Finnishness, Whiteness and Coloniality

Edited by **Josephine Hoegaerts, Tuire Liimatainen, Laura Hekanaho and Elizabeth Peterson**

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Finnishness, Whiteness and Coloniality

An Introduction

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"It's just different here," is a common way in the Nordic countries for relativizing—that is, eschewing responsibility—for racism. "It's not our fault we are so white, it's just the way it is." These commonly held justifications were presented by the anthropologist Kristín Loftsdóttir during her keynote speech at "The 'Great White North'? Critical Perspectives on Whiteness in the Nordics and its Neighbours," a conference held at the University of Helsinki in August 2019. But racism is not relative, Loftsdóttir emphasized, nor is it erased by adopting a stance of innocence. The Nordic countries are in a curious position when it comes to issues of colonialism and racism. Located in the farthest reaches of Europe, there is a sense among many Nordic citizens that they have always "been" there—and that, furthermore, the people who have been

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there have always been "white." The notion of whiteness is an extremely complicated view of reality, one that is contested throughout history. This theme is addressed at length in this book, which does not presuppose a stable definition of whiteness: it grapples with the complexities, fluidities and multiple meanings this concept can acquire and communicate. Rather than positing whiteness as a category, this book explores whiteness in its various guises, and as it is defined in various disciplines. The view that there is an unbroken historical thread of permanent whiteness in the Nordic countries is what Loftsdóttir calls a "restitching" of the historical threads, willfully overlooking the colonization and longstanding historical mobility of people in and out of the region. While much has been written and researched on colonialism and race in Europe and the Nordic countries, the topic has been underexamined within the specific context of Finland. In this 12-chapter volume, based on a collection of papers from the conference, a set of themes specific to the Finnish context are treated by a range of scholars representing different fields of study. The key question explored in each of the chapters is: What is the relationship between Finnishness, race and coloniality?

A few months after the conference, racism emerged at the forefront of public consciousness in Finland. The Black Lives Matter protest movement, a six-year effort initiated in the United States after the murder of a Black child, Trayvon Martin, became a global movement after the murder of George Floyd, a Black man who was killed by white police officers. Global protests erupted following the murder of Floyd, reviving widespread resistance against the systemic racism imbuing the levels of so-called civilized (which is to say: colonized and colonialized) society. The subsequent Black Lives Matter and related protests raised anti-imperialist reactions globally. Also in Finland, Black Lives Matter protesters filled Senate Square in the heart of Helsinki, with thousands of peaceful protesters demonstrating against racism and police brutality, while promoting equality, justice and change (Kajander and Siironen 2020). During this time, Finland's complex role within the racial and colonial systems emerged again in public discourse, debated by academics, politicians and reporters (see e.g. Keskinen 2020; Nuuttila 2020a; Nuuttila 2020b). The complex spirit of these debates was summarized by reporter Ndéla Faye, who made the following comments in a segment for the Finnish broadcasting company YLE:

> The most interesting thing is that in Finland, the debate is stuck on the level in which Russia and Sweden have oppressed Finland for centuries. Discussions always return to this, but no one wants to talk about the role of white Finns as oppressors, for instance, in relation to the forced Finnishization of the Sámi. (Faye quoted in Nuuttila 2020b)[1]

Faye's remarks summarize the ways in which different power relations are set in motion in synchrony, drawing from different perspectives where (white) Finns are simultaneously defined as the oppressed and the oppressors. However, as Faye continues, these roles do not exclude one another, highlighting the interrelated yet contradictory character of these debates. Keskinen, Skaptadóttir and

Toivanen (2019a) note that investigation on the Nordic countries adds "powerfully to a body of critical scholarship on race and ethnicity that shows how entangled they are within repressed histories of internal and external colonization and imagined nationhood." Keskinen (2019: 179) has further emphasized the importance of including a regional perspective in the study of Nordic colonialism, as well as "a multi-level model that focuses on the relations among the global, regional, state, and local levels." She holds that Finland is "a case *par excellence*" to investigate the role of regional aspects in colonial and racial histories as Finnish histories are situated in the "triangle of Nordic/European colonialism, racial thinking, and modern state building" (ibid.: 164, 178). Therefore, the notion of whiteness is a useful lens through which to understand contemporary Finnishness and its paradoxes, as the chapters in this volume demonstrate.

This volume carries the debate about minoritization and oppression in Finland beyond the familiar narratives of the oppression of "Finns." Here, "Finns" is in quotation marks because the volume calls into question exactly what is meant by "Finns" and "Finnish," problematizing and questioning a status that, while seemingly straightforward to many, begs for critical investigation. The debate is by no means entirely defined by race: culture, language, politics, and issues of individual choice are serious considerations when it comes to defining Finnishness (one's own, or others'). But the specter of racial categorization haunts any conversation in which brown curls prompt questions of "where are you *really* from?," or lifestyle articles in which some are assumed to "just know" what it is like to be "Finnish." For this volume, we therefore center our investigations solidly on uncomfortable questions of race—and particularly to get below the surface of what is often experienced as a non-racialized identity, or the "invisible" color: whiteness. Unmarked, unquestioned, and unnoticed by who inhabits it, whiteness often flies under the radar in discussions about ethnic identities, while issues of migration and suppression are forced to center stage. Such discourse establishes whiteness in Finland as a seemingly neutral presence that is at the same time both invisible and ubiquitous. Despite changing social realities, whiteness therefore continues to appear to some as the "normal" state of Finnishness to which all other articulations of identity are compared and also condemned.

Finnishness

It is tempting to understand the ambiguity of contemporary Finnish identities as a recent phenomenon, the result of a globalized world in which movements like Black Lives Matter echo around the world, cities become increasingly "multicultural" and various forms of migration and displacement disrupt the perceived homogeneity of communities. But as a number of authors in this volume point out, negotiations over Finnishness and whiteness, and their intersection, are nothing new, nor are they ever fully established. A growing body of research on multiculturalism, whiteness and colonialism has emerged in recent years to examine both Nordic and Finnish contexts (see e.g. Aaltonen and Sivonen

2019; Hübinette et al. 2012; Kivisto and Wahlbeck 2013; Keskinen 2019; Keskinen, Skaptadóttir and Toivanen 2019b; Kujala 2019; Kuortti, Lehtonen and Löytty 2007; Loftsdóttir and Jensen 2012; Lundström and Teitelbaum 2017; Ranta and Kanninen 2019; Tervonen 2014; Wickström and Wolff 2016). As many of these studies have shown from different perspectives, in a similar manner to other Nordic countries, Finland has never been a culturally or racially homogeneous country or nation, nor is it an outsider to colonial systems. These realities, however, have affected and have also been strongly affected by the development of national identities and the enduring myths around them (e.g. Tervonen 2014).

Traditionally, Nordic countries have struggled to acknowledge their participation in global colonial histories, something characterized by the notion of "exceptionalism" (Keskinen 2019; Rastas 2007; see also Loftsdóttir and Jensen 2012), or being an "innocent outsider" in the history of colonialism (Keskinen 2019; see also "white innocence," as per Keskinen 2019 and Wekker 2016). The position of Nordic countries, including Finland, within the colonial system has been described with the concept "colonial complicity" (Keskinen 2019; Keskinen et al. 2009; Vuorela 2009), as although they were not major actors in overseas colonialism, they nonetheless "actively participated in and benefited from the unequal economic, political, and cultural relations developed during European colonialism … When these histories are combined with Nordic colonialism in the Arctic, it becomes clear that the Nordic countries were in multiple ways involved in colonial endeavours, both as 'accomplices,' but also as 'active colonial powers'" (Keskinen, Skaptadóttir and Toivanen 2019a: 5).

To fully grasp the notion of Finnishness, Finland's "colonial complicity" in the intersections of past and present, east and west, local and global is central to any discussion. Prior to its independence in 1917, the area which today forms the independent state of Finland belonged to the Swedish kingdom until 1809, after which it formed the Grand Duchy of Finland as part of the Russian Empire. Finland's position as part of two empires and the emanant national narrative of the emancipation from a subordinate position, economic hardships, wars and independence struggles to the glorification of nationhood and economic prosperity is often credited to the resilience of its people. This everyday wisdom, however, has often "resulted in bypassing the role of Finns and Finland in colonial histories" (Keskinen 2019: 164; see also Lehtonen and Löytty 2007; Tervonen 2014).

The multiplex role of Finns in the colonial system is also translated into the racial histories of Finns and Finland (Keskinen 2019). First, the contested character of the Europeanness of Finns within the hierarchical understandings of 19th-century ethnographers and anthropologists was ambiguous from the beginning. Finns were, for example, perceived to be of Mongolian descent with Turanian heritage/Asian roots (Kemiläinen 1993; Keskinen 2019; see

also Chapter 12 in this volume), yet they also appeared as explicitly "white" in the 20th century, straddling divides between east and west in their bodies, practices and language as they appeared both as white Europeans and as hailing from primitive eastern people into part of the Nordic and Western regime. Even as the Finnish nation-state became more established, Finnishness remained an intrinsically multiplicitous identity, split along linguistic divides between the Finnish- and Swedish-speaking population (see e.g. Tägil 1995) and expression of national, cultural and ethnic modes of belonging. Second, the colonial and racial histories of Finns are tied to the modern state- and nation-building processes, which in addition to notions of homogeneity, also created "'Others' of the Indigenous and minority populations, who were perceived as biologically and/or culturally inferior" (Keskinen 2019: 178). Therefore, the state is also a powerful player in how ethnicity, race and nation become manifested (Keskinen, Skaptadóttir and Toivanen 2019a). The myth of homogeneity created within these processes has left the varied histories of migration, the longstanding presence of ethnic minorities and Indigenous people in the region ignored in dominant narratives such as history-writing (ibid.; Tervonen 2014).

In the latter half of the 20th century, Finland has rapidly risen from a poor agrarian country to a developed welfare state (see e.g. Koponen and Saaritsa 2019). Today, Finland can be defined as a "global winner": a modern Western welfare state ranking high on global indexes such as freedom of the press, gender equality, PISA and even happiness. In 2018, Finland was selected as the "goodest" [sic] country, topping the Good Country Index, which measures what each country in the world contributes to the good of humanity. These rankings serve to further the notion of homogeneity and the hegemony of whiteness in defining Finnishness, and ultimately overlook that these notions have direct consequences for migrants (especially migrants of color), racialized minorities and the country's Indigenous Sámi population (Keskinen, Skaptadóttir and Toivanen 2019a). That is, these notions feed into a sense of Finnish exceptionalism and a self-image as a country outside of colonial involvements or of the historical burden of racism. This sense of exceptionalism, coupled with the tendency of many Finns to see themselves as the oppressed in exclusion to being an oppressor, has a consequence of feeding directly into racism and xenophobia (e.g. Rastas 2007). Indeed, racism in Finland is well documented. For example, a 2018 EU report called "Being Black in the EU" concluded that Finland was the most racist country out of 12 countries in the study (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2018). At the same time, these realities give rise to emerging counter-narratives of Finnishness and what it means to be Finnish. One example is the Ruskeat tytöt ["Brown girls"] collective, who have brought into the broader public the voices and narratives of non-white (i.e. Brown) Finns, and draw attention to a whole range of racialized groups in Finland.[2]

Whiteness

The concept of whiteness has been described as "a dominant and normative space against which difference is measured" (Dyer 1997: 10), a constantly shifting boundary of power and privilege (Kivel 1996). Yet the meaning of whiteness is not static, and it does not follow a historically continuous line; what is considered "white" is relative. Following Steve Garner (2007: 1), "[t]he meanings attached to 'race' are always time- and place-specific, part of each national racial regime." "Race" or whiteness is not only a matter of skin color or other physiological features; it is socially constructed and ever-changing, depending on who is in power and how power structures relate to one another. Racial definitions are entangled with other markers of relative inferiority and superiority, such as being Nordic or European (Loftsdóttir and Jensen 2012; Lundström and Teitelbaum 2017). As a Nordic nation, this ideology also applies to Finland. One of the outcomes of this trope of dominance is that whiteness affords privileges to individuals who are fortunate enough to fit with its definition in a certain time and place: when viewed as the "norm," such people can afford to take for granted their own skin color and position of power (Loftsdóttir and Jensen 2012).

The connection between Finnishness and whiteness is constantly contested, but also under constant reification, as different competing narratives pull at the threads that seem to bind them. On the one hand, historical notions of Finnishness, created through practices of categorization, construction, contestation and exclusion, claim space in contemporary narratives of belonging under the guise of "tradition," or how the community is imagined. On the other hand, contemporary understandings of an ethnically diverse Finland jostle for that same space, both underlining and disrupting modern meanings of Finnishness. For this reason, Suvi Keskinen and others (2019a) emphasize the importance of addressing the treatment of both migrant and Indigenous communities together, as it advances understanding on how difference is imagined and represented.

The multifarious and fluid definitions of Finnishness revealed in the research of many of the authors in this book point to a complex and perhaps uncomfortable truth: while Finnishness and whiteness are not, and have never been, perfectly synonymous, they have often been presented as such. From 19th-century theories about "the whitest race in the world" (Chapter 12) to contemporary ideas about who qualifies as "beautiful" in Finland (Assulin 2019; see also Chapter 5 in this volume), many discourses and practices of Finnishness are unconsciously entangled with, or politically invested in, whiteness. These entanglements, both historically and in the present, have largely been made possible by the elasticity of both concepts. If Finnishness is a complex category, stretching to contain multicultural multitudes and global migration while also contracting to exclude many for their language, citizenship or culture;

whiteness is perhaps even more slippery as a concept. Rather than trying to artificially pin it down, we have opted to allow for the exploration of the inherent variance of these concepts in the chapters of this volume. Different chapters therefore include somewhat different definitions of what looks at first glance like the same issue.

One of the main goals of this volume has been to demonstrate the inherent complexity of whiteness, a concept that is often understood in the Nordics as an American import that cannot be applied to countries with very different connections to colonization and the transatlantic slave trade. However, as many chapters in this volume demonstrate, Finland's involvement with the (post)colonial world is neither new nor superficial. As recent research on Indigenous histories and coloniality continues to show (see e.g. Chapter 11), settler societies are often unaware, or unwilling, to recognize the colonial foundations of state formation, policy and politics. Attempts to decolonize Finnish history, cultural traditions and practices are as necessary as they are fraught with difficulty. Decolonizing efforts are currently being made in activism, society, governance—and scholarship. The insights gained in studies of whiteness elsewhere in Europe, Africa and the Americas are therefore highly valuable to researchers delving into questions of intersecting Finnishness and whiteness, and the work of scholars like Sara Ahmed (2007), Kalwant Bhopal (2018) and Gloria Wekker (2016) has been fundamental to the research in this book. Theories and analyses of the fluidity, multiplicity and sociocultural invisibility or unmarked nature of whiteness are mobilized in several chapters to critique models of Nordic exceptionalism, genetic romanticism and even discourses of equality and multiculturalism. They also play an important part in decolonizing narratives of Finnishness.

(De)Coloniality, Continuity and Change

Acknowledging the endurance of racial hierarchy, and the complicity of higher education and scholarship in upholding that status quo, need not lead to apathy or complacency, however. As Nelson Maldonado-Torres stresses in his "Outline of Ten Theses on Coloniality and Decoloniality" (2016), universities have been spaces both for (mostly youthful) agitation against racialized hierarchies and for its suppression. As we have learned, again, with the recent BLM protests, "breathlessness is a constant condition in the state of coloniality" (Maldonado-Torres 2016: 5). Universities, too, represent contexts where "many students feel choked and breathless" (ibid.), but they should at the same time be places where new practices and radical ideas can be given the oxygen they so desperately need. This volume therefore aims toward an approach that gives space to both decolonization and decoloniality, and that critically analyzes both colonization and coloniality. In other words, it attends to both continuity and change in the

formation of our current, "post-colonial" reality, and relies on critical studies of the past alongside social, cultural and political analyses of the present.

It is useful to clarify some concepts and vocabulary that will be mobilized throughout the book, beginning with the distinctions between colonialism, coloniality, decolonization and decoloniality: "colonialism and decolonization are for the most part taken as ontic concepts that specifically refer to specific empirical episodes of socio-historical and geopolitical conditions that we refer to as colonization and decolonization" (Maldonado-Torres 2016: 10).

This perspective risks presenting the structural violence and inequalities connected to colonial regimes in the past, as if they no longer have any bearing on the present. By placing historical research next to contemporary analyses, we hope to disrupt notions of a problematic past having no relevance for a more progressive presence, and to draw attention to the continuation of coloniality:

> coloniality and decoloniality refer to the logic, metaphysics, ontology, and matrix of power created by the massive processes of colonization and decolonization. Because of the long-time and profound investment of what is usually referred to as Europe or Western civilization in processes of conquest and colonialism, this logic, metaphysics, ontology, and matrix of power is intrinsically tied to what is called "Western civilization" and "Western modernity." (Ibid.)

This description requires, as suggested at the beginning of this introduction, an engagement not only with histories of internal colonialism and the current benefits reaped from colonial complicity, but also a willingness to delve into the contemporary presence of settler colonial realities. In the context of Finland, this means allowing linear narratives of change and temporalities of settlement to be disrupted (on settler coloniality, see e.g. Moreton-Robinson 2015).

One of the most obvious outcomes of the constant tension between continuity and change in thinking about coloniality and race is the vocabulary we use to talk about issues of structural inequality. Language can empower and subjugate, and the implications of a particular language, words, acronyms and phrases depend heavily on who uses them, in what context and at what time. Most of us have experienced such shifts in meaning in our lifetimes, and will do so again, contending with the constant social and political negotiations that decide which words are considered offensive, which cause pain, which are reclaimed with in-group pride and which manage to clarify or nuance our discourse. The chapters in this book detail the use of vocabulary to engage with notions of identity, belonging, inequality and ethnicity in a number of different contexts. It is therefore impossible to provide a clear introductory glossary of how such terms are used throughout this book. Nevertheless, some collective choices have been made: slurs and hateful or otherwise hurtful vocabulary present in the data analyzed in some of the chapters in this volume have not been

reproduced in the text, but do sometimes appear with their original context in the notes. Overall, we have elected to use the terminology different communities use to identify themselves, rather than the appellations found in, for example, historical documents (with the exception of instances where the analysis of these appellations is central to the research question). Choices on how to identify oneself or one's community are as fluid as identities and communities themselves are, and the chapters reflect that. Attenuating toward contemporary stylistic choices, we use upper-case Black and Indigenous and lower-case white when describing ethnicity.

By drawing attention to its inherent multiplicity and fluidity, the chapters in this volume reveal that whiteness—like other categories of hegemony and privilege—is a "sticky" category (Berggren 2014): it has an almost unfailing ability to shift and adapt to changing contexts and still hold on to its social power and political sting. This explains, perhaps, why despite our efforts and those of the authors to disrupt racialized structures, the discourses and practices of whiteness are present in this volume, too, dictating the scholarly conventions and academic hierarchies that inevitably become part of the production of a research-based, peer-reviewed book. There certainly is diversity (social, cultural and ethnic) in this book, and the contributors and editors live out the realities described in these chapters, of shifting notions of whiteness and its intersections with Finnishness, transnational identities and citizenship. However, at the same time, the composition of this volume's authorship reflects the limits of the editors' practice of scholarly interaction and that of the academic world in general. Researchers who do not identify or pass as white and/or Finnish remain a minority in the university landscape and, consequently, that minority often carries a heavy burden of representation, being called upon to speak for their communities, cultures or traditions—again and again and again. We have sought a balance, in these chapters, between the need for representational justice and a fair distribution of emotional and social labor—and while we believe each of the chapters included is necessary and important, that balance has remained imperfect. In its modest way, the book aims to contribute to uncomfortable discussions about the necessity to decolonize the university and the academe, too. Or rather, it points, perhaps painfully, to the continued difficulty of including different perspectives on European and national identities in academic work. This lack of diversity within academia affects its formal structures, its mundane practices of organizing and distributing research, and the way in which researchers conceptualize and categorize the world. As Sara Ahmed has pointed out, "[w]hiteness is only invisible for those who inhabit it, or those who get so used to its inhabitance that they learn not to see it, even when they are not it" (Ahmed 2007: 157). A critical perspective on whiteness therefore not only requires analysis or theory, but above all the cultural and political work of diversifying the communities in which we live, work and do research (Smith, Funaki and MacDonald 2021).

Chapters

In this book, we have aimed to address both the norms and ideals that underpin concepts of race, citizenship and belonging, as well as the embodied and affective practices through which they are given shape on a day-to-day basis. To that end, the book is made up of four parts, elucidating the normative cultural work of creating Finnishness, the construction of ideals and norms surrounding race, modes and practices of belonging and, conversely, the discursive and physical violence of colonization and minoritization.

In Part I, *Imaginations of Finnishness*, the authors contest the imagined ethnic (white) homogeneity of Finns by exploring the constructs of "Finnishness" and ethnicity in different contexts, approaching the topic from medical, heritage-related and gendered perspectives. In Chapter 1, Aaro Tupasela establishes the role population genetics has played in producing visual representations of difference and similarity, problematizing how such representations are often employed as "evidence" in the construction of Finnish nationhood and national identity. However, Tupasela highlights that "genetics is always relative," and various choices affect these representations, such as excluding minorities from consideration. Heidi Henriikka Mäkelä continues on the theme of assumed homogeneity and the role of visual documentation in creating such assumptions by investigating the reproduction of normative white, heterosexual and middle-class Finnishness in photographs published by the National Inventory of Living Heritage, in Chapter 2. The results of a visual discourse analysis illustrate in particular that the photographs reproduce normative notions of femininity and masculinity, nature and naturalness, whiteness and "otherness." In their chapter based on survey data, Saga Rosenström and Barbora Žiačková zoom in specifically on one of these imagined binaries: that of gender. In Chapter 3, they investigate the role of the symbolic "Viking woman" in the construction of national identities in the Nordic countries, focusing on the perceptions of Finnish participants. Offering both a historical insight in the role imaginations of white femininity have played in the process of nationbuilding, and a contemporary look at how such historical myths continue to haunt the present, their chapter investigates how the narrative of history itself can be coded by gender and race—and how such narratives can change. While Finnish respondents brought up many themes relevant to the Viking-Scandinavian history, the respondents overtly rejected the Viking woman symbolism as irrelevant to Finnish identity.

Part II, *Doing/Constructing Whiteness in Finland*, shifts attention to the cultural work of understanding and presenting one's self (and others) as white in Finland. Constructing and doing identity is a matter of simple, often unconscious, daily practices, and the chapters in Part II show how inconspicuous practices like going to school, reflecting on life memories or chatting on Facebook help to construct and bolster understandings of race, difference and

multiculturalism. Chapter 4 delves into young people's understandings of difference and (in)equality in Finland. Focusing on the intersection of whiteness and masculinities, Marja Peltola and Ann Phoenix explore 12–15-year-olds' understanding of multiculturalism. With interview data, the authors demonstrate that young boys often overtly described egalitarian "color blind" ideals when asked about multiculturalism, a notion with which many participants were seemingly unfamiliar, allowing them to detach themselves from racial or ethnic inequalities, which were nevertheless present in their discourse. In Chapter 5, the entanglement of Finnishness with sexual identity comes under scrutiny. With a mixed methods approach, Riikka Taavetti tracks traces of ethnicity and race in Finnish sexual autobiographies from the early 1990s. While ethnicity and race are rarely directly referenced in these autobiographies, Taavetti demonstrates how the authors implicitly construct their own white Finnishness by pointing out differences between themselves and perceived "others." Encounters with such "others" are described as exotic, often in a seemingly positive fashion, nonetheless in a style distinguishable from descriptions with fellow white Finns. Chapter 6 looks at the self-perception and presentation of Estonian migrants in Finland. With an ethnographic approach, Jaanika Kingumets and Markku Sippola investigate the construction of whiteness in Facebook group discussions by Estonian migrants. While discussions about whiteness are not prevalent in the Estonian context, the authors demonstrate that whiteness becomes more salient when Estonians migrate to other countries, where they might become perceived as "racialized minorities." To avoid this, Estonian migrants employ whiteness to distinguish themselves from less privileged, non-white migrant groups.

Part III, *Representations of Belonging and Exclusion*, reflects on similar questions of identity and difference, specifically focusing on the often strategic practices of minoritized groups in the Nordics to mobilize or resist narratives of whiteness. In this part, the fluidity of "Finnishness" as a category of identity comes to the fore, as does its precarious connection to Finland as a geopolitical space. In Chapter 7, Tuire Liimatainen examines representations of Finnishness and whiteness in Sweden-Finnish social media campaigns and online activism, showing how the mediatization of discourses and images of Finnishness continue to construe identity at the crossroads between nationality, ethnicity and culture. By examining social media posts of both white and non-white Sweden-Finns as well as Sweden-Finnish minority activists, Liimatainen shows how the relationship between Finnishness and whiteness in the Swedish context is a highly fluid, situational and often contradictory way of boundary-drawing. The next chapter shows that the situational and fluid character of Finnishness and whiteness also applies in the context of Finland's capital and its urban landscape. Jasmine Kelekay examines the discursive construction of East Helsinki in Afro-Finnish rappers' music in Chapter 8. Adopting a framework for territorial stigmatization, Kelekay demonstrates that the

rappers utilize various alternative narratives to resist the pervasive racial and class-related stereotypes associated with East Helsinki. In Chapter 9, Riikka Tuori shifts the attention to a longstanding minority in Finland, and the influence of their rich heritage on contemporary identities. With recent interview data from the research project *Minhag Finland*, this chapter investigates the construction of Jewishness among Finnish Jews along with their experiences with antisemitism and racism in Finland. While cognizant of their "difference" as a minority group, the participants' responses demonstrate that the Finnish-Jewish community has evolved into a multicultural community embracing many markers of Finnishness as well.

Part IV, *Imperialism and Colonization*, offers a clear empirical contestation to the myth of Finnish white homogeneity as well as its colonial innocence. The chapters investigate the mechanisms and effects of colonization from socio-cultural and linguistic perspectives. Different groups of "others" are brought into discussion, illustrating that indigeneity and migration are messy categories to apply to various inhabitants of Finland, rather than simple delineations of types of "otherness." Much like the classification of "Finnishness," the classification of "others" is a matter of cultural work, of canonization and of contestation. It is also an important part of Arctic colonialism, both historical and contemporary.

Chapter 10 explores Finnish discourses about identity and ethnicity, and particularly the role English as an (acquired) language plays in practices of self-identification and ethnic belonging. In this chapter, Elizabeth Peterson demonstrates that skills in English, often considered something positive and even a source of pride among Finns, carries direct connotations to colonialism and class-based distinctions that run counter to the perceived social equalities in Finland. In Chapter 11, Rauna Kuokkanen outlines the role of the Finnish state and nation in ongoing practices of settler colonialism. Understanding Sámi communities as mere cultural entities or even "problems" rather than as holders of geopolitical sovereignty has shaped and legitimized histories and practices of nation building. Kuokkanen investigates how whiteness and its experience has contributed to both the ethnicization and colonization of Indigenous peoples in Finland. Drawing from various historical sources, including newspapers, letters and poetry, in Chapter 12, Ainur Elmgren examines the racialized perceptions of Finnish and Turko-Tatar intellectuals from the 19th century onward. As longstanding minoritized groups, they held a position of both (relative) subordination and privilege, and developed sophisticated vocabularies hybridizing narratives of the Mongol Empire, intellectualism and Finnishness to construct their own identities. The chapter shows how shifting ideals, representations and beliefs led to changes in self-representation and belonging, too, as they struggled to represent their Mongolian heritage as desirable in a modern European context.

Finally, Suvi Keskinen reflects, in her afterword, on the colonial nature of Finnishness and its histories and heritages. Keskinen's work has been one of the formative influences in the emerging conversations, both scholarly and public, about Finnish colonialism and its historical trajectory. This book both attests to the powerful challenges to myths of homogeneity and neutrality she and other scholars have formulated recently, and attempts to chart out a territory beyond the state of the art. In her afterword, Keskinen looks back at how debates around colonial complicity and racial justice have emerged and changed in the last two decades, in Finland. She also gestures at the future, imagining a way forward into new scholarships and politics of hope.

In conclusion, this contribution can be seen as a response to a call to action to critically examine the relationship of race, whiteness, colonialism, Finland and Finnishness. Because this contribution is the first volume of its kind on this combination of topics, the chapters in the volume necessarily take a wide and general perspective. In this volume, our approach is to address what we see as the most significant and informing topics that apply to the context of Finland and Finnishness. As is normally the case, we are well aware that this volume merely skims the surface of further investigations that are ripe and ready. Examples that occurred to us while we were preparing this volume include different cultural representations and emerging counter-narratives around Finnishness and the effects of global capitalism, not necessarily in reference to past colonial systems, but rather as part of modern neoliberal economy where the decisions of big companies affect, for example, which names and images can be seen on food brands in the shelves of Finnish grocery stores. Examples include the contestations of Finnishness through shifting a white to Brown Finnish young woman as the character depicted on the Finnish brand of oats, Elovena (see Turun Sanomat 2006), as well as changing brand names such as Eskimo brand ice creams in the wake of the global wave of addressing systemic racism and following the example of international companies (see Sirén 2020). Returning to Finland's success as the "goodest" and the "happiest" country and its new self-image as a global winner, it might be relevant to ask: How much room is there for critical self-reflection and the admission and addressing of racism in a country that is already seen as "perfect"?

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Notes

[1] Translation by the editors of this book.
[2] https://www.ruskeattytot.fi/

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PART I

Imaginations of Finnishness

CHAPTER 1

The Genetic Imagination

Imaging Populations and the Construction of Nationhood

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Abstract

This chapter explores the ways in which genetics, particularly population genetics, generate representations of difference and similarity. Using examples drawn from both scientific literature, as well as popularizing texts, I show how visual representations of difference and similarity have come to provide compelling forms of evidence for constructing nationhood, as well as national identity. Using the case of Finnish genetics, as well as the study of rare diseases in Finland, I will describe how genetics and historical understandings of nationhood have come to complement other forms of national identity, such as culture. If the national romantic period in Finland from the late 19th to the early 20th centuries drew its legitimacy from literature and the arts, then the role of genetics in the construction of nationhood can be understood through the lens of what I have termed *genetic romanticism*. Much like the national romantic

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period, I consider genetic romanticism as a set of practices and processes through which national identity becomes defined and stabilized.

Keywords: nationhood, population genetics, genetic romanticism, visualization

Introduction

According to the British philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah (2010: 151), "upholding differences among groups may entail imposing uniformity within them." Within the interdisciplinary field of science and technology studies (STS), research exploring the generation of similarity and difference has focused on the ways in which science and its related technologies become intertwined with these processes. The generation and maintenance of racial and ethnic differences/uniformity have in many ways rested on using the visual senses to understand physical differences between individuals. Whether we examine the history of phrenology or race classification under apartheid in South Africa (Bowker and Star 1999) or the ways in which artificial intelligence platforms come to perpetuate racial inequalities and discrimination (cf. Mitchell 2019), the role of the visual in upholding difference has always played an important role.

When it comes to nationhood and nationalism, the generation of difference draws on a far wider gamut of resources to generate difference. This includes culture (music, art and literature), symbols of nationhood (flags, statues), as well as science and technology (Adas 2015). The role of science and technology in constructing and mediating representations of difference and similarity has become a powerful tool, which is all too often understood as being neutral and unbiased. Recently, numerous authors have pointed to the myriad of ways in which bias and racial discrimination are built into technologies (Benjamin 2019; Eubanks 2018; Noble 2018). Unpacking the role of technology in generating perceptions of difference and similarity are, therefore, central concerns in better understanding how "whiteness" is being created today. "Whiteness," according to some commentators, has become the accepted norm and measuring stick against which other races are compared (Bonnet 1993; 1996).

During the past half century, discussions surrounding the genetics of difference have garnered a great deal of attention in relation to difference and uniformity between people and nations (Lipphardt 2014). Nadia Abu El-Haj (2012: 22) has pointed out how genetic markers have been understood as "'mere' indexes of ancestry and origin," whereby genetics is seen as a neutral representation and archive of human origin and ancestry. The role of early genetic studies of populations, such as the HapMap project and the Human Genome Diversity Project, sought to provide scientific explanations of genetic variation and difference, only to fall into the trap of *a priori* assumptions of what constitutes

meaningful genetic difference in the first place (M'charek 2005). Although these projects were rooted in the work and curiosity of Luca Cavalli-Sforza and his interest to understand the evolution of humans over time (Cavalli-Sforza 1990; Cavalli-Sforza et al. 1991), the project was nonetheless plagued by ethical, legal and social criticisms (Wasserloos 2001; Weiss 1998; Reardon 2009). Most significantly, a number of commentators accused the proponents of the project of being a "vampire project" and its organizers molecular colonialists for "'targeting' ethnic groups without consulting them" (Young Kreeger 1996).

The role that genetics has played, however, in constructing and solidifying scientifically derived differences among populations, particularly national populations, has been surprisingly significant, particularly within the Nordic context (Tupasela 2017; 2021). Genetics not only provides a technologically mediated basis for understanding similarity and difference (thus something that is perceived to be neutral and natural), but it has also provided surprisingly striking visual tools and representations of similarity and difference between various groups of individuals. "Whiteness," according to Richard Tutton (2007), has become a mainstay in many of today's genetic study designs and is used to uphold an asymmetry of power in relation to who deserves to be studied and for what reasons (Frankenberg 1993; see also Maldonado-Torres 2016). Within the Finnish context, whiteness has come to encompass more a nationalistic as well as a cultural delineation, whereby differences have been drawn between language groups (Finnish versus Finnish-Swedes and non-Finnish-speaking, especially Russian), as well as ethnic minorities, such as the Sámi and Roma populations.

Evelyn Ruppert (2011) has suggested that a population is not an object that awaits discovery, but rather enacted through specific devices and technologies. According to Nancy Krieger (2012: 634), "who and what makes a population has everything to do with whether population means are meaningful or meaningless, with profound implications for work on population health and health inequalities." In this sense, technologies of population visualization based on genetics enact particular types of relations between individuals and populations rather than represent an archive or index waiting to be discovered.

This chapter explores the ways in which genetics, particularly rare disease genetics and population genetics in Finland, generates representations of difference and similarity. Using examples drawn from both scientific literatures and popularizing texts, I will seek to show how visual representations of difference and similarity have come to provide compelling forms of evidence for constructing nationhood, as well as national identity. Using the case of Finnish genetics, and drawing on the study of rare diseases in Finland, I will trace how genetics and historical understandings of nationhood have come to complement other forms of national identity, such as culture. The development of the notion of Finnish Disease Heritage (FDH) among Finnish pediatricians and geneticists can be understood as a form of kinship study within the Finnish context (cf. Sommer 2015). Subsequently, population geneticists have

transposed and translated these findings into a broader interpretation of Finnish genetic heritage and origin.

If the national romantic period in Finland (late 19th and early 20th century) drew its legitimacy from literature and the arts, then the role of genetics in the construction of nationhood can be understood through the lens of what I have termed *genetic romanticism* (Tupasela 2016). Much like the national romantic period, I consider genetic romanticism to be a set of practices and processes through which national identity becomes defined and stabilized. As Venla Oikkonen (2018) has noted, however, population genetics is a set of evolving technological and material practices, which means that the relations constructed through genetics are also fluid and dynamic.

I locate this chapter within a broader academic discussion on ethnic and racial relations, with a particular focus on the Nordic countries (Keskinen 2019). I argue that genetics and its associated technologies of visualization play a crucial role in how scientists and the media enact and construct Finnishness. A significant narrative in this process has been the argument that Finns are a unique and homogenous entity. This narrative of uniqueness is, however, constantly being negotiated and aligned with a narrative of being European and Nordic as well (Tarkkala 2019; Tarkkala and Tupasela 2019). Modern genetics, with its long and troubled history and entanglements with eugenics, racial hygiene and discrimination (Kevles 1985), has sought to distance itself from this heavy historical weight. Following the work of Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2016: 10), however, Western genetics still carry with them remnants of coloniality and decoloniality, in that many of the logics of processes associated with generating genetic difference and similarity still rest on the "matrix of power" inherent in "Western civilization" (cf. Tutton 2007). In Finland, this is particularly salient in relation to the Sámi population. By this, I mean that within genetics the significance of the white, Western, male still remains a dominant benchmark against which others are compared. Furthermore, in relation to nationhood, Finland has sought to use genetics as a tool for recreating and perpetuating notions of genetic uniqueness (Tarkkala and Tupasela 2019). The fluidity and malleability of genetic identity is an ongoing process, where the analysis of new samples and their comparison to samples collected from other populations generate new ways of understanding identity and ancestry (Oikkonen 2015).

There are several reasons why I draw attention to the role of genetic technologies in generating difference and similarity between people and populations. *First*, technologies always entail choices as to what is analyzed and how. Although many of the underlying assumptions about these choices may seem clear and straightforward to the researchers using them, their consequences may not be as clear to people who are unfamiliar with the underlying assumptions that their use entails. *Second*, what one chooses to analyze genetically is by no means a self-evident process. Given the vastness of the human genome, the choices related to what one wants to study will inevitably have

an impact on the outcome. The study of different parts of the human genome (mitochondrial DNA, as opposed to a comparison of a whole exome sequence) will yield different results in terms of relationships between individuals and groups of people. *Third*, and perhaps most obvious, is the question of which individuals are included in the studies. Although this may seem self-evident, genetics has a long history of exclusion. In Finland, for example, Roma people have never been included in a single population genetic study. Similarly, Samí people have not been included in all studies conducted in Finland, which has contributed to the generation of different types of population differences in a number of studies. *Finally*, the study of genetic difference and similarity between individuals and groups of people always entails the question of who are we comparing and to what? Genetics is always relative. Despite the sequencing of the human genome at the beginning of the millennium, the use of that genome as a baseline to qualify differences and similarities is always questionable. As I will discuss below, the question of the role of different reference populations will always generate changes in the relations between those being studied.

In the following, I will first discuss scientific visualizations as a particular object of study within science and technology studies, as well as the humanities. Following this, I will describe the early historical roots and linkages between the study of rare diseases and how nationhood has come to be represented genetically. Finally, I will discuss these points with reference to specific studies, which Finnish researchers have conducted with samples from various segments of the Finnish population and point to some of the challenges they pose in relation to delineating and constructing genetic Finnishness.

Scientific Visualizations

A number of scholars have suggested that the emergence and ubiquity of digital technologies and the forms of new representation that they entail can be called a "visual turn" within contemporary culture (Carusi et al. 2015; Mitchell 1994; Rheingold 1992). The visual turn can be said to encompass and cover a number of interconnected perspectives, including concerns over perceptions and cognition of new visual technologies, new ways of understanding and interpreting scientific objectivity in relation to visual representations, as well as ontological questions about what count as scientific objects themselves (Carusi et al. 2015: 2).

The study of visualization as a technology is closely aligned with questions surrounding representation and objectivity. As discussed above, the study of representation as a scientific practice is by no means new (Coopmans et al. 2014). The use of visual representations within genetics research has helped to provide relief to compressing massive amounts of genetic information into images, which geneticists use to visualize relations. The translation of

mathematical and computational tools into visual representations, however, is not without its problems. Matei Candea (2019: 63), for example, has argued that diagrams do not provide "a clearer, simpler, or less deceptive" communication medium than textual arguments. One could even argue that visual representations of computational methods obfuscate and complicate our understanding of genetic relations and population migration through an oversimplification of those very processes.

The compression of large amounts of data in images masks many of the choices made by researchers in order to generate those visualizations. Visualizations, as well as genetic testing, all entail a large number of methodological choices, which will inevitably have a significant impact on the outcome of the results. Since there is no standard or commonly agreed upon measure within genetics to study difference, the result is a broad range of genetic studies, as well as visualizations through which relations and ancestry come to be represented. In this sense, I argue that the history of visualization goes hand in hand with the history of scientific observation (Daston and Lundbeck 2011; Lipphardt and Sommer 2015; Pauwels 2006).

What is interesting in a number of these studies that I will discuss below is how they form an extension of cartographic practices. Gunnar Olsson's (1998; 2010) critical work on cartography serves as an important entry point to examine visualizations generated by geneticists as attempts at generating new types of objects by drawing lines. The genetic maps, which geneticists generate, serve as powerful visual enactments, which help to stabilize, as well as destabilize, notions of identity in relation to genetic ancestry. Given that these visualizations draw on different collections of genetic material, collected using different criteria, as well as analyzed using different methods, the outcomes are equally different.

Visualizations and diagrams, such as population genetic trees and maps, are examples of such visualizations. As Marianne Sommer (2015: 108) has noted, "molecular tree diagrams freeze a hierarchical kinship system that is meant to represent a state before the great historical movements." On the one hand, these visualizations help to present a narrative and image of unity and similarity among those who are included within that visualization. At the same time, however, the visualizations are used as a form of exclusion, which seeks to draw its authority from empirical methods and computation.

Maps have always had an important role in the representation of power relations (Pickles 2004). With the combination of genetic analysis and mapping, medical professionals and geneticists inscribe biological traits on physical maps. These inscriptions serve as novel narratives of identity, ancestry and difference, which draw on scientific notions and claims of objectivity and neutrality. In the following, I will begin by discussing the role of the study of Finnish Disease Heritage (FDH), which has played an important role in creating an alignment between genetic analyses and historical narratives of identity and origin.

Finding Finnishness in Church Records

Although this chapter seeks to draw attention to the role that scientific visualization has played in constructing Finnishness, it would be a grave omission if I did not draw attention to the close relationship between medical (genetic) and historical research—in particular, the role that church records have played in helping to better understand how some genetic features came to be described as being particularly Finnish. To understand this relationship, I need to discuss the concept of Finnish Disease Heritage (FDH). FDH is a group of rare diseases that are overrepresented in the Finnish population (Norio 2000). First introduced as a concept in 1973, the term has come to cover some 30 typically recessive diseases in the Finnish population. The concept has represented a major research undertaking particularly within the Finnish pediatric profession initially, and later within the genetics research communities. The study of rare diseases helped to produce a historical account of population migrations in Finland as it relates to families who are carriers of the different mutations. The study of FDH has also been instrumental in elucidating the uniqueness of the rest of the population. This historical linkage was the result of researchers using church records to better understand how genetic inheritance between distant relatives may have given rise to the rare disease in question (Tupasela and Tamminen 2015).

The study of FDH over the years has also contributed to a stabilization and naturalization (though still contested) of the genetic uniqueness of Finns themselves. Despite FDH being a very heterogeneous group of diseases, it has served, in part, to formulate a specific vision of Finns as homogenous yet European during the past 50 years. The historical work conducted around FDH has had an important impact on later population genetic studies, as well as the narratives used to explain how Finns came to be unique since the studies showed how migration and intermarriage affected the prevalence of certain rare diseases in the population. Particular examples of this include the notions of isolation (such as in the case of Kuusamo and Kainuu), as well as bottlenecks, which feature heavily in some of the later explanations of Finnish homogeneity.

Subsequent genetics studies of the Finnish population have drawn heavily from the concept of FDH and its associated historical narratives. In particular, the relationship between genetics and historical explanations of population structure have become part-and-parcel of how many subsequent population genetic studies have been conducted in Finland. While the studies of FDH cases relied on more traditional visual representations of disease and relationships, such as maps showing the locations of where patients lived, the subsequent population genetic images and visualization represent far more persuasive tools for representing relationships between groups of people since they compress a massive amount of information into relatively easily

understandable images. Given that the study of rare diseases has involved special and unique communities, which were the result of isolation, as well as bottlenecks, it is surprising to see the degree to which these narratives have influenced more general population genetic studies. As Oikkonen (2015) has noted, however, population genetic studies draw on a multitude of technological and material practices, and the FDH-derived historical narrative represents only one theory of Finnish genetic origins and identity (cf. Sundell et al. 2010).

In the following section, I will discuss some of these images and related texts, as well as their significance for understanding how Finnishness has been visually represented in genetic studies.

Representing Nationhood (Population Structure) through Genetics

> The Finnish population in Northern Europe has been a target of extensive genetic studies during the last decades. The population is considered as a homogeneous isolate, well suited for gene mapping studies because of its reduced diversity and homogeneity. However, several studies have shown substantial differences between the eastern and western parts of the country, especially in the male-mediated Y chromosome. This divergence is evident in non-neutral genetic variation also and it is usually explained to stem from founder effects occurring in the settlement of eastern Finland as late as in the 16th century. Here, we have reassessed this population historical scenario using Y-chromosomal, mitochondrial and autosomal markers and geographical sampling covering entire Finland. (Palo et al. 2009)

Geneticists can study and represent genetic ancestry and relations in many ways. There is no one way, but rather a multitude of methodologies for sampling and analysis, which produce different results. Although this is self-evident to geneticists, methods, technologies and sampling decisions also have an impact on the ways in which nationhood and identity come to be represented and understood. The above excerpt from a study examining Y-chromosomal, mitochondrial and autosomal markers highlights how different methods and sampling strategies will generate different ways of understanding and representing identity and ancestry alike. Besides highlighting the different outcomes in interpretation of population structure, the article also highlights the significance of temporality in genetic studies of ancestry. Depending on the samples used, such as ancient DNA, different studies also open up different temporal vistas of ancestry (cf. Willerslev and Cooper 2005). During the past half-century, starting from studies on rare diseases and their causes, these studies have also contributed to an interesting and varied discussion regarding the origins and genetic relations of Finns.

As discussed above, Finnish genetic identity and the origins of Finns have traditionally been studied and understood through the medium of culture and cultural artifacts. Disciplines, such as archaeology and history, have contributed to the understanding of early settlement and origins of the Finnish populations. The national romantic period in Finland provided new material representations of national identity, including literature, art and architecture (Anttonen 2012). Alongside these approaches, genetics have provided new epistemological, as well as ontological, approaches to deriving identity "markers." Compared to culturally derived markers of identity and relatedness, genetics draws on the authority of natural science and calculation to derive its claims to scientific objectivity (cf. Daston and Galison 2007).

To highlight some of the challenges associated with the visualization of relations using genetics, I will begin by highlighting an article by Elina Salmela et al. (2008), which sought to study population structure by comparing samples collected from a number of populations within the Nordic countries and Europe. Figure 1.1 provides an example of the ways in which research groups use visualization to help present the results of an analysis comparing genetic samples taken from these 16 different population groups. Although the image itself is challenging to interpret given that it is in three dimensions, the colorful dots nonetheless provide us with a quick way of understanding how difference between samples taken from different people show up on an image. The first important point to make regarding the image is, despite it being in three dimensions, that it is able to compress a massive amount of information into a relatively simple color image that helps guide the reader into "seeing" genetic relations between individuals within these sample groups. Much like Nadia Abu El-Haj (2012) has noted, this serves as an indexical representation of relations, despite it being highly fluid.

Although I will not go into the specifics of the analysis, I would like to focus on an important insight, which the authors make in the article. They state:

> Interestingly, in the MDS plots the Finnish-Swedes stood out from the rest of Western Finland *only when* Sweden was included in the analysis, which highlights the importance of *relevant reference populations* also when detecting patterns of variation within a country. (Salmela et al. 2008) (emphasis added)

Despite having used a large number of samples from different populations, the authors noted that genetic difference among the samples collected from Western Finland only emerged when they added samples collected from Sweden to the analysis. This important observation points to the relational quality of genetic mapping. Geneticists can create difference by adding different reference populations to the comparison. In this sense, the process of drawing lines and mapping in genetics differs considerably from traditional cartographic practices in that differences and similarities are relative as opposed

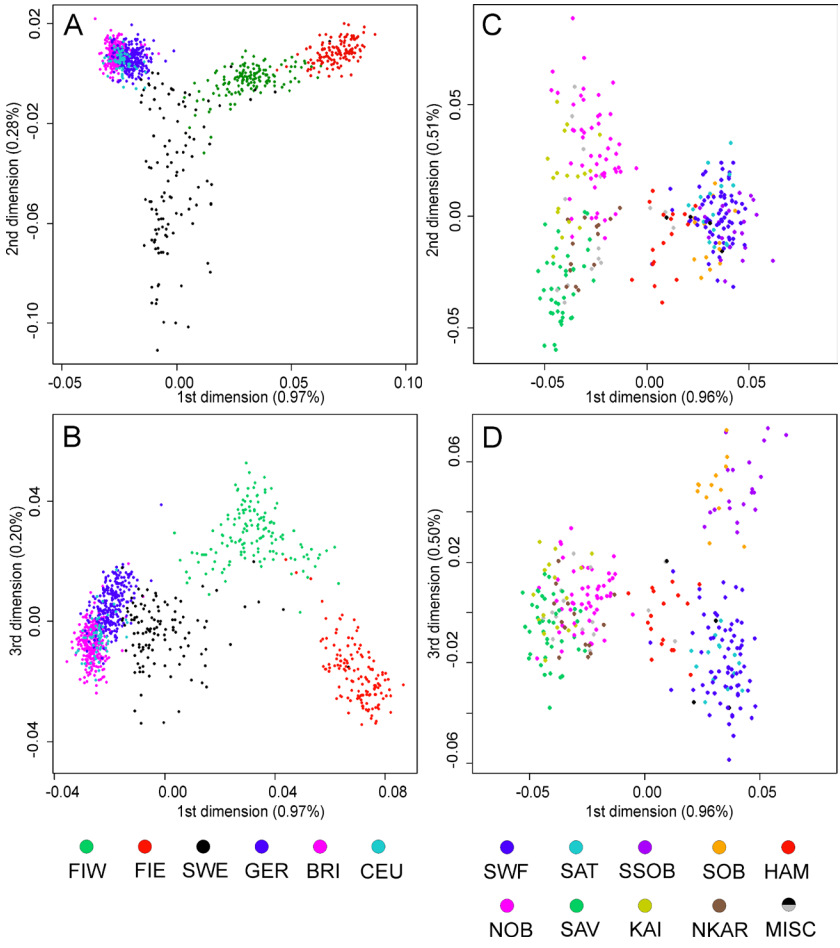

Figure 1.1: Mapping genetic relatedness. Source: Salmela et al. 2008. Published under CC BY 4.0.

to fixed physical entities. The point also highlights an even more important consideration when conducting these comparative analyses. Since genetic relations are always in relation to something (another sample or samples from a population), including different reference populations will either increase or decrease the location of the dots on the visualization. This will represent, therefore, closer or more distant relations. It is important to note, therefore, that in relation to Gunnar Olsson's (1998) notion of creating new objects by drawing lines, the comparisons that geneticists generate of populations are not stable, fixed objects, but rather always enacted through relations, which are materially and technologically mediated.

This important observation is significant for a number of reasons. *First*, the observation highlights the relational nature of many of the genetic studies, which provide visual representations of similarity and difference. *Second*, although geneticists understand this challenge, the images and studies that they create may cause confusion as to the fixed nature of relatedness. *Third*, there are no standards or accepted practices as to which reference populations ought to be included in such comparisons, rather, studies have tended to include samples based on which ones have been available for the researchers.

The study by Salmela et al. (2008) carries also many of the challenges, which I mentioned earlier in relation to methodological considerations. Much like the study by Jukka Palo et al. (2009), this study takes as its starting point a particular analysis methodology (MDS). Studies such as this have significant implications as to their epistemic authority. Although the researchers recognize the fluidity of genetic studies such as this, the visual objects that are generated have considerable significance in popular culture. The translation of scientific studies to popular media and culture is a significant element in the reproduction of Nordic coloniality, in that it reinforces notions of uniqueness and difference. I will discuss this point later on.

There is also an important temporal perspective raised by this type of study. As new studies are published using different samples from different populations, so changes the narrative of origin and genetic relatedness. In comparing the Palo et al. article to the Salmela et al. article, we can already discern the emergence of a competition between narratives of relatedness and origin, which are reliant on the materials and technologies available to the researchers.

The Salmela et al. (2008) study is representative of many similar studies which draw comparisons and contrasts between populations. It is, however, worth examining another significant study published in 2010 by the Finnish Institute for Molecular Medicine (FIMM). In a press release entitled "Finnish Genes Placed on the Genetic Atlas of Europe" (FIMM press release 2010), they describe a study conducted in the Netherlands (see Figure 1.2) in which genetic samples from Finns, among many others, had been analyzed to study differences and similarities between European populations (Lao et al. 2008). One of the figures in the article is comprised of two maps next to each other: the one on the left is an image where populations are compared based on their SNPs (single nucleotide polymorphisms), whereas the map on the right is a traditional cartographic map of Europe indicating where the samples have been collected.

The study is interesting and important in relation to our discussion of Finnishness for a number of reasons. As I discussed earlier, the question of what methods are used to study differences is a significant question. In this particular study, the researchers chose to compare slightly over 300,000 single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNP) using principal component analysis (PCA). What is important in the study is that they point out some of the shortcomings of earlier analysis techniques, one of which is characterizing population

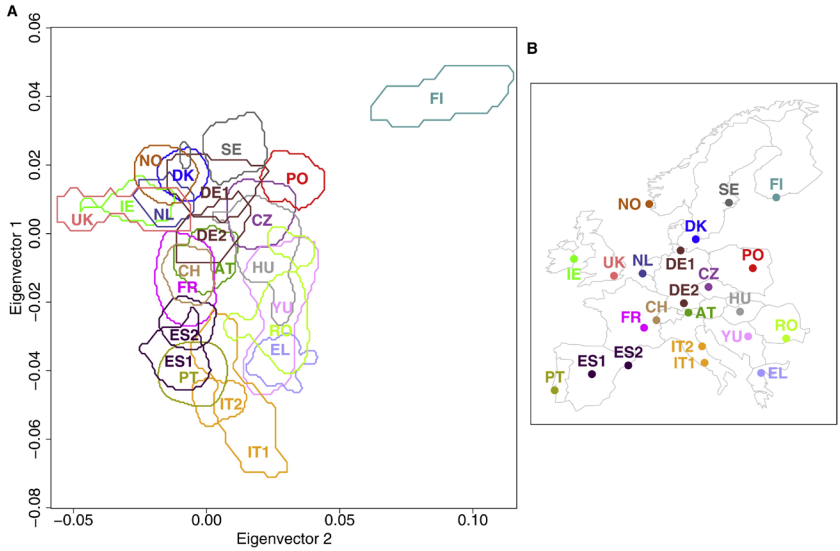

Figure 1.2: SNP-based PCA of 2,457 European individuals from 23 subpopulations. Source: Lao et al. 2008. Published with permission, all rights reserved.

structure and how it correlates to geography. Although it is not the purpose of this chapter to question the validity of these results, I do wish to point out that those differences and similarities can be studied using a multitude of methods, as well as technologies. Furthermore, depending on what part of the genome one studies, the results may provide different insights into similarity and difference. SNP studies, for example, do not provide insights that one might get from studying mitochondrial DNA. In terms of who is studied, it is unclear which individuals have been selected to serve as representatives of a national population. For Finland, 47 samples from Helsinki were included in the study. Following Noah Tamarkin's (2014) discussion of diaspora, the study raises a number of interesting questions. The Finnish samples chosen to represent Finns and Finnish genetic ancestry did not contain representations of ethnic minorities (e.g. Sámi or Roma). Such exclusions and *a priori* assumptions of Finnish history and representation lead to the question of what types of scientific representations of the population and belonging become stabilized in such studies.

Furthermore, the sampling criteria in the different countries also differs considerably. In Finnish sampling protocol, the requirement is usually that samples are taken only from people whose both grandparents were born in the same county. The same criteria, however, have not been applied to samples collected from other countries. This difference in sampling protocol helps to create differences in how homogeneity and reduced variability become expressed in the studies.

According to Lao and colleagues:

> Overall, our study showed that the autosomal gene pool in Europe is comparatively homogeneous but at the same time revealed that the small genetic differentiation that is present between subpopulations is characterized by a significant correlation between genetic and geographic distance. (Lao et al. 2008)

The notion of "comparative homogeneity" used in the text is interesting since what constitutes genetic homogeneity is not defined explicitly. In their article, Palo et al. note how Finns have reduced diversity and are genetically homogenous. As some authors have noted (Tarkkala and Tupasela 2020), genetic homogeneity can take on different meanings depending on what the researchers are referring to.

Much like the study of Finnish population structure, there are many questions which this study raises in terms of inclusion. Many of the countries in the study have significant immigrant populations who have lived in those countries for several generations. From a comparative genetic perspective, however, they are not included in the studies, since their presence would alter the ways in which the lines between national populations would end up being represented in the visualization.

The study also raises the question of what interpretive limitations are built into the study from a broader comparative perspective. What would happen to the conclusions and relations between populations if samples from other populations, such as the Baltic countries or Russia, were included in the study? Would European homogeneity and genetic relations change, and in what ways if the geographic scope of the study were broader?

Besides excluding individuals or groups from studies, geneticists will also "clean" their data before analyzing it. This means that samples whose data do not fit within certain parameters of the analysis will be excluded from the analysis. According to Sini Kerminen et al. (2019), for example, samples with heterozygosity over specific thresholds are removed from studies. The removal of outliers and samples, which skew the results, will have an impact on the results themselves. The act of cleaning data should also be seen as a way in which difference and similarity is reinforced within genetic studies.

One example of the different interpretations that exists regarding the historical development of the Finnish population is between the so-called "two-wave" versus "trickle theory." The two-wave theory of the development of Finnish genetic structure is perhaps best exemplified by a study in which the authors state: "The vast majority of Finns descend from two immigration waves occurring about 4,000 and 2,000 years ago" (Peltonen, Palotie and Lange 2000; see also Kittles et al. 1998). According to this theory, the majority of the Finnish population and its genetic composition can be explained by two major waves of population expansion. In contrast to this theory, another Finnish research

group used computer-modeling methods to try to explain the current genetic population structure of Finland. According to the study: "Immigration from neighboring populations, even if very limited but constant over prolonged time periods, can have drastic effects on a population's genetic composition" (Sundell et al. 2010). What these two studies suggest is that interpretations of population history, as it is in relation to genetic studies, are very fluid and flexible. Origin and relationships can be interpreted in drastically different ways depending on the approach one uses to conduct a study.

Revising Population History Time and Again

The studies I have discussed above, as well as numerous other population genetic studies which seek to describe the genetic origins of Finns, the population structure of Finns and/or their genetic relations to neighboring populations all share a common thread. The studies continually revise and rewrite population histories and relations based on the materials and technologies that are available to them. In this sense, genetics is no different from history or archaeology, which also rewrite migration history continually. These genetic narratives and origin stories play an important role in constructing nationhood and national identity.

Derek Fewster (2006; 2017) has examined the relationship between nationalism and history in Finland, noting how general myths of descent that the elite drew on were strongly drawn from cultural artifacts like the national epic poem, the *Kalevala*. The work of Finnish pediatricians and geneticists can be seen to perform similar activities in constructing narratives of a national genetic heritage through FDH and population genetic studies. Although the genetic studies seek to base their interpretations on computational technologies, methods and samples, there remains an uneasy question regarding the epistemic authority with which these studies are able to lay claim to their findings.

As one recent article noted: "Our work provides a general framework for using haplotype sharing to reconstruct an integrative view of recent population history and gain insight into the evolutionary origins of rare variants contributing to disease" (Martin et al. 2018). The rewriting of "recent population history" is not a stable process and does not produce a stable cartographic object. Although many of the studies make similar findings regarding population structure, there is always a revision involved regarding the historical origins and roots of populations. Concomitantly, this historical revision also entails revisions to our relations to neighboring or even distant populations. Given that the notion of Finnish population becomes so closely tied to national identity, belonging and otherness are also constructed along nationality. What makes the issue of salience in relation to whiteness is how being Finnish is attached or "tethered" (Hinterberger and Porter 2015) to a frozen moment in Finnish history which pre-dates larger population migrations.

Of course, it is important to note that geneticists are aware of this problem. In fact, several Finnish geneticists have written about the problem over the years. In a blog post from 2019, a Finnish forensic geneticist, Jukka Palo (2019), notes how the notion of genetic Finnishness is problematic for a number of reasons. In responding to an ongoing discussion regarding the notion of genetic Finnishness and its use by "ethnonationalists," Palo points out a number of challenges in making claims of homogeneity. He points out that definitions regarding similarity, as well as time as a context for analysis, has a significant impact on the results of interpreting Finnishness from a genetic standpoint. In this sense, Finnish geneticists are involved in the generation of both coloniality and decoloniality within the context of genetic studies. The significance of these studies can be perhaps best exemplified in the ways in which they become translated in the popular media. In the next section, I will briefly discuss this feature of Finnishness as it relates to recent media representations.

Population Genetics in the Media

Although the researchers who conduct and publish these studies are well aware of the limitations of their studies, as well as the contingent nature of comparisons and reference populations, the studies that I have discussed above have had a significant impact on discussion in the popular media. The process of translation into common narratives surrounding national identity and genetics is significant, since it often glosses over the small, yet significant, nuances surrounding genetic analyses.

Perhaps the most significant discussion surrounding Finnish identity in relation to genetics was in Finland's largest newspaper the *Helsingin Sanomat*. Published in their monthly publication, in July 2010, the article "Kaksi kansaa" (two people) sets out to explain how Finland's East–West genetic division can be explained by such common differences as how people mow their lawns (Malmberg 2010). The article draws its insight from the recently published genetic atlas of Finland and points out how Finns from the East of Finland are as genetically different from those in the West, as Italians and Swedes are from each other (FIMM 2010). The article spurred a plethora of discussions in the newspaper's online comment section, which highlights the way in which scientific studies of relatedness and origin translate into everyday discussions and conceptions of identity and belongingness. These discussions, however, rarely reflect the methodological and technical questions which are related to the analytic output in the first place.

The relationship between the visual aspects of genomics and national identity are well laid out in the article since it contains the genetic map that was published by FIMM. The visual cues provided by the map serve as an important form of evidence to support the genetic differences between Finns. The genetic differences are then concomitantly translated by the article into cultural

(language) differences between Finns living in the East versus those living in the West of Finland. While language, art and literature served as vehicles through which national identity was constructed during the national romantic period, the use and circulation of the genetic maps of the Finnish population does the same, except through the medium of genetics. What is interesting in this process relates to the ways in which genetics integrates the traditional symbols of nationhood and identity as allies and evidence.

The *Helsingin Sanomat* article was by no means the only article to circulate the discussions surrounding the genetic origins and development of the Finnish population. Another article popularizing the FIMM study in the media, also published in 2010, was in the Finnish science magazine *Tiede* (Kaaro 2010). According to the article, the human genome is a type of history book. In many ways that is correct, but it should also be noted that the genome can be read and interpreted in many different ways. Furthermore, just like archaeology, it is a "text" that is continually revised and rewritten. In this sense, the book comparison is also problematic since it suggests something that is stable and fixed. As we have discussed, however, the study of the human genome and inheritance always entails interpretations and choices as to how to read the genome itself.

The translation of scientific studies into popular media is always a challenge, in that once they are publicized and published, there is always the chance that they are interpreted in ways that they were not originally intended. This is something that geneticists are also aware of. The problem, however, is that regardless of whether researchers understand this, the images become part of debates and discussions among Finns. As such, they continue to perpetuate common notions of Finns as genetically unique. This process can be seen as a perpetuation of Nordic coloniality, whereby Finns maintain a genetically unique, exclusive and separate history from other Nordic countries and Europe, as well as the rest of the world. In this sense, the images can be seen to contribute to an ongoing logic whereby Finnishness is not just a cultural identity represented through language, for example, but more importantly a genetic quality, which seeks to exclude those people whom geneticists have systematically sought to exclude from their studies.

Discussion

Suvi Keskinen (2019: 165) has called for more studies which explore Nordic differences within the postcolonial period. Since the late 1960s, Finnish genetics have followed a strong path of studying the Finnish population from a genetic perspective, more so than in the other Nordic countries, with perhaps the exception of Iceland. With the case of FDH, the goal has been to help families who are carriers of rare diseases. These studies have helped set the foundation for a particular narrative of Finnish genetic history as being unique and homogenous in comparison to other Nordic countries. These studies can be said to practice a form of "white innocence" (Wekker 2016). They help to

strengthen ideas of the Finnish nation as genetically unique despite the knowledge that the methods and sampling techniques that researchers use always entail decisions regarding inclusion and exclusion. Although many researchers are very aware of this issue and even regularly write about the problems of Finnishness as a genetic quality, these conceptions nonetheless become regularly translated into the popular media and thus everyday understandings of what Finnishness entails.

The studies that I have discussed above also have a concrete impact on current policies and strategies regarding precision medicine in the Nordic countries (Njølstad et al. 2019; Tarkkala, Helén and Snell 2019). For example, Danish researchers recently sequenced 150 "Danish" genomes in order to construct a national reference genome (Maretty et al. 2017). The people selected to represent the Danish population required a significant amount of discrimination and exclusion within the general population. Geneticists are, therefore, constantly involved in generating interpretations of the historical origins and naturalness of the nation-state. Depending on who is included as a "natural" or "real" representative of a nation will have impact on the way in which medical technologies and treatments are developed. For Finland, this would most certainly entail discrimination against the Samí and Roma populations, as well as the exclusion of more recent immigrants such as the Somalis. It would also entail the exclusion of most people whose family histories involved any member of the family moving around. In this sense, Finnish genetic history is closely tied to the lack of mobility.

Oikkonen (2018: 6) has suggested that genetic technologies, such as population genetics, contribute to a narrative of nostalgia where continuity plays an important role. The exclusion of individuals and populations, the cleaning of data of statistical outliers and the visual representations of relations through various technologies helps to contribute to the writing of national narratives. In this sense, genetic romanticism represents a continuation of efforts to maintain national identity and stabilize relations among those whom researchers consider to be Finns. Colonialism has been traditionally understood as a process by which authority is exerted over other people or territories. As Maldonado-Torres suggests, we need to extend this understanding to notions of coloniality and decoloniality. I have sought to use the case of Finnish genetics to show the way in which colonialism and coloniality, as well as decoloniality, operate within the context of genetics. The visual technologies I have described in this chapter should be seen as part of a broader context in which Finnish identity is reproduced through the medium of genetics.

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CHAPTER 2

Visualizing Heritage, Ethnicity and Gender

Bodily Representations of Finnishness in the Photographs of the National Inventory of Living Heritage

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Abstract

The main goals of this chapter are to analyze: (1) how the claim of whiteness is reproduced in 21st-century Finland in the processes of producing intangible cultural heritage; and (2) how Finnishness is visualized and embodied in these practices. I scrutinize the newly established wiki-based open access publication *National Inventory of Living Heritage* (NILH, 2017–), which is a part of the Finnish implementation for the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. In this chapter, I examine the photographs published in the NILH by using a methodological approach of visual discourse analysis. I conduct an analysis of 153 photographs that are divided into categories of (1) manhood, womanhood and family, (2) nature and naturalness and (3) visual othernesses of Finnishness. Building on interdisciplinary studies on

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heritage, banal nationalism and gender, I argue that the NILH photographs participate in reproducing the normative (e.g. heterosexual, white, family-centered and middle-class) images of Finnishness. Finnishness is embodied in the photographs in active, working, mature bodies that perform either heroic and masculine or collective and caring feminine tasks. Finns are also represented as having an intrinsic connection to "nature." People are often portrayed in forested landscapes, and the pictures underline naturalized connections between the landscape, ethnicity and sexuality.

Keywords: Finland, intangible cultural heritage, UNESCO, visual discourse analysis, whiteness

Introduction

"Externalizing culture in human bodies invites racist distinctions. In Iceland, it is difficult to get away from the whiteness of heritage," states the Icelandic folklorist Valdimar Hafstein (2012: 513), who has scrutinized the use of Icelandic folk costumes in contemporary society. In Finland, whiteness seems to similarly be an intrinsic feature of the heritagization processes. However, heritage processes such as museum exhibitions are currently not places for "hot" (see Billig 2017; Paasi 2016) discussions on nationality, race or ethnicity, at least not in Finland, where the heritage sector has been fairly moderate and state-led. Yet, as many scholars in the field of heritage and museum studies argue, heritage practices such as museum exhibitions or visits still participate in the processes of reinforcing and confirming the identities concerning gender, class, race or nation in banal, quotidian and unnoticeable ways (Embrick et al. 2019; Levin 2012; Smith 2015).

In this chapter, I analyze how the banal and often rather hidden claim of whiteness is reproduced in 21st-century Finland in the processes of participating in the transnational trajectories of identifying intangible cultural heritage. I scrutinize the newly established *National Inventory of Living Heritage* (NILH, 2017–), which is a part of the Finnish implementation for the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. The NILH stems from the *Wiki-Inventory for Living Heritage* (WLH, *Elävän perinnön wikiluettelo*, 2016–), which is a wiki-based platform into which different kinds of communities are able to submit entries that discuss phenomena that are considered as "cultural heritage" (these include, i.e., submissions such as "Glassmaking tradition," "Beer culture" and "Picking mushrooms"). The NILH is curated by the Finnish Heritage Agency, but it could be described as an interface of institutional and vernacular heritage production as it is constructed in dialogue between the Finnish Heritage Agency, the Ministry of Education and Culture, and a varied group of larger and smaller Finnish communities.

In the chapter, I examine photographs (particularly those that include human beings) that are published in the NILH alongside the submission texts. The pictures are not by any means in the center of the inventory—on the contrary, they are "only" pictures that are chosen to represent and depict the phenomenon in question. Still, due to their minor role, the photographs are intriguing keyholes through which the performances of whiteness, nationality and gender may be discussed in detail. I am particularly interested in how "Finnishness" is embodied in these visual practices. I analyze the photographs published in the NILH and concentrate on the representations of human bodies: how do the bodies in the pictures represent "Finnish" cultural heritage? How are the heritagization practices gendered? How is the claim of whiteness present in the photographs?

The Finnish manifestations of heritage understood as nationally important are currently represented in a sublime, non-violent and festive manner, emphasizing the shared national past and the harmonious future ahead (Haapoja-Mäkelä 2019; 2020b). As shown in Figure 2.1, the bodies that represent sauna culture in the NILH emanate harmony, unity and even paradise-like conformity. The young female bodies are located in the rural, summery lake landscape, which—through its familiarity to the Finnish viewers—automatically evokes the canonical national landscape imagery in viewers' minds, and thus refers to constructed spatial identities and imagined belongings of a nation (e.g. Häyrynen 2005). Qualities such as "purity," "naturalness," "traditionality"

Figure 2.1: The NILH: Sauna bathing in Finland. Photo: Hanna Söderström / Sauna from Finland. Published under CC BY 4.0.

and "authenticity" may be associated with the landscape, as well as with the modestly covered, but almost naked, white bodies that seem to merge into the landscape. Nakedness is not associated with sexual practices in the picture—rather, it implies the "naturalness" of the photographed bodies (e.g. Nash 2018) that represent the Finnish heritagized past. The Finnish past is understood as "natural" and "part of nature" in the heritagization processes, and this, as I will argue in this chapter, is a central perspective through which the visuality of Finnishness is produced.

The chapter is structured as follows. First, I consider the theoretical background of studying cultural heritage, Finnishness and whiteness. The second section introduces the materials and the method of visual discourse analysis in detail. The third, fourth and fifth sections concentrate on analyzing the pictures in relation to ideas of gender, "nature" and the boundaries of Finnishness. I conclude by summarizing briefly the relevant findings of the chapter.

The Heirs of the Finnish Maid: Intangible Cultural Heritage, Finnishness, Whiteness

Heritage is a "verb" (Harvey 2001: 327): instead of being an inherent feature of a thing or a phenomenon, it is something that is actively (re)produced, negotiated, challenged and remade. It is a performance that becomes realized in the process of naming, disseminating and experiencing it. Furthermore, heritage is a network of meanings that is not produced only through language, but in a multimodal interaction with the material world (e.g. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004; Smith 2015). In the field of critical heritage studies, heritage performances are seen as something that always seek to negotiate the past's presence in the present through strategic and political appropriations and the creation of connections and reconnections (e.g. Waterton, Watson and Silverman 2017). Hence, following this view, I suggest that the NILH does not represent "Finnish heritage" as such, but it actively participates in producing and remaking it.

The prefixes "cultural" and "intangible" are a part of the administrational language that has been adopted in global usage largely after the UNESCO's *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* (2003, ratified in Finland 2013). However, as Laurajane Smith and other scholars argue, the distinction between "intangible" and "tangible" is paradoxical and artificial: this division simplifies the complex relationships between human activity and the material world (Kuutma 2009; Smith and Campbell 2018; see also Lähdesmäki 2016). In this chapter, I see the concept of intangible cultural heritage as an "emic" conceptualization that refers to the institutional processes and taxonomic systems of producing and categorizing heritage. As a whole, I propose that the phenomenon of intangible cultural heritage is a

material-discursive process, in which intangible and tangible elements are understood as intertwined.

The institutional processes of producing and categorizing heritage have been acknowledged as systems that reinforce pre-existing structures and identities of gender, class, race and nation (e.g. Smith 2015). Despite the universalist aims of UNESCO or the pro-multiculturalist approach of the Finnish Heritage Agency,[1] the category of Finnishness seems to be understood in the materials in a rather stereotypical and normative way. Several scholars of critical heritage studies have shown that the UNESCO-related processes have ended up emphasizing the role of the national scale, even though the transnational and subnational scales are interwoven into these processes (Aykan 2015; Buljubašić and Lähdesmäki 2019; Ichijo 2017; Smith and Campbell 2018).

I argue that cultural heritage and heritage production is a central category through which the national enters people's lives and through which it can be negotiated, manifested and reproduced. It is an essential part of *spatial socialization* that is defined as a process "through which individual actors and collectivities are socialized as members of specific, territorially bounded spatial entities, and through which they more or less actively internalize territorial identities and shared traditions" (Paasi 1999: 4; 2016: 24). A significant part of spatial socialization is the process of historialization that becomes manifested, for example, in school history teaching (Paasi 1999: 11), and similarly, heritage management powerfully participates in the creation of the nation's past, present and future.

Following Rogers Brubaker, I understand the notions of ethnicity, race, nationhood and gender as something that "are not things *in* the world, but perspectives *on* it. … They include basic schemas and taken-for-granted background knowledge, embodied in persons and embedded in institutionalized routines and practices, through which people recognize and experience objects, places, persons, actions, or situations as ethnically marked or meaningful" (Brubaker 2009: 32, original emphasis). In the heritage practices, the idea of Finns as an ethnic ingroup is emphasized. I have argued elsewhere that the discursive construction of this ingroup-ness is circulated in the wiki-inventory through the usage of "we" pronouns that indicates an imagined national we-group (Haapoja-Mäkelä 2020b). The idea of Finns as a "we-group" stems mostly from the politics of the 19th century. However, as the roots of the idea originate from the ideological and political foundations of Finnish nationalism and nation-making, traces of the discursive Finnish we-group can be followed further back in history, in the Protestant Reformation of the 16th and 17th centuries and the politics of standardization of the Swedish state (Anttonen 2005: 131).

Currently, the Finnish normative and hegemonic we-ness is white, Finnish-speaking, heterosexual, family-oriented and middle-class (Lehtonen and Koivunen 2011; Rossi 2017). Yet, the idea of Finnishness as a "white" and "Western" construct is historically not trouble-free and a rather new one: in the beginning

of the 20th century, Finns were placed in the lower levels of racial hierarchies, especially when compared to Swedes (Keskinen 2019). Today, Finnish whiteness is rather color-blind or even "silent," in a sense that it is not largely discussed in society.

"Whiteness" is considered here as a fluid construction that shapes the ways in which boundaries between "us" and "them" are drawn. Finnish whiteness has been traditionally described as blond and blue-eyed (e.g. Valenius 2004), but, as Richard Dyer (1997) has noted, whiteness can have various shades. This was manifested in the racialized discourses of the long 19th century, when the Finns were regarded to be of "Mongolian descent," and thus, as a part of the non-white "yellow/Asian race." Scandinavians, for example, were instead on the top of the hierarchy of whiteness (Keskinen 2019). Today, the rather hidden nuances between blond whiteness and other whitenesses can be scrutinized, for example, in the light of immigrant discussions—despite the shade of their hair and skin color, native Europeans (and to some extent, Russians) are part of the constructed "us" when compared to, for example, African or Asian asylum seekers.

The practices of normative white Finnishness are maintained, for example, in heritagization processes, such as museum exhibitions—or, as this chapter suggests, in cultural heritage inventories. The broad topic of racialized institutions has been studied widely, particularly in relation to space and place. This approach has been extended to the field of museum studies as well, and, following Embrick et al. (2019), I propose that like art museums, the practices of wiki-inventorying could be labeled as *white sanctuaries*. In the case of art museums, institutional racial mechanisms produce sanctuaries in which some groups are able to freely navigate the space and others are seen as outsiders, despite the universalist and post-racial discourses attached to the museums (Embrick et al. 2019). As for the wiki-inventory and the NILH, the practices produce a *virtual white sanctuary* in which the color-blind banality of whiteness is reinforced, for example, through the pictures published alongside the texts.

The ideas of Finnishness and whiteness are interwoven into the gendered practices of imagining and reconstructing a nation (e.g. Mayer 2000; Nagel 1998). As Johanna Valenius (2004) has shown, the state of Finland itself has been embodied into the bodily form of a female, the Finnish Maid (*Suomineito*), since the turn of the 20th century. The Maid was commonly portrayed as a blond, blue-eyed, virginal young woman, who was admired, desired, protected and loved, but also raped or annihilated in the visual and textual materials published at the turn of the 20th century (Valenius 2004). The Maid has been a common metaphor of Finnishness since, and even certain real living women have been described to be the embodiment of the Maid. In my childhood, in the beginning of the 1990s, I was taught at school to look at the Finnish map and see the Maid's figure in the shape of the Finnish borders (her head

up in the north, her hand raised next to it and the hem of her skirt spread in the south)—which is a prominent example of the processes of spatial socialization and gendered practices of producing a nation. Thus, it is not surprising that the figure of the blond Maid also lurks behind the NILH's 2010 photographs; her figure is not necessarily explicit, but as I show in this chapter, she is implicitly present in the bodily manifestations of Finnishness.

Materials and Methods

In my chapter, I examine the pictures published in the *National Inventory of Living Heritage*[2] (2017–). The NILH is an open access online publication that consists of entries that were earlier published in the WLH, but were chosen to be included in the national list as well (see Figure 2.2). In Finland, the UNESCO-related inventorying processes are based on the "bottom-up" ideology that is currently a large-scale trend in the new museology. However, the Finnish Heritage Agency controls, administrates and frames these processes by, for example, naming an expert group that participates in the selection of NILH submissions in cooperation with several societal communities (see Finnish Heritage Agency 2017). The Finnish submissions that are nominated for inscription on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity are chosen from the NILH, and thus, the NILH is an encompassing representation of things that are largely considered as nationally important heritage in Finland at an institutional and societal community level.

I concentrate in this chapter on the pictures published in 2017 in the NILH. This material consists of 52 submissions and 217 pictures, of which 153 represent humans (see Table 2.1). The number of submissions is based on the March 2020 situation; in April 2020, 12 new submissions were added to the NILH. Unfortunately, these submissions cannot be analyzed here since this chapter's analysis was already close to an end when these new entries were chosen to be included in the NILH.

The pictures in the NILH are uploaded partly by the submitters of the WLH, and partly by the experts and curators in the Finnish Heritage Agency from several open access image banks.[3] All of the images are photographs, and a majority of them are amateur shots of themes that somehow represent the entry. Just a few of the pictures are professional photographs that are clearly targeted, for example, for use in the tourism sector (e.g. "Santa Claus Tradition in Finland"). The analyzed pictures consist of 153 photographs that represent people portrayed in different kinds of positions and sets. The other pictures of the NILH depict material things such as artifacts, landscapes and animals. Most of the pictures are contemporary (175), but some of them could be labeled as "historical" (42), as the oldest among them was taken in the 1860s.

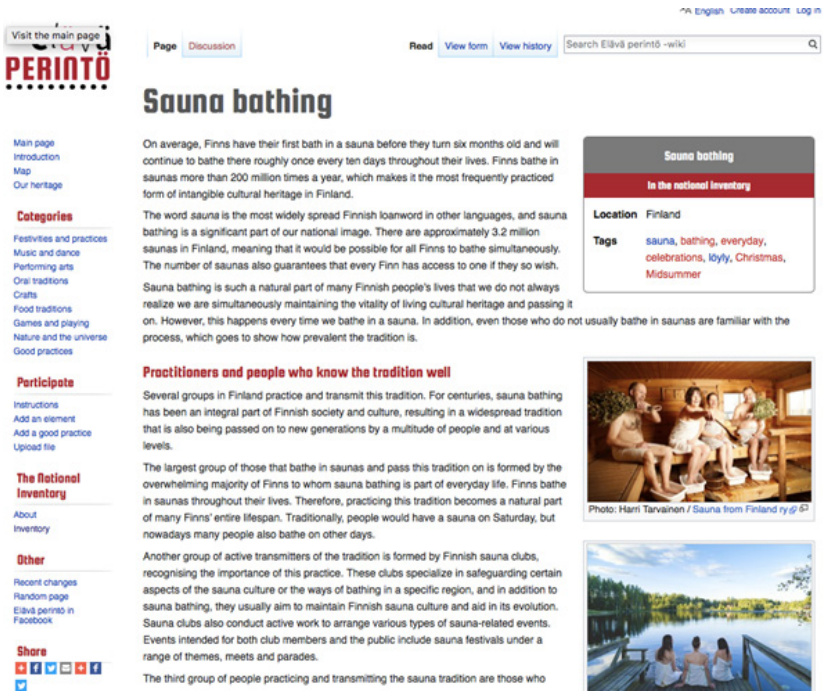

Figure 2.2: A screenshot of the NILH page "Sauna bathing." Opened on May 25, 2020. Published under CC BY 4.0.

Table 2.1: Content of the photographs in the NILH.

Theme	Number
People	153
Landscapes	12
Animals	4
Artifacts, etc.	44
Miscellaneous	4
Total	217

All 153 photographs were analyzed using *visual discourse analysis* (Rose 2012). Close attention was paid to exploring how the images construct accounts of the social world: how they—in Foucauldian words—produce and participate in power/knowledge production and constitute regimes of truth. Visual discourse analysis is mostly concerned with the sites of the images (texts) themselves, particularly in relation to their social modalities. Thus, following Gillian Rose, I placed all the pictures side by side and focused on: (1) identifying key themes

in the pictures; (2) examining the assumptions they make about what is "true" about Finnishness, whiteness and gender; (3) being open to different kinds of complexities and contradictions; (4) looking for the visible (what is present in the photograph) as well as the invisible (e.g. discursive significance) ; (5) being attentive to details (Rose 2012: 219–220; cf. Nash 2018: 595). Consequently, I ended up dividing the photographs into themes that are (1) gender and Finnishness, (2) nature and naturalness and (3) othernesses, even though some of the photographs included overlapping themes and categories. These themes are introduced profoundly in the next sections of this chapter.

Visual discourse analysis commonly produces knowledge that is very effective at interpreting images carefully, and particularly stresses the effects of social differences, which quadrates with the target of this chapter that is to analyze the visual-discursive production of cultural heritage following the realm of the critical heritage studies. The method is less constructive if the aim is to analyze the practices or institutions through which different kinds of discourses are produced, disseminated and lived (Rose 2012: 224–25). I have analyzed the role of the institutional heritage administration in the production of nationalist discourses elsewhere (Haapoja-Mäkelä 2020b).

As it was noted before, ethnicity, race, nationhood, gender and heritage are perspectives *on* the world, not intrinsic features of it (Brubaker 2009). Thus, it is problematic to analyze visual clues only and make claims, for example, about whiteness, or race in general, as a visual or conceptual fact (Nash 2018). Consequently, I have resorted to the literary texts of the NILH entries as a background material, even though I have not discussed them broadly in this chapter. I have read the texts and searched traces of racializations that are manifested, for example, in linguistic expressions such as divisions between "us" and "them" (e.g. Haapoja-Mäkelä 2020b). Furthermore, I (as a white, Finnish female scholar) have used my own embodied understanding through which I recognize objects and situations as ethnically meaningful (Brubaker 2009: 32). Thus, I follow the views of the feminist scholars who argue that "race is a part of the fabric of everyday life … if we think of the fabric of the racial order as woven in the dialogues between bodies and space, then white racialness is eminently photographable" (Knowles 2006: 517–18; see also Nash 2019: 594; Dyer 1997).

Men, Women and the Nation as a Family

The analyzed NILH photographs consist of photographs that portray men (67), women (46), children (17) and crowds (41). A majority of the photographs include overlapping categories. Only two of the pictures represent bodies that are somehow interpreted as "minorities." Of course, these kinds of categories are always vague and porous, and it is problematic to group people under these narrow notions. Nevertheless, the content of the photographs roughly follows

the normative categories of Finnishness: whiteness is overrepresented, and the photographs that somehow challenge this idea are rare. Moreover, the largest group of people portrayed in the NILH photos are men, which shows that the intangible cultural heritage inventorying is indeed a gendered practice which participates in the complex fabric of underlying power structures (see also Wilson 2018). In this section, I concentrate on bodily representations that interconnect the notions of gender, whiteness and Finnishness.

In the NILH, cultural heritage is commonly embodied in middle-aged or elderly bodies: the mature body represents traditional knowledge and Finnish heritage (see e.g. submissions "Kalakukko tradition"; "Winter seine fishing in Lake Puruvesi"; "Lace-making in Heinämaa village"). Additionally, both men and women are most often portrayed as representing activities such as working or exercising. The nature of work in the pictures is commonly understood as "traditional": occupations regarded as "modern" and urban are absent, and historical rural and/or peasant working-class occupations such as fishing, tar burning or glassblowing are emphasized. A total of 34 of the pictures represent these kinds of activities, and a majority of these include handicraft making. Some of the people in the pictures are seen as representing their "real-life" source of livelihood, but a great deal of the submissions discuss activities that are considered to be hobbies or vanishing old occupations. These "vanishing" lifestyles are often revived and maintained in small-scale businesses and demonstrations held by local organizations and activists (e.g. "Log driver competitions").

"Conscientiously done work" is a typical value that is mentioned in the discourses of national stereotypes and Finnishness (e.g. Helkama et al. 2012), and the NILH pictures do not challenge this view. Hard-working-ness is a virtue in the materials of this chapter, and the white male bodies seen in the pictures underline this feature almost overtly. In Figures 2.3 and 2.4, the masculine bodies perform toughness, muscularity, even recklessness as they carry out demanding tasks. The photograph in Figure 2.3 could be described as grotesque, as the man's hands are dirty, his hair hangs loose over his face, and the flowing brown tar gushes from the pipe.

The pictures seek to materialize the "old times," an imaginary but common temporal expression in Finnish, that refers, for example, to the rural pre- and postwar Finnish landscape imageries. In these visualizations, the theme of pastoral fields was popular, but it was also supplemented with hard-working, masculine men on the one hand and virtuous but beautiful women dressed in the Finnish folk costume on the other (Vallius 2014). The wooden log wall is a material trace of the Finnish past in the photograph in Figure 2.3, as a majority of the Finnish viewers recognize it as a material that was used in the rural Finnish tenant farms and outhouses. These kinds of material traces that indicate oldness, simplicity and "naturalness" are often used in the contemporary heritagization processes. Furthermore, Figure 2.3 reinforces the idea of Finnish heritage as something that is work-centered, simple, physically difficult and

Figure 2.3: The NILH: Tar burning in pits. Photo: Jussi Kalliokoski. Published under CC BY 4.0. Owing to ethical considerations, the subject's face has been obscured.

far from the Central-European heritage ideal of castles, ruins and upper-class monuments (on elite origins of European heritage, see Sargent 2016).

In the heritagization practices, the romantic claim of "folk" that represents the idealized lower class (e.g. Anttonen 2005) is present in the photographs that depict rural working-class occupations. In Figure 2.4, a man participates in a lumberjack competition. Log driving played an important role historically in Finnish modernization and forestry, but lumberjacking was considered as dangerous and uncomfortable labor (Pöysä 1997). In the heritagization processes, the dangerousness of the performed activity brings a sense of heroism in the narrative of Finnishness and Finnish work: the male body on the log is a hero who is able to tame the "wild nature" and flowing rapids. This combines the ideal masculinities of Finnish narratives: first, the category of industrious working-class man in the forestry business (Pöysä 1997); and second, the category of a classic warrior who is powerful but ready to die and sacrifice himself for the nation's sake. These have both been idealizations of a decent man (e.g. Jokinen 2019; Tepora 2011).

In the pictures, the male bodies not only represent *modern masculinity*, which could be defined in terms of power, honor, courage and self-control (Mosse 1996), but they are shaped by the desire of reaching *beyond* "modernity": to the imaginary time of traditions in which the main virtues of male body were strength and power. Similar observations have been made, for example, in relation to heavy metal culture in Finland: one of the ideal figures of

Figure 2.4: The NILH: Log-driver competitions. "King of log drivers." Photo: Ninaras 2016. Published under CC BY 4.0. Owing to ethical considerations, the subject's face has been obscured.

masculinity among heavy metal music listeners and players is the category of *äijä* ("tough guy," "dude" or, in older usage, "old man"), who is "hard like steel" and "traditional," and who is neither sentimental nor fashionable in the way they dress. The ideal and imaginary picture of *äijä* is understood as stemming from the old times when values were not "soft" (Sarelin 2012: 162–64.)

The desired and ideal toughness of *äijä* is present in the NILH pictures, and it is emphasized, in addition to the above-mentioned pictures of working men, for example, in the photographs of athletes. Five of the submissions discuss themes such as Finnish baseball playing, skiing and running (e.g. "Everyman's rights"; "Jukola Relay"). Sports have widely been acknowledged to be one of the central fields in which the constructs of "us" and "others" have been imagined, reinforced and negotiated at the national scale (e.g. Hobsbawm 1990). In Finland, athletes have been treated as national heroes for over a century, and one of the national myths is that Finland was "put on the world map" by the runners and other sportsmen in the first half of the 20th century. The sports victories were used in creating an image of Finns as a "strong, white nation that equaled the Germans and Anglo-Saxons in its racial qualities." Members of this kind of "Western white race" were mainly understood as sporting males, and in the masculine imagery of sports journalism, the notions of "race" and "nation" have been commonly intertwined (Tervo 2002: 351).

The national athlete-hero imagery is salient in the NILH and, for example, Finnish baseball (*pesäpallo*), which is considered to be "the Finnish national sport", is represented through the stereotypical images of masculinity: in Figure 2.5, the famous baseball player is pictured shouting aggressively when leading the

Figure 2.5: The NILH: Baseball in Finland. "Antti Piuhola from Nurmo Jymy in 2012." Photo: Mädsen. Published under CC BY-SA 3.0.

game. The image fits well with the history of Finnish baseball, as it was used pre- and postwar times in military training and for preparing school children for battle and warfare. Even the vocabulary of the game was created to improve on militaristic aims (Hyvärinen 2017). Figure 2.5 follows up the image of *äijä*, and the man in the photograph is connected to the hero character in Figure 2.4 through the promise of toughness, even though the idea of danger and sacrifice is not explicitly present in Figure 2.5—the militaristic discourse is only implicit in the picture. Yet, the interminglings of nationality, whiteness and sporting masculinity are regarded as important in the processes of heritagization. In Figure 2.5, the male body has the ability to refer to the national past through the act of playing Finnish baseball and, thus, the sporting bodies themselves become important heritagized objects.

However, subtler tones are allowed for the masculine performances as well in the heritagization processes. Figure 2.6 represents professional fiddle players from the village of Kaustinen, which is one of the most well-known areas of historical folk music styles in Finland. In 2019, the Kaustinen fiddle-playing submission of NILH was nominated by the Ministry of Education and Culture for inscription to the UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The players in Figure 2.6 are professional musicians

Figure 2.6: The NILH: Kaustinen fiddle playing. "Kaustinen Folk Music Festival 2015. The band JPP performing in Areena." Photo: Lauri Oino 2015. Published under CC BY 4.0. Owing to ethical considerations, the subjects' faces have been obscured.

who form the band JPP, which is the most well-known instrumental *pelimanni* ensemble of the Kaustinen area.[4]

The picture shows how the white, male bodies mirror one another in the rhythm of the music they are playing: all the fiddle players in the front are slightly bent down in the same direction and their feet stamp the ground. The musicologist Mats Johansson (2013), who has studied the gendered practices of Norwegian folk music, notes that the Norwegian folk music scene (especially fiddle playing) is historically and contemporarily dominated by men in social and musical meaning. The *pelimanni* field in the Kaustinen area is similar at least at the professional stage: despite some female performers, most of the players are men. Additionally, Johansson suggests that, in Norway, a fiddle player "should possess 'masculine' qualities in the sense of having technical proficiency and musical stamina required to convincingly project sound images of intensity and energy," as well as expressive, emotional, tender and personal qualities in his playing (Johansson 2013: 369–70). In Figure 2.6, the energetic and heroic toughness of *äijä* is present in the players' active and almost athletic playing positions, but the performers are also allowed—and anticipated—to express more emotional nuances, as their playing is also viewed through the demands and ideals of classical music's violin virtuoso genius. Thus, heritagization practices allow male bodies to leave or distance themselves from the role of the traditional and almost "primitive" *äijä*, but as in Figure 2.6, the claim of

Figure 2.7: The NILH: Baking the traditional Eura twists. "People baking at Euran pirtti." Photo: Jorma Pihlava / Photo archive of the Cultural Services at the Municipality of Eura. Published under CC BY 4.0. Owing to ethical considerations, the subjects' faces have been obscured.

pastness is then attached not only to their physical strength, but also to their bodies' ability to refer to the genre of folk music and all its subtle nuances.

Women, instead, are portrayed in the pictures in a more serene way. The spatial environments of men are more often public, outdoors or in nature; in contrast, the women's world seems to be "home" or home-like indoor environments, such as kitchens (see also Palmsköld and Rosenqvist 2018). In the NILH pictures, women knit, sew, make lace, bake or cook. The majority of the female bodies seen in the pictures are elderly, which underlines the temporal continuities between the present and the old times and, thus, fulfils one of the most important demands of heritagization. In Figure 2.7, the ladies baking the traditional pastries are portrayed wearing aprons in a cozy environment.

Their hard-working demeanor is more discreet, but their active hands produce large amounts of food which indicate mother-like care, collectivity and warm solidarity. Motherhood has been a central category in constructing the Finnish nation: even the modern image of a woman promoted by women's organizations at the beginning of the 20th century was based on the unbreakable bond between a mother and a child. The virginal figure of the Finnish Maid has also been depicted paradoxically as a mother in some cases: Finland itself has been occasionally seen as a mother who protects her citizens (Valenius 2004: 110–18). When interpreted in the context of the NILH and compared to

Figure 2.8: The NILH: The gymnastic tradition in Finland. "The year-long rehearsals culminate in outdoor large group performances on fields. Come rain or sunshine. Women's large group performance routine at Helsinki Festival Games in 1956." Photo: The Finnish Gymnastics Federation's archives.

the pictures of men, Figure 2.7 seems to reinforce the construct of a woman as the biological and ideological reproducer of the nation: the mother-like, baking older women indicate the Finnish "fore-mothers" whose task has been to repeatedly perform the duties of mothers and housewives in the private environment of home (e.g. Mayer 2000; Yuval-Davis 1997).

Interestingly, one particular photograph of the NILH challenges the role of women as mother-like housewives. Figure 2.8, which shows one of the "historical" black-and-white photographs included in the data, depicts women doing gymnastics in a muddy field in the 1950s. In this photograph, female bodies are represented as heroines of the hard conditions of the past: they are represented as having enduring strength and as being capable of exercising in all weather conditions. The photograph renews the canonical narratives of Finnish past as tough but admired manifestations of "pain, poverty and suffering," and the positions of the female bodies even underline this as they kneel down in mud and bow their heads in the heavy rain. Interestingly, pain and suffering have been the features of a man's life especially in the militarist-nationalist war hero discourses (Jokinen 2019), but as the war history is almost entirely absent apart from some cursory mentions in the intangible cultural heritage inventory, female bodies are also given the role of showing the past's burden.

Overall, the gender roles are represented in the NILH as "traditional." The NILH photographs tend to place the body in the metaphoric heterosexual "national family," that is, a male-headed household in which both sexes have a "natural" role to play (e.g. Nagel 1998: 254; Valenius 2004: 55–58). Children are quite rarely portrayed in the NILH photographs, but when they are, they

are often pictured with their parents (see e.g. "Santa Claus tradition in Finland"; "Making national costumes"; "Making a Korsnäs sweater"), which emphasizes the claim of "national family." Furthermore, the ideal of a white and Finnish nuclear family is a metaphor that naturalizes the claim of whiteness: if the heritage practitioners are seen as "collective mothers" and "heroic fathers," then the idea of whiteness is seen as a genetic fact that is inevitably inherited within the "national family."

Nature as Finnishness

The past is very commonly constructed in the NILH through connections to "nature," that is, it is understood as something non-urban, but rarely outright wilderness. The metaphoric understanding of Finnishness as something that is close or intertwined with nature is not a new idea. As Ari Aukusti Lehtinen notes, the distinction between "culture" and "nature" has been a historical necessity in Finland: "nature has become a symbol of the past, that is, life at natural risk, to be used as a negation to those much-welcomed processes of modernization and civilization. Nature, as the primitive past, was to be left behind" (Lehtinen 2008: 475). This idea stems from the romantic period, but it was negotiated and contested by the critics of modern lifestyle, for example, in Finnish literature from the beginning of the 20th century as well. For instance, the "primitivist" authors such as Joel Lehtonen and Juhani Aho admired and described the sublime experiences of nature in which the controlled colonial gaze was substituted with descriptions of ecstatic bliss and the harsh, "vulgar" and frightening sides of nature that threatened and penetrated civilization (Rossi 2020: 148).

Both sides are essential in the NILH pictures: nature represents, at the same time, the primitive past and the tamed wilderness that is left behind, and thus brings forth the narrative template of national memory in which the toughness of the past is tamed and changed into the form of modern welfare Finland, but it is also something admired, uncanny, almost frightening and powerful. Nature is commonly recognized as a realm apart from the everyday, and the heritagization practices have been a part of the processes of separating nature from "culture" (Lowenthal 2006). This essential division between modernity and nature is present in the NILH pictures, but they are intertwined in a double-timed way: nature represents the past, and the past must be inherent in the contemporary heritagization practices. Thus, the past penetrates modernity through it. Consequently, the NILH photographs include very few urban environments (only 14 units can be recognized as urban), and most of them are located in rural-like, forested surroundings that are simultaneously everywhere and nowhere in Finland: the forested landscape in the pictures is almost like a "non-place" or a stereotypical background that represents the Finnish national spatiality and its past, and, for example, regional features are subsidiary.

Figure 2.9: The NILH: Picking mushrooms. "A mushroom-picking trip in an old forest is a magnificent experience." Photo: Lissu Rossi. Published under CC BY 4.0. Owing to ethical considerations, the subject's face has been obscured.

The landscapes seen in the pictures are semi-peripheries, picturesque rural environments reminiscent of the landscapes described by the famous Finnish author Zacharias Topelius in the mid-19th century or the forested imagery of National Romanticism (e.g. Figure 2.1; see Häyrynen 2008).

In the NILH, nature is a place into which people go and practice "heritagized activities" such as orienteering, foraging wild greens and mushroom picking (see Figures 2.9 and 2.10). The activities and the repeated movements bodies make in the practices connect people with the past: hence, as "nature" is understood as representing the Finnish pastness, activities in nature are regarded as even more traditional and, thus, worth heritagization. In the NILH photographs, bodies enter the "primitive" past as they go to nature. The forest landscape, which once was a symbol of backwardness and periphery, is now a landscape of national heritage in which modern Finns are able to be in contact with the past. In Figures 2.9 and 2.10, the forest landscapes, the act of picking mushrooms or wild greens, and the traditional, old-fashioned baskets made of splints create a backdrop of deep time spans that utilizes the stereotypical

Figure 2.10: The NILH: Horta hunting, foraging for wild greens and herbs. "Horta hunting, i.e. foraging for wild greens, is an ancient, empowering hobby practiced in nature, that can result in bringing home a basketful of superfoods, free of charge." Photo: Jouko Kivimetsä. Published under CC BY 4.0. Owing to ethical considerations, the subject's face has been obscured.

symbols of Finnishness such as the naturalized connections between humans and forest landscape and artifacts made of wood. This is also brought forth in the imagery created for tourism: Figure 2.11 utilizes "natural" elements such as a campfire, the snowy ground, a cup carved from wood, woolen clothes and the wooden wall to create a sense of "authentic" pastness, even though the character of Santa Claus brings a twist of fantasy to these discourses.

However, "nature" is not represented only through explicit references to forested or rural landscapes in the NILH photographs, but it is also brought forth through "naturalness" in general. Ideas of "unspoilt" or "pre-modern" nature are significant in creating the connections between the present and the past—also in bodily representations. One of the examples of this is the "Sauna bathing" entry that introduces the idea of Finnish corporeality as naked but non-sexual, something that is regarded as "natural" (see Figure 2.1). Figure 2.12 is a prominent example of this: the photograph, published by Sauna from Finland, which is a commercial network that promotes sauna business companies, introduces a group of happily smiling people in a wooden sauna interior.

Figure 2.11: The NILH: Santa Claus tradition in Finland. "Santa Claus and an elf enjoying a cup of coffee by a lean-to in December 2015." Photo: Kimmo Syväri / Visit Finland image archives. Published under CC BY 4.0.

The traditional sauna equipment (birch whisk, pail of water, scoop for throwing water on the sauna stove) function as semiotic symbols of Finnishness, but their "pre-modernity" and "primitivity" also mark deep time spans and connections to the forest landscape as they are made of wood and young branches of birch (see also Kalaoja 2016: 150).

The bodies in the middle represent the ideal of non-sexual nudity that is often associated with the Finnish sauna culture, but the non-sexuality is still brought forth in a rather modest (and, simultaneously, in a sexually loaded) way, as the bodies are covered with towels. Sauna pictures have been part of Finnish tourism imagery since the 1930s, but at the beginning of the 20th century, they were regarded as obscene. Today, the sauna pictures represent Finnish or Northern exoticism in the imageries of country branding. However, the tourism sector tries to avoid *overtly* "primitive" or sexually loaded impressions in sauna bathing pictures, which has led to an emphasis on amenity, enjoyment and collectivity (Kalaoja 2016: 150–51). Consequently, Figure 2.12 balances the fear of being "too primitive" and the ideal of non-sexual corporeality.

"Naturalness" is very easily associated with the naturalized category of whiteness. Figure 2.1 at the beginning of this chapter can be interpreted as an interface in which the ideals of Finnish naturalness, landscape and the gendered white body meet. The young women sitting on the small wooden dock refer to the image of the "pure" and "virginal" Finnish Maid who was quite often depicted naked or revealingly clad (Valenius 2004). The Finnish Maid's hair

Figure 2.12: The NILH: Sauna bathing. Photo: Harri Tarvainen / Sauna from Finland. Published under CC BY 4.0. Owing to ethical considerations, the subjects' faces have been obscured.

is mostly described as blond, but the brown-haired women are "close enough" to represent Finnishness, and the color of the blue lake hints that their eyes might be blue as well. As the photograph is published in the "Sauna bathing" submission, the women are positioned as though they have just left the steamy sauna for cooling off on the small dock. This indicates that they are cleaned up, which connotes purity. The women seem to become one with the landscape, and the landscape becomes one with them, as the pure and virginal lake landscape (which, simultaneously, is the national rural-like "non-place") surrounds them and even touches them as their feet soak in the water. The canonical Finnish lake-and-forest landscape has been identified with femininity and, thus, eroticized in the processes of viewing, recognizing and describing its beauty (Valenius 2004: 104).

On the Borders of Finnishness

The NILH photographs show a very homogeneous image of Finnishness: people are beavering away on different kinds of tasks, the sun is shining and beautiful nature surrounds all. In the NILH, cultural heritage is often seen as something happy, joyous and worth celebrating—only the "Visiting cemeteries on Christmas Eve" entry might be interpreted as representing darker shades of life. The idea of so-called *dark heritage* (e.g. Thomas et al. 2019) is absent in the

NILH; for example, the mnemonic practices of remembering the Finnish Civil War (1918) or Second World War are not emphasized. This is rather surprising in the context of Finland, as the narratives of war are often considered as one of the most important ways of narrating Finnishness and the Finnish past (see e.g. Torsti 2012). In the NILH, the narratives of war are replaced with narratives and symbols of 'nature' and 'collectivity', and the 'everyday', which, of course, serve well, for example, the tourism sector, which is one of the benefiting areas of heritage inventorying. Are there, then, any cracks in the façade?

By reading closely the photographs, some underlying counter-narratives can be recognized. The aforementioned Figure 2.8 from the 1950s with muddy gymnastic fields opens slightly a small window to the idea that the past might also be difficult and problematic. The Finnishness of the picture stems from the postwar period during which the great narrative of the Finnish welfare state was only beginning to take shape; modern technologies and overflowing abundance are absent, and the slim figures of the women in the heavy rain indicate a simpler life. The old photograph in the context of the NILH functions, to quote Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer (2011: 245), "as supplement, both confirming and unsettling the stories that are explored and transmitted." In the case of Figure 2.8, the transmitted story is made clear when the photograph is compared to the other pictures published in "The gymnastic tradition in Finland" entry: large, green sports fields and glittery and colorful clothes of modern gymnasts underline the simplicity of Figure 2.8 and conditions that are close to indigent. Finnishness as a linear, developing narrative is made rather clear in this context, but, as noted before, the simplicity of the past lifestyle is simultaneously admired in the heritagization processes: the past's poverty and "naturalness" are happily celebrated and solemnized from the distance of the present.

Similar observations can be made, for example, in the case of Figure 2.13, taken from the submission "Finnish skittles." The photograph was taken by the journalist I. K. Inha, who was later named "national photographer of Finland." The photograph also belongs to the NILH category that depicts sports and leisure time activities. When compared to the contemporary photographs of sportsmen in the NILH, the men in Figure 2.13 are not presented in a traditional Western sports hero manner—on the contrary, their postures, clothes and facial hair could be described as peculiar when compared to later imagery. The photograph emphasizes—in a similar way to Figure 2.8—the desired but uncanny imagined otherness of the Finnish past: the simple clothes and equipment, the forest environment and the markedly high-spirited posture of the man raising his hand all tell a story of a humble and poor, but still resilient and capable, nation.

However, the photograph also broadens the geographical, linguistic and ethnic limits of normative Finnishness, as the picture is taken in the Karelian-speaking[5] area of Aunus Karelia (currently located in Russia) in the 19th century. The extension of Finnishness to the areas of "related people" (fin *sukukansat*) in the East stems from Finnish national romanticism (e.g. Anttonen 2005), but

Figure 2.13: The NILH: Finnish skittles. *"Kyykkämaalta."* Photo: I. K. Inha 1894, Luvajärvi, Kiimaisjärvi, Aunus. Photo: Finnish Heritage Agency, Finno-ugric picture collection. Published under CC BY 4.0.

it is still relatively commonly referred to in different kinds of institutional heritagization contexts, such as museum exhibitions or folk music performances (e.g. Haapoja-Mäkelä 2020a). The photograph in question underlines the temporal and spatial connections to the Karelian area and, thus, indicates an affirmation to old-ness, traditionality, Eastern-ness and Finno-Ugrian-ness. The 21st century's normative Finnishness is thus widened in the picture toward the values and views of 19th-century politics, which is not surprising, as the heritagization processes tend to stretch the ideals of the national romantic period in Finland (Haapoja-Mäkelä 2020b).

Figure 2.14, instead, comes closer to the contemporary society. The Roma singer Hilja Grönfors's picture is one of the few photographs which represents "minorities" in the material. For example, the Indigenous Sámi people are not included in the NILH, even though the WLH contains Sámi-related submissions (see Haapoja-Mäkelä 2020b). The largest minorities in Finland (Russians and Estonians) are mainly categorized in the linguistic/cultural vein and, thus, they are "invisible" in terms of visual markers. The Roma otherness, instead, is rather "hypervisual" despite their Finnish-speakingness and more than 500-year-long history in Finland: in the picture, Grönfors stands at the front dressed in her traditional Roma costume, which is a beautifully decorated but strongly stigmatized garment in Finnish society. Alongside other stereotypic

Figure 2.14: The NILH: Singing tradition of Finnish Roma people. "Hilja Grönfors Trio." Photo: Sauli Heikkilä / Pieni Huone.

images, the dress is a symbol that indicates the othered role of the Roma people in Finland. The dress symbolizes the stereotyped features such as "free sexuality" and "criminality" that have been associated with Roma people historically—and in contemporary society. The Roma people have been erased from the idea of nationhood, as they have not fitted into the ideal of a Finnish folk (e.g. Stark 2018). Thus, Figure 2.14 provides a counter-narrative to other pictures analyzed in this chapter, as it challenges the stereotypical narrative of Finnish white heritage.

The Roma dress and the presence of the singer Grönfors in the photograph, as well as the whole "Singing tradition of Finnish Roma people" entry, are excellent examples of how the intangible cultural heritage administration practices openly and genuinely endeavor to be inclusive, multicultural and liberal *per se*. The NILH's aim is to be as inclusive as possible, but, as the national-scale interpretation shapes the framework of inventorying in a rather banal way, the vernacular community level responses are produced, negotiated and shaped in relation to nationalist discourses. This results in stereotypical—that is, white, middle-class and normative—representations of "Finnish culture" (Haapoja-Mäkelä 2020b).

What kinds of stories does Figure 2.14 tell, then, against this background? Placed side by side with the other NILH pictures, it gives space for a non-normative embodiment of Finnish heritage. It is indeed a brave act to set Grönfors's dress, black hair and singing in alignment with what is portrayed, for example, in Figure 2.1, particularly if the stigmatized role of the Roma people in the Finnish society is kept in mind. Additionally, she is depicted in a similar kind of

"non-place" described above; the landscape in the background spatializes her in the imaginary national space in which the forested environment plays a significant role, connecting the picture to the great narrative of Finnishness.

However, the picture might be interpreted only as a curiosity, or as a reproduction of the images of a romanticized and nostalgized "gypsy woman." As Thomas Beardslee notes, the risks of the UNESCO intangible cultural heritage application are built into the very concept itself: gross power imbalances, problematic accreditation and access to authority necessary in order to shape the heritage discourse about a given practice, the "un-naming" or anonymization of heritage practitioners and their depiction only as "bearers" or "passers-on" of traditions, as well as the possible negative consequences for the "bearers" in terms of freedom and agency, are all risks that the heritagization processes may (re)produce (Beardslee 2016: 99). Interestingly, the above-mentioned un-naming happens in the NILH context mostly in relation to the entries that represent "canonical" Finnishness (see e.g. Figure 2.1), while Hilja Grönfors is introduced by name. However, she is depicted as a bearer of the Roma traditions, someone who has the knowledge and understanding of the past's heritage. The question of whether her picture, name and singing are emphasized in the NILH because of the performance of inclusivity is not easily answered.

Concluding Remarks

The NILH photographs offer interesting insights into the ways in which Finnishness is embodied in heritagization practices in 21st-century Finland. The pictures perform the Finnish "we-group" to others: they invite the outsider gaze to appraise Finnishness and Finnish heritage and compare it to the other cultures in the realm of modern heritage practices. This is by no means new in the context of visual heritage production: on the contrary, coffee table books, tourist brochures, museum exhibitions and so on have participated in similar processes for decades in Finland (see e.g. Jokela 2010). What is striking in the materials examined in this chapter is the similarity between the older imageries and the contemporary images of the NILH: since the 19th century, the national imageries have contained forested landscapes, blue-eyed girls, sportsmen and active workers (e.g. Häyrynen 2005; Koponen et al. 2018), similar to the images analyzed in this chapter. The longevity of these kinds of visual representations of nationality may, according to Maunu Häyrynen (2020: 54), stem from the experience of familiarity that affectively interlaces the everyday and the national ideology in certain places, spaces and environments. This idea fits in well with the observations of heritage scholars: performances of cultural heritage often reinforce the already acknowledged ways of producing identities that concern gender, class, race and/or nation (e.g. Smith 2015). Thus, following these thoughts, I argue that the bodies in the NILH pictures meet the expectations of what Finnish cultural heritage looks like and, hence, produce an affective experience of familiarity for the viewer of the photo-

graphs, especially for the one who views them from the insider perspective of "white sanctuary."

The claim of whiteness is a significant part of this affective familiarity of Finnishness. It is present in the photographs in an all-encompassing manner: the NILH photographs belong to the virtual white sanctuary of the intangible cultural heritage inventorying, in which whiteness is taken for granted and regarded as a privileged norm. Whiteness is silent and banal in a way that no attention is paid to it, despite some obvious curiosities in which the alleged inclusivity of the inventorying practices is wished to be brought forth. Whiteness is also seen as "natural," as the pictures underline the naturalized connections between the landscape, ethnicity and sexuality. Furthermore, as people are regarded as being a part of a "national family," whiteness seems to be an inherited "genetic" feature of Finnishness.

The embodied heritage performances balance between the images of Finnishness "now" and "then" and strategically deploy and reconnect historical images and the contemporary. These performances seek to embody the romantic "Finnish folk" through strengthening, for instance, the stereotypical images of "Finnish man" and "Finnish woman." Finnish heritage is embodied in the photographs in active, working, mature bodies that perform either heroic and masculine or collective and caring feminine tasks, which underlines the idea of national family, but also "traditionality." The media researchers Mikko Lehtonen and Anu Koivunen (2010) suggest that in the Finnish public speech the category of "folk" (*kansa*) commonly represents today's Finnish middle class. They state:

> The new, ideal "we" consists of people who see themselves as broad-minded, law-abiding, and diligent citizens who, at the same time, are active and responsible consumers. Those who belong to the "we" are faithful to traditional Finnish virtues but they are simultaneously able to think about the future, be innovative, business-oriented, and international. (Lehtonen and Koivunen 2010: 234)

The NILH photographs visualize and reproduce this ideal group, but the context of heritagization requires emphasis on "traditional Finnish virtues," which explains the emergence of, for example, rural peasant tasks or representations of having an intrinsic connection to "nature." Overall, the ideal Finnish "we-group" in the NILH photographs is represented as maintaining and sharing a very homogeneous corporeality, physical space and mental state of mind.

Notes

[1] The Finnish Heritage Agency leans on the values promoted by the UNESCO 2003 Convention, such as mutual respect, transparent collaboration and cultural diversity (UNESCO 2020).

[2] See the website of the National Inventory of Living Heritage at https://wiki.aineetonkulttuuriperinto.fi/wiki/Elävän_perinnön_kansallinen_luettelo/valitut/en.

[3] Email interview with a former university intern at the Finnish Heritage Agency (University Intern 2020).

[4] Kaustinen fiddle-playing is based on the *pelimanni* tradition (Swedish *spelman*, literally "play-man"), instrumental dance music genre that has been prominent in the area since the 17th century. Nowadays, the field is heavily influenced by the folk music revival that emerged in the 1960s, and it is part of the so-called contemporary folk music scene that is largely institutionalized and professionalized (e.g. Hill 2014).

[5] Karelian is a Finnic language spoken mainly in the Republic of Karelia in Russia.

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CHAPTER 3

The North Engendered

Mythologized Histories, Gender and the Finnish Perspective on the Imagined Viking-Nordic Ideal

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Abstract

Narratives derived from historical and archaeological knowledge form a core part of the creation of national identities. This chapter offers reflections and observations on the results of a survey-based pilot study into the construction of the Nordic woman in relation to an imagined and mythologized Viking past. In conducting the study, we addressed this topic from the perspective of the Nordic countries more broadly, while here we will focus on the answers of those respondents self-reporting as Finnish.

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We suggest that the image of "the Viking woman" as a symbol of a tradition of gender equality is of high importance to how national identities are formed in the Nordic countries. She represents an idea of the romantic North, and an idealized, explicitly or implicitly, white identity. How the "Viking woman" is envisioned by Nordic societies relates to femonationalist political narratives, and race and racialization in the present day. In the Finnish context, this is further entangled within the tension between Finnishness and the ubiquitous use of a historically derived Scandinavian symbol as pan-Nordic. Taking the respondents' perspectives as a starting point, we explore the intersection between mythologized history and symbolism, womanhood, and Finnish ethnic identity.

Keywords: Nordic identities, Finnishness, vikings, feminism, whiteness

Introduction

The premise of this chapter was formed in light of a pilot survey study that aimed to disentangle how non-specialist cultural stakeholders perceive the connection between the "Viking" and Nordic female identities. As an archaeologist and a sociologist, we hit upon this topic during a casual discussion about the social construction of the past, and its redeployment in political contexts. While much has already been written about the use of the past in political discourses, particularly within populism (see e.g. Bjørgo and Mareš 2019; Díaz-Andreu and Champion 1996a; Trigger 1995), what we felt was missing was—ironically—the *popular voice*. In short, we wanted to ask primarily self-identifying Nordic individuals how they perceive and construct popularly perceived "Viking" and Nordic female identities, if or how they connect them, and by extension what could be inferred about their perceptions of an idealized Nordic state.

Women are of interest as they are expected to pass down culture to the next generation, and especially nationalist movements tend to support traditional gender norms (Farris 2017). However, in the Nordic countries in particular, gender equality has been promoted as something inherent to Nordic culture (Askola 2019; Mulinari and Neergaard 2014; Tuori 2007). Women serve a normative function in the construction of group identities, in effect acting as both symbol and cultural custodian. Women are tasked with passing on culture through producing and educating the next generation; simultaneously, they are seen as an embodiment of culture in how they present and perform (Farris 2017). The idealized everywoman has found an uncomfortable role within Western pseudo-feminist ethnopolitical discourses, where women's rights and bodily autonomy have been used as evocative rhetorical devices in opposition to the perceived threat of the Other, by parties whose own social and cultural stances are arguably harmful to women's liberation (Mulinari and Neergaard

2014). The perception and construction of women, femininity and womanhood, current and historical, offers an interesting possibility to disentangle intersectional aspects of cultural identity that may otherwise remain inaccessible.

The concept of the "Viking" has likewise served a normative function in the creation of group identities. It refers not only to a historical society or time period: rather, beyond its obvious association with early-20th-century fascism, it is also an important part of Nordic branding, as well as an idiosyncratic "Nordic" brand of whiteness (see e.g. Kroløkke 2009). The historical and symbolic importance of "Viking" imagery to white supremacist movements (Kølvraa 2019), and the resurgence of the image of the Viking warrior woman as a feminist icon (Williams 2017; see also Jesch 2017; Price et al. 2019) standing in contrast to the oppressed Other woman, intersect with the construction of Nordic identity as both white and feminist.

Despite common knowledge dictating "there were no Vikings in Finland," Finland does have a discrete archaeological "Viking Age" as a result of historic links with Scandinavian scholarship (Laakso 2014; see also Aalto 2014). Vikings have played a part in the development of Finnish identity, as an oppositional symbol, through pan-Nordic branding, and in their constructed historic connection to the Swedish-speaking community. Forming part of the language dispute between Finnish- and Swedish-speaking Finns, the ethnic and nation-building implications of Scandinavian-centric Viking symbolism strikes at much deeper questions of Finnish identity. Sami Raninen and Anna Wessman note that "Viking imagery has been used to both associate the Finns with the speakers of Scandinavian languages and to dissociate the language groups in Finland from each other" (2014: 328). Questions about ancestry, cultural and racial superiority, and rights to the land based on who came first were fundamental issues raised as part of the language dispute and played out within 19th- and early-20th-century historical research (Fewster 2011: 42). Association with a glorious Viking heritage and associated figurative symbolism became important to the Swedish-speaking "Svekomans" of the turn of the 20th century (Aalto 2014: 145). This heritage was in stark contrast to a distinct Finnish nation envisioned by journalist and intellectual Zacharias Topelius as existing before—and ultimately repressed by—the Swedish conquest of Finland (Fewster 2011: 42).

Reflecting on the feedback we received from respondents and others when conducting the survey, we were struck by how Finnish individuals reacted strongly to being approached about a topic concerning Vikings. Several individuals placed themselves in opposition to Vikings, identifying them as part of Scandinavian heritage irrelevant to Finnish identity. Others questioned whether Finnishness should even be considered as part of Nordicness, which they rather associated with Scandinavian, and especially Swedish, cultural heritage.

This chapter explores how the Finnish respondents in our pilot study defined their Nordic identity in relation to their perceptions of Viking-Nordic history, and their selective participation in, and adoption of, historicized mythologies

and symbols. The unique relationship of the Finnish respondents to the Nordic identity, and its construction in relation to an ostensibly Scandinavian-centric past, along with the utility of the female gender as a discursive battleground for both ethnic relations and sexual politics, makes their perspectives extremely valuable.

We begin by considering how narratives about the present are created in reference to the past through archaeology, and how the past is itself socially constructed. The understanding of the social construction of identity through history recurs throughout the chapter. Next, we explain how the research survey that this chapter is based on was constructed. We then approach the major themes raised in the responses of individuals identifying as Finnish, which we present in conversation with previous research and theory. The major themes raised are Finnishness in relation and opposition to Nordicness, the Nordic brand, and how specifically women's role is constructed within the Nordic identity and in opposition to a perceived Other. Throughout, we discuss the underlying assumption of whiteness. Finally, we reflect on the survey, and on the intersection of the themes raised by the Finnish respondents in constructing Finnish identity through women in explicitly or implicitly racialized terms.[1]

Constructing the Present through the Past

National histories anchor the nation as a "people" within a geographic polity. The consolidation and codification of national histories in Europe during the late 18th and 19th centuries, often in tandem with the production of national epics, drove the development of archaeology as an academic discipline. The production of historical knowledge became a political and patriotic exercise, institutionalized and sponsored by nation-states seeking to legitimize themselves territorially and temporally (Díaz-Andreu and Champion 1996b: 3). The essential qualities of nations produced ethnic-cultural archetypes and emphasized differences between groups; these, Margarita Díaz-Andreu and Timothy Champion argue, could be expressed with varying emphasis on "cultural, linguistic, ethnic or racial" differences (Díaz-Andreu and Champion 1996b: 4). Culture historical archaeology became an active part of the creation of ethnic-cultural archetypes, focusing on the creation of knowledge about "specific peoples" (Trigger 1995: 269).

Archaeology has remained political to date, and developed, as other social sciences, in tandem with changing social and political concerns more broadly. From the 1980s, post-processual archaeologies emphasized the need for humanizing the discipline by bringing focus back to the lived experience of the individual. The study of ancient genomics and increasing public interest in personal genetic history have risen in prominence over the past two decades, and it is difficult not to see this in parallel with increasing global political trends toward nationalism (see Hakenbeck 2019). Commercial services offering

genetic analyses of ancestry have exploited this interest, often relying on essentialist tropes about historical peoples to explain the results to their customers. Some companies have faced extensive criticism for claiming to tell their customers how "Viking" or "Roman" they are or, as Susanne Hakenbeck puts it, "to examine their own whiteness genetically" (2019: 520–521; Thomas 2013). In doing so, these companies have enabled the consumer-public to shorten the distance between the historical past and the present. This has allowed consumers to effectively *embody* the past.

In being instrumental in the creation of national histories, the place of archaeology and history, has likewise always been one of public service. Reliance on public funding, resulting in increasing answerability to public and political stakeholders, has raised questions about the archaeologist's socially ethical responsibilities in directly engaging in political debate (see e.g. Gustafsson and Karlsson 2011 on the implications of *Sverigedemokraterna*'s (SD) heritage policy). Increasingly, historians and archaeologists have participated in these debates in public forums. Concurrently, while museums, archives, public monuments and state education remain within the purview of the historical specialist, increasing access to information online has democratized the creation and reproduction of historical knowledge.

Because it is socially constructed, historical knowledge is constantly being shaped by the social, cultural, and political concerns of the time of its production. Likewise, it generates a complex figurative language that is necessary for its reproduction at different levels of expertise; this allows for the development of a symbolic shorthand which can reduce the level of nuance being communicated. The "Viking" envisioned by a historian, for example, most likely looks very different from one created by a game designer (a point recently illustrated by artist Patrick Robinson's series of "historically corrected" promotional posters for Ubisoft's *Assassin's Creed: Valhalla*). Yet, through a series of collectively understood cultural references and visual cues, something recognizable as "Viking" is generated in both cases. Ann-Sofie Nielsen Gremaud discusses the internalization of these symbols in the case of collective identity construction in Iceland as a type of "semantic memory" (Nielsen Gremaud 2010: 90). It is possible to extend this to a broader popular imagination of the collectively—through formal and informal education, media, and so on—absorbed and (re-) produced "Viking." In the above example, neither conception is objectively better than the other: the historian's aims are very different from those of the game designer: the two hope to achieve very different things. The issues arise in the slippage between images and ideas woven in different contexts.

Vikings and Viking symbolism have undergone a long process of development of their representation in pop-culture, historical narrative building, and political discourse. The most obvious political deployment of Viking symbolism has been by historical and active white nationalist fascists in Europe, as well as North America. The explicit connection between "Vikings" and whiteness is continually re-established within online discourses (Kølvraa 2019: 277–79;

Žiačková 2019). On the other hand, "Viking" symbolism has been reclaimed by anti-fascist groups such as the Swedish *Vikingar Mot Rasism* ("Vikings Against Racism") (cf. Kølvraa 2019: 279), and in the creation of subversive narratives about Nordic ethnicity in popular media and current historical research (e.g. Bailey and Mohombi 2010; Worley 2017).

As the largest of the modern Nordic nations, Sweden has become exemplary of Nordicness, in defining essential Nordic traits as well as the Nordic brand more generally (Harvard and Stadius 2013a: 3). Many of the conceptualizations about the Nordic Viking Age that find parallels in present-day constructions of Nordicness can be traced to the Romanticism of 19th-century Scandinavia, in particular Sweden (Arwill-Nordbladh 1991: 56; Cederlund 2011: 21). The two key ideological notions that would form a part of this were already present from the 17th and 18th centuries: the association of a series of primarily physiological (and so racial) virtues with the "northern races" and the romanticization of expansionism, exploration and adventurousness as heroic ideals (Arwill-Nordbladh 1991: 54).

Montesquieu characterizes people from northern climates in *De l'esprit des lois* (first published in 1748) as physically stronger, more courageous and even more frank (1989: 232). These attributes became part of the Nordic archetype, and found expression both within the construction of the image of the contemporary peasantry, as well as that of the developing Nordic hero, the "Viking" (Arwill-Nordbladh 1991: 54). Similar ideas would continue to be echoed in European race theory and arguably find parallels in present-day Nordic branding. Adventure and exploration derived from Gothicism, internalized as innate to the Nordic spirit, were also exalted by Scandinavian national romantic writers (Arwill-Nordbladh 1991: 54). These qualities would become part of the pervasive visual and literary stereotype of the "Viking" and would be expanded to the image Nordicness generally.

Here it is useful to turn to a direct observation made by Carl Olof Cederlund, who provides perhaps the best and most holistic dissection of the "Viking" as an idea: that there is "an undercurrent which connects different parts of the symbolic use of the Viking—for example the idealistic, the romantic, the one used by artists, the commercial, and I do not hesitate to say partly also the archaeological—with the one expressed by fascism" (Cederlund 2011: 17).

In recent decades, through popular cultural media such as television, video games and music, the image of a Viking has become a cultural shorthand for, on the one hand, the same hypermasculinity (if reimagined with the concerns of the modern man) and on the other, a perceived gender equality, primarily constructed through a rejection of Abrahamic monotheism. The latter has transformed from the historical struggle against Christian conversion to the perception of Islamic encroachment on Europe (Andreassen 2014: 443; Žiačková 2019). By highlighting the traditionally masculine qualities of the Viking woman, such as her perceived strength and independence, her female descendent becomes a historic heir to gender equality placed in opposition to

the oppressed Other. Unsurprisingly, the concurrent emphasis on her attractive physical attributes, her whiteness, and her traditionally feminine roles within the domestic sphere make her palatable to more socially conservative views.

The cultural democratization of the "Viking" has allowed for its adoption within identities outside of the Nordic countries. Guðrún Dröfn Whitehead has discussed the transformations and redefinitions that the image of the Viking has gone through, noting its singular ability to be easily modernized and translated cross-culturally (Whitehead 2014: 38–50). "Vikingness" has expanded beyond its Scandinavian–Nordic national boundaries: it has become a performative meta-identity (Žiačková 2019) allowing participation from a diversity of people and multivariate interest groups, such as musicians and fans of particular genres of music, historical reenactors, or Live Action Roleplaying (LARP) groups, as well as neo-fascist white nationalists.

It is important to remember that while participation in one of these interest groups does not preclude involvement with another, neither does it necessarily mean that participants in any of the former groups participate in white nationalism. Some groups have actively participated in anti-racist actions and speech (see e.g. Cerbone 2019: 245). What must be acknowledged, however, is that participation in "Vikingness" through these types of activities often centers around the performance of white European and North American identities.

Methodology

Following closely the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity (TENK) guidelines for research with human participants, we conducted an anonymous online survey between July 5 and 14, 2019. Respondents were sourced through various forums, Nordic and historical interest social media groups, and through our personal social networks, whom we encouraged to share the survey. Participation was entirely voluntary, and no questions were mandatory.

Respondents were asked for consent to the use of their data prior to commencing the survey: in the interest of accessibility, information about the purposes of the survey and how their responses would be used given in three languages (Swedish, Finnish, and English). Anonymity was ensured by the limitation of identifying personal data, with the only demographic data requested being gender and "country" (see below) as it was in line with the research aims of the study. Digital identifying information, such as IP addresses, was not recorded as metadata.

We were primarily looking for respondents who self-identified as belonging to one of the Nordic countries. Respondents were asked to state which country they identified as belonging to, rather than for a specific ethnicity or nationality. A total of 89 respondents from approximately nine countries participated in the survey. Finnish respondents being the most represented group at 39 (43.8 percent); 30 respondents (33.7 percent) were from other Nordic

countries; and the remainder were from elsewhere in Europe and North America (19=21.35 percent) or did not give their location (1=1.12 percent). Of the Finnish respondents, 15 were men (38.5 percent), 21 were women (53.8 percent) and three were "other" (7.7 percent).[2] Responses to the survey were received in Finnish, one of the Scandinavian languages or English. For the purposes of this chapter, we will only quote from the responses of the Finnish participants. The quotes are identified with an anonymous respondent number. All free text responses have been translated to English by Saga Rosenström.

The survey consisted of multiple-choice and free-text questions. Respondents were asked to explain how Viking and contemporary Nordic women are stereotypically depicted, what their role is or was in different contexts, how they relate to one another, and how they relate to other women. Additionally, we asked how important the Viking woman is to today's Nordic identity. The respondents also stated their level of interest in history. The results of the multiple-choice questions were statistically analyzed, and the written answers were analyzed and coded using the qualitative data analysis software ATLAS.ti. The coding process was primarily inductive, but also heavily influenced by our interests and background research.

The overrepresentation of Finnish participants can partly be explained by the data collection method: in addition to approaching participants through social media groups and forums, we used our own network in Finland. This might likewise go toward explaining why many of the Finnish respondents wrote in Swedish, as a large part of that network belongs to the Swedish-speaking minority.

Engendering the Viking-Nordic in Finland

To consider first some general observations from the overall survey results, only 35.3 percent of Nordic respondents identified the image of the Viking woman as "Very important" or "Important" to the Nordic identity today, compared to 63.2 percent of non-Nordic respondents. The figure was only slightly lower for the Finnish respondents than their Nordic neighbors, at 30.8 percent. A likely explanation for this is the success of Viking-centered branding outside of the Nordic countries (Dale 2020: 215).

Finnishness and Nordicness

Capturing what defines the "Nordic"—or indeed "Finnish"—in a reasonably pithy way is surprisingly difficult. Its expression at a national or supranational level tends to center around equality, sustainability and social welfare (Harvard and Stadius 2013b: 320–22; Magnus 2016: 196–99). On a more human level, progressive values, honesty, simplicity and nature, or the state of *being natural*,

are considered positive cultural traits. They are broadly identifiable with an "authenticity" of character.

Topelius describes Finnishness as something essential in the soul of Finns. He also describes their appearance—or rather probably, the appearance of Finnish men: average size, broad shoulders, muscular, grey complexion, brown hair, and a lazy posture. Contemplation, hard work, and loyalty are described as their virtues (Topelius 2013; 2017).

Matti Peltonen (2000) highlights that national self-image is "invented," or discursively constructed. Finns have traditionally invented themselves in a more negative way than nations in Europe generally (as Topelius demonstrates with reference to the grey complexion and lazy posture). The exception comes in the form of athletic success, and of course *sisu*, the Finnish resilience or guts (Peltonen 2000: 267).

Today, feeling a strong belonging, even patriotism, toward Finnishness is considered positive (see Honkasalo 2011: 15), despite the concept of ethnic belonging being difficult to quantify. Petri Ruuska lists the typical traits that are most often considered Finnish: being "introverted, quiet, hardworking, honest, and so on" (2002: 61, translated from Finnish). These traits still bear a strong similarity to Topelius's characterization of Finns a century earlier, or as one of our respondents puts it, "in the Nordic countries we very highly appreciate/respect authentic feelings, honesty, and candor, while in the rest of the world you get into the circles better with pretending, superficiality, and by not revealing deeper feelings" (respondent 28).

Authenticity as a character trait finds parallels also in ideas of the local—here identified with the "natural"—as of inherently "better" quality. The image of the *authentic* Nordic local is reinforced particularly through its reference to environmental sustainability and the importance of nature. This, when combined with the creation of an idealized past itself coded as *authentic*, traditional, inhabited exclusively by "original" people possessing the authentic character traits, lends itself to perceptions of racial homogeneity as inherent and historical (Andreassen 2014: 443). In branding, this can extend to directly racial ideologies, for example, when international sperm banks sell the idea of producing baby "Vikings," ultimately "[connecting] Scandinavian genes with quality" (Kroløkke 2009: 13).

Only a minority of the Finnish respondents discussed race in relation to Nordicness in their written responses. When asked what a Nordic woman *cannot* be, only three Finnish respondents made direct reference to race or ethnicity, while a fourth stated more generally that she had to share a "nordic [sic] culture or background." Of the former three, one responded with a racial slur. The other two respondents distanced themselves from racialized discourses, while acknowledging them as a structuring of perceived normative Nordicness.

> Whiteness is a rather strong association with being Nordic … Sounds awful, but if you are dark-skinned *it seems like most people perceive you* as (and I

> feel a little bit the same too although *I know it's not true*) import goods. :(*Which is complete bullshit, really*. (emphasis added) (respondent 80)

Does the Past Define Us?

In response to the question "Is the Nordic woman today similar to the Viking woman?" one respondent stated that:

> A nordic woman of the viking era [sic] would've been borderline guaranteed to be ethnically Scandinavian. With the advent of modern travel and immigration options that has changed. (21)

When we asked the respondents to select adjectives strongly associated with Viking and Nordic women, 24 Finnish respondents (61.5 percent) and 19 Scandinavian (63.3 percent) coded either or both as "white." A total of 20.5 percent of respondents coded only Viking women as "white," suggesting that whiteness, even when not viewed as an essential part of present-day Nordic identities, is still perceived as an essential trait of historical ones. A minority (n = 5) identified being "blonde" with Viking or Nordic women without simultaneously coding them as white. Although hair color is not a directly ethnic trait, it is one which can be perceived as racialized. In this context, it is possible to consider references to being "blonde" as euphemistic of whiteness, where respondents have perhaps not wanted to directly reference it.

When we asked our respondents whether the image of the Viking woman is important for Nordic identity, respondents generally answered in the negative, distancing Finnishness from "Vikings."

> Especially in Finland one does not have a strong connection to that identity. (respondent 89)

> Again speaking from the Finnish perspective, I don't know any Finnish women or men that would describe themselves as Vikings or descendent from Vikings. This is perhaps because the Finnish folk poetry and mythology associated with that is perceived as very important for Finns and as much closer to their heritage. (respondent 68)

It should be noted that the first respondent quoted above wrote in Swedish, while the second wrote in English. In coding our own material, we grouped together comments that showed the respondent making a distinction between what is Finnish and what is Nordic. These comments occurred 12 times in statements by nine separate Finnish respondents, none of whom considered the image of the Viking woman to be very or at all important to Nordic identity today. Three comments were written in Finnish, three in Swedish, and six in

English. It is possible that those who chose to write their responses in English have Finnish as their mother-tongue, and were using English because it is the *lingua franca* of the internet, but we cannot know for certain: only one Finnish respondent writing in English specified that they were not native to the Nordic countries. Some respondents also switched languages between questions.

A recent study of over 6,000 participants conducted by Finnish thinktank e2 found that 74 percent of Finnish-speaking Finns find Nordicness important to their identity, compared to 91 percent of Swedish-speakers (Pitkänen and Westinen 2018: 12). The results of e2's survey show that Swedish-speakers in Finland identify more with Nordicness than Finnish-speakers; and while our sample is too small to draw any overarching conclusions, we may speculate that this is unlikely because Swedish-speakers consciously relate Nordicness to Viking-Nordic symbolism. Greater linguistic access to Scandinavian cultural exports, allowing for easier participation in international Nordic culture, seems a more likely alternative.

The idea of a Finnish people based on a shared language and ethnicity was introduced by Henrik Gabriel Porthan (d. 1804) (Fewster 2011: 35–36). His division of Finnish people into three distinct groups—"semi-foreign Swedes … semi-decadent lowland dwellers … and near-original highlanders"—would be formative in the later Finnish Romantics' construction of an authentic Finnish nation (Fewster 2011: 36). The transformation of native Finnish Swedish-speakers into all but foreigners with a different, Viking, heritage from the "original" Finns of the *Kalevala* tradition, would form the background of the ensuing ethno-political language dispute. The creation of a Finland-Swedish identity distinct from the Finnish in the latter part of the 19th century was contemporary with the creation of the "Viking" of Scandinavian national romanticism (Raninen and Wessman 2014: 328). Participation in a shared Viking heritage became an integral part of the identity of some Swedish-speaking Finns, most notably those involved in the "Svekoman" movement (Aalto 2014: 145). Adoption of the associated imagery by Swedish-speaking Finns put them in symbolic opposition with the Finnish-speakers utilizing Kalevalic symbolism in their nation-building (Aalto 2014: 148; Fewster 2011: 38).

Finland, though linguistically distinct from the other Nordic countries, has had to navigate its Nordic identity in relation to internationally recognized Viking-Scandinavian symbolism (Raninen and Wessman 2014: 328). Participation in visual cultural language, primarily through branding, is only one facet of the historic Finnish relationship with inherently Scandinavian-centered Viking symbolism. Owing to its pervasiveness within Nordic figurative imagery, it is easy to see how "Nordicness" could be constructed as exclusionary of non-Germanic-Scandinavian identities within the Nordic countries. Colloquial interchangeability between the use of words such as "Viking," "Norse," "Scandinavian" and "Nordic" can be considered (re-)enforcing of cultural and ethnic relationships between these concepts in an ahistorical, timeless way. As Raninen and Wessman note, the association of "'Vikings' with Finland has far

more to do with 20th- and 21st-century socio-politics than anything to do with the late first millennium AD" (2014: 328).

While most of the respondents perceived the Vikings as insignificant to Nordicness, cultural relationships with perceived Viking heritage have continued to be relevant for *some* Swedish-speaking Finns. In a small number of cases, the need to historicize these cultural relationships has driven local stakeholders to falsify or plant archaeological evidence, to invite external (Swedish) archaeologists to excavate sites, and to reject interpretations of archaeological evidence that contradict often deeply held beliefs (Raninen and Wessman 2014: 332–33). A Viking(?) heritage was alluded to by one respondent:

> I believe that it's quite important for who people from the North think that they are—it's a cause of feeling strength and pride … to be someone—*descendants to legends*. emphasis added (respondent 80)

Who Defines Our Past?

In general, the survey respondents express concern for authenticity in the construction and representation of the past. When asked, most respondents express a desire for the Viking woman to be defined by various types of experts: "researchers of the field," "historians," "gender neutral research," "a combination of academics from different backgrounds" and so on. Some respondents distance themselves from their responses if they feel they do not possess sufficient historical knowledge (e.g. "I don't know much about this specific subject but I would imagine …" (respondent 41)). Many also cite formal sources of knowledge, such as "museum," "scientific studies," or "the history lessons from school" as the basis of their views about the Vikings in addition to pop-culture.

Other respondents understood the question differently: in their view, "the genes," "women, whose family roots are from the Vikings," and "Nordic women" should define Viking women. It is possible, then, to infer both that, in the view of some, genetic authenticity is a key aspect of defining the past *as well as* having the right or expertise *to* define the past. Arguably, in both cases, the respondents are drawing reference to a need for authenticity, either through normative sources of historical information or by means of a perceived direct connection to that history, which is seen to somehow imbue its possessor with authentic knowledge.

A third group of respondents (n=3) assert themselves as possessors of expertise or authentic knowledge about the past in another way. They perform their expertise by referencing "special knowledge"—knowledge that separates them from complete laypeople on the topic:

> … Since the "viking" men of the household went *"viking" [sic] meaning going on raids and whatnot* … emphasis added (respondent 21)

> A tattooed hollywood [sic] actress with crazy hair wearing an *anachronistic leather corset* and waving a sword. emphasis added (respondent 41)

On his popular blog, archaeologist Howard Williams (2016) raises a number of concerns regarding the perpetuation of "special knowledge," often by self-appointed myth-busters. Narratives that adhere to "special knowledge" (such as Viking horned helmets being a myth) can appear as "authentic" despite being potentially "equally speculative or constructed with modern agenda at their heart" (Williams 2016). In addition to camouflaging more fantastical elements, this can reproduce and reinforce structurally violent narratives through exclusion and the normalization of essentialist tropes. This point is picked up by Roderick Dale, who questions whether it is possible or even useful to try to reconcile pop-culture images of Vikings and their historic reality (Dale 2020: 226). Rather, Dale suggests, we should put our energy toward actively working against the perpetuation of white supremacy through insidious hypermasculine and other narratives based around the Viking image (Dale 2020: 226–27).

Debates on the public perception of authenticity in historical portrayals of the Viking Age fit well within the wider problem of the so-called "White Middle Ages." Through repeated whitewashing, representations of the historical past—along with fantasy set in a broadly medieval European setting—have removed people of color from European early medieval history (Elliott 2018; Young 2019). Attempts to rectify this have been criticized as historically inaccurate, while the presentation of corroborating historical evidence of ethnic diversity has faced significant, sometimes threatening, backlash (Young 2019: 233–35). Helen Young summarizes the issue well: producers and consumers of media (and knowledge?) "want their 'historical' world and its narratives to *feel real* more than they want them to be *factual*" (2019: 235, original emphasis).

Pop-culture

Although respondents express concern with the realism and accuracy of historical interpretations, most construct *stereotypical* images of Viking or Nordic women in reference to pop-culture. These are directly referenced in relation to Viking women: "a horn headed 'Hilde,'" "you know Wonder Woman? Like her but blonde," "that kind of sexualized 'Brynhilde'/Valkyrie," "in media the TV-series Vikings, the film *How to Train Your Dragon*, or in Marvel films." Conversely, Nordic women were generally described by the respondents in indirect reference to pop-culture. Specifically, respondents alluded to the image of the sexually liberated Swedish bikini-model stereotype of the 1960s and 1970s: "sexualized blonde," "big breasts," "sexually promiscuous tanned blonde," "perhaps a bit sexually unleashed" and so on.[3] Finnish respondents only referred to the bikini-model stereotype explicitly in response to how Nordic women are perceived by foreigners.

Elena Lindholm Narváez describes the sexy Swedish bikini-girl *femme fatale* character that recurred in, for example, Spanish films as typically blond, tall, and liberal (2013: 197). Sweden—and by extension all the Nordic countries—became a modern utopia in the Spanish collective imagination (Lindholm Narváez 2013: 200). Carl Marklund (2013) explores how Sweden became representative of the Nordic countries after the Second World War, during which it was arguably the least affected of the Nordic countries. Through effective marketing in the United States, where there was an interest in the Nordic countries, Sweden managed to become the archetypical Nordic country in the cultural consciousness abroad (Marklund 2013: 273).

In the responses, the image of both the stereotypical Viking and the Nordic woman is of distinctly "Scandinavian" character. Large overlaps occur in physicality, with repeated emphasis on whiteness, stated explicitly or through euphemistic terms such as "fair," "blonde" and "blue-eyed." Of the 64 references to whiteness in the written responses, almost half refer to blonde hair only. "Blonde" could be a socially acceptable or subconscious way of suggesting light skin tone.

The responses to which we assigned the code "whiteness" correlate with descriptions of appearance to 51 percent. When descriptions of appearance do not bring up the color of Viking/Nordic women's skin or hair, they either used the adjective "tall" or described sex appeal (correlation with appearance 21 percent). Among all Finnish written responses, explicit or implicit "whiteness" co-occurs with comments where women are presented as "sexy" or "sexual" at 17 percent: the fourth highest code correlation in the material.

Since the social construction of history is connected to its public consumption and (re-)production, the past in pop-culture becomes an intrinsic part of historical discourse and identity construction. Several respondents directly refer to the internationally successful History series *Vikings* (2013), written by Michael Hirst, as formative of their view of Viking women. Others mention pop-culture, television shows and film more broadly. Indeed, *Vikings* (2013) has been praised by some archaeologists for engaging new audiences with this part of history and has even inspired a recent volume of essays by archaeologists, historians and scholars of literature about its representation of the past (Hardwick and Lister 2019).

The History Network, together with Hirst, commissioned an accompanying documentary series titled *The Real Vikings* that aired in 2016, and featured the show's leading actors exploring the historical and archaeological reality of the Vikings alongside leading authorities on the subject. It could be argued that such a cross-pollination of different types of media would cultivate an inadvertent suspension of disbelief among some audience members regarding the less visible inaccuracies within the *fictional* series, through its direct or indirect relationship with educational historical programming. There were, until recently, no horned helmets to be seen after all (Williams 2020).

While History has been repeatedly criticized for its non-historical or misleading programming, it continues to cultivate an image as a platform for historical content. Hirst himself admitted that he "had to take liberties" with the show owing to a relative lack of historical sources (Gilbert 2013). Despite this, *Vikings* (2013) has redefined the aesthetic landscape of the historical Viking Age in popular cultural *and* formal historical contexts. For example, there are striking similarities between the tattooed heads of the show's protagonists and the busts presented at the *Mød Vikingerne* ("Meet the Vikings") exhibition at the National Museum of Denmark, designed by reality TV personality and designer Jim Lyngvild. The exhibition has received criticism for its misrepresentation of the historical past (e.g. Sindbæk 2019).

The pop-cultural impact of *Vikings* (2013) demonstrates several moments of slippage between fictional representations, perceptions of authenticity and the production of historical narratives. Reference to historical antecedents provides a feeling of authenticity that does not equate with accuracy (see Young 2019, above). When presented using normative methods of "storytelling," particularly in institutional settings like museums, these narratives give the impression of reliability to the information they present (Polletta et al. 2011: 117).

Will Cerbone identifies "the cartoon Viking" as the aesthetic nexus of the past engaged with by fans of diverse Viking-related popular media (2019: 244–45). The trope is slowly becoming outdated: it is the hypermasculine representation of the Viking prominent in heavy metal culture, video games, and superhero films. Subversive representations such as "fat Thor" in *Avengers: Endgame* (2019), increasing representation of people of color (Young 2019: 234), women and individuals with disabilities (Long and Williams 2020) continue to modernize the Viking image to fit present-day concerns (cf. Dale 2020: 226). These are partly echoed in the Finnish respondents' answers that they wish to see in media representation of Viking and Nordic women: in both cases, most respondents wish to see a greater diversity of roles taken on by women, along with more emphasis on everyday activities and realism. Again, great concern is placed on the perceived authenticity of these representations, although how that should manifest is dependent on the respondent's personal ideological stance.

Consumption and Branding

Participation in popular media can lead "fans [to] seek out historical authenticity to bring them closer to the exotic past that inspires them," while concurrently placing value in the visual expression of this authenticity, such as archaeological replica jewelry (Cerbone 2019: 245). Commercial consumption and display of heritage in that way allows a consumer to embody the past. Although capitalism and globalization arguably allow for anyone with sufficient economic power to buy into almost any purchasable display of cultural heritage, such

symbols change meaning depending on the identity of the individual displaying them, and the manner of display. Rikke Andreassen humorously notes that white Nordic consumers partaking in contemporary Nordic cuisine could be seen as "Nordic customers … eating 'the Nordic'. Yet in this process, they also become more Nordic," and reinforce the idea of whiteness as inherent to Nordicness (Andreassen 2014: 441). To continue Andreassen's thought, it could be argued that you aren't just what you eat, but also what you *consume*. Consumption of Nordic products is in some way integral to the stereotypical image of the Nordic woman, as this respondent also notes:

> Blonde and blue-eyed white woman who has her own career and does well economically. She travels relatively much and owns at least something of Scandinavian design in her home. Dressed neutrally and wears natural and not "too" strong makeup. Highly educated. (respondent 84)

The "whole package" of the Nordic woman described by the respondent includes racial elements inextricably linked to her authenticity ("Blonde and blue-eyed white woman … wears natural … makeup"), which are reinforced through her consumption of Nordic products. The Scandinavian design items in her home create a setting for the Nordic woman's Nordic identity, and reinforce it. In other words, the environment in which Nordicness is performed is itself a part of the performance. Nature and wilderness, often created as likewise quintessentially Nordic (Andreassen 2014: 440), are also backdrops for the performance of Nordic identities. Although not directly referencing ethnicity, by association with nostalgic discourses emphasizing the unspoiled, open natural landscapes of the imagined past, the images constructed in the creation of these settings reinforce the otherness of people and things that do not "fit" within them (Ahmed 2006: 135–36).

Branding and the Far Right

Branding centered around positive "Nordic" qualities allows a cross-pollination of visual symbolism. Finland's most visible example of the far right interacting with Viking imagery is the street patrol group Soldiers of Odin. In talking about the initial success of Soldiers of Odin in Finland when it was formed during the so-called refugee crisis, Tommi Kotonen among other things ascribes Soldiers of Odin a "mystique" that other street patrols of the time lacked (2019: 249). Kotonen stresses the importance of Soldiers of Odin's visual appearance (2019). The unified, militant dress code helped catch the attention of both potential new recruits and the media (Kotonen 2019: 249–50). Every Soldiers of Odin bomber jacket features the image of a Viking man wearing a horned helmet, whose beard forms the local national flag, beneath which is the name of the area or chapter.

Using Odin as a symbol of strength, along with recognizable imagery of white hypermasculinity through the horned Viking male head, also allowed the (Finnish) Soldiers of Odin to participate in an international visual language. Viking imagery allowed them to speak to an idealized racially homogenous history that they were seeking to preserve, in a way that allowed others, from Canada to Malta to Central Europe, to understand and participate in.

The respondents, too, are aware of the link between far-right ideologies and Vikings. One describes a stereotypical Viking woman:

> Light, blonde, sturdy, but in the end giving in to her husband. A bit like that kind of fantasy of the "white power" gang. (respondent 14)

Another respondent suggests that linking the image of the Viking woman to Nordic identity has racist connotations:

> The image of the Viking woman has a slightly racist tone in today's world. Or if one even thinks about those things. These light Valkyries seem to be fairy-tale characters. (respondent 34)

The fantastical representation of the Viking woman is understood by some of the respondents, therefore, within the context of white supremacist discourses in Europe and North America. Despite these movements relying heavily on hypermasculine imagery in their branding, ideologically they make space for women under certain conditions. Respondent 14's comment that the fantasy is one of a strong woman who "in the end [gives] in to her husband" corresponds to femonationalist discourses about women common among both white supremacist groups and more tolerated far-right political parties.

Gender Equality and Nationalism

Most far-right racist movements or populist political parties tend to have a traditional view on gender roles (see Askola 2019); in the Nordic countries there are several examples of these movements calling on gender equality in pursuing their agendas. The Soldiers of Odin and MV-Lehti in Finland—or even the general public—raised concerns about women's and girls' safety when asylum seekers arrived in Finland during the so-called refugee crisis of 2015 and 2016 (Keskinen 2018). In Sweden, SD likewise balances on the one hand condemning feminism, and on the other seeing gender equality as inherently Swedish (Mulinari and Neergaard 2014: 48).

To appear more politically correct, these movements call on gender equality in endorsing their racism (Farris 2017). This is possible because the construction of Finnish and Nordic identity leans heavily on top results in global gender

equality rankings (Honkatukia and Keskinen 2018: 2). Several responses demonstrate how engrained the idea of exclusively Nordic gender equality is:

> I guess Nordic women are perceived as more independent and having more rights than women in other parts of the world. (respondent 68)
>
> In other places women attempt to please men more, the most important goal could be to form a family, even education and profession are sidestepped when the children come. (respondent 34)

Nordic female empowerment is similarly perceived as historical, and as almost inherent to her femininity. Viking women controlling or manipulating their surroundings by being female is a recurring theme among the respondents.

> A matriarch who decides about things, even though men think that they're deciding. According to the old saying: man is the family's (the society's) head, but woman is the neck that turns it. (respondent 34)
>
> A strong Nordic woman who fought and plundered with the men, however also a little mysterious. (respondent 84)

The ideal of the Nordic-Viking woman as strong, empowered and "mysterious" exists in tension with the expectation of her submission to a male counterpart. Concurrently, she represents something to be protected, by being placed in opposition to Other women who are less independent, have fewer rights and so on.

Farris (2017) explains how liberal white men view male Others as threats to gender equality, while simultaneously feeling entitled to female Others for "saving" them from their own culture. Sara R. Farris is echoing Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's famous statement, that "white men are saving the brown women from brown men" (Spivak 1993: 93). The inviolability of the woman represents the preservation of the identity of the state; the Other woman becomes an object of colonization. The connection to sexual violence must not be forgotten here, as it relates both to the preservation of ethnic purity as well as discourses describing Other men as sexually violent (Farris 2017).

Symbolically, the need to protect women from sexual or physical violence extends to national narratives, particularly in relation to real or perceived threats of invasion or cultural subordination. Nations are often personified as women, as are powerful symbols like Victory, Liberty, Justice and Freedom. We anthropomorphize nation-states because it makes them easier to comprehend, "[t]hey become entities that speak and act, are injured, bleed, have virtues and vices, might be loved or hated" (McGill 2017: 36). This allows nationalism to become emotional. However, although a nation may be imagined as a woman, women are rarely empowered in such narratives; rather, they are often portrayed as irrational (O'Donoghue 2018). A crucial part of the national

narrative then becomes centered around a woman—in the case of Finland, this is the *Suomi-neito*, Maiden of Finland—who needs to be protected from the foreign Other.

Edvard Isto's painting *Hyökkäys* ("The Attack," 1899) serves as an example of this. It shows the Maiden of Finland as a fair-skinned, blonde woman in a white dress with a blue belt, holding a law book. She is being attacked by an eagle with two heads, clearly representing Russia and reflecting contemporary social concerns. A similar sentiment of today is expressed by one Finnish respondent, who states very bluntly that, in the Arab world, Nordic women are perceived as "sweet candy to rape" (respondent 7). This racist statement must be viewed as part of the wider femonationalist narrative perpetuated by the populist right-wing and white supremacist groups.

Women are fundamental in making sure that customs and values are passed down to the next generation, and Farris shows how the family as an institution is of great importance to nationalism and the perpetuating of the nation-state (Farris 2017: 71–72). The nation-state, then, is what—with the help of the family—legitimizes the political state.

A common theme among our respondents is to explain Viking women's role in society as the mother who takes care of the home. Many also specify that Viking men were gone for long periods of time. The woman, then, was

> [p]retty much the leader of the household. Since the "viking" men of the household went "viking" [sic] meaning going on raids and whatnot, the women were often left with the responsibility of the house, the family and the finances. (21)

Heli Askola discusses how nationalist parties in Europe support this traditional, heteronormative view of gender with women primarily as mothers (2019: 56). Several respondents also associate similar ideas with Finnish women during the Winter and Continuation Wars taking over activities traditionally done by men. Women of the past are given independent power and agency—but only within the home and, as it seems, because men are away.

Paradoxically, women's independence is the most prevalent theme throughout the Finnish responses. "Independence" is referenced in 17.6 percent of all separate written responses, indicating its importance to their understanding of Nordicness. Independence is seen as a source of pride, and seen as a current and historical trait: as summarized by one respondent, "[n]either the Viking woman nor the contemporary Nordic woman wants to be dependent on any man" (59).

The importance of female strength and equality is stressed by the respondents: in response to being asked "Who defines Nordic women?", 21 out of 32 respond with a variation of "herself." "Independence" implies the existence of something to be independent *from*, or *de*pendence and subservience: the respondents constructed an unfree woman as someone not Nordic, or even explicitly Muslim. Perceived Otherness in the Finnish gender context in the

present often relates to Islam as the two are frequently seen as incompatible (Rosenström 2019).

The focus in constructing the Finnish self-image has traditionally been on the Finnishness of Finnish men (Peltonen 2000: 268); this is in contrast to the perceived "inherent" gender equality of the Finnish and Nordic identities. Understanding Finnish gender equality is not just understanding politics, but has become a criterion—especially for immigrants—for fully belonging in the Finnishness (Tuori 2007: 30).

Conclusions

Most Finnish respondents do not consider the Vikings to be important to the construction of the Nordic identity, and specifically irrelevant to Finnish identity. This contrasts the common Viking-Nordic branding in which Finland participates, and the historic association of Viking imagery with the Swedish-speaking minority. Ideologically, however, the themes raised by the Finnish respondents find parallels both in historic characterizations of Finnishness, and in perceptions of Viking-Scandinavian history.

Most respondents also do not express explicitly racist views. It is, however, important to acknowledge the ideological undercurrents of many of the responses with the perpetuation of whiteness as an inherent and historic Nordic quality, either expressed directly, or euphemistically through traits such as "fair," "blonde" or "blue eyed." This subtly perpetuates ethnicity, race or skin color as equivalent to nationality or culture, possibly even suggesting a hierarchy of beauty or worth. Similarly, many of the ideas expressed about women's roles, historically and in the present, and how these roles should be presented in the media, perpetuate ideologies underpinning femonationalism. The (white) Nordic woman is presented as historically strong, independent, and free, however still ultimately submissive to the (white) man. Her identity is presented as incompatible with perceived Other identities, seen as unfree.

In reflecting on both the survey and the writing of this chapter, we feel it is important to recognize that it is likely that the Finnish responses would have looked very different had we asked specifically about Finnishness or Finnish women, or about another period of history. The data used for this chapter was sourced for a more general study about perceptions of the relationship between Viking Age women and Nordic women by people from *all* of the Nordic countries. Nevertheless, irrespective of their actual place in Finnish history, the Vikings have been relevant to the construction of Nordic history and Nordicness over the last 200 years, including in Finland.

What must be emphasized most strongly is that in considering the construction of Nordicness in reference to the image of the Vikings, certain identities are erased from discourse. This has included the Finnish identity that has had to navigate this discourse in defining its Nordicness, and—notably—Sámi

identities, which were entirely missing in the responses to the survey despite their indigeneity to Fennoscandia. Concurrently, the present-day image of the Vikings has become a meta-identity welcoming of (primarily white) members of any nationality, making it easy to inhabit by white supremacist groups.

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Notes

[1] Before we continue, we would like to take on board some feedback we received from a colleague during the conference and begin with a content warning. We will be discussing implicit *and* explicit expressions of racism. Explicitly racist language was rarely used by Finnish respondents, and as far as possible we have not quoted it where it has occurred, unless it was directly relevant and necessary to our line of argument.

[2] "Other" designates people who either preferred not to specify, were non-binary or did not provide an admissible answer.

[3] The only exception was one respondent who described the stereotypical Nordic woman as a "Frozen-princess."

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PART II

Doing/Constructing Whiteness in Finland

CHAPTER 4

Doing Whiteness and Masculinities at School

Finnish 12- to 15-Year-Olds' Narratives on Multiethnicity

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Abstract

As Finland becomes increasingly multiethnic, there is a growing need to understand how young, white Finnish people position themselves and others in relation to norms of Finnishness and whiteness, and in relation to racism and (in)equalities. In popular narratives, assumptions of increasing "tolerance" and decreasing racism and inequalities are sometimes particularly attributed to young people, a perspective that enables most of the population to continue to evade issues of racism and perpetuate "white innocence" (Wekker 2016) and the color blindness (Bonilla-Silva 2003) of imagined Finnishness. In this

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chapter, we draw on a study of masculinities in 12- to 15-year-olds in Helsinki to examine these issues by focusing on the white Finnish participants' narratives on multiethnicity. Our theoretical starting point is to understand the intersections of Finnishness, whiteness, and masculinities. We argue that while the interviewees widely embraced egalitarianism and multicultural ideologies in the interviews, the norm of whiteness was unquestioned and the contradictions characteristic of white innocence largely prevailed. The combination of white Finnishness, male gender and egalitarian ideas allowed the white Finnish boys to occupy an unquestioned position of "ordinary boys." They were able to construct themselves as tolerant and to see multiethnicity and racism as phenomena that were largely irrelevant to them, while benefiting from a privileged white position.

Keywords: white innocence, Finnishness, multiethnicity, racism, masculinities, young people

Introduction

The myth of (historical) monoculturalism has long had a strong influence on how Finnishness is understood in Finland: as white and as never having included ethnicities other than Finnish. Yet, Finland has always been multicultural (e.g. Tervonen 2014) and as Suvi Keskinen (2019) points out, Finns were generally excluded from whiteness until the first half of the 20th century, being considered East Baltic, rather than white Nordic. Keskinen's analysis is important in demonstrating that racialization is not fixed and that it has changed for Finns in parallel ways to how Jewish people, Italians and Irish people "became white" in the United States (Roediger and Capotorto 2003). Equally, it highlights the relationality of racialization in that it is in comparison with other groups that Finns have become white and come to see themselves as always having been white. The pervasive belief in historically white monoculturalism can be understood as part of the multifaceted concept Gloria Wekker (2016) calls "white innocence." This concept describes the contradiction between denial of racism and evasion of issues of race on the one hand, and racialized hostility to migrants and minoritized ethnic groups on the other. In the Finnish case, commitment to what can be viewed as assimilationist ideologies requiring migrants to adapt to Finnishness (Nortio, Renvik and Jasinskaja-Lahti 2020) constitutes an example of white innocence. This can be viewed as part of the Finnish "cultural archive" (Wekker 2016), in which understandings of national history and identity normalize and render invisible contemporary racialized and ethnicized inequalities.

In recent decades, the growing numbers and increased diversity of ethnicized and racialized minorities in Finland have produced an intensified need to rethink the borders of Finnishness. For example, the "refugee crisis" in 2015,

the period of some months when Finland received greater numbers of asylum seekers than accustomed, was experienced as shaking the taken-for-granted link between national identity and whiteness. This was seen as threatening by many segments of the society (Keskinen 2018). These developments have simultaneously buttressed notions that migration does not disrupt understanding of the Finnish nation as white and slowly given rise to more critical discussions and rethinking of national identity and Finnishness (Nortio et al. 2016). As part of the reimagining of the "new" more multicultural Finland, the younger generations are often accorded special status. One popular narrative assumes that Finnish children and young people (who are still implicitly assumed to be white) are "doing" multiculturalism. In other words, unlike older generations, they attend multicultural educational institutions and other contexts and, on the implicit assumption that familiarity breeds liking, are assumed, therefore, to be growing up "tolerant" and living multiethnicity as "normal." In consequence, they are considered a generation who will disrupt racialized divides and make racism obsolete. In that context, some teachers are resistant to acknowledging ethnicized and racialized differences between children and praise those who profess color blindness (Kimanen 2018).

Color-blind approaches are part of white innocence and have long been common in the United States, the United Kingdom and other countries with longer-acknowledged multicultural histories than Finland (Bonilla-Silva 2003; Schofield 1986). Although much critiqued, there has been a resurgence of color-blind ideologies, including in the United States following Barack Obama's presidency (Wise 2010). They are widely criticized for evading color, while actively refusing to engage with the power relations of racism and social inequalities (Gillborn 2019). It is thus a form of racism that obscures, while perpetuating, the normative positioning of whiteness and the existence of racial inequalities and racism. It normalizes a focus on minoritized ethnic groups and renders whiteness invisible (Bonilla-Silva and Dietrich 2011). In the Finnish case, the re-imagining of the nation as white, but multicultural, raises two issues. First, even in ethnically more diverse areas of Finland, such as metropolitan Helsinki where the study discussed below is located, there is urban and social segregation. In addition, familiarity does not in itself prevent racism (van Ausdale and Feagin 2001). Second, the assumptions that younger generations are more "tolerant" than older generations, and that racism is decreasing and equality increasing, raise the problems identified for color blindness.

As Finland becomes increasingly multiethnic, understanding how young white people position themselves and are positioned in relation to norms of whiteness, racism and (in)equalities is increasingly important. In this chapter, we examine these issues in the context of a study of masculinities in 12- to 15-year-olds in Helsinki, focusing on the white Finnish participants' narratives on multiethnicity. Our theoretical starting point is to understand the intersections of Finnishness, whiteness and masculinity. We argue that while the interviewees widely embraced multicultural ideologies in the interviews,

the norm of whiteness was unquestioned in the school contexts where the interviews took place, and the contradictions characteristic of white innocence (Wekker 2016) largely prevailed. The combination of white Finnishness, male gender and egalitarian ideas allowed those participants who were both white Finnish and boys to occupy the unquestioned position of "ordinary boys," who were able to construct themselves as tolerant and to see multiethnicity and racism as phenomena that were largely irrelevant to them, while benefiting from a privileged (white) positioning.

The chapter is divided into five parts. It first discusses the theoretical frame by focusing on masculinities and whiteness and then describes the study that informs the chapter. In the three empirical sections, we discuss how the boys constructed the norm of white Finnishness before considering how they accounted for racialized difference in their schools and, finally, the ways in which they distanced racism from themselves.

Theorizing Whiteness and Masculinities

The theorization of whiteness and masculinities have both proliferated over the last couple of decades, but both fields have long been objects of study. While whiteness is often not recognized as important in everyday life, some scholars have long recognized its importance. For example, the African American scholar W. E. B. Du Bois published an essay in 1910 examining and analyzing whiteness, white people's reluctance to be scrutinized and how the relative invisibility of whiteness for white people helps to maintain white supremacy (Du Bois 1920 [1910]). In the 1980s and 1990s, a few scholars (e.g. Fine et al. 1997; Frye 1983; hooks 1992; Kovel 1984; McIntosh 1988; Morrison 1994) analyzed whiteness and produced landmark scholarship that has helped to inaugurate the field of whiteness studies. Ruth Frankenberg's (1993) research on white women and whiteness showed the relationality of whiteness as racialized positioning.

> My argument in this book is that race shapes white women's lives. In the same way that both men's and women's lives are shaped by their gender, and that both heterosexual and lesbian women's experiences in the world are marked by their sexuality, white people and people of color live racially structured lives. In other words, any system of differentiation shapes those on whom it bestows privilege as well as those it oppresses. White people are "raced", just as men are "gendered". And in a social context where white people have too often viewed themselves as nonracial or racially neutral, it is crucial to look at the "racialness" of white experience. (Frankenberg 1993: 1)

Her argument, that whiteness matters and that it is relational and racialized, has largely been accepted among scholars of racialization and racism.

Frankenberg's theorization of whiteness as structural advantage, standpoint and unmarked, unnamed cultural practices was expanded by Michelle Fine et al. (1997: ix) as "a system of power and privilege, as a group, an identity, a social movement, a defense, an invention." The ways in which whiteness studies have developed includes what Robin DiAngelo (2006) called "white fragility," the notion that making whiteness visible against white people's wishes is aggressive and that arguments that white people have unearned and unacknowledged privilege and are often racist is racist against white people. Despite such resistances, the theorization of whiteness has moved beyond mainly seeking to establish its relevance to what France Winddance Twine and Charles Gallagher (2008) call the "third wave" of whiteness studies. This, they suggest, examines "white inflections, the nuanced and locally specific ways in which whiteness as a form of power is defined, deployed, performed, policed and reinvented" (Twine and Gallagher 2008: 5). Studies that characterize this third wave focus on institutional and ideological practices that maintain white privilege, however much it is challenged, and show that, in order to remain dominant, discourses of whiteness are flexible and shift to adjust to challenges. The flexibility and relative invisibility of whiteness are central to its normalization (Luttrell 2020).

As with whiteness, theorization of masculinities has also burgeoned over the last 20 years as they have become a source of anxiety in many societies. In particular, concern has focused on boys' poor educational attainment in relation to girls, their disengagement from schoolwork and their propensity for violence (Janssen 2015; Arnesen, Lahelma and Öhrn 2008). For Finnish boys, threats of violence, physicality, materiality and gendered performances ("fear power") have all been found to be used strategically as resources, to gain respect and dominance in schools (Manninen, Huuki and Sunnari 2011). This is in line with the theory of "hegemonic masculinity," originally developed by Tim Carrigan, R. W. Connell and John Lee (1985), which has become ubiquitous, while also critiqued, in the field of masculinity studies. According to Connell, masculinities are hierarchically organized so that hegemonic masculinity—associated with toughness, power and authority, among other things—dominates both femininity and other forms of masculinities, and is thus normative and underpins social understandings of ideal masculinity and the desires of many men and boys (Connell 1995).

Yet, masculinities are changing in many societies, including Finland. There is, for example, a decrease in homophobia for some older young men (McCormack 2011), reduction for some groups in problematic drinking cultures in Finland (Törrönen and Roumeliotis 2014) and changes in power relations associated with hegemonic masculinities (Hearn 2015). Gender does not, however, provide a total explanation for such findings. Boys' educational attainment cannot, for example, entirely be related to gender, but varies by ethnicity, social class and nation (Gross, Gottsburgsen and Phoenix 2016). Masculinities themselves have repeatedly been shown to be racialized across the globe

(Mac an Ghaill and Haywood 2014; Phoenix 2008). Masculinities thus have to be viewed as multidimensional, that is, intersectional, rather than singular (Mellström 2014). It is, therefore, vital to attend to boys' imaginaries of masculinities and themselves as masculine in changing times. These imaginaries are important in themselves, but they are also consequential in that imaginaries impact on how children and young people are treated, how they see themselves (Layne 2016) and how they negotiate everyday social orders of who is respected, valued and denigrated as masculine (Tolonen 2018).

Both whiteness and masculinities have functioned hegemonically, asserting their authority without violence through domination and leadership that depends on consensus expressed, for example, through the media (Gramsci 2006 [1971]). Both are dynamic, changing over time and proliferating rather than being fixed, but refusing attempts to render visible the power relations they entail. Talking of the phenomenon of "laddism" in the United Kingdom, Chris Haywood et al. (2018: 3) suggest that it is a contemporary form of masculinity that serves to reclaim patriarchal values where feminism has gained influence: "One of the strategies to regain power has been to adopt a marginal position in which white heterosexual men draw upon their victim status in order to re-articulate their power and control." Both masculinities and whiteness can, therefore, involve the refusal to recognize gendered and racialized power relations. Recognition that dynamic strategies to maintain power are commonly used by white people led the white, feminist scholar Paula Rothenberg (2000) to call her memoir "Invisible Privilege," using her own autobiography to provide insights into the complex intersections of gender, racialization and social class.

Given this background, it is important and timely to investigate how young white people position themselves within discourses of whiteness and gender and to situate those understandings in the particular contexts within which they live. The concept of intersectionality (Crenshaw 1989) is important here in that it provides a means of recognizing that everybody is simultaneously positioned within multiple social categories, such as gender, social class, nationality and "race" (Collins 2019). So even when focusing particularly on one social category, such as whiteness, intersectionality is a heuristic, reminding us that we cannot understand the category in isolation from others (Phoenix and Pattynama 2006). In order to illuminate the complexity of the intersections of gendered, racialized and national particularities of white Finnish young masculinities, the analyses below take a performative view of both whiteness and masculinities. They consider the ways in which the young people's narratives "do" white Finnishness and masculinities and how these intersect in the Finnish context.

Research Context and the Data

The chapter draws on data from the project *Masculinities and Ethnicities in New Times* (Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies 2017–2018). The interview

data were gathered in 2017–2018 among sixth- to eighth-graders (12–15 years old) in three comprehensive schools in Helsinki, as well as one youth club.

The Finnish comprehensive school, with its task to guarantee a high-quality basic education to everybody, is one of the flagships of the Finnish welfare state and a source of national pride. The school institution has traditionally had an important role in maintaining the idea of cultural homogeneity through reproduction of national representations and subjectivities. Despite its universalist aims, it has also been found to reproduce the link between Finnishness and whiteness through constructing the "normal" student as white and Finnish (Juva and Holm 2017). Imagining schools as multicultural, tolerant and equal—which Juva and Holm found common among teachers and school staff—serves to blur the normative position of white Finnishess and makes it difficult to address issues related to racism and discrimination in school.

Compared with schools in many other countries, the socioeconomic and ethnic segregation of comprehensive schools is a recent concern in Finland, but one that is increasing in urban areas (Bernelius and Vaattovaara 2016). In Helsinki, where this study is located, segregation between schools has been found to be greater than segregation in the surrounding residential areas; in terms of ethnic segregation, the proportions of school students statistically defined as from minoritized ethnic groups ("with foreign backgrounds") vary between almost zero to more than 50 percent. In the Finnish context, 50 percent is higher than the national average, since, nationally, the proportion of the population "with foreign backgrounds" (the proxy available for ethnicity in Finland) was about 8 percent in 2020 (OSF 2021). Everyday realities in schools thus differ, and segregation poses very real challenges for some urban schools. However, it is noteworthy that the public discussion tends to focus on certain schools constructed as "problematic," based on their reputations and assumptions that their students' backgrounds deviate from white, middle-class norms. Much less attention has been paid to how white Finnish middle-class practices and choices maintain and strengthen school segregation (Kosunen 2016). This, in turn, highlights their normative and thus "unproblematic" positioning.

Schools in different residential areas were recruited into the study in order to include students from different social classes and ethnic backgrounds. One school was located in a relatively wealthy (upper-)middle-class area, where the students were almost exclusively white Finns—pseudonymized as Nurmi School below. One school was in an area that was socioeconomically mixed and had approximately one-fifth of pupils recorded as from "foreign backgrounds" (Kukkula School). The third school was located in a socioeconomically more vulnerable area, and it had a more sizeable share of pupils from other backgrounds than white Finnish (Harju School). The youth club was also located in a relatively socioeconomically deprived area (City of Helsinki 2019). Ethical clearance was received from the University of Helsinki, the divisions for Education (schools) and Culture and Leisure (the youth club) of the City of Helsinki and the principals of each school.

Seven focus group interviews with between two and five participants (two mixed gender, five boys' groups) and 22 individual interviews were conducted with altogether 32 participants. A total of 28 of the interviewees were boys, of whom one was transgender. Four were girls. The majority of the participants—23—were white Finns. Three were mixed-parentage and six had what is referred to in Finland as "migrant backgrounds"; they had backgrounds in Eritrea, Estonia, Ireland, Italy, Korea, Nepal, Russia, Somalia and the United States, and all except two were born in Finland. In terms of ethnicity, white Finns constituted the vast majority in two of the three schools. The participants' ethnic/migratory backgrounds roughly correspond with the different ethnic mixes present in the three schools, which is reflected in the small proportion of participants from other ethnicities. In Harju School, only one white Finnish pupil participated in a focus group interview (and he opted out of an individual interview), which is why our analysis of the white Finnish interviewees' narratives focuses mostly on the Nurmi and Kukkula Schools, and the youth club. The interviewees' backgrounds are briefly presented in Table 4.1.

Since we wanted to get a picture of how students thought about and "did" masculinities, we talked to all the students in the classes we approached about the study and offered them the possibility of participating in it. No pre-selection was made by the teachers or the researchers and we included everybody who volunteered and returned the signed parental permission slips. Given that gender is a relational construct and masculinities are performed and understood in relation to boys and girls (Connell 1995), we designed the study to include girls in the sample, as had been done in a London study of boys and masculinities (Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman 2002). We had little success, however, in recruiting girls. A common experience in all three schools was that most girls in the classes did not consider a study on masculinities inviting or relevant to them.

Most of the interviews were done in the schools, but three of the 32 young people were interviewed at home or in a youth club. The schools' temporal and

Table 4.1: Age, gender and migration status by interview type.

Age	Focus groups	Individual interviews	Gender	Focus groups	Individual interviews	Back-ground	Focus groups	Individual interviews
12	11	7	**Boy**	23	21	**White Finnish**	20	13
13	8	7	**Girl**	3	1	**Mixed heritage**	3	3
14	4	6	**Total**	26	22	**Migrant background**	3	6
15	3	2				**Total**	26	22
Total	26	22						

spatial organization therefore set conditions for most of the interviews, limiting the time available (the interviews lasted between 30 and 90 minutes) and defining the use of space. For ethical reasons, we let the participants choose whether they wanted to participate in both an individual and a focus group discussion or in only one of these, in order to avoid putting them in situations that were difficult or would cause social sanctions afterwards; and also considered this in the interview situations.

All the interviews were conducted in Finnish by Marja Peltola and first professionally transcribed in Finnish and then translated into English[1] to enable joint analysis (since Ann Phoenix does not speak Finnish). The accounts and narratives in the data are understood as co-constructed by the interviewees and the interviewer and influenced by the interview context. Thus, the school context and the interviewer's position as a white, Finnish female academic have inevitably had consequences for the interactions. The boys, for instance, assumed that as a Finn the interviewer shared an understanding of what a comprehensive school is like and had some familiarity with such schools. The whiteness of the interviewer was not commented on by the interviewees—whiteness was seldom discussed by the interviewees, which highlights its normative position. However, whiteness and Finnishness were self-evidently shared features with the white Finnish interviewees.

All the participants were asked questions about "multiculturalism" and ethnicity. None objected to the questions or queried them. However, the participants sometimes appeared puzzled and hesitant in response. It appeared that many were unaccustomed to discussing such issues and had difficulties in finding the vocabulary to do so. Further, it is possible that the shared position of being Finns, and understanding Finnishness as detached from "multiculturalism," was so self-evident for some that discussion of it felt irrelevant.

Multiethnicity in the Schools, the Norm of Whiteness and Egalitarian Ideologies

Especially for the interviewees in the almost exclusively white Nurmi School, multiethnicity was a distant theme. This is not surprising given that the pervasiveness of "color blindness" (which is part of what constitutes white innocence, Wekker 2016) frequently makes racialization invisible to white people. In addition, the pervasive myth that Finland is monoethnic (Tervonen 2014) was not challenged, particularly since there were very few children from minoritized ethnic groups in Nurmi School. As a result, the white Finnish young people encountered few young people or adults they recognized as being from ethnicities other than their own. They viewed multiethnicity as removed from their everyday lives and marked by visible differences such as wearing a hijab or identifiable practices such as going to different religious classes.

> Marja: What about then, multiculturalism, is that a thing that is visible in any way at this school?
>
> Sofia:[2] What do you mean?
>
> Marja: Like, are there any pupils from different backgrounds and different ethn-..?
>
> Elsa / Veeti: [speaking simultaneously] Well hardly any…
>
> Sofia: Do you mean like religion?
>
> Marja: Well religion or, if you think like, if there's people who have moved here from somewhere else or their parents have moved here or something like that.
>
> Veeti: Well I don't really know anyone's origins. I know only that two people attend different religious classes and then, I… That's it.
>
> Sofia: Well I know, I've seen in the school corridors for example a couple, only three or four people who wear that kind of veil. But no one probably says anything to them, hopefully or like that. So it's like everybody adjusts to this (school).
>
> (*Nurmi school, focus group 2, two boys and two girls, aged 12–13, white Finnish background*)[3]

It is striking that the young people in the above focus group are not familiar with the notion of multiculturalism. Sofia first asks what Marja means and when Marja has explained, she works to make sense of it in terms of her everyday experiences and settles on religious difference, checking whether this is what Marja means. Her shift of focus to religion enables Veeti to explain that two people in his class have different religions, apparently different from Evangelic Lutheran, the majority religion in Finland. Sofia then explains that she has seen in the school corridors (i.e. not in her classes) three or four people who wear "that kind of veil." Difference and different religion for her are embodied in visible dress and is clearly Muslim, even though she does not know what the veil is called. In this, Sofia's account fits with those of many white young people and teachers, who focus on niqabs and burqas as signifiers of Muslim religion and multicultural difference (Scott-Bauman et al. 2020). It is noteworthy that, while issues of discrimination, problems or inequities have not been raised in relation to multiculturalism or religious difference, Sofia immediately explains: "But no one probably says anything to them, hopefully or anything like that." It appears that acknowledging that she has noticed this difference requires an immediate denial of discrimination. There is a co-location of noticing difference and discrimination that must be refused. Yet, Sofia's denial of discrimination is partial in that she uses the words "probably" and "hopefully," accepting that she does not actually know

and that it is possible that this signifier of difference may well be marked as a reason for discriminating against the girls who wear "that kind of veil." Sofia's final statement in the above extract is ambiguous in that it is neither clear who the "everybody" who is doing the adjusting is, nor what the adjustments are. However, her marking of religious difference serves to underline the norm of white Finnishess by highlighting particular Muslim girls as embodying multicultural difference.

Sofia's account is indicative of the pervasiveness of egalitarian ideologies among the young people in the sample. This is exemplified in an individual interview with Aleksi, also from Nurmi School.

> Marja: I was still thinking about—so about ethnic background amongst your friends so, does it matter at all that, what is someone's skin color or where their parents are from or—?
>
> Aleksi: Noo. To me the main thing is that you're a cool person and then like, funny jokes and you get along. So that is, in a way to me for example makes no difference if someone for example, likes some ballet and I don't, but as long as I get along with them otherwise.
>
> Marja: Right, so all the other things don't matter?
>
> Aleksi: M-hm (nods).
>
> (*Nurmi school, individual interview, boy 13 years old, white Finnish background*)[4]

In his response, Aleksi encapsulates issues that constitute popular or hegemonic masculinity, being cool and funny, telling funny jokes and being able to get along with other boys. He underlines this individualistic approach to accepting people for what they are by suggesting that even if a boy liked ballet (something that is antithetical to being hegemonically masculine according to many boys' accounts), it would not matter as long as he got along with them. It is particularly noticeable that he avoids mentioning skin color or parents' backgrounds altogether and gets onto what is perhaps safer ground for him, masculine sociability. In doing so, he implicitly equates ballet and minoritized ethnic group status as comparable and as non-normative, even as he is asserting that they do not matter. His account subtly reconstructs whiteness and hegemonic masculinities as norms.

This individualistic approach to multiculturalism is also evident in another interview from Nurmi School with Kristian and Valtteri.

> Marja: How about here in school, can you see multiculturalism …?
>
> Kristian: …It isn't necessarily that multicultural here.
>
> Valtteri: Here there is quite a lot of, the same Finnish people, like all, I see a lot of those comments (in the internet) where people complain

> that how many, immigrants there supposedly are here and everything really horrible, so I think, here after all there aren't a lot and I think they're not causing any harm even. And, like there aren't that many here either so, really there aren't a lot. (…)
>
> Marja: How do you think like in general that, does it matter that what is the person's skin color or…
>
> Kristian: No.
>
> Valtteri: No, I don't think so.
>
> Kristian: It depends on what is there inside, inside the head.
>
> Valtteri: Yeah, I think so too, it doesn't matter at all, that, like I don't get how it could matter at all, to some.
>
> (*Nurmi School, focus group 4, two boys, both 12 years old, white Finnish background*)[5]

Kristian's and Valtteri's responses seem straightforwardly an indication of belief in multicultural equality, strong opposition to, and puzzlement at, racist discrimination and a commitment to treating people as individuals ("What is inside the head is what matters"). However, as well as espousing equality, Valtteri's longest turn also shows a taking-for-granted of the status quo and that his commitment to equality is provisional in that he focuses on numbers and seems to suggest that complaints might be justified if there were a lot of migrants in Finland.

All the participants above are able to take a color-blind approach at the level of an "all different, all equal" rhetoric because they are all white and take for granted their Finnishness and belonging in Finnish society. They are, therefore, accepting of the fact that they and people like them are the ones who decide whether migrants or religious minorities are accepted as belonging in Finland. As a result, their accounts implicitly reproduce the racialized status quo and, as found in much work on whiteness, makes their undoubted commitment to egalitarian ideologies and eschewing of racism, contingent and limited (Leonardo 2009; Nayak 2007). The example below takes a different focus, in being concerned with tourism and cuisine. However, it also serves to reproduce the notion that whiteness is the norm and minoritized ethnic groups are outsiders to the Finnish state. It comes from the individual interview with Veeti, who was cited in the first extract above in his focus group discussion.

> Marja: Is multiculturalism in general the kind of thing that's like familiar to you or have you ever thought about it?
>
> Veeti: It is familiar because we travel so much, so of course when I am abroad I eat more multicultural food and, especially because my parents

> don't like these tourist places at all, for example some touristy restaurant. (…)
>
> Marja: Do you have any opinion about that that Finland is now becoming somewhat multicultural after all, is it a good or a bad thing?
>
> Veeti: Well I think it's quite a good thing. I'm probably, quite excited about that for example that Taco Bell is coming, do you know the American chain, so that's coming to Finland now and… I like it that at least in food culture that this Finland is becoming multicultural. (…) But then if you start to use a lot of money, or like really, a lot of money for religions, for example I was thinking a bit about what was it again, the chapel?… (Marja: The mosque-project?) Yeah about that, I was a bit like, quite a lot of money will probably be spent on that. In the end it isn't probably that much, but it was immediately, the first thought that is that now so wise? Because there aren't that many probably here in the end. So you could maybe make it a bit smaller. But yeah.
>
> (*Nurmi School, individual interview, boy 13 years old, white Finnish background*)[6]

Veeti's account provides an example on the intersection of (upper-)middle-class positioning and white Finnishness. He is well travelled outside Finland and enjoys experiencing multicultures, particularly through food. As Stuart Hall (1997: 181) suggests: "To be at the leading edge of modern capitalism is to eat fifteen different cuisines in any one week." Veeti considered multiculturalism positive in relation to his consumption as a tourist and a diner. However, while he eloquently praised multiculturalism in Finnish food culture, he opposed multiculturalism that demanded what he saw as too much public investment in Helsinki's ongoing mosque project and, indeed, did not know the word mosque despite his apparent cosmopolitanism.

Phil Cohen (1988) suggests that "multicultures" and "multiracisms" can coexist. In the case of white young people interviewed about masculinities, white innocence (Wekker 2016) meant that they took a conditional approach to multiculturalism and, as Emma Nortio, Tuuli Anna Renvik and Inga Jasinskaja-Lahti (2020) found, did not consider that Finnish society should change to include migrants and people from minoritized ethnic groups. The section below moves from consideration of the young people's conceptualization of multiculturalism in general, to examining the ways in which they described their experiences of racialization in their schools and classrooms.

Accounting for Racialized Difference at School

In two of the schools, the students encountered other ethnicities on a daily basis. Therefore, they had the opportunity to become familiar with young people

from other ethnic groups and, potentially, to become friends. This section considers whether this was the case. It examines how white Finnish young people at these ethnically mixed schools thought about multiculturalism at their schools, as well as their views on the young people from different ethnicities they met at school. The popularized notions that prejudice is the result of prejudging (Allport 1954) or that familiarity breeds liking (Zajonc 1968) would suggest that being in the same classrooms would decrease racism and increase multicultural commitments. However, the literature available has long demonstrated that these notions are too simplistic (Rattansi 2020) and that power relations, local and national contexts and histories are all implicated in interactions in "contact zones," which are frequently conflictual (Pratt 1991). This complexity was evident in the accounts of the young people in the study reported here.

> Marja: Is this school in your opinion so-called multicultural, whatever you think that means?
>
> Lauri: Yes. (others show their agreement)
>
> Marja: How does that then show here?
>
> Lauri: Well everybody gets along but it may, some people, particular people, maybe if (…) those who have come from somewhere abroad so they try to take a role, at least some.
>
> Onni: Yeah, really a lot.
>
> Marja: What sort of roles?
>
> Onni: Well like they start to throw their weight around, terribly much. Probably just because they wouldn't be left as targets of such behavior, but in my opinion there's almost none of that at all here in my school. I don't say now that everybody's doing that but quite often when that comes from somewhere, generally it is from the immigrants. (…)
>
> Marja: If you think about the teachers, does it show in any way in their behavior that people come from different backgrounds? Is it so-called equal here, the treatment?
>
> Lauri: It depends a bit, it may be a bit stricter for the foreigners. But it may well depend on their own behavior.
>
> (*Kukkula School, focus group 5, five boys, 14–15 years old, four with white Finnish background, one with white Estonian background*)[7]

In the above focus group, all the boys agreed that their school is multicultural and, when asked how that is evident in their school, Lauri explains that they all get along, but immediately makes exceptions by explaining that "particular people … come from somewhere abroad so they try to take a role." It is noteworthy that while he quickly explains what multicultural means, his engagement

with difference is less fluent in that he stops, restarts, talks about "some people," "particular people," then "at least some" when making a distinction between some of those who come from abroad and, implicitly, presumably white Finnish people. Unlike the clarity of his statement that multicultural means that everybody gets along, the rest of his first response is far from clear to the interviewer or reader, although it seems clear to Onni, who says "Yeah, really a lot." When the interviewer asks for clarification, it is Onni who responds with a long turn, explaining that "they start to throw their weight around, terribly much." Just as Lauri seems to have felt impelled to give an explanatory extension to his first statement, so Onni provides an explanation of his first answer that suggests that the people he is talking about might "throw their weight around." His explanation suggests that this may be because "they" are targets for other people. However, having suggested this, which implicitly suggests that boys identified as "immigrants" may be badly treated by white Finnish people, he gives his opinion that this does not happen in his school and that, while not all "immigrants" are like this, when there are such problems, they are caused by "the immigrants." The interviewer follows this up by asking about whether teachers treat everyone equally and it is Lauri who again gives a response explaining that "it may be a bit stricter for the foreigners," but that this is probably contingent on "their own behavior."

The effect of this exchange is to maintain white Finnishness as the norm and "immigrants" and "foreigners" as problematic by comparison. In these exchanges, both Lauri and Onni smooth over contradictions by recognizing that "other" young people may be treated badly while denying that it happens in their school or suggesting that it only occurs as a response to those young people's unacceptable behavior.

While exchanges such as those above were common in the study, a different perspective was presented in an interview with a trans boy and his female friend, both of whom were white and Finnish. In their fast-flowing, co-constructed account, the social boundary between white Finnish boys and boys from minoritized ethnic groups is related to social class and racism.

> Sami: We have a ridiculously white school, or I mean Finland in general is very white. So then especially the sports class, they are all white. (…)
>
> Katriina: Then also, they're also relatively wealthy, those in the sports class.
>
> Sami: Yes, they're all quite wealthy, they always have all the latest fashions, more new clothes and… good mobile phones and everything else like that. (…)
>
> Katriina: Yes it's a bit, then also when they're—I don't know if they are racist or not, when they... well it seems to be a bit like that they are (racist), at least a bit, all of them.
>
> Marja: You mean who they?

> Katriina: They…
>
> Sami: Sport—
>
> Katriina: Boys in the sports classes. And then also it feels, they are using it, for example we have one other, a ninth grader black boy, so they use the n-word to him.
>
> Marja: Ah, oh no.
>
> Sami: But I feel that, I don't know. (Boy name) for example wants so much acceptance that he kind of like, accepts it. (…) And then at our school we have so many of those white sporty boys that all the non-white boys are gamer boys and then they're automatically a bit more feminine. Not necessarily more feminine but still feminine.
>
> (*Youth club, focus group 7, a trans boy and a girl, both 15 years old, white Finnish background*)[8]

According to Sami and Katriina, racist attitudes are common among white Finnish boys, particularly in the specialist sports class, where the boys are affluent and are considered to be at the top of the school hierarchy. Despite sometimes being subjected to racist behavior, Sami suggests that some of the boys from minoritized ethnic groups still seek to be accepted rather than complaining about the racism to which they are subject. According to Sami, the category of white sport boys is so strong and masculine that in comparison, all those he refers to as "non-white" boys are lumped together as "gamer boys," a category that is viewed in schools as less masculine. In Sami and Katriina's narrative, racism is gendered as a masculine phenomenon and only discussed in relation to boys' behavior and their social hierarchy.

Sami and Katriina provide a starkly different account from Lauri and Onni's. This may be because they come from a different school—they were interviewed at the youth club and their school was not one of the three schools that participated in the study. It may also be, however, because they have a different social understanding and have developed an intersectional racialized/social class analysis. This fits with their narrative that black boys are subjected to racism without having done anything to warrant it and that the black boys do not retaliate, but instead seek "acceptance" from the powerful, white Finnish boys. This was in line with Katriina and Sami's accounts more broadly, as quite exceptionally in the data, they adopted an intersectional view on many of the topics discussed and so were sensitive to differences related to social class, ethnicity, skin color, gender and sexuality.

In both of the above examples, white Finnish masculinity is constructed as the norm, with other masculinities constructed in contrast as either excessive ("macho"/"troublemaker") or as feminine, something that is commonly found in research on masculinities in many countries (Gottzén, Mellström and Shefer

2020; Hopkins 2006). The difference between the two focus groups presented above, however, is that the trans boy and young woman are critical of this and resist this view.

Distancing Oneself from Racism

In this final empirical section, we take a closer look at the ways in which the young people in the study view racism and their approaches to it.

Racism, generally, was denounced by the interviewees. However, most discussed racism as something vaguely negative ("bad" or "dumb") and therefore dissociated themselves from it. It was understood largely as an individual-level problem or inconvenience rather than a structural phenomenon. As found by Aminkeng A. Alemanji and Fred Dervin (2016), it was also located outside their own sphere and relegated, for instance, to the adult world or to certain parts of the internet.

Positioning themselves outside of, and untouched by, racism meant that these white Finnish interviewees were able to describe practices that included racist elements without recognizing them as such. One such practice involved joking, which is recognized as an integral part of masculine performativity (Kehily and Nayak 1997; Huuki, Manninen and Sunnari 2010; Barnes 2012). Masculine joking covered a wide array of topics and served multiple purposes. Boys' backgrounds and appearances, including aspects of minority ethnicity, were frequently part of its focus. For instance, Onni from Kukkula School explained that among his team members—some of whom were from minoritized ethnic groups—saying things that could be considered racist "by someone" was acceptable since "everyone knows" that it "is only joking" and thus not to be taken seriously.

> Marja: Have you ever heard that any of them would have faced racism or something, shouting for example in some of your matches?
>
> Onni: No, I haven't and then just, in the workouts it doesn't, if someone says something so called that could be in someone's opinion (racist) so it's still, we're all such good friends with each other that it, it just doesn't influence that in any way, or if, everyone there knows, so if you say something about another so it's always joking, like in our team, there it's not worth taking anything seriously, it's a bit like that.
>
> (*Kukkula school, individual interview, Onni, 14 years old, white Finnish background*)[9]

This line of thinking was shared by several other boys, and it was emphasized that joking was not targeted disproportionately against minoritized boys because "everyone is dissed equally." Racist joking was thus equated with other

insulting joking about boys' appearance or behavior. White Finnishness was invisible in that it was left outside joking, which highlights its normative position; at the same time, racist joking was treated as a matter of individual-level insults. Since masculine joking practices include a norm of being able to "take a joke," taking offence would be read as "whining" or being humorless, which would threaten boys' status in the masculine hierarchies (Huuki, Manninen and Sunnari 2010). That masculine norms make it harder to voice opposition to racist joking highlights the value of an intersectional approach in understanding white privilege among young people. Masculine joking practices, for the white Finnish boys, thus enable the use of racist expressions while maintaining a position as "not racist" and the performative maintenance of color-blind egalitarianism.

The interviewees sometimes recognized other people's behaviors as racist. However, in these cases, too, it was possible for the white Finnish boys to hold on to an outsider position in relation to racism, and to minimize its significance. In the quote below, Elmeri from Nurmi School describes brutally racist behavior that his team member has had to endure not only in his football hobby—according to Elmeri because "he's really good at running"—but also in school.

> Marja: Have you ever encountered something that people whose origins are somewhere else were treated in a different way than…?
>
> Elmeri: Yeah.
>
> Marja: Okay, where?
>
> Elmeri: Well we have one like a dark-skinned forward. He's really good at running so people always shout at him everything like, go steal bikes and then, everything else a bit racist like this.
>
> Marja: Ok so some opponents shout or?
>
> Elmeri: Opponents and then some parents shout.
>
> Marja: Parents, for real?
>
> Elmeri: Yeah and sometimes in school people throw bananas at him and [laughs] other stuff like this.
>
> Marja: Right. Has your, coach or someone said something about it?
>
> Elmeri: Yes but it doesn't help at all when, they just don't listen.
>
> Marja: Well what do you think about it?
>
> Elmeri: I think it's a bit dumb, but not everyone needs to be friends with everyone.
>
> (*Nurmi school, focus group 3, four boys, all 13 years old, three with white Finnish background, one mixed heritage*)[10]

Elmeri describes these actions as "a bit racist," but treats them as minor and insignificant. In this narrative, he does not himself take any sort of active position apart from as an observer. He does not express any sense that he should take responsibility for showing opposition to such behavior either during the event or when recounting it in the interview situation. Neither does he expect real opposition or intervention from the coach, whom he agrees did say "something," but whom he renders powerless by pointing out that the coach cannot help since the people making the racist comments "don't listen." When Marja asks him to reflect on the issue himself, Elmeri distances himself from it as something "a bit dumb," but frames it again as an individual-level problem relating to the nature of people's relationships. Although he had just described how racist acts have been targeted to a child by adults and he has seen racist acts repeated in different social contexts, he gives no recognition to the power dynamics and repetition and refers to racism as if it only occurs when people are not "friends," and that it is unreasonable to expect that everyone should be friends.

Doing Intersectional Whiteness and Masculinity

In this chapter, we have analyzed how white Finnish young people—in our study, mostly boys—position themselves and others in their narratives on multiethnicity, and how these positions intersect with their constructions of, and practices related to, masculinities. For many, multiculturalism was an unfamiliar and distant theme. They made sense of it by taking up color-blind egalitarian ideas. While those young people who attended the school with the greatest proportion of white Finnish young people were unfamiliar with the idea of multiculturalism, the presence of minoritized ethnic groups in the participants' schools did not necessarily make it easier for them to elaborate on this theme.

Most of the participants embraced egalitarian ideals in which it was generally important to represent themselves as people who have positive, open-minded attitudes toward diversity. That their egalitarianism was color blind meant that their narratives included very little recognition of racialized inequalities, and even when such issues were addressed, they were treated as individual rather than structural phenomena. The normative position of white Finnishness was left unrecognized and unquestioned, while it was reproduced and consolidated in implicit assumptions about who had to "blend in," who needed to be "tolerant" and who caused "trouble."

The Finnish version of white innocence (Wekker 2016), grounded in the Finnish welfare project and myth of monoculturalism, highlights the nation as egalitarian, while remaining color blind and failing to recognize racialized power relations and inequalities, both historical and contemporary. White innocence can also be found in "multicultural education" in schools, which is supposed to offer pupils the analytical tools for understanding diversity, but (as in multicultural education in other countries) has been found to work in

superficial or even othering ways, leaving white Finns outside of its focus, and lacking content related to racism and anti-racism (Alemanji 2016; Holm and Mansikka 2013). Given that white innocence is a central part of, and reinforces, the Finnish cultural archive, it is not surprising that white Finnish young people draw upon this perspective when making sense of multiethnicity.

The normative position of white Finnishness intersected with white Finnish masculinities to be the unquestioned norm, against which the masculinities of boys from other ethnic groups were often seen as either excessive or feminine. "Doing boy" intersected with the norm of white Finnishness, for instance, in how racialized and racist name-calling was legitimized in the context of joking as masculine performativity. Joking thus allowed the white Finnish boys to accept racist language and use it themselves, while simultaneously holding on to their self-representations as not racist, "tolerant" and egalitarian. A further concrete example of white innocence in action can also be found in how self-identity as egalitarian enabled the participants to treat racism as nothing to do with them, while minimizing and excusing it.

Our analysis of the intersection of white Finnishness and masculinities contributes to what Twine and Gallagher (2008) called the "third wave" of whiteness studies by showing how social categories intersect and mutually constitute one another in nuanced ways. White Finnishness and masculinities both work hegemonically and, to an extent, reinforce each other's normative position. This does not, however, mean that white innocence, color-blind egalitarianism or other mechanisms enabled by and supporting the normative position of white Finnishness in Finland were only related to masculinity. The intersection of white Finnishness and other social categories is likely to produce different but no less powerful ways of legitimating white Finnishness as normative.

As we discussed in the introduction, there is a recurrent imaginary of young people as a new, "multicultural" generation, who actively participate in recreating Finland as a "multicultural" nation. Our analysis shows that if Finnishness is to be reimagined and recreated as racially more inclusive, it has to disrupt the problematic lines of thought connected with white innocence and complicity with racism by acknowledging that the exclusionary norm of white Finnishness is deeply rooted in young people's, as well as adults', everyday practices.

Notes

[1] The translations were done by Linda Sivander, Olli Heiniö and Anna Koivukoski as part of their paid internships in the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies in 2017–2018. We are very grateful to all three for their valuable help and to the Collegium for funding this.

[2] All young people's names appearing in the text are pseudonyms.

[3] K1: Mites sitte, monikulttuurisuus onks se semmonen asia mikä mitenkään näkyy täs koulussa vai?

M/N: Mitä sä tarkotat?
K1: Se et onks täällä oppilaita erilaisist taustoista ja eri-, etn-..?
M/N: No aika vähän (—) [0:18:16 pp].
M/N: Tarkotat sä uskonnossa vai?
K1: No joko uskonto tai sit jos ajattelee et ois muuttanu jostain muualta tai niitten vanhemmat on muuttanu jostain muualta tai jotaki semmosta?
M2: No, mä en hirveesti tiedä kenenkään syntyperiä. Mä tiedän vaa että, kaks tyyppii jotka on eri uskonnoissa ja sitte, mä.. Siinä se on.
N1: No mä tiiän, mä oon nähny koulun käytävil esim. pari, ihan vaan joku kolme tai neljä, tyyppii jotka käyttää semmost huivii. Mut ei kukaan varmaan mee sanoo niille, mitään toivottavasti tai tällee. Et on se sillee ihan et kaikki sopeutuu kuitenki tähän (kouluun) [0:18:59].

[4] K: (M)ietin vielä noista.. siis tost etnisestä taustasta sun kavereissa nii onks sil mitää välii että, mikä on jonku ihonväri tai mistä sen vanhemmat on kotosin tai..?
V: Eei. Mulle o vaa pääasia et on hyvä tyyppi ja sit sillee.. hauskat jutut ja tulee toimee. Et se on tavallaa mulleki esim. iha sama jos joku vaik, tykkää jostai baletist ja mä en, mut kuha mä tuun muuten sen kaa toimee.

[5] K1: Mites muuten täällä koulussa, näkyyks monikulttuurisuus täällä (…)?
M2: (…) Ei täällä hirveen monikulttuurista välttämättä.
M1: Kyl täällä on aika paljon, samoja suomalaisia tyyppei, niinku kaikki, mä nään tosi paljon semmosia kommentteja missä ihmiset valittaa et kuinka monta, maahanmuuttajaa mukamas tässä on ja kaikkee ihan hirveetä, niin mun mielestä, täällä kuitenkaan ei oo ees kauheesti eikä, mun mielestä niistä oo mitään haittaa ees. Ja, siis eihän tälläkään kauheesti niitä oo että, ei todellakaan oo kauheesti. (…)
K1: Mites te ajattelette noin niinku yleisesti että, onks sillä väliä että mikä on ihmisen ihonväri tai..
M1: Ei.
M2: Ei mun mielestä.
M1: Se riippuu siitä mitä on siellä sisällä, pään sisällä.
M2: Niin, munkin mielestä, ei sillä oo mitään välii, että, niinku, mä en tajuu et miten sillä ois mitään välii, joidenkin mielestä.

[6] K: Aivan [naurahtaa]. Onks ylipäänsä monikulttuurisuus sulle sellanen asia mikä on sulle sellai tuttu tai ooks sä koskaa ajatellu sitä?
V: On se tuttu koska me matkustellaan niin paljon, niin sitte mä tottakai syön siellä enemmän monikulttuurista ruokaa ja varsinki ku mun vanhemmat ei tykkää ollenkaa tälläsista turistipaikoista, vaikka jostai turistiraflasta. (…)
K: Onks sul jotain mielipidettä siitä et ku Suomi kuitenki monikulttuuristuu, onks se hyvä vai huono asia vai?
V: No musta se on ihan hyvä asia. Mä oon ainaki varmaa innoissaa siitä että tulee vaikka toi TacoBell, tiedätkö se amerikkalainen ketju nii se tulee nyt Suomeen ja.. mä tykkään siitä et ainaki ruokakulttuurissa et tää Suomi

monikulttuurisoituu. (…) Mut sitte jos ruvetaa käyttämää paljon rahaa, tai siis tosi paljon rahaa uskontoihi, esim vaikka mä olin vähän mietteliäs siitä minkä se olikaan se kappeli... (K: ...se moskeijahanke vai?) Nii siitä, mä olin vähän että aika paljon toho rahaa varmaan menee. Ei se varmaa loppujen lopuks niin paljon, mut se oli heti ensimmäinen ajatus et onks toi nyt iha järkevää. Koska ei täällä varmaa niin paljoo kuitenkaan oo.. et vois ehkä vähän tehdä pienemmä. Mutta nii.

[7] K: (O)nks tää koulu teijän mielestä ns. monikulttuurinen mitä se nyt sit tarkottaakaan et?
V: On.
V: Joo.
K: Miten sä näkyy tääl vai?
V: Kyl kaikki tota tulee toimeen, mut saattaa jotkut, tietyt, ehkä jos (…) ne jotka on tullu jostain ulkomailta nii ne yrittää ottaa roolia, ainaki jotkut.
V: Niin, tosi paljon.
K: Minkälaisia rooleja?
V: Siis sillei et rupee isottelee iha hirveesti. Just varmaa just sen takii ettei ne ite jäis sen isottelun kohteeks, mut mun mielest sitä ei oo melkein yhtään tääl mun koulussa. En mä nyt sano et kaikki tekee sitä, mut aika usein jos se tulee jostain suunnasta nii yleensä se on maahanmuuttajista. (…)
K: Jos ajattelee tota opettajii nii näkyyks se niitten suhtautumises mitenkää, se että ihmiset tulee eri taustoista? Onks se ns. tasa-arvosta se kohtelu täällä?
V: Se vähä riippuu, saattaa olla vähä tiukempi ulkomaalasille. Mut se saattaa kyllä johtuu niitten käytöksestä.

[8] V1: Meil on älyttömän valkonen koulu, tai siis Suomi ylipäätänsä on tosi valkonen. Nii sit varsinki urheiluluokka, ne on kaikki valkosii. (…)
V2: Sit kans et, ne on kaikki suht varakkaita ne urheiluluokkalaiset. (…)
V1: Nii ne on kaikki aika varakkait, niil on aina kaikki uudet vaatteet ja uusia vaatteita lisää ja (…) hyvät kännykät ja kaikkea muut tommosta. (…)
V2: Onhan se vähän, sit kans ku ne on… mä en tiiä onks ne nyt rasistisii vai ei, ku ne... no vaikuttaa vähän silt et ne on (rasistisia), ainaki vähän, kaikki.
K: Siis ketkä ne?
V2: Ne..
V1: ..Urheilu..
V2: ..urheiluluokkalaiset pojat. Ja sit kans tuntuu et ne käyttää just sitä esim. meil on yks toinen ysiluokkalainen musta poika, nii sille sanotaan n-sanaa.
K: Aa, voi ei.
V1: Mut must tuntuu et, emmä tiiä, (pojan nimi) esim. haluu niin paljon hyväksyntää et se vähän niinku hyväksyy sen. (…) Sit meiän koulus meil on nii paljo niit valkosii urheilupoikii et kaikki ei-valkoset on pelaajapoikii ja sit ne on automaattisesti vähän feminiinisempiä. Ei välttämät feminiinisempii mut feminiinisiä kuitenki.

[9] K: Ooks sä koskaa kuullu et kukaa niist kohtais jotain rasismii tai jotain, huuteluu vaik jossain teiän matseis?
V: Ei, en oo ja sitte just, treeneissäki ni ei se, jos joku sanoo jotain ns. mikä vois olla jonku mielestä (rasistista) ni se on kumminki, me ollaa kaikki niin hyvii kavereit keskenää et se, se vaan et se ei vaikuta millään tavalla et, tai jos, jokanen siellä, ni jos sanoo jotain toisesta ni se on aina vitsiä, et meiän joukkuees, siel ei kannata ottaa mitään tosissaan, se on vähän sellanen.

[10] K: Ootteks te koskaan törmänny semmoseen et kohdeltais eri tavalla ihmisiä jotka on jostain muualta kun-
M4: Joo, (—) [0:19:52 hp].
K: Okei, missä?
M4: No kun meillä on yks semmonen tummaihonen hyökkääjä. Se on tosi kova juokseen niin sille aina huudetaan kaikkee että, mee varasteleen pyöriä ja sitten, kaikkee muuta tällästä vähän rasistista.
K: Okei, siis huutelee jotkut vastustajat vai?
M4: Vastustajat ja sitten huutelee jotkut vanhemmat.
K: Vanhemmat, oikeesti?
M4: Joo ja sitä heitetään joskus koulussa aina heitetään välillä banaanilla ja [naurahtaa] muuta tällästä.
K: Just joo. Onks se teiän, valmentaja tai joku sanonu siit jotain?
M4: On mut eihän se mitään auta kun, ne ei vaan kuuntele.
K: No mitäs sä ajattelet siitä?
M4: Mun mielest se on vähän tyhmää mut, ei kaikkien tarvi olla kaikkien kaa kavereita.

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CHAPTER 5

"A Dark Foreign Man"

Constructing Invisible Whiteness in Finnish Sexual Autobiographies from the 1990s

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Abstract

This chapter analyzes a collection of 148 sexual autobiographies to discover how the narratives of sexual experiences and descriptions of sexual attitudes and feelings are connected to notions of race and nationality. The autobiographies, gathered in 1992 in Finland in the FINSEX research project are studied using both corpus analysis methods and close reading. The chapter addresses the construction of Finnish whiteness in a context that is, seemingly, monoethnic and in which race is rarely discussed. While very few authors comment directly on race, there are traces of ethnicized understandings in the texts. The narratives implicitly construct the authors' own white Finnishness as the authors note ethnic differences that make their own whiteness visible and construct the borders of Finnishness. The analysis of these autobiographies offers perspectives on the meanings of race and their connections to sexuality in the early 1990s Finland.

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Keywords: sexuality, autobiography, whiteness, Finland, corpus analysis

Introduction

In her sexual autobiography written in 1992, a female author describes her affair in Cyprus during the late 1970s, when she was in her 30s:

> And Alexis was so beautiful. During the first night after dancing, we went swimming in the pitch-dark sea and made love for a long time on the yacht club's concrete terrace. I got nasty marks on my back, but during the next night, I got more of them.[1]

This description is included in the autobiography's section titled "adventures," where the author describes how, even though she did not seek affairs with foreign men, she ended up in them both in Finland and abroad. With the descriptions of these affairs, the author, as others like her who wrote about their sex lives for an autobiography competition, constructed their understanding of the limits of Finnish sexuality and Finnish whiteness. In this chapter, I analyze these sexual autobiographies to discover what these accounts as well as the interpretations given by the authors for their experiences can reveal of the racialized nature of sexuality in early 1990s Finland.

The researchers who gathered this collection in 1992 were sociologists Osmo Kontula and Elina Haavio-Mannila. Their studies were a part of a research continuum on Finnish sexuality, named in the 1990s as the FINSEX project, which had already begun in the early 1970s with population-level surveys. According to Kontula and Haavio-Mannila's interpretation, by the early 1990s, Finnish sex had become more diverse, Finns were happier with their sexual lives and the sexual lives of men and women had become more similar (Kontula and Haavio-Mannila 1993). The FINSEX project had, as its name suggests, at its heart the idea of national characteristics in sexual practices. In the project, an understanding of Finnish sexuality has been produced in international comparisons, when especially the survey results, but also experiences narrated in the autobiographies, have been compared to results of studies conducted in Finland's neighboring countries (Haavio-Mannila and Kontula 2001; 2003; Haavio-Mannila, Rotkirch and Kontula 2005). Kontula and Haavio-Mannila (1995; 1997) analyzed these autobiographies in their books, first on sexual experiences in childhood and youth, and later on experiences in adult life (for their results in English, see Haavio-Mannila, Kontula and Rotkirch 2002). These studies addressed the autobiographies from the perspectives of life course and sexual scripts, as well as the differences between generations and those between men and women. Even though Tuija Saresma (2012: 20) has noted that these autobiographies could be analyzed to dismantle the normative representations of Finnish heterosexual whiteness, the construction of race or nationality within

these autobiographies has not yet been a subject of study. In this chapter, I scrutinize these aspects in the texts and analyze them to understand the intertwined construction of sexuality and Finnish whiteness.

As Joane Nagel (2003) states, race and sexuality form each other, and racial borders often make sexual barriers. Nagel (2003: 39–40) emphasizes how race is relational and acquires different meanings in different times and spaces (see also Pugliese 2002). With my detailed analysis of both the narration and the language of the autobiographers, I am able to demonstrate how the writers produced their understandings of whiteness and Finnishness in the intimate context of sexual autobiography. These intersections between sexuality and ethnicity might appear as what Nagel (2003) terms as "sexual cosmologies," theories of sexual qualities of certain ethnic groups, or simply as descriptions of personal experiences that reveal how sexuality and ethnicity construct each other as habitual, in "manners of being and acting," as Shannon Sullivan (2006: 23) phrases it. As Sullivan (2006: 24–25) suggests, habits can be both limiting and enabling, as can according to my understanding Nagel's sexual cosmologies. Both habits and cosmologies encourage certain kinds of actions and encounters, and discourage others. Following Leena-Maija Rossi (2009; 2015: 120–35), I perceive both whiteness and Finnishness as internally unstable categories that need their excluded others to secure their borders. Like Rossi, I perceive sexuality and gender as essential intersecting categories in the construction of whiteness, and analysis of these autobiographies offers an excellent opportunity to address this often subtle and invisible process.

Historically, Finnish whiteness has been a contested question. As Suvi Keskinen (2019: 171–75) describes it, in the 19th and early 20th centuries racial biology Finns were classified as inferior compared to those perceived as part of the "Nordic race" (see also Rossi 2015; Saarenmaa 2017). However, the autobiographies that I analyze here reflect an era when Finnish whiteness was perhaps in the historically most unquestioned position. At the beginning of the 1990s, the assumption of historically monoethnic Finland was firmly established (e.g. Lepola 2000: 21), and as the end of the Cold War produced new shades in Europeanness and whiteness (e.g. El-Tayeb 2011: xiv), Finland perceived itself on the side of the West and the securely white Europe. Indeed, Finland of the early 1990s could be seen as an example of Europe as "raceless" (El-Tayeb 2011: xv), a context where the questions of ethnicity are simply perceived as irrelevant. That said, traveling abroad and increased migration to Finland opened new opportunities for comparison and drawing the boundaries of white Finnishness. On the one hand, as Laura Saarenmaa (2017) states, traveling—be it real or fantasized—opened a way not only to reflect, but also to construct whiteness. On the other hand, Outi Lepola (2000) has analyzed how increasing migration questioned the self-evident position of Finnishness in the early 1990s. My study demonstrates how sexuality and Finnish whiteness interacted when the notion of Finnishness was under a new kind of contemplation.

The chapter proceeds as follows. I first discuss the context of these autobiographies, Finland of the early 1990s, and describe the circumstances in which the writers constructed their understandings of whiteness and Finnishness. I also address briefly how ethnicity was described in Kontula and Haavio-Mannila's studies. I then describe the autobiographies and my methods of analyzing them with both corpus analysis methods and close reading of the individual accounts. I present my analysis in two parts, first focusing on the experiences of ethnic difference in these accounts, analyzing what the writers noted as racialized features and how race became addressed in the writings. In the second section of my analysis, I focus on the limits and definitions of Finnishness, and analyze how the writers defined Finnishness and how Finnishness in these accounts becomes both stereotypically described and internally unstable. I end my chapter with conclusions on how the analysis of remembering intimate encounters enhances our understanding of how ethnicity was constructed in 1990s Finland and how my methodological combination might offer new perspectives on the fractures in the construction of racialized national belonging.

When Race Does Not Matter? Ethnicity in Early 1990s Finland

While Finland of the 1990s was a seemingly monoethnic society, it was also rapidly changing, and therefore the authors of these autobiographies wrote their accounts in a moment when the understandings of Finnishness were on the move (see e.g. Lepola 2000: 18–19). Historically, Finland had been a society of emigration, but it was now turning into a country of immigration (Mulinari et al. 2009: 7). For instance, during the six years from 1987 to 1993, the percentage of foreign nationals residing in Finland had almost tripled, although the share was still very low in terms of European standards, just 1.1 percent of the total population (Jaakkola 2005: 5). This change ensued largely from the collapse of the Soviet Union and the opening of borders east and south from Finland, and of the first groups of Somalian refugees reaching Finland through Moscow in 1990 (Lepola 2000: 17–18). During this period, the attitudes toward migration and people with a foreign background turned more negative, which was interpreted as an effect of the severe economic depression of the early 1990s (Jaakkola 2005). In more detail, at the time when these autobiographies were written, migration to Finland increased rapidly. In 1990, Finland received 6,492 immigrants with foreign nationality, and the number more than doubled to 13,238 in 1991. In particular, the number of migrants from African countries rose more than five-fold to still a low number of 2,089 individuals migrating to Finland in 1991 (OSF, "11a8"). While these numbers are small in comparison to the rest of Europe, the change was notable in Finnish society at that time.

More directly related to sexualized racial borders, in a study based on repeated surveys on Finnish attitudes toward foreigners, Magdalena Jaakkola (2005) reports that, in 1993, attitudes toward intercultural marriages were at their lowest

during the period covered by her studies, from 1987 to 2003. The attitudes were particularly negative toward marriages with Somalians or Russians (Jaakkola 2005: 83), and only 14 percent of the respondents considered very positive the perspective that they themselves would have married a foreigner (Jaakkola 2005: 107). That said, in 1993, a smaller proportion than six years earlier agreed with the statement that Finnish women are much too easily attracted by foreign men, although 54 percent of the respondents still at least partially agreed with this view (Jaakkola 2005: 90). Interestingly, a similar question was not asked about Finnish men, which reveals the underlining assumption that women's sexual behavior was an issue of public concern in a manner in which men's was not. Likewise, an almost equal number, 56 percent, assumed that the rising number of immigrants in Finland would lead to an increase in sexual harassment (Jaakkola 2005: 101). Already, these questions reveal how the foreigners were connected to both sexual appeal and sexual danger. The phrasing of the questions also tells of an unchallenged understanding of white Finnish ethnicity in the questions' assumption that the survey respondents would not have a foreign background themselves. Likewise, these questions demonstrate how the need for ethnosexual barrier building (Nagel 2003) heightened at the time of growing immigration.

Whereas the number of people with a foreign background in Finland was low in the early 1990s, traveling abroad had become common, which opened increasing opportunities to reflect Finnishness in encounters with foreign nationals. During the 1980s, the number of package holidays to Southern Europe in particular had increased manifold (Selänniemi 1996: 13–14). In the late 1980s, the annual growth in the proportion of Finns who took at least one minimum three-day holiday trip abroad had increased at an accelerating pace. While in 1985, this proportion was 22 percent, in 1989, it was already 33 percent (*Suomalaisten lomat ja vapaa-ajanmatkat 1989* 1990). Statistics Finland has tracked traveling regularly starting from 1991 (OSF, 12qp)—a change in data collection that in itself reflects the growing importance of traveling. In 1991, Finns made 4,470,000 trips abroad, roughly one trip for each Finnish resident. Out of these travels abroad, roughly 1 million were work-related and included at least one night in the country of destination, roughly 2 million were leisure traveling with overnight stays, and 1.5 million were cruises, mostly to Sweden, with overnight stay onboard. At that time, Statistics Finland did not gather information about the destinations of traveling. As Tom Selänniemi (1996) states, sensual pleasures of sunbathing, eating and enjoying warmth played a major role in travels to the "south." From the perspective of sexual experiences, travels abroad offered an opportunity to explore options not available in Finland, and the autobiographers recalled their experiences of nudism and commercial sex, or simply referred to other countries as freer than Finland.

As Kontula and Haavio-Mannila focused in their studies in the 1990s on the main topic of these autobiographies, sexual experiences, they did not concentrate on the notions of race or nationality. Nevertheless, their studies do

offer some reflections on these topics. In particular, these come up when the researchers discuss sexual experiences with foreign partners. The researchers connected these encounters to the topics of extramarital affairs and holiday flings, and with this emphasis, they portrayed traveling abroad as an exception from the limitations of everyday life. In their study, Kontula and Haavio-Mannila (1997: 694–98) framed casual relationships abroad as insignificant, yet exceptional. Moreover, they also mentioned foreign men in the context of intimate violence (Kontula and Haavio-Mannila 1997: 552), and quoted extensively men's accounts of buying sexual services abroad (Kontula and Haavio-Mannila 1997: 529–38). While the aspect of holiday affairs abroad as a temporary oasis of freedom is evident in the writings, the multitude of experiences described is not limited to these casual encounters. The writers also describe long relationships with strong attachments and serious intentions. Sometimes Kontula and Haavio-Mannila cited these accounts, but they framed these with their conceptualization of foreigners as exotic (see e.g. Kontula and Haavio-Mannila 1997: 448–51). As Kontula and Haavio-Mannila's study focuses on Finnish sexual lives, the limits set for Finnishness need to be read between the lines: this framing of foreigners as exotic is one way in which they as researchers constructed the understanding of Finnishness as differing from other nationalities.

Distant and Close Reading of Sexual Autobiographies

The collection of sexual autobiographies that I am addressing here was gathered in the form of a writing competition, titled "Sexuality as part of life" (*Seksuaalisuus osana elämää*). The call for writings, published in newspapers and magazines, invited anyone to write about the role of sexuality in their lives, and instructed the prospective participants to order a leaflet with full writing instructions (the leaflet is reprinted in Kontula and Haavio-Mannila 1995: 595–99). While the instructions were detailed, the writers were free to choose how they reacted to the questions that addressed education received on sexuality, sexual experiences during youth and adulthood, disappointments and traumas, as well as their evaluation on their present situation and the role of sexuality in their lives. Nothing related to ethnicity or any sort of minority positions was mentioned in the call. The call resulted in 175 autobiographies with varying length, with very different emphasis and varying styles of writing. Out of these texts, Kontula and Haavio-Mannila considered 161 autobiographies as suitable for their analysis (Kontula and Haavio-Mannila 1995: 44), and 149 writers gave their permission for future use in research. These autobiographies are now available at the Finnish Social Science Data Archive in digital and anonymized form (Kontula 2015).

This collection of writings is not a representative sample of Finns of the early 1990s. While the writers can be—and have been—compared with the Finnish population by, for example, their age, place of residence and education (see

Kontula and Haavio-Mannila 1995: 44–55), what remains is that those who wrote their autobiographies may differ from those who did not. Therefore, much more than a sample, these writings form a collection of the different possibilities present in Finland at that time for thinking and writing about sexual feelings and experiences (on the questions of representativeness in studying life writings, see Summerfield 2018: 135–66). Collecting written reminiscences and autobiographies has a long tradition in Finland and studying them has been an essential element in the Finnish field of oral history research that has utilized written sources in addition to interviews (see e.g. Heimo 2016). While this research tradition was already established by the early 1990s, this collection of sexual autobiographies was more directly inspired by sociological research that had likewise utilized written autobiographies (see, in particular, Roos 1987).

Kontula and Haavio-Mannila's studies (1995; 1997) treated these texts almost as a transparent link to the writers' experiences and searched in them for typical events for a certain generation or a certain sexual lifestyle. My own approach in this chapter is quite the opposite: I am not interested in evaluating if the autobiographies present factual accounts of the writers' lives. In fact, these autobiographies do carry resemblance to the conventions of pornographic writing. This might indicate that porn stories were one resource the writers had to hand when interpreting their experiences (on a similar discussion regarding Russian sexual autobiographies, see Rotkirch 2000: 36–37). It could also mean that some writers took the competition as a chance to experiment with writing about their fantasies as if they had been real-life events. That said, even if the autobiographies were fictional, they would communicate the understandings of sexuality of their time of writing. In my analysis, I pay limited attention to the diverse temporalities within the writings. This is partly because it is often impossible to date the events described by the writers. Additionally, in autobiographical writing, different temporal layers intertwine: the understandings of the time of writing inevitably shape how the writers interpret their earlier experiences, and these earlier experiences construct their understandings at the time of writing (on the multiple temporalities in life writing, see e.g. Summerfield 2018: 88–91). As testimonies of the early 1990s Finnish understandings of race, whiteness and Finnishness, these autobiographies focus on the very intimate context of recounting one's sexual experiences and feelings. For a large part, they offer views on the stereotypical thinking of that time, but they also give an opportunity to see beyond simplifications, into the diversity of conceptualizations and interpretations given by the writers to their experiences.

The collection of 149 autobiographies is rather large material for traditional close reading, in particular as I focus on a topic that they often only address in passing, that is whiteness and Finnishness. Therefore, I have experimented with other ways of approaching the data. I utilized computer-assisted corpus analysis to discover what kind of understandings of ethnicity and nationality addressing the textual level could reveal. One of the authors wrote her autobiography in Swedish, and this writing is not included in my corpus—I do,

however, analyze it individually with close reading. In addition, as an interesting challenge to this collection as a compilation of *Finnish* autobiographies, one Estonian writer also participated in the writing competition. While she lived in Estonia, she presumably had found the call in one of the Finnish newspapers and magazines read widely by Estonians during the early post-Soviet years. After some consideration, I decided to leave this text out of my analysis. Thus, my material consists of 148 autobiographies, 44 by male and 104 by female writers. I use the three-digit codes given by the original researchers when referring to these writings.

As Finnish language is morphologically complex and the material is relatively small for corpus analysis, I have lemmatized the 147 texts written in Finnish, to facilitate discovering recurring patterns. Lemmatization means that I have returned all the words to their basic forms, and the lemmatized corpus resulted in 600,019 word tokens combined.[2] To discover the connections between words not easily visible by reading through the material, I have used corpus analysis freeware AntConc (Anthony 2019; Froehlich 2015) to search for collocates, words that appear close to one another more often than would be probable by mere coincidence, and clusters or n-grams, combinations of two or more words. Following the example of Jarmo Jantunen (2018), to present the statistical significance of a collocate, I used Mutual Information (MI) score, which is sensitive toward uncommon words or fixed phrases and usually highlights content words, and a span of four words left and right from the search word. I analyzed collocates with a minimum frequency of five to leave out connections that only occur in a single text. Given the diversity and relatively small size of the corpus, the n-gram analysis provided very low frequencies and very few usable results.

I combined traditional close reading of the material with corpus analysis, a type of distant reading that allowed me to address the collection as a whole. While distant reading with computer-assisted corpus analysis has a reputation for not being particularly sensitive on issues concerning race and gender, like Lauren F. Klein (2018), I claim that it can be a useful tool also for studying the construction of racialized and sexualized positions. Like Klein, I perceive distant reading as helpful for discovering what is hidden in the texts and for getting further from the immediately visible categories. By identifying collocations, I have been able not only to discover which words are connected to terms related to race and nationality, but also to analyze terms that can be used to disguise these topics. Corpus analysis has not yet been used much with autobiographies and personal narratives. However, in this study, it has allowed me to see the material with fresh eyes and to discover even passing mentions of words related to race. My use of corpus analysis is inspired by studies that combine corpus analysis and (critical) discourse analysis (Baker et al. 2008; Lehto 2018: esp. 84–88). That said, my focus is not on identifying the typical discourses in the material, but rather on using corpus analysis to facilitate reaching the diversity and complexities of the experiences. Corpus analysis allows me to identify

relevant sections of the material and to see recurring patterns in even those autobiographies that do not discuss much, or at all, topics related to ethnicity and that would easily fall out from content-driven analysis. In my close reading, I analyze in detail the sections that address race, whiteness or Finnishness. I have translated the quotes from the texts from the Finnish originals as closely as possible, but refrained from repeating the most offensive slurs in English.

Intimate Encounters with Others

As an immediate marker of racial difference is a person's complexion, collocates of the words light or fair (*vaalea*, 96 tokens in the corpus) and dark (*tumma*, 91 tokens in the corpus) can reveal if the autobiography writers utilized these words to mark the differences between people. The collocates of these words are presented in Table 5.1. Light and dark coincide with words related to people, and the collocates reveal how whiteness as a skin color is not, in fact, invisible in the texts, but the word skin (*iho*) is the third on the list of most meaningful collocates of the word *vaalea*, right after two words for hair (*tukka* and *hius*). Dark, on the other hand, has no association with the word skin, but it is connected to the color of hair and eyes, showing that the people described in the texts are not noted by their dark skin color. In addition, the word dark is associated with the word for handsome (*komea*), indicating a masculine connotation that is not visible with the word for light. While the frequencies are small, the comparison between these collocate lists confirms the invisibility of non-white-skinned people in the autobiographies and shows how still some writers considered the light skin color as worth mentioning.

The more precise words for skin color are infrequent: the word white-skinned (*valkoihoinen*) appears in the autobiographies only once, and dark-skinned or black-skinned (*tummaihoinen, mustaihoinen*) do not appear at all. That said, the context of this only appearance of direct reference to white skin color is both interesting and telling. In his autobiography, a 45-year-old male writer (129) remembers his encounters with commercial sex abroad. He narrates how he had first searched for porn during his trips to Sweden, and then he recalls his experience as a spectator in a sex club in Hamburg, Germany. When describing the show he saw, he names two male performers as white-skinned. Their whiteness becomes relevant in the context where some of the other men were not white, as the writer describes them first as "three dark men, not quite black but very dark"[3] and later as a "dark mixed-race man, not fully black either."[4] As in the study by Kevin A. Whitehead and Gene H. Lerner (2009), whiteness as a category becomes named and its self-evident position questioned only when it is particularly necessary. In this case, the need stems from the author's aim for a detailed description of what he saw at the sex club and his observation of the racial differences between the performers. However, as the author is a spectator in this setting, he does not need to name his own whiteness. This account

Table 5.1: Collocates of the words *vaalea* and *tumma*.

vaalea

17 collocate types

237 collocate tokens

Collocate	Translation	MI-score	Frequency
tukka	hair	9.17231	7
hius	(individual) hair	8.49186	5
iho	skin	8.38022	5
pitkä	tall, long	6.86872	10
nainen	woman	5.36146	19
eräs	one, certain	5.23263	5
nuori	young	5.12263	5
tyttö	girl	4.98352	10
toinen	other, second	3.76843	6
ja	and	3.67106	46
joka	which, that	3.62107	10
mies	man	3.34175	7
hän	he, she	3.33700	19
olla	to be	3.11115	55
tulla	to become, to come	2.98498	5
minä	I, me	2.70842	13
se	it	2.17835	10

tumma

21 collocate types

258 collocate tokens

Collocate	Translation	MI-score	Frequency
komea	handsome	9.23061	7
tukka	hair	8.76405	5
pitkä	tall, long	6.79388	9
rinta	breast, chest	6.57457	6
silmä	eye	6.48059	6
tyttö	girl	5.64565	15
pieni	small	5.64565	6
kaksi	two	5.46444	6
nainen	woman	4.99805	14
myös	also	4.60612	6
mies	man	4.31200	13
joka	which, that	3.96128	12
kuin	as	3.85806	7
hän	he, she	3.68980	23
ja	and	3.61699	42
toinen	other, second	3.58257	5
olla	to be	2.72889	40
kun	when	2.70677	5
minä	I, me	2.54458	11
se	it	2.39303	11
ei	no	2.07309	9

is one of the two occasions in the collection where the writers use the Finnish n-word, translated above as black. The other is an account (058) where the writer recalls his visit to a gay bar in Finland and a tall, handsome Black man who approached him. The author, who was heterosexual himself and patronized the bar with his gay friend, describes how he feared hurting the man's feelings as he rejected these approaches.

As traveling abroad had become common by the early 1990s, these autobiographies reflect trips both for work and leisure. They mostly address experiences within Europe, including the countries of the (former) Soviet Union and Turkey, with further destinations as sporadic examples. The autobiographies demonstrate how traveling had only become a possibility during the recent decades and was for many writers still a notable exception in their lives. However, as the collection also includes writings by those who traveled extensively, these accounts become highlighted when addressing race and nationality. One of the writers narrating his frequent travels is a male author (034) who was 61 years old and retired at the time of writing. In his autobiography, he recalls finding his future partner after the Second World War and narrates their long marriage, which had not prevented him from searching for other sexual encounters. In addition to his long-term affair in Finland, the author remembers his encounters abroad that involved paid sexual services. He describes in detail the women he met as he traveled to Leningrad and Tallinn during the late Soviet years both as a tour leader and as a tourist (on imagined sexual encounters of Finnish men in Soviet bloc countries described in porn magazines, see Saarenmaa 2017). He recalls the women he met fondly, naming them as "the sweet Ekaterinas and Galinas." Especially when describing his encounters with women from the Soviet Caucasus, he describes these women as exotic, alluding to the sexual desirability of racialized others. The writer names the ethnic groups of these women in a manner in which he does not discuss other women in his text. He details the features of these women, such as black blue hair or dark almond-shaped eyes, and describes a scene where a woman performs a dance dressed in an "Islamic" outfit. While these encounters took place in Tallinn and Leningrad, in the very western corners of the Soviet Union, they show how traveling within the Soviet Union was common and different reasons, as in this example dancing in a dance company, brought people from faraway regions together.

In the end of his autobiography, the author compares the women he names as "Slavic" with Finnish women and even uses the word race in this context, demonstrating how racialization works also to differentiate between people who are white by their skin color (regarding in particular the position of Russians in Finland, see Krivonos 2019: 31–37). According to the writer, while there are different nationalities of "Slavic" women, they are all characterized by the societal structures that shape their attitudes toward sexuality. In his opinion, the "Slavic" women are more lively by their nature, which is particularly visible in how they perceive sexuality as a joy in life and a form of art. He refers to a

notorious survey conducted in the early post-Soviet years according to which being a prostitute was a preferred future profession for young women (on this survey, see Bridger and Kay 1996: 32–34), and interprets this result as an indication of "Slavic" women's will to combine work with pleasure. This emphasis on the pleasures of sex, even if it is paid for, is evident throughout his description of his own encounters, and his autobiography describes the blurred line between paid and unpaid sex. This may, partly, refer to the fact that in the Soviet context exchanging sex for services or goods did indeed blur the line (Rotkirch 2000: 203–07), but it also echoes how in the 1970s Finnish pornographic stories the fantasy of the excessive sexuality of racial others was marked in how even prostitutes could not help enjoying sex (Saarenmaa 2017). In addition, the statement contributes to the author's own self-image as a lover rather than a customer, which likewise echoes the Finnish innocence depicted in the 1970s porn magazines (Saarenmaa 2017: 40) and bypasses the uneven economic positions of a Finnish man and a Soviet woman. These inequalities are only referred to in passing, for instance, when the author mentions a sweater he has brought with him to be sold in Leningrad (for memories of Finnish tourists' unofficial trading in the Soviet Union, see Kuusi 2013).

As at the time of writing these autobiographies, Finland had a very low number of residents with a foreign background, the encounters with them could have been noteworthy for the writers. The authors recall people of whom they mention their nationality, but also those whom they name as foreign, possibly with an explaining national attribute. The word foreign or foreigner (*ulkomaalainen*, 18 tokens in the corpus) clusters with the word man, which is notable as the authors also recall encounters with foreign women—these women are just not described as foreign (cf. Jaakkola 2005: 90, on the interest in foreign men as objects of women's desire). From the writings, it is often impossible to interpret what, in fact, the term foreign means. Being a Finnish citizen or long-term resident, or, indeed, having a background of generations in Finland might not have made one Finnish in the eyes of the writers (on the (im)possibility of an immigrant being perceived as becoming a Finn, see Lepola 2000: 363–72).

To exemplify how those named as foreigners and their ethnicity become relevant in the autobiographies, I analyze a writing by a 30-year-old female author (003) who had married young and who, after the marriage had run its course, had short-term affairs, one of them with a young "Moroccan Arab." She had met this man on her way to work and, according to her words, only became interested as the man seemed exotic. She states that her interest was not of a sexual nature, and she was surprised when he seemed to take for granted that their relationship would be sexual. As the author was missing sexual encounters at the time, she decided to sleep with the man, as she found him attractive. However, their relationship did not last long: "The man made love as I imagined an Arab would: fast, strong, completely concentrating on his own feelings and forgetting me. I did not take it personally. We met only twice, and then we both ran out of interest."[5] In the autobiography, the account of this affair works

as a prelude to a longer and more meaningful relationship. During the following winter, the author moved to a nearby town, and felt open to new adventures and affairs. She narrates:

> So I was attuned to the right state of mind when one morning on my way to work a dark foreign man stepped into the bus. My short affair with the Arab had somewhat lowered my mental barriers and I did not much think of him being a foreigner. He had wonderful eyes, which fastened to my own for some reason. I felt a strong feeling of recognition. As if we had known each other in some previous life.[6]

Even without any words, a connection formed between the man, described only as a dark foreigner, and the author. In addition, while the writer states that she did not think of the man as a foreigner, she immediately connects this encounter to her earlier affair with the Moroccan man. The autobiography continues with how the writer remembers meeting the man again on a bus a couple of days later:

> The man saw me and looked at me, as if he would have wanted to hold on to my eyes and he came to sit next to me on the opposite side of the aisle. We simply stared each other in the eyes the whole trip. I do believe in love at first sight, but I think this was a crush, it was exotic, and I had all along waited to find a man.[7]

The narration contrasts in how the author describes the feeling of familiarity with this man, but how, simultaneously, the man could be any man—an exotic dark foreigner, but also simply someone who is available. This contradiction is present throughout her description of their affair: the author describes how the touch of the man's hand feels wonderful and electrifying and yet she analyzes how it was her own feelings rather than the man's actions that made her so excited and aroused. Moreover, she offers cultural explanations for his behavior. She recalls being sure that the words "I love you" meant less for him than for her, and assumes that in his "world" she was too active for a woman. The author compares this experience with her earlier affair with the Moroccan man, and again she felt that the man did not take into account her feelings:

> The man was a prisoner of his cultural background, a male chauvinist, to whom satisfying the woman did not even cross his mind. I tried to talk to him but it was like talking to a wall: he looked at me as if I would have asked for the Moon or spoken a foreign language.[8]

The writer does not mention which language they spoke, but considering that she describes the man as a foreigner, it is very likely that they indeed spoke a foreign language, at least foreign to one of them. The author obviously had

a strong idea of the sexual particularities of "Arabs," which she then utilizes to explain her experiences with both of these men. In addition, this account is an example of what the word dark refers to in these autobiographies. The author does not describe the skin color or other features of the foreign man, but as eyes and gaze are important in the account, the writer mentions his "chocolate eyes." In addition to the fact that the writer utilizes the word exotic when describing both of her affairs, also the reference to chocolate eyes constructs the man as a delicious, edible "Other" (Rossi 2009: 197–99).

In addition to analyzing what kind of sexual encounters the writers place to foreign countries in their memories and what kind of sexual characteristics they attach to foreigners and foreign cultures, it is worthwhile to note which experiences are *not* tied to foreigners. In particular, homosexuality, one of the "cracks" in the nationalist hegemonic understanding of sexuality (Nagel 2003: 167), has often been perceived as something foreign (e.g. Dunn 2016: 95–97). In Finland, homosexuality has been at least since the 1950s considered as a Swedish import, and even as a "Swedish disease" (Juvonen 2006: 51; on intergrating homosexuality into Finnishness, see Järviö 2018). In these autobiographies, this understanding is not present, although one author (125) refers in passing to how homosexuality was more common in a country that is unnamed in the text, but that is described as different from Finland by its culture and religion. In addition, the collection includes one account of same-sex relationships abroad. This autobiography is written by a 30-year-old woman (086), and it is the only text in the collection written in Swedish. The author recalls her experiences in the early 1980s Stockholm feminist circles and her affair with another woman there. In her account, however, the setting abroad is not of importance as such, but the account tells of the existence of a larger feminist community and the more prominent role of lesbian feminism in Sweden compared to Finland. While these autobiographies include plenty of experiences of same-sex desires (Taavetti 2019), none of these highlights ethnicity.

On the Limits of Finnishness

As expected due to the lack of explicit discussion on race and ethnicity in Finland in the early 1990s, the terms race or nationality are rarely used in these autobiographies. The word race (*rotu*) is used, in addition to the reference to the ethnicity of the women from Caucasus discussed above, by two writers who emphasize that everyone is an individual regardless of their race, and the word nationality (*kansallisuus*) appears only on these occasions. In addition, two male writers refer to their female partners' exceptionally beautiful legs as *rotusääret*, and one female writer presumes that men who are very attracted to women's large breasts constitute their own "race." These rather peculiar ways of using the word highlight how the term race was not commonly used at the time of writing. Echoing this silence on discussions on differing ethnicities, only

one author (125) acknowledges the existence of racism, as she mentions it as a reason why she needs to meet her Pakistani lover in secret.

Comparably to the absence of the direct discussion on race or nationality, the term Finnish does not coincide with words that would demonstrate how the writers understood their own nationality. Finnishness is, in these texts, omnipresent and the authors do not name it with recognizable attributes, as they do not reflect on what is self-evident for them, their own nationality (cf. Lepola 2000: 354–63, on the construction of Finnishness in political debates on migration during the 1990s). A more interesting result is that the analysis of collocates of different words referring to foreigners does not provide results that could be read as descriptions of how the authors understood foreigners, which could, in turn, be used as a negation of how the writers understood Finns and Finnishness. To study this, I constructed a word-search list consisting of different names of countries, cities and nationalities mentioned in the autobiographies. The collocates of the word in this list consists of terms related to traveling and do not include words that could be interpreted as descriptions of foreign people. Therefore, the analysis of how the writers construct Finnishness must be searched within the writings by close reading.

As Saarenmaa (2017) has analyzed, in the writings of Finnish pornographic magazines of the 1970s, the dreams and fantasies of traveling were common, even though mass traveling was only just becoming possible. These dreams, fantasies and published stories also formed the frame within which the autobiographers interpreted their experiences of traveling and encounters with foreigners. Obviously, encounters during travels were not solely with locals, but also with other tourists, Finnish and foreign. Indeed, the travels may have offered a space for contemplating one's own national belonging (e.g. Andrews 2005). Therefore, despite the scarcity of direct discussion on Finnishness, some of the texts construct even explicitly the difference between Finns and foreigners often in relation to experiences of traveling. A female writer (060), 38 years old at the time of writing, had started traveling abroad alone at the age of 35, after divorce from a marriage she had entered while being just a teenager. Before accounting her experiences of traveling, she describes her life situation at that age—being single, in a well-paid job, and having "not learned the life of women." She makes clear the distinction between herself sitting smoking and drinking black coffee at her apartment window, and the "overweight mothers" gossiping by a sandbox in the yard. Her views on Finnish men were even harsher, and she felt torn by her sexual desires and her disdain of Finnish men. During her first trip to Italy, she realized what she had lacked in her life and how alone she was. In her text, she immediately opposes the assumption that her revelation was of a sexual nature: "No, I did not fall under the Italianos with jet-black eyes,"[9] she writes. Her traveling was frequent, and in her Mediterranean destinations, she acquainted herself with the locals. She summarized her observations and her own experiences with the following:

> And what was common to all these foreigners was the one and the same thing: joyfulness, friendliness, authenticity and love of people. And men. I never met a married man who tried to sleep around. Married couples were very liberated and happy. I lived those holidays fully and honestly to myself. On every holiday, I had someone. I enjoyed the holiday, I enjoyed tenderness, I enjoyed freedom, and I enjoyed making love.[10]

The author describes how her search for freedom led to sexual encounters, usually in the form of holiday flings that ended with her flight home. At the time of writing, however, she had met a German tourist during her holiday in Central Europe. This man had proposed marriage to her, and they were about to leave for a vacation together. Interestingly, even though the author emphasized the importance of sexual desire in her relationships and praised how her holiday lovers "love like only someone from the southern country can,"[11] she formed a relationship with a blond German man. Here, the blondness reads as a marker of whiteness that differentiates the German man from darker foreigners. As Whitehead and Lerner (2009) note, sometimes whiteness is mentioned to counter the assumption of some other ethnicity, and in this case blondness differentiates the German from the author's Mediterranean lovers. To borrow Nagel's (2003: 14–17) terminology, the author ended her "ethnosexual sojourn" closer to home, with a man resembling her own white Finnishness.

If this author described her disappointment with Finnish men in comparison to her experiences with men abroad, a 54-year-old male author (113) expressed comparable views regarding Finnish women. This writer describes how his marriage had broken down and he was convinced that finding a Finnish partner in his 50s would be difficult, and therefore he had signed up for a service that arranged marriages with women from the Far East. He started a correspondence with a young woman from the Philippines, and at the time of writing, this woman had just moved to Finland. He states that "to me, this Far Eastern girl makes the Finnish woman seem like a complete asshole."[12] He describes his new life with this "wonderful creature":

> All the caring and serving full of love that I have completely spontaneously received. Never before have I been rubbed with fragrant cream in the evenings and tucked into bed like a small child, not to mention the cooking. It feels like I would be in an incredibly pleasant dream and I am afraid of waking up.[13]

It is evident that this male writer did not expect to build an equal relationship and was happy when he had found a woman who did not seem to expect that either. In his praise of unequal partnership, this author is not alone. A somewhat similar idea is present in a text by a 68-year-old female writer (174) who describes how the men she met during her holidays "treat their woman

as a pearl."[14] Comparably to how the male writer's sole experience of a Filipina partner provoked him to judge "the Finnish woman" collectively as an "asshole," this female writer does not even name the foreign country in which she enjoys her holiday romances. Therefore, her description reads as a statement that Finnish men, unlike her foreign partners, have not treated her as a pearl. This desire places her as a willful object, not as an equal partner, similarly as the male writer who enjoyed being "tucked into bed like a small child." Both these writers contradict the understanding of how sexual lives in Finland had become more gender equal (Kontula and Haavio-Mannila 1993) and, in fact, this development was not something they hoped to occur.

When considering the limits of Finnishness, those who can be perceived as outside of the national entity, but who are nevertheless rather close, can illuminate the boundary-building processes. These autobiographies do not offer traces of "kinsmen" thinking (Keskinen 2019) in relation to Estonians, often perceived as similar to Finns, even though the writers do describe travels to and encounters with Estonians. Indeed, Estonians were one of the nationalities that had lost their popularity according to Finnish surveys on migration at the turn of the 1990s (Jaakkola 2005: 72). It is possible that as the changing situation after the collapse of the Soviet Union placed Estonians as immigrants from the Finnish perspective, they were not perceived as similar or as "kin" as they were both earlier and later. Surprisingly, the Turkish are the only nation referred to as kin to Finland, although the writer (141) assumes that this is something that only the Turkish themselves believe.

Observing racialized differences even closer to home, the references to Roma in Finland are very scarce and consist mostly of repetition of hearsay or proverbial expressions. Only one writer, a 48-year-old man (118), recalls his own encounter with Roma. This occurred in his youth in the 1950s countryside:

> As an arousing memory, a bike trip home from the village burned in my mind. Three gypsy girls walked on the road with their black hair flowing.—Pick us up, and you will get some, they called at us. For some time we traveled with the girls. They even hung from our bikes' carriers. How could we give them a ride, there was three of them and two of us. And we did not even have a place where to lie them down. I really felt helpless. I should have a motor bike, so I would drive further with the girl. I was irritated and aroused by the girls' curiosity-awakening offer.[15]

In this description, the writer notes the black hair of the Roma girls and a bit later ponders the girls' "black tuft" he was almost able to see, marking the differences from the other girls in his surroundings. This sole encounter complies with the image of Roma as sexually promiscuous that is one aspect in the construction of the stereotypical differences between the Finns and the Roma. The girls are, according to this author, casually offering to engage in sexual relations

with unknown boys they have just met. As Eija Stark (2019) has analyzed, Finnish folk tales associate Roma with uncontrollable sexuality, which is in contrast with the chaste attitude toward sexuality in Roma culture.

The references to Sámi people, another minority in Finland to whom sexualized connotations have been attached, are even fewer than those to Roma. In fact, the word Sámi is not mentioned in the corpus at all. The only direct comment on Sámi people is by a 61-year-old male writer (034), whose account of sexual adventures in Leningrad and Tallinn I analyzed above. This author comments that he has no experience of "Lappish" women and refers to Sámi with a pejorative word derived from yoik singing. This comment forms a closure to his description of the regional differences he has noted among Finnish women. According to the writer, those from Eastern Finland are less restrained and more impulsive, especially compared to the women from Ostrobothnia on Finland's western coast that he considers as the other extreme. This writer produces the similar kind of exoticizing categorizations of women from different Finnish provinces as he does on foreign women. These reflect the popular understanding of Finnish nation as a combination of differing tribes, and in this account, the writer projects these assumed differences on sexuality.

Conclusions: Producing Finnish Whiteness in Heterosexual Memories

In this chapter, I have analyzed the racialized understandings tied to sexual encounters in autobiographies. These writings reflect the naturalized understanding of Finnish whiteness that prevailed in the early 1990s, as none of their authors names their own ethnicity, and none of the accounts offers opportunities to question the writer's own white Finnishness. However, in the accounts this mostly invisible whiteness becomes named when it contrasts with non-white bodies, as Finnishness becomes—implicitly or explicitly—defined as it contrasts with foreigners. The authors utilize stereotypical understandings of what the "others" are like, and use these to explain their experiences. In addition, these accounts demonstrate the structural power imbalances between especially Finnish men and women from lower-income countries, and exemplify the utilization of racialized markers in these exchanges.

Analyzing both the descriptions of the encounters and the words utilized for ethnicity allows to alternate between close reading of individual autobiographies and distant reading of the collection as a whole. This methodological choice proved useful precisely because race and nationality are not topics of these writings as such, but are only visible in subtle references and as one aspect in the narratives of sexual encounters. Throughout the study, the use of corpus analysis combined with close reading in a circular manner. It offered an opportunity to review if something analyzed on the level of a single text

could also be discovered in other autobiographies. Likewise, I was able to conduct new searches with the words I discovered during close reading. That said, searching for certain words has its limitations when addressing a topic that is rarely directly addressed in the texts. Sometimes, as when comparing the collocates of different words, I can note the absence of a certain topic, but there are limits to what one can read into this silence. A similar combination of methods could be utilized with other collections of written reminiscences and autobiographies. As these collections have been gathered in Finland for decades, the material is vast, and as often the collection work has been conducted by culturally significant organizations, such as the Finnish Literature Society, these collections could offer intriguing perspectives on how the writers position themselves in relation to the assumed Finnish whiteness and how they participate in its construction.

My analysis has addressed the construction of white Finnishness from the perspective of entangled sexuality and ethnicity at a particular historical moment when Finland was perceived as monoethnic and questions of race were therefore regarded as insignificant, but when this situation was also starting to change. The early 1990s was therefore a moment when the self-evident position of Finnish whiteness was questioned as migration to Finland was increasing and also the autobiographers describe their encounters with foreigners in Finland. Likewise, increasingly common trips abroad, also reflected in these autobiographies, provided opportunities to compare Finns with other nationalities. My analysis demonstrates how these societal changes affected the intimate context of sexual encounters and sheds light on the complex process of ethnosexual bordering at an individual level of narrating one's own sexual history. As my study shows, the role of race in the narration is not straightforward, but the understandings of ethnicity work both to enable as well as to limit what the authors considered as possible. These autobiographies utilize and construct stereotypical thinking of different nationalities, the Finns included, and produce racialized hierarchies. That said, the writers also narrate how they have formed intimate relationships that overcome prejudice. These examples of crossing ethnosexual borders, however, often framed the "others" with an exoticizing gaze that shows how deeply the prevailing understandings of racialized differences affected even the most intimate experiences.

Notes

[1] "Ja Alexis oli niin kaunis. Ensimmäisenä yönä menimme tanssimisen jälkeen uimaan pilkkopimeään mereen ja rakastelimme kauan purjehdusklubin sementtisellä terassilla. Selkään jäi pahat merkit, mutta seuraavana yönä niitä tuli lisää." Kontula 2015: 014. All translations by the author. The names mentioned in the quotes have been changed.

[2] I used LAS program (Mäkelä 2016) for lemmatization. To increase the quality of my material, I went through the whole corpus manually and corrected clear spelling mistakes and wrong lemmas.

[3] ”kolme tummaa miestä, ei aivan neekereitä, mutta hyvin tummia.”

[4] ”tumma sekarotuinen mies, ei hänkään täysin neekeri.”

[5] ”Mies rakasteli sillä tavalla kuin kuvittelin arabin rakastelevan: nopeasti, voimakkaasti, täysin omiin tunteisiinsa keskittyen ja unohtaen minut. En ottanut sitä henkilökohtaisesti. Tapasimme vain kaksi kertaa, sitten loppui kummankin mielenkiinto.”

[6] ”Niinpä olinkin virittäytynyt sopivaan mielentilaan, kun eräänä aamuna työmatkalla bussiin astui tumma ulkomaalainen mies. Lyhyt suhde arabin kanssa oli hiukan madaltanut mieleni raja-aitoja enkä ajatellut miehen ulkomaalaisuutta sen enempää. Hänellä oli ihmeelliset silmät, jotka jostain syystä jäivät kiinni omiini heti kun mies tuli autoon sisälle. Koin voimakkaan tuntemisen elämyksen. Olimme kuin tuttuja jostain entisestä elämästämme.”

[7] ”Mies näki minut ja katsoi kuin olisi halunnut ripustautua katseeseeni ja tuli viereeni istumaan käytävän toiselle puolelle. Koko matkan vain tuijotimme toisiamme silmiin. Uskon rakkauteen ensi silmäyksellä, mutta minusta tämä oli ihastusta, eksotiikkaa, ja sitä, että olin koko ajan odottanut löytäväni jonkun miehen.”

[8] ”Mies oli kulttuuritaustansa vanki, sovinisti, jolle naisen tyydyttäminen ei tullut mieleenkään. Yritin puhua hänelle, mutta olisin yhtä hyvin voinut puhua seinälle: hän katsoi minua kuin olisin vaatinut kuuta taivaalta tai puhunut vierasta kieltä.”

[9] ”Ei, en kaatunut pikisilmäisten italiaanojen alle.”

[10] ”Ja kaikkia näitä ulkomaalaisia yhdisti yksi ja sama asia: iloisuus, ystävällisyys, aitous ja ihmisrakkaus. Ja miehet. En koskaan kohdannut ukkomiestä joka yritti mennä vieraisiin. Avioparit olivat hyvin vapautuneita ja onnellisia. Minä elin ne lomani täysillä, itselleni, rehellisesti. Jokaisella lomalla oli joku. Nautin lomasta, nautin hellyydestä, nautin vapaudesta ja nautin rakastelusta.”

[11] ”rakastaa vain kuin etelämaalainen sen tekee.”

[12] ”Tämä kaukoidän tyttö on saanut suomalaisen naisen tuntumaan minusta täydelliseltä paskiaiselta.”

[13] ”Kaikki se huolenpito ja rakkautta uhkuva passaaminen, jota nyt olen aivan sponttaanisti osakseni saanut. Ei ole ennen minua iltaisin voideltu hyväntuoksuisella voiteella eikä peitelty sänkyyn kuin pientä lasta, ruuanlaitosta puhumattakaan. Tuntuu kuin näkisin tavattoman hyvää unta ja pelkään herääväni.”

[14] ”käsittelevät naistaan kuin helmeä.”

[15] ”Kiihottavana muistona mielessäni paloi kylältä pyöräilty matka. Kolme mustalaistyttöä kulkea kepsutti mustat tukat hulmuten tiellä—Ottakaa kyytiin, niin saatte, he huutelivat meille. Jonkin matkaa kuljimme tyttöjen

kanssa. He jopa roikkuvat tarakassa kiinni. Miten niitä kyytiin olisin ottanut, kun heitä oli kolme, meitä kaksi. Eikä olisi ollut paikkakaan, minne tytöt olisi kellistänyt. Kyllä siinä tunsi itsensä avuttomaksi. Pitäisi olla moottoripyörä, niin hurauttaisin tyttö kyydissä kauemmaksi. Harmitti ja nostatti himoa tyttöjen antama uteliaisuutta herättävä tarjous."

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CHAPTER 6

Discursive Constructions of Whiteness, Non-White Cultural Others and Allies in Facebook Conversations of Estonians in Finland

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Abstract

This chapter discusses how Estonian migrants in Finland craft their place in Finnish society by appropriating the idea that they as an ethnically and culturally marked group naturally belong to the privileged migrants in Finland, while many other migrants do not. We explore how Estonians in Finland engage in Facebook group discussions with other Estonian migrants and in this dialogical process construct their own whiteness in relation to majority Finns and their racialized others in Finland, imagined as culturally distant, harmful and unfitting in the European North. We show how the discussants, drawing situationally both from their Soviet past and transnational migrant life in Finland, place

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themselves in a "knower's position" regarding racialized experiences both in Finnish and Estonian society, and through that aim at legitimizing their right to define and strictly delineate the boundaries of whiteness both in Finland and Estonia. In addition to that, we also observe the dynamics of whiteness with regard to Russian migrants in sorting out how ethnic/racial hierarchies are built in Estonians' mind.

Keywords: Estonian migrants, whiteness, racialized othering, Soviet legacies, social media ethnography

Introduction

Estonians, although often depicted as the best managing migrant group in Finland (e.g. Pitkänen, Saukkonen and Westinen 2019), still constantly need to prove their worth and negotiate their right to fully belong in their host country. Being transnationally active migrants who are closely connected to their homeland Estonia, too, they are sandwiched between various expectations on both sides of the Gulf of Finland facing double pressures to succeed. After the 2015–2019 European migrant crisis,[1] led by the increasing fear over the anticipated social changes in the future and unjust redistribution of resources, not only Finns but also all the migrant groups residing in Finland have needed to rethink their relationship to the growing and diversifying migrant population in the country.

In this chapter, we focus on the attribute of whiteness in social media discussions of Estonian migrants in Finland, approaching it in Ruth Frankenberg's (1993, cited in Estable, Meyer and Pon 1997: 21) terms as "a dominant cultural space … with the purpose to keep others on the margin." We explore what are the various ways in which Estonian migrants construct their own whiteness in relation to the "white" majority Finns, non-white racialized others and "white" Russians in Finland. Leaning on the ethnographic data collected in two Facebook groups that gather Estonians affiliated to Finland, we argue that whiteness, being identified as a valuable resource linked to privilege and rights of many kinds, has acquired increasing significance for Estonians through their transnational experience. To test this argument, the analyzed data encompasses two migrant groups in Finland that are seemingly distant and mutually incomparable: Russians (Russian-speaking people whom Estonians regard as ethnic Russians and subjects of the former Soviet and today's Russian state)[2] and non-white groups (African, Arab or Muslim background people primarily). While these reference groups are demographically by no means coherent and dichotomous, and may as groups in some cases even overlap, we treat such comparison as relevant since it rises as such powerfully in Estonian migrants' online discussions.

The Facebook discussions we examined seem to be predominantly characterized by views reflecting *blue-collar identity*, which by Melissa K. Gibson and Michael J. Papa (2000) and Kristen Lucas (2011) are reflected in a sense of dignity based on the quality of work and strong work ethic. The presumption that most of the discussants represent blue-collar workers—visible especially among male discussants who much more often discussed work, while the topics of women frequently concerned situations related to family life, and everyday living in multicultural neighborhoods—is consistent with the fact that most Estonians living in Finland are actually in blue-collar positions (Pitkänen, Saukkonen and Westinen 2019: 23). However, as we elaborate in further sections, there are no firm ways to define our studied groups more specifically, whereby we stick with the label "Estonian migrants in Finland" with a consideration that the occurring whiteness discourses are strongly shaped by discussants' engagement with two sociocultural contexts, Estonia and Finland.

Since Estonian migrants in Finland often live active transnational lives, being physically intensely connected to the neighboring home country and generally inclined to return migration, we emphasize whiteness as being transnationally constructed and historically informed. Whiteness here should be understood as negotiated simultaneously between two contexts, that of present-day Finland, which for many Estonians is becoming abnormally non-white, and that of post-Soviet nationalist Estonia, where the historical underpinnings and practices of whiteness are even more complex. We thus need to carefully consider Estonian migrants' (post)-Soviet and transnational subjectivities and their specific practices in Estonian-Finnish transnational space to fully understand how they attach meanings to and craft their social position in Finnish host society.

Such emphasis helps to elaborate and enrich the Finnish (Keskinen 2019; Keskinen, Skaptadóttir and Toivanen 2019) and Nordic transnational perspectives of whiteness and racialized relations. We invite even more careful consideration of old and new migrant populations' role—each one having their own distinct legacies of racialization—in shaping racial hierarchies in migrants' host countries. We contribute to the existing understanding on how the discursive production of whiteness dynamically and situationally works in white-dominated welfare countries, allowing the white migrants to create both sameness with and distance between other white migrants (Guðjónsdóttir 2014). More broadly, we also add to existing but still scarce scholarship (Imre 2005; van Riemsdijk 2010; Samaluk 2014) on applications of whiteness in Central and North European contexts when it comes to (post)-Soviet subjectivities.

The chapter is structured as follows. We first explain the Estonian migrants' special position in Finnish society as the "whitest" but not equal members of the society. Next, we engage with the literature that serves us in approaching whiteness and racialized othering in post-Soviet and Nordic contexts. Subsequently, we will give an overview of how the data were collected as social media ethnography and later analyzed. The next three sections each focus on a

different empirical aspect of the data. First, we examine how Estonian migrants on Facebook draft their boundaries of whiteness by drawing from their experiences in two societies, Finland and Estonia. Second, we discuss how Estonian migrants craft the group of non-white people in Finland, and how certain beliefs, attitudes and prejudices are discursively constructed and reproduced to emphasize their distance and incompatibility with "white" populations in Finland. Finally, we look at how Estonian migrants draw the boundaries of whiteness by discursively constructing sameness with the Russians in Finland, meanwhile still highlighting the difference with Russians in Estonia. Emerging from all these three angles, we show how whiteness is discovered and flexibly constructed by Estonian migrants as long as it helps to reach and maintain their privileged social positions in Finnish society.

Demographic Profile and Social Position of Estonian Migrants in Finland

The EU expansion in 2004 brought along Estonian workers' mass migration to Finland as the county offered better-paid jobs and a higher standard of living. Estonian migrants constitute the second largest migrant group in Finland after Russian-speakers, amounting to 51,000[3] permanent residents and complemented by up to 20,000 Estonians who work and reside in Finland on a more temporary basis and spend extensive periods of time in Estonia (Jauhiainen 2020: 234). Among the permanent ones, the share of working-age residents (between 15 and 64 years old) is relatively high, at 78 percent, although the proportion of children (14 percent of all residents) is also fairly high. It is remarkable that the share of retired residents is only 6 percent, which is much lower than that of the other major linguistic group, Russian-speakers (13 percent). The gender division between Estonian males and females among the permanent residents is around 50/50 (Statistics Finland 2021).

Estonians stand out as a relatively successful migrant group by many indicators. For example, they experienced least discrimination at work among the five researched nationalities residing in the Helsinki metropolitan area (Pitkänen, Saukkonen and Westinen 2019: 5). Moreover, Finns' attitudes toward Estonians whom they perceive as culturally and linguistically close to them are generally more positive than toward most other migrant groups (cf. Jaakkola 2009). Despite this, Estonians have also reported experiences of discrimination (Mankki and Sippola 2015; Zacheus et al. 2017) and recent studies have shown that their integration in Finland has been far less successful than often imagined (Pitkänen, Saukkonen and Westinen 2019). Kristi Anniste and Tiit Tammaru (2014) state that 31 percent of Estonian migrants work in positions below their education level and have experienced downward mobility after moving to Finland. Compared to other major linguistic groups in the Helsinki metropolitan area, Russian- and English-speakers, Estonians end up with managerial and

senior officer positions far less often (Pitkänen, Saukkonen and Westinen 2019: 23). There are thus clear indications that their situation as a migrant population in Finland is considerably more complex and less rosy than generally thought.

The relationship between Estonians and Finns during the three decades after the Soviet collapse and the beginning of free movement between Estonia and Finland, explored mainly through media studies, has been far from harmonious. In the 1990s, Estonians were pictured by Finnish media as victims, objects of compassion and those who needed Finns' help (Raittila 2004: 296), thus supporting the Finns' self-image as Estonians' elder brothers connected to the process of othering. Later, especially after Estonia's membership of the European Union, which increased the standard of living in Estonia and brought Estonians closer to the Western standards, Finns' imaginaries of Estonians have developed to more diverse and ambiguous, but generally to more positive ones (Kaasik-Krogerus 2020). However, the hierarchies—either between Estonia and Finland as countries or the Estonian migrant population versus Finland's white natives—have not disappeared yet.

We propose to explore in further detail the Estonians' ideas and experiences of whiteness while situated primarily as transnational labor migrants (Alho and Sippola 2019; Kalev and Jakobson 2013; Telve 2016) in a dominantly white Nordic welfare society. Migrants from Estonia, although carrying a post-Soviet subjectivity similarly to migrants from Russia, are in a crucially different legal and moral situation due to being recognized in Finland as subjects of the European Union, while many migrants from Russia are not. Yet, there are many competing narratives surrounding Estonian migrants and commuters in both Finnish and Estonian society, both negatively and positively loaded, shaping their experiences of transnational (work) life. In Finland, they are rarely counted as naturally belonging in Finnish society, but are regarded as economic migrants who best contribute and least harm Finnish society. In Estonia, their move to Finland is widely viewed as a sign of weakness and betrayal, looking for an easy way out from economic and social deadlock in post-Soviet Estonia (Annist 2017), and hollowing out the Estonian nation-state. On the other hand, they are portrayed as the resourceful ones having found a way to earn good money from Finland with which to support their families back home and accumulate capital by using the "gullible" Finnish welfare system. Known are also the narratives of how Estonians in Finland skilfully "exploit" the Finnish generous welfare system and are celebrated as heroes for that back at home and by other migrants.

There are also accounts that address extensive economic, social and symbolic deprivation, experienced particularly in the post-Soviet Estonian peripheral countryside and small towns, which has motivated Estonians to seek opportunities in Finland (Annist 2016; 2017). As Aet Annist (2016) notes, social and symbolic deprivation leads to the sense of losing one's value as a member of a society, and even though migration may bring opportunities to economic accumulation, rehabilitating or reinventing one's social and symbolic value through

migration in Estonia or in Finland—if the future is associated more with the latter one—it can give both positive and negative outcomes. In our analysis, we identify the experiences of devalorization of the self in post-Soviet Estonia and the need for seeking strategies to restore one's worthiness as an important factor among Estonian migrants and commuters. We regard the discussion groups on Facebook as one of the central channels through which Estonian migrants attempt to work out strategies to re-establish their worthiness. We view their particular ways of entering into discourses of whiteness and racism—while having little consciousness of being part of shaping respective discourses—as one of their strategies of restoring their value and sense of worth in societies they are part of.

Understanding Whiteness and Racialized Othering in the Finnish-Estonian Transnational Space and Beyond

Scholars have indicated that the hegemonic black–white divisions remain too narrow to understand how racist views proliferate and contingent hierarchies plant themselves in societies. Therefore, the focus in racial studies has shifted more to scrutinizing white versus non-white paradigms to reveal "a more fluid picture of situational micro-level power relations" that emerges in various social contexts (Garner 2006: 257). Whiteness, "most effectively conceptualized as both a resource and a contingent hierarchy" (ibid.) linked to a set of norms or values, has thus become an increasingly relevant framework to understand how groups of people in societies actively position themselves in relation to others, non-white and not-as-white, and gain important advantage. Richard Dyer (1997, cited in Garner 2006: 259) has problematized the fact that whites are blind to whiteness in everyday situations in dominantly white societies, because they do not experience and thus realize difficulties non-white people encounter in those settings, calling whiteness "an invisible perspective, a dominant and normative space against which difference is measured." Recently, Nordic scholars (Guðjónsdóttir 2014; Leinonen and Toivanen 2014) for their part have broadened that perspective by adding that white migrants, when contrasted to non-white migrants by the white majority populations, may become aware of their white privilege and selectively utilize it in moving toward higher positions in racial hierarches and securing their advantage. This is the theoretical angle we aim to tackle in our analysis.

Whiteness remains an understudied field in the Finnish context despite important contributions made in recent years (Keskinen 2014; 2016; 2019; Krivonos 2017; 2019; Rastas 2005; 2019;). This is partly because Finland, which until very recently defined itself as a highly homogeneous country, presented for a long time a position that due to its historical homogeneity it did not have issues of racialization based on perceptions of whiteness. The scholarship of whiteness almost exclusively shows how the image and persistence of the

Finnish nation-state is integrally tied up with ideas of whiteness circulating in the society, some of which are universally shared in the Nordics, while others are related to Finnish historical legacies (Keskinen 2011; 2016). The Indigenous Sámi and Roma people's racialized positions, for instance, are argued to be inextricably related to strategies to protect the Finnish nation-state (Helakorpi 2019; Siivikko 2019), based on shared ethnicity and language.

In the light of the radicalization of whiteness discourses in 21st-century Europe (Essed et al. 2019; Poole and Siobhan 2011), the year 2008 marks a discursive change in Finland. It was the start of (online) media and political construction of foreign people, particularly those of Arab and Muslim backgrounds, as a threat to Finnish nationalism due to their perceived incompliance with local Finnish cultural norms, especially regarding female bodies and sexuality. Suvi Keskinen (2011; 2014) has demonstrated how over a very short period of time, the radical racialized, and in her case, also strongly gendered, discourses in media and especially in online media proliferated and soon became normalized in Finland and were eagerly utilized by far-right politicians to promote their anti-immigration arguments targeted to subverting multiculturalism, and subsequently saving the Finnish welfare state. In that way, both cultural and economic arguments have become neatly tied up in the whiteness discourses in Finland, making it rather difficult to talk about one without discussing another. Over the last dozen years, non-whiteness in Finland is increasingly associated with all-European ideas of "saving" Europe from Muslim "invasion," which is expected to bring violent cultural clashes and destruction of "Western" civilization. The 21st-century evolution of radical racialized othering in Finland, inseparable from that of Europe at large, has not happened in isolation from Estonians in the country and beyond; rather, ideas have quickly traveled and been exchanged.

As in Finland, whiteness in Estonia is implicitly linked to the foundations and coping strategies of the nation-state. On the one hand, scholars emphasize the exceptionalism of the titular nation appropriating a unique culture and language, while on the other, they stress firm belonging in the white European cultural sphere (Berg 2002; Peiker 2016). Long-lasting Russian influence and particularly the 50-year-long Soviet period has caused Estonia to not always be perceived as part of the European cultural space (Feldman 2000; see also Keskinen 2016 for Finland's contested position). From 1991 onward, the independent Estonian state's aspiration was to firmly establish and consolidate its place among the modern "civilized" European states again. In the "return to Europe" discourse (Berg 2002; Pääbo 2014), Estonia has focused on returning its population to Europe. However, this has been done selectively, including native Estonians and excluding Russian-speakers who settled in Estonia as Soviet migrants and their descendants.

In Estonia, whiteness as a subtle hierarchical system of privilege has developed in line with the Soviet ideological stance of condemning othering based on "race," while promoting state-steered ethnic mixing policies. This gave

prevalence to ethnic Russians while particularly suppressing some other ethnic groups, including Estonians, even though the latter were locals in Estonian territory and Russians were largely migrants. Russians were generally not of a different "race" for Estonians. In Estonia, racialized othering thus historically draws from categories of ethnicity and nationality, "race" with its emphasis on physiological features being more of a covert category until quite recently. In present-day Estonia, the dynamics of privileged and suppressed groups is different. The privilege structure has been played around in favor of ethnic Estonians, but the old patterns still linger in the background and continue to be perceived as traumatic experiences across generations. Regardless of the history that poses many challenges to harmonious ethnic or racial coexistence, whiteness as a lived and narrated experience has only now slowly started entering public and academic discourses in Estonia (see e.g. Aavik 2015; Gidwani and Triisberg 2020; Pushaw 2020), although it is still not in mainstream media outlets. There are several reasons for why Estonia is late in entering into global discussions around racism and white privilege: the workings of the Soviet ideology that germinated the belief that racism did not exist in Soviet society; the post-Soviet nationalistic atmosphere in Estonia that placed the focus of ethnic tensions in the country on language and citizenship politics solely, leaving no space for scrutinizing issues of whiteness or racialized othering within the same empirical space (cf. Balibar and Wallerstein 1991); and the long history of Estonians of perceiving themselves as victims of other, superior powers—the communists, the fascists, occupants and the like (Laineste 2017). To put it briefly, there is a lack of understanding among Estonians as a nation of what racialized othering means and how it works within complex webs of power as a structural and multifaceted system of privilege and disadvantage. Therefore, when arriving in Finnish society, Estonians are very seldom able to recognize incidents of injustice directed toward them on behalf of Finnish employers or neighbors as racism.

Instead, to bolster their easier arrival and existence in Finnish society, Estonians have widely accepted society's prevailing deservingness discourse that works in their favor when claiming their rights for "social citizenship" in their host country (Alho and Sippola 2019). In Estonians' view, this is a justified expectation considering their serious contribution to the Finnish welfare state by means of diligent tax-paying and reasonable use of welfare state benefits (ibid.). While some of the earlier findings indicate that Estonian migrants' perceptions of non-deserving migrants may have racialized underpinnings (ibid.: 353–54), their own whiteness has not, so far, been argued to be a constitutive factor for their own privileged position in Finnish society. Comparatively, Daria Krivonos (2017; 2019) has recently contributed to the yet only emerging research on whiteness in Nordics combined with the post-socialist context from young Russian-speaking migrants' perspective. While Russian-speakers in Russia and some other post-Soviet societies hold an image of their white

supremacy (cf. Sahadeo 2019), Krivonos (2019) demonstrates how Russian-speaking youth, disillusioned by their "Western" imaginaries and in hope of being included in the Finnish mainstream society as similarly "white," experience degradation in their whiteness privilege by becoming deskilled, unemployed and devalued in Finland after their migration. Her contribution on how white post-Soviet migrants' racialized identities play out "within the neoliberal restructuring of the welfare state" (ibid.: 103) "through re-inscribing themselves into whiteness by racializing Others" (ibid.: 114) calls for more scrutinization on post-Soviet applications of whiteness in dominantly white Nordic societies.

Social Media Ethnography

The data we use was produced as part of a research project on constructing ethnic hierarchies among the largest migrant populations in Finland, Estonian- and Russian-speakers.[4] Our research team looked at how the ethnic or racial hierarchies were discursively produced in Facebook groups created by and intended for the aforementioned migrant groups in Finland, during a span of four years between 2015 and 2018. In this chapter, we only focus on the content produced in Estonian-speaking Facebook groups. The choice of conducting online ethnography rather than "real-life" ethnography or thematic interviews in our research design was guided by two principal considerations. First, ethnic and racial hierarchies are subtle processes that occur and are possible to disentangle in specific contexts, and this is unlikely to happen in interview situations. And, second, the relatively short period (from mid- to the end of 2018) we were able to dedicate on data gathering in our project did not allow for ethnographic research in "real-life" situations, which typically require more time. Among the many existing Facebook groups intended for Estonian-speaking migrants in Finland, we scrutinized two large, closed groups where the conversation language was thoroughly Estonian.[5] For the sake of anonymity of our data, we reveal neither the names nor the more detailed Facebook group descriptions.

While we carefully followed all the anonymization procedures typical to working with qualitative data, we needed to take extra cautions. For avoiding any risk that the users and data linked to them can be potentially revealed when Facebook would change their privacy measures, we decided not to quote any data produced in Facebook groups. Instead, we conducted non-participative social media ethnography where conversations were only followed, and notes made, translated from Estonian to English as an extra step of anonymization, to summarize the content of the conversations in aspects that were of our interest. All descriptions and points made in the empirical section of this chapter are thus retellings and analysis based on the ethnographic notes we wrote, not quotes, and should be read as such. All in all, our study on Facebook groups that needed to comply with GDPR rules initially posed several methodological

and ethical challenges, which we successfully overcame. The study was conducted with the approval of the ethical committee of Tampere University.

By undertaking non-participative ethnography we mean that we followed the conversations and reactions silently, without any attempt to participate in conversations by liking, commenting or producing topics that other group members could react on. Following retrospectively an extensive number of conversations that were produced often daily on Facebook, we learnt with time to easily distinguish topics that potentially raised ethnic or racial issues and produced different viewpoints. We were not interested in the quantitative aspects of the conversations, but rather in the variety of viewpoints and the context in which certain perspectives emerged, following the principles of thematic analysis at first. Most broadly, we explored how Estonians in Facebook groups talked about other Estonian migrants in Finland, about native Finns, and about other migrant groups. Following David A. Snow and Leon Anderson's (1987) embracing and distancing framework, we developed an analytical lens that focused on how Estonian discussants discursively constructed cultural proximity and distance with non-white groups, Russian migrants and Finns. As we have emphasized earlier, our analysis may include the perspectives of Estonian migrants, commuters and sometimes even family members, and while we recognize the inability to distinguish perspectives belonging to any of those groups separately in this study, more important is the shared factor—the experience that emerges from being exposed to two societies, Estonia and Finland, and one's transnational subjectivity in that space.[6]

Our online research provides rich data and deep insights regarding what kind of imaginaries circulate among Estonian migrants in Finland, people who are "bound by a shared view of reality," even if that reality is negotiated online only (Ruelle and Peverelli 2017: 15). Scholars who have earlier studied discursive constructions online have noted this often to be connected to processes of collective identity making (Coretti and Pica 2015), which is hardly characterized by the "democratic exchange" of ideas among the group members (Ruelle and Peverelli 2017: 16). Instead, members encounter various mechanisms that limit their possibilities to equally contribute to the identities emerging from discussions, starting from group administrators' rights to moderate conversations to some members' more vocal presence that overshadow alternative perspectives.

Relying on social media data also presented various limitations: we were unable to make any conclusions regarding the generations, education background or any other demographics, because we had no reliable access to this data and the research ethics would not have allowed us to analyze the data on the level of individuals. Deciding from the posted content, tone and the style of writing of the most vocal and active discussants, we, as noted earlier, saw traits that are likely characteristic to blue-collar Estonians, many of whom are likely to have experienced various kinds of disappointments, deprivation and devalorization prior to their move to Finland (cf. Annist 2016; 2017). Yet, we strongly suggest

that the interpretation of our research results must be taken as an indication of what processes were ongoing in the social world in late 2010s and by no means should those be regarded as fully descriptive of the Estonian population in Finland at the time. Another limitation concerns conducting ethnography in a retrospective way. Apart from mid- to the end of 2018, our explorations did not emerge concurrently with the actual social context, whereby we could not analyze our data in a more integral way with the social and political happenings.

The following analysis first present how transnational Estonian migrants discursively construct whiteness in their inhabited Estonian-Finnish transnational space. We then continue discussing how non-white migrant groups in Finland are systematically discursively racialized by utilizing economic and evolutionary right-wing arguments. We finally convey how Russian-speakers to whom Estonians hold different attitudes in their home country are discerned from other migrants and depicted as white and almost as worthy as Estonians through arguments of cultural closeness.

Discursive Construction of Whiteness in Estonian-Finnish Transnational Space

We understand whiteness through Estonian migrants as the group's attributed social positioning in Finnish society, which secured them important privileges, but which they did not directly formulate as "whiteness." Our ethnographic data illustrates that Estonians had a sense of entitlement as white people ethnically close to Finns and they took this privilege for granted. Yet, they did not generally see themselves as equal to Finns. They rather accepted that, as not native to Finland, they could be entitled to less than Finns, but only concerning the Finns who were genotypically white, that is, the "true" Finns in Estonians' terms. Finns' perceived superiority was manifested in the ways in which Estonians in their online conversations commonly agreed that while in Finland, they needed to live in accordance with this country's and majority population's normative framework, generally closely observing and adhering to both institutional rules and regulations, as well as everyday normativity. They, for example, followed the routines at workplaces, including the time and length of coffee-breaks and the time and ways of finishing the work day, even if they did not understand some of the routines inherent to Finnish work culture.

When crafting their position in imaginary ethnic and/or racial hierarchies in Finland, Facebook discussants typically referred to racially and ethnically underpinned bodily features, as well as to both cultural and economic arguments inextricably. While such conversations did not occur often, when Finns' racial/ethnic bodily features were discussed, they were portrayed as albinos with extremely light skin complexity, thin blond hair, round faces and round body shapes—features that were regarded as *too* white by Estonians, who in

contrast saw themselves as having more character thanks to their history of blood-mixing under various rulers. Curiously, this paradoxical position in view of Estonians' strongly felt fear of racial mixing with "black" people did not receive particular attention in online discussions. Nevertheless, despite the bodily distinctions between Estonians and Finns, in cultural terms, Finns and Estonians were depicted as sharing the same cultural space. Both Finland and Estonia were culturally positioned in Europe and regarded as members of European nation-states. Consequently, both Estonians and Finns were ascribed to the notion of European whiteness, which meant a shared legal, moral and developmental framework. Even when the economic arguments were discussed, we noticed that those leaned in this context not so much on deservingness discourse (Alho and Sippola 2019; Krivonos 2019; van Oorschot 2006) *per se*, but on its cultural undercurrents.

While relating to the deservingness discourse, Estonians elevated their own migrant group's position based on their significant tax contribution and small burden on Finnish welfare society as known facts, but underneath there was nearly always the understanding that these behaviors are a result of the Western moral framework and work ethos which belonged exclusively to white people. Interestingly, there was much online talk about Estonian migrants who behaved contrary to this moral framework as they avoided taxes, subscribed to welfare benefits and services undeservingly and disregarded laws and regulations (Sippola, Kingumets and Tuhkanen 2021). These practices were usually condemned; however, this seemed to have little effect on their European whiteness. When going against the norms of Finnish society, Estonian migrants were simply encouraged to return home to Estonia by their compatriots, pointing out that while they did not deserve a place in Finnish society, they still remained assigned to a place they had come from. Despite being unable to comply with the rules of the Western societies, they could not have been excluded from those societies either.

The online discussants frequently presented themselves as experts of multicultural context in two societies, Estonia and Finland. As subjects of the post-Soviet Estonia who had experienced life in ethnically mixed Estonian society, where the Soviet time ethnic hierarchies in their view favored the Russian-speakers, they saw themselves as more experienced than Finns when it came to the possibility of losing one's privilege to migrant populations. Drawing from this argument, the discussants were eager to parallel the current historical moment in Finland with that of their own Soviet past, emphasizing the danger that nation-states as defined by the titular nations, either Finns or Estonians, may disappear when non-white migrants are accepted *en masse* and take over their societies. In this, the discussants sympathized with the critical anti-immigrant views toward multiculturalism. They maintained that the Finns' inclination to multicultural tolerance and letting non-white people easily enter their country was a sign of naivety, which would eventually result in the cultural

clash between Finnish and non-white migrant populations. In such discursive construction, the holders of these views did not see themselves as migrants to Finland.

Other Estonians, however, clearly stated that as migrants themselves, it was not their business to dictate how Finland should treat other migrants, but Finland has the sole right to decide over their *own* country, whereas they as *migrants* should just accept the situation. The latter perspective outlines succinctly how in online discourses Estonians, as migrants, see their role in shaping the ethnic or racial hierarchies in Finland; some were clearly more vocal and critical and expressed readiness to "teach" the Finns about the possible danger lurking round the corner, and others were inclined to take much more passive positions.

As much as Estonians on Facebook were concerned with Finland becoming increasingly populated by non-white people, they were even more uneasy about this likely happening to Estonia as well. As transnationally active migrants who often kept one foot in two societies and whose return to Estonia was likely, it was understandable that they wanted to influence the future of the Estonian state, an important part of that being the preservation of Estonia's dominantly white future. The discussants often claimed having experienced the worsening societal situation with a population becoming gradually non-white in Finland, meanwhile taking a position as people who know how white societies negatively transform as a result of the "influx" of non-white persons. They talked from this "expert" position to warn Estonians in Estonia about the change that is inevitable should they tolerate the immigration of non-white migrants (see also Ojala, Kaasik-Krogerus and Pantti 2019: 168).

Discursive Constructions of Non-White Immigrant Groups

One of the observations in Facebook conversations was that Estonians generally regarded becoming exposed to a multicultural society that included large numbers of non-white people only after moving to Finland. This change brought "race" into their consciousness and placed it at the centre of discourses and practices of racialized othering. Moreover, racializing non-white groups through a set of discourses that were in line with those already proliferating among the white European people and identified as normative European whiteness (Essed et al. 2019), can be seen as the way to craft more space and reserve value for themselves among other migrant groups in Finland. This is not to claim that prior to Estonians' mass migration to Finland from 2004 onward racialized othering focusing on exclusive characteristics of "race" did not exist in post-Soviet Estonia, but real-life contacts with non-white persons enabled them to present their disturbing exceptionalism as a real experience, and thus as more credible.

Our online observations support the general understanding that the majority of Estonian migrants were located in the Greater Helsinki area, which was considerably more non-white than most places in Finland. As migrants who generally rented housing from state-owned and private housing companies rather than owned properties, Estonians tended to live more in neighborhoods where migrants were plentiful and so this resulted in public encounters with non-white residents. Estonians' contacts with non-white people took place overwhelmingly in public settings: in yards and streets in their neighborhoods, shops, public transportation, their children's schools and libraries, and already much less often in workplaces. Frequent mentions were made also about living together in the same multi-storey buildings and encounters in stairwells. In identifying multicultural non-white settings, Estonians typically focused on people's visual markers related to skin and hair color, as well as special clothing such as headscarves and long robes, which were related to distinct bodily features, but also manners, style, habits and taste distinct from their own. Also, audible markers—the volume of the voice and the sound of foreign languages unintelligible for Estonians—were frequently drawn to attention and regarded as unpleasant or unfitting in their surroundings. Similarly, the smell of food spreading in stairwells when the non-white neighbors were cooking was told to be unpleasant. These encounters made Estonian migrants on social media to continuously reflect upon the cultural distance they felt with non-white migrants as groups, contrasting it with the felt proximity with the white people in Finland, most often other Estonians, Russians and Finns. And yet, we observed several long discussions where Estonians struggled with heavy-smoking Finnish neighbors in rented public housing, their cigarette odors leaking into their apartments, and such experiences never marked Finns negatively as a group.

There was a tendency in the online discussions that the discussants classified all people, whose skin complexity they perceived as different from their own, either as "black-skinned" (literally: Black), or drew arbitrary divisions between "black-skinned," "dark-skinned" (literally: dark, Brown; referring to persons of Arab appearance mainly, but people of Latin or Central American origin could also have easily been counted as "dark-skinned") and Muslim. For all these categories, there were a wide variety of pejorative names in use, pointing to cultural and physiological features being associated with certain groups of the non-white migrants. Estonians' ability to distinguish groups of non-white migrants by their ethnic, linguistic or religious specificities alike (this was typical when discussing people who were perceived geographically and culturally close) appeared very weak.[7] Often, non-white people were called pejoratively with a racial slur,[8] which indicated that they were broadly conceptualized as African origin regardless of whether or not this was true. Importantly, although multicultural Finland described as such was a place long before Estonian migrants arrived, Estonians saw African or Middle East origin people as non-fitting to Finland and expressed their discomfort with the presence of non-white people, despite them often already being second-generation migrants in Finland.

Non-white people were repeatedly depicted in online conversations as culturally extremely distant and primitive, this being expressed blatantly rather than covertly. Some discussants seemed to believe that there existed evolutionary, behavioral and religious reasons all arbitrarily tied together as to why those people were terminally distant to Western people. Non-white children, while residing in Finland, were pictured as untamed, fearless and misbehaving. Meanwhile, the Facebook discussants seemed to generally recognize that it was a question of a different kind of education as to why these children's behavior seemed to differ so much from that of the Finnish or Estonian children. In response to these arguments, some discussants argued that these children, raised under the influence of their parents, will not be able to learn Finnish educational norms and will eventually reproduce their own culture and norms, dangerous to Finland. Only very seldom were we able to track opinions that the experience of multicultural Finland was considered positive; much more often was such change of environment described in terms of anxiety, fear, discomfort and reluctance.

The notes from the data described above, highlighting often anecdotal imaginations of non-white people inhabiting the Nordic spaces, are nothing new to be heard in Finland. They very much reflect the ideas circulating in Finnish online media platforms and those in other European countries. The Facebook discussions of 2015 to 2018 on which we focused had already largely adopted the conceptual shift of discussing non-white people in Finland primarily as Arabs or Muslims in line with what had happened in Finnish forums after 2008 (cf. Keskinen 2011). Yet, we were also able to observe how the Arabs and Muslims started to be overwhelmingly associated with the notion of "refugee" by the Estonian Facebook discussants after the summer of 2015, which marked the beginning of the "refugee crisis" in public consciousness in Finland. Media images of non-white and non-European-looking young men, women and children dominated Estonians' imaginations of how the refugees look and were used us such. Young Arab men moving around in groups, dark-skinned foreign students and women wearing burkas accompanied by several children were all immediately categorized as refugees. Furthermore, non-white people's nonconforming and disturbing behavior was increasingly associated with being a refugee. On the other hand, some Estonians in the researched Facebook groups pointed out that there was clearly no way to unmistakably recognize refugees in brief everyday public encounters and in doing so one runs a serious risk of calling a person with a darker skin complexion born and raised in Finland a refugee. However, in heated social media discussions, these arguments did not seem to have much weight.

We as observants got an impression that the discussants who at first tried to object to highly racist standpoints used much more controlled and polite language, but as their language was not responded to in a like manner, but typically, altogether offensively, they quickly withdrew from the discussions. In that way, the dynamics of Facebook discussions clearly indicated that the

more radical and racist viewpoints tended to dominate and attract more attention and prolonged participation, because the negative emotions carried on longer. Although it was striking how few of the members of our studied groups reported having personal relations with non-white people, we assume—taken the general atmosphere of mistrust and hostility toward non-white persons in online discussions—that some group members actually preferred to conceal or silence their relationships with non-white friends and neighbors in order not to become objects of offensive talk by others. The few who expressed their support, and mentioned existing friendships or intimate relations with non-white people, generally received personal insults and devalorization, and their support to racialized people was associated with sexual relations, naivety or pathologies, thus intersecting race with gender.

Constructing Cultural Closeness with Russian Migrants

Our third perspective in this chapter is to make sense of how the Finnish context works for Estonian migrants in defining the boundaries of whiteness with Russians from Russia and beyond, especially against the backdrop of a proposition that despite the lack of such theoretical framing, Russians may be regarded as Estonians' racialized others in post-Soviet Estonia. Considering Estonians' rather recent renegotiation of privilege with Russians and tense relations between the two groups in Estonia, we expected that Estonian migrants' attitudes toward Russians in Finland were somewhat negatively influenced by those in their home country. Our ethnographic data revealed that in the Facebook conversations, certain influence of that context was present, yet the Estonian migrants' attitudes toward Russians were far from straightforwardly negative and constituted rather a complex web of different positionalities, some of which we will explain here.

The visual and audible markers related to Russians in Finland, especially when contrasted with those of non-white people, were typically clearly distinguishable as often mentioned in Estonians' online talks. As neighbors and co-residents in Finland, Russians were typically pictured as pleasant and well-behaving people in comparison to other migrant groups, behaving close to Estonians' own cultural norms. It could even be said that while in Estonia Russians were regarded as "others," in the Finnish context they became "us"—white European cultured people (cf. Krivonos 2017 on Russians in Finland). Thus, despite the local frictions in Estonia, and condemnation of Soviet rule that continues to be associated with the will of Russians, in Estonian Facebook discussants' view, their shared experience of once cohabiting the Soviet space nevertheless gives ground to a common normative and mental framework facilitating the self-understanding and comfort between Estonians and Russians in Finland.

Especially in the narrations of Estonian women who were born and raised in a Soviet atmosphere, many of the norms and traditions regarding upbringing

and educating children, dressing and beauty standards, ideas of femininity and gender roles, cooking skills, codes of politeness and hospitality, a sense of commitment and emotional engagement were reported to have very similar features for Estonians and Russians. We found that these norms were rather idealized, because as much as it was possible to conclude from online conversations, the social circuits of many discussants did not actually include Russians similarly to non-white people. However, Russians' cultural norms were considered in some ways distinct from those typical to Finland, other Nordic or even Western European countries, and acting as bridges especially between Estonian and Russian women, forming a space of commonality and togetherness. Notably, if in the Estonian nation-state setting, Estonians constructed Russians as negative "others" who remained foreign and distinct because of the grave cultural divide described mainly in terms of linguistic and religious mismatch (Petersoo 2007), then in Finland those differences seemed to lose significance.

Sometimes Estonian online discussants even presented Russians positively as the people Estonians in Finland should learn from when it comes to their ability to keep their own cultural traditions, norms and language vibrant as opposed to many Estonians, who easily gave up on their own in an attempt to become *too* Finnish. This finding was curious, as it points to the very subtle processes in ethnic or racial hierarchy construction in which Estonians reproached non-white migrants for being culturally too distant from the Finnish cultural centre, but at the same time celebrated their own and other white migrants' ethnic and cultural traits and even wished those to remain clearly recognizable in a host society. Constructed commonalities between white migrant groups such as Estonians and Russians crafted meaningful spaces for downgrading some non-white migrant groups, but at the same time the very same mechanisms enabled uplifting groups of white migrants in comparison to the white majority population. We discerned that the visually observable and performative acts such as dressing up for school celebrations or presenting flowers to teachers on the first day of the school year not only discursively brought Estonians and Russians together, helping them to see each other as the "civilized" migrants in Finland, but also stressed their shared difference from Finns who appeared in this respect as uncultured or uncivilized and in some ways perhaps even less white accordingly.

One of our general observations was that Estonian migrants on Facebook were usually not very familiar with the social context of Russians in Finland—just the same way as they remained ignorant about the non-white migrants' backgrounds and trajectories of mobility. Russians were usually considered in ethnic terms and associated with Russia, and in some specific cases with Estonia. Only rarely did Estonians recognize the multiplicity of Russians' backgrounds and mobile paths to Finland. For example, the very fact that many Russians were considered people of third countries by the Finnish state, whereby their conditions of staying and working in Finland were considerably different from Estonians as residents of the European Union, seemed to be something Estonians were generally not mindful about.

However, the Facebook conversations occasionally highlighted that, according to the discussants, the Russians who had moved to Finland from Estonia were different from the rest of the Russians residing in Finland. In practice, this meant for them that Russians from Estonia could sometimes stand out as a negatively perceived group of Russians among other Russian migrants in Finland. For example, Estonians might have stressed that Russians, "but of course those ones from real Russia, not Estonian Russians," are particularly warm-hearted and helpful workmates in Finland, and they mentioned having had only good experiences with "Russians from Russia." In our view, making such distinctions with regard to Estonian Russians predominantly appointed to past and present racialized experiences, particularly Soviet-era experiences with Russification and the suppressed position of the Estonian language during the Soviet period. This was followed by the contemporary understanding that Russians were resistant to learning the state language in their serious attempt to perform the continuous superiority of Russian language in post-Soviet Estonia.

While this could be seen as something that potentially feeds negotiations of whiteness in contemporary Estonia—if this would be the lens to use in analyzing ethnic relations in Estonia today—this dynamic plays out differently in Finnish society, where both Estonians and Russians are speaking their native languages as foreign in Finland, which evens out the racialized friction from a linguistic perspective. In effect, Estonian migrants admitted that their attitudes to Estonian Russians had become generally more positive after their own migration to Finland. Living in a foreign-language environment, facing challenges in sorting out everyday matters and struggling with officials had made Estonians more understanding of other people in a similar situation. Yet, sympathizing with non-white people on the same grounds was not the case. All in all, it can be concluded that Estonian migrants on Facebook perceived Russians as considerably less visible, less topical, deserving less negative attention and causing little confrontation in comparison to non-white migrants in Finland.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we presented how in the Facebook group discussions Estonian migrants in Finland discursively drew boundaries between "native" Finns and their own ethnic migrant group, between Russians recognized as another ethnic-linguistic migrant group and the non-white migrants who were depicted as a group of a different "race." We identified that in such discursive constructions Estonians used the attributes of ethnicity, language, culture and 'deservingness'" (Krivonos 2019: 104), which all, sometimes individually, and sometimes in combined forms, contributed to the production of whiteness and racialized othering. There were different normative discourses at play, depending on

whether the Estonian discussants targeted being embraced by the white Finnish population, sought for enlarging the group of white migrants as allies of a kind in Finland, or aimed at creating more distance from the non-white groups.

In our analysis, we emphasized the specific historical legacies of Estonians related to the underlying logics and dynamics of racialization in the Soviet and post-Soviet Estonian state, and their migrant as well as transnational subjectivities, which in this complex combination positioned them differently compared to the majority Finns in Finnish society, therefore revealing how the whiteness privilege among Estonian migrants should be understood as featuring ideas, practices and ongoing negotiations of a specific kind. While Estonians and Finns equally use the underlying idea of normative European whiteness (Essed et al. 2019) in claiming their own and neglecting non-whites' place in the European North, Estonians also seemed to use other strategies to secure their place as the privileged migrant group within the structure of Finnish migrant populations. When Russians have clearly perceived losing their white privilege after migration to Finland (Krivonos 2019), our studied online discursive constructions of whiteness indicated that this was not an issue for Estonians. Rather, Estonians became more aware of their own whiteness after migration to Finland and collectively cultivated the discourse that highlighted their whiteness as a useful cultural resource in negotiating their better place in Finnish society. This can be explained by their group's crucially different unemployment figures in comparison to Russians, which allowed for self-perception of constituting a "deserving" migrant group in Finnish society which contributes to rather than consumes resources automatically entitled to those belonging to the white national core. In formulating those positions, it was clearly visible how Estonians utilized the popular discourses similarly circulating among the Finns themselves.

One of the interesting findings was Estonians' tendency to depict Russians in Finland as their closest migrant group, and a kind of cultural ally among all migrant groups in Finland. Russians often appeared as a reference group in relation to whom Estonians measured the composition of their own whiteness as opposed to non-white migrants, as well as the white Finns. Curiously, when Estonians seemed to be wanting to craft for themselves a place in a Finnish society that would bring them legally and normatively closer to the white Finnish majority, they situationally also collectively worked toward discourses that separated them from Finns and the Finnish whiteness, both physiologically and culturally. This seemed to point to the subtle strategies of gaining power and self-worth in situations where the institutional settings of interaction allowed for more space to negotiate one's own culture without the danger of compromising one's whiteness. However, such ambiguous processes deserve further research for drawing firmer conclusions.

The racialized talks that drafted difference from non-white migrant groups were grounded in similar arguments known to be reproduced also

among white Finns, the difference being, however, that the rhetoric that was dominating the large Facebook groups targeted to the average Estonian audience in Finland was much ruder, to the extent that it more resembled the discussions in intendedly radically right-wing Finnish forums. This can be partly explained by the more blatant forms of racist talk that has been tolerated in the public sphere in Estonia compared to many Western countries, including Finland. Deriving from the abundant "good worker" discourse typical of blue-collar workers, which we witnessed in the groups, we may assume that the radical anti-immigrant sentiments directed toward non-white migrants belonged to blue-collar and service workers who see globalization as economically and socially threatening (Haubert and Fussell 2006). Furthermore, the active vocal presence of members and fierce supporters of the Finnish branch of Estonian right-wing populist party EKRE known for their anti-immigrant racist stance was clearly visible in the groups, especially from mid-2018 onward, when the Estonian parliamentary elections approached. There were thus politically influenced exchanges of transnational and global reach that affected the discursive constructions of whiteness and racialized othering beyond the Finnish social context.

In conclusion, our analysis clearly indicated how Estonian migrants easily imported and found use of the prevailing normative frameworks of whiteness in Nordic and European societies, even if their own experiences of whiteness and racialized othering in societies in which they operated were different. We anticipate that if Estonians in Finland manage to maintain their privileged position as worker-migrants protected by deservingness discourse and full entitlements to the welfare state when needed, the status quo of their whiteness is likely to remain similar to what we observed. However, should Estonians experience growing social and economic deprivation in Finland, the racialized frictions are likely to escalate.

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Notes

[1] During the crisis, high numbers of people arrived in the European Union overseas from across the Mediterranean Sea or overland through Southeast Europe, mainly from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq, where armed conflicts had been going on for years and resulted in mass migrations.

[2] Our ethnographic data indicates that the ways in which Estonians categorize people as "Russian," pointing to cultural and linguistic specificities mainly, is often highly arbitrary and leads the category to fluctuate. In daily-life situations from which Estonians discursively draw their categorizations, it is often impossible to distinguish whether people considered migrants from Russia are not in fact Russians or ethnically mixed Russian-speakers from Estonia or elsewhere.

[3] The number refers to citizenship, which means that those included are not only ethnic Estonians, but also Russian-speakers with Estonian citizenship, and those excluded have resigned their Estonian citizenship.

[4] Dialogue in the making: Research and development project on reciprocal relationships between migrant populations in Finland (DIARA), funded by the Kone Foundation, 2018–2020.

[5] Concluding from the first names and surnames, but also content, we encountered while studying the groups, the discussants were almost entirely ethnic Estonians. Only on a very few occasions did people of Russian background participate in conversation and, if so, in Estonian language.

[6] At the same time, we are also aware of transnational subjects not being necessarily equally active in keeping ties in both societies, but generally speaking the membership in Facebook groups which we studied is an indication of one's need to stay connected to other Estonians and their mindsets while living in Finland.

[7] The only African origin migrant group occasionally specified by Estonians was Somalis. Turks were the only group of migrants whom Estonians considered positively Muslim; known as the kebab and pizza places' owners and employees, Turks were contrasted to Somalis as work-loving and tax-paying rather than lazy, undeserving migrants.

[8] There is still little sensitivity in Estonian society about the word "Negro" and its profound racialized underpinnings. Many in Estonia hold the view that "Negro" is a neutral, innocent word and Estonians can use it unproblematically.

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PART III

Representations of Belonging and Exclusion

CHAPTER 7

In/Visible Finnishness

Representations of Finnishness and Whiteness in the Sweden-Finnish Social Media Landscape

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Abstract

This chapter examines embodied representations of Finnishness and whiteness in Sweden where the collective notion of Sweden-Finnishness is situated in the nexus of migrant and minority experiences. Based on material generated by individuals and activists as part of Sweden-Finnish social media campaigns in the 2010s, the chapter discusses the different ways in which Finnishness and whiteness are negotiated on an individual level and how they are situated in different social, political and historical contexts. By applying the analytical lens of in/visibility and drawing from both critical whiteness studies and intersectionally informed thinking, the study reveals how Finnishness can at the same time be invisible and visible due to the whiteness of the Finns, but also visible as minoritized and racialized others. The chapter provides novel insights into contemporary Sweden-Finnishness and experiences of non-white Sweden-Finns,

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as well as politicized and minoritized Sweden-Finnishness. In addition to highlighting the diversity of different Finnish experiences in Sweden, the study demonstrates that whiteness is a highly fluid, situational and contextual way of boundary-drawing.

Keywords: Sweden-Finns, Finnishness, whiteness, in/visibility, national minority, immigration

Introduction

> It is not just me as a Finnish-Iranian who has a complicated identity. Finns sit on a double chair in the Swedish racial hierarchy. One is indeed a damn Finn, excluded, stereotyped, yes even having their skulls measured—but today, one also has the possibility to be included into the white community. The whiteness of Finns is more visible next to the other darker *svartskallarna*. (Farzin 2016: 104–05)[12]

In an essay published in the recent anthology *Finnjävlar* (2016), reporter Maziar Farzin summarizes aptly the complexity of modern Sweden-Finnishness in multiethnic Sweden. While acknowledging his own subjective experience and complicated identification processes, he also notes how the collective notion of Sweden-Finnishness is likewise complex. The contemporary notion of Sweden-Finnishness is not only limited to the narrative of Finnish postwar migration, and later generation social climb and identity negotiations, but it also refers to the political recognition of Sweden-Finns as a national minority in 2000 and the consequent new narrative of Finnishness as part of historically multicultural Sweden. The "double chair" in the quote illustrates the entangled and complex ways in which Finnishness in Sweden becomes represented today in different temporal and socio-political contexts and how the notion of whiteness is operationalized as part of these representations. On the one seat sits the modern, Western and white notion of Finnishness, but on the other persists the notion of Finnishness as historically excluded and racially inferior in relation to "Swedishness," which has again gained prominence in the contemporary Swedish minority political context.

This chapter examines embodied representations of Finnishness in Sweden by investigating how different subjective and collective positionings of "Sweden-Finnishness" become negotiated in relation to whiteness and in/visibility in the context of contemporary Sweden-Finnish identity politics mobilized in social media. The study is based on an analysis of the contents of Sweden-Finnish social media campaigns *#Vågafinska* [#Daretospeakfinnish] and *#Stoltsverigefinne* [#Proudswedenfinn], and the Instagram account of the activist group *Tukholman sissit* [Guerillas of Stockholm]. While social

media has provided ethnic organizations, media and activists with new platforms for the construction of collective identity and protest (e.g. Gerbaudo and Treré 2015), the highly personalized and individualized character of collective action in social media also gives space for individuals from different backgrounds to voice articulations of identity and belonging. Therefore, this material allows the examination not only of the metaphorical double chair of different collective notions of Sweden-Finnishness, but also how these points of reference are mobilized on individual-level identity projects. In addition, the study provides insights into how boundaries of Finnishness and Swedishness become constructed in different contexts, as they are the two hegemonic domains in which and toward which Sweden-Finnishness in its different meanings is navigated.

The study adopts perspectives from critical whiteness studies as well as intersectionally informed thinking. Following a constructivist approach, ethnicity, race and nation are not seen as "things *in* the world, but perspectives *on* the world" (Brubaker 2004: 17, emphasis in original). This means the conceptualization of ethnic boundaries as socially constructed, changing and situational (Barth 1969). Whiteness is one important boundary and is seen in this chapter as "a dominant and normative space against which difference is measured" (Dyer 1997: 10), and as a constantly shifting boundary of power and privilege (Kivel 1996). The analytical lens of in/visibility is especially useful in studying intra-Nordic ethnic boundary-drawing as it emphasizes the importance of looking at the different contexts in which individuals and groups become visible and invisible and which shift in time and place (Leinonen and Toivanen 2014; see also Leinonen 2012). Johanna Leinonen and Mari Toivanen (2014) point out that the black–white binary, which is often present in the US context, is not sufficient to understand how collective identities are produced and sustained in the Nordic context, where ethnicity and "race" become visible and invisible not only through visually observable features such as skin color, but also through audible markers such as language and accent. In/visibility can facilitate analysis on the ways in which "race," as a socially constructed category, operates in positioning and racializing some groups as visible or allowing others to "pass" due to their "whiteness," thus making them invisible (Leinonen and Toivanen 2014; see also Guðjónsdóttir 2014; Toivanen 2014). To study in/visibility, an intersectionally informed approach is a beneficial addition as it directs attention to how different attributes such as "race," nationality, class and even age and generation participate in producing subjective social locations (Yuval-Davis 2011). Floya Anthias (2008: 5) further emphasizes how these social settings, or divisions, are not fixed but sometimes also simultaneous, being "context, meaning and time related" and involving therefore "inevitable shifts and contradictions." In a similar way, Leinonen and Toivanen (2014: 164) note that the "in/visibility of migrants and minorities should be understood as a continuum rather than as a dichotomy: not only is group in/visibility tied to specific socio-historical

circumstances but also each individual's in/visibility may vary according to the social setting that the person occupies."

Finnishness, Swedishness and Sweden-Finnishness—Shifting Boundaries of Whiteness and Belonging

The notion of "Sweden-Finnishness" has generally been underpinned by the assumed homogeneity of white, Finnish-speaking Finnishness. However, due to the possibility of Sweden-Finns to refer today to both their background as immigrants and status as a national minority, this picture is much more complex both in reference to the demographics of the population with Finnish background in Sweden, but also to the entangled, yet fluid and historically shifting boundaries of whiteness and belonging between "Finnishness" and "Swedishness."

Sweden-Finns have their background in the massive Finnish postwar labor, which led to an estimated 250,000 Finns settling permanently in Sweden between 1945–1994 (Korkiasaari and Tarkiainen 2000). In Sweden, immigrant Finns were met with a new social hierarchy, where they found themselves lower in the ethnic hierarchies together with other labor migrants from, for instance, Italy, Yugoslavia and Turkey. Finns were often held as engaged and valued workers, but were simultaneously met with prejudices and stereotyping (ibid.). In addition to being characteristically working-class migration, Finnish postwar migration to Sweden also needs to be understood as situated in an era in which Finnish and Swedish understandings of each other were very different. While Finland and Sweden have a long joint history as part of the Swedish kingdom until 1809, the age of nationalism and nation-state forged the former ties into differences. In the 19th century, racial taxonomies played an essential role in constructing difference between Swedes and other Scandinavians, labeled as part of a superior Germanic/Nordic race, and Finns, who represented the more inferior Mongolian or East Baltic race (Ågren 2006; Helander 2007; Keskinen 2019). At the same time, an idea of a culturally and racially homogenous Finnish nation was constructed, for example, in 19th- and early-20th-century Finnish history-writing (Tervonen 2014). The canonized Finnish national narrative also includes certain postcolonial elements due to the vision of the nation as emancipated from the former oppression of two empires, Russia and Sweden, as well as due to the historical position of Swedish-speakers as the educated, political and cultural elite in Finland (Lehtonen and Löytty 2007; Snellman and Weckström 2017). From the latter half of the 20th century onward, the historically asymmetrical relationship between the two countries has become more balanced through, for instance, the postwar shift from pan-Scandinavianism to Nordism (Wickström 2017), the social and economic development of Finland (Korkiasaari and Tarkiainen 2000) and Finland's and Sweden's memberships in the European Union in the 1990s (Helander 2007; Virta 2007).

These broader changes have also affected the position of Finns in the Swedish ethnic and social hierarchies, which has changed rapidly from the 1970s onward. Lotta Weckström (2011) compares the social climb of Finns in Sweden to that of Italians, Irish, Poles and the Jews in the United States, whose gain of social status also led to changing racial perceptions of these groups. At the same time, the new multicultural politics of the 1970s supported the ethnic organizations of Finns. The following decade, a Sweden-Finnish ethnopolitical movement emerged demanding recognition for Sweden-Finns as a minority and contesting the categorization as immigrants (Huss 2002). The demands were supported by the growing settlement of Finns in Sweden and the changing character of immigration to Sweden, but also newly emerging interest toward older Finnish history in Sweden (ibid.). In 2000, Sweden recognized the Jews, the Roma, the Sámi, the Sweden-Finns and the Tornedalians as national minorities, and their respective languages as national minority languages as these groups and languages were seen to have historical or long-lasting ties with Sweden in addition to their linguistic, cultural and/or religious distinctiveness (Elenius 2006). The recognition of national minorities has thus created new hierarchies between the Swedish majority population, old national minorities and new immigrant groups, but it has also institutionalized a new narrative of Sweden as a historically multicultural country (Silvén 2011). Since the 2010s, Swedish minority politics have shifted increasingly from the mere recognition of the country's multicultural past to the human rights framework and reconciling with past injustices experienced by its national minorities (ibid.). Throughout the past decade, Sweden-Finnishness as a national minority culture has been taking its form through new shared symbols (such as the Sweden-Finnish flag), the institutionalization of the narrative of Sweden-Finnishness as historically present in the Swedish soils and contemporary popular culture narratives that largely handle the rejection of shame in favor of claiming pride over Finnish language and background (Koivunen 2017).

Despite the many positive impacts, the new field of minority politics has been pointed out to have created essentialized images of national minorities, depicted as historically fixed and stable (Silvén 2011). While Finnish postwar migration is generally depicted as white and Finnish-speaking, the cultural diversity of Finland with different ethnic, linguistic and religious groups was also represented in these migration waves (see e.g. Hedberg 2004; Tervonen and Jeskanen 2012). In addition, many Finnish children have grown up in the super-diverse suburbs of Swedish cities in addition to those who also have multicultural family backgrounds (Lainio 2014; see also Latvalehto 2019). In the contemporary minority political context, the diversity of subjective Finnish experiences is often left overlooked—however, a recent exception to this can be found in the political program of the Sweden-Finnish youth umbrella organization Sweden-Finnish Youth Organization (*Ruotsinsuomalaisten nuorten liitto/Sverigefinska Ungdomsförbundet*, RSN-SFU), which emphasizes the simultaneity of multiple ethnic and linguistic identifications as part of Sweden-Finnish

identity (RSN-SFU 2016). Nevertheless, previous studies have mainly acknowledged how many (white) second-generation Finnish descendants experience that they are able to pass as "Swedes," some even experiencing that identifying as an immigrant or taking a non-Swedish identity was difficult due to the lack of visible markers such as dark hair (Ågren 2006; Weckström 2011). While a recent master's thesis by Stellan Beckman (2018) also notes that (white) Finns can pass as Swedes in everyday contexts, Beckman argues that Sweden-Finnishness is at the same time in the margins of "Swedish whiteness," approaching Finnishness prominently through the lens of ethnic differences. This might be partly affected by the new minority political context, which likewise emphasizes ethnic distinctiveness.

Very recently, postcolonial perspectives to understanding Finnish-Swedish relations have emerged, notably among the Swedish-born generations with Finnish background. They can be characterized as a new cultural elite as they are often highly educated and/or work in media, education and the third sector. For instance, the *Finnjävlar* anthology referred to in the beginning of this chapter not only brings together the voices of the representatives of that generation, but also mobilizes a postcolonial perspective to understand the historical relations between "Finns" and "Swedes" (see Borg 2016). Framed as part of new Sweden-Finnish history writing, the anthology participates simultaneously in the contemporary Swedish memory work concerning race biology and its heritage in Sweden (Hagerman 2018). Concrete efforts calling for a reconciliation were also made at a grassroots level in late 2018, when a committee consisting of Sweden-Finnish activists filed a petition to the Swedish medical university *Karolinska Institutet* (KI), demanding it to repatriate 82 human skulls labeled as Finnish, which it possesses in its historical anatomical collection (KI 2019). At the same time, contradictions deriving from the Finnish immigrant history are present. For instance, many Finns in Sweden have been noted to be politically active in the right-wing populist party Sweden Democrats (*Sverigedemokraterna, SD*) and thus seemingly contradicting their own immigrant background with the party's anti-immigration ideologies. While the political behavior of Finns in Sweden has remained unstudied, in media, this phenomenon has been framed through the working-class background of Finns, shared Nordic identity, and the strong historical and cultural ties between Finns and Swedes.[3] These highly contradictory positionings emphasize how today, both politics of difference and sameness operate simultaneously between "Finnishness" and "Swedishness."

Material and Method

The data used in this chapter consist of the contents of two Sweden-Finnish social media campaigns and one activist account from the 2010s: Swedish Public Radio's channel *Sisuradio*'s[4] one-week-long Twitter campaign *#Vågafinska* (2013), RSN-SFU's Instagram campaign *#Stoltsverigefinne* (2016–) and an

Instagram account *Tukholman sissit* (2017–), run by an anonymous Sweden-Finnish activist group.[5] As the *#Stoltsverigefinne* campaign and the activist account are still active and ongoing, the data collection extended until the end of 2019. In total, the material consists of 3,055 tweets and 701 Instagram posts (including 845 photos/videos and their captions). Combined, more than 400 unique users have taken part in the two campaigns. All material is publicly available under the campaign accounts and hashtags. In addition, material from the campaigns has also been published in two books and as an exhibition.

The *#Vågafinska* campaign took place for five days, from October 21 to 25, 2013. It was intended to gather experiences and stories of the general public about the Finnish language in Sweden. Data used in this chapter consist of tweets shared with the campaign hashtag "#vågafinska" during the campaign week. The *#Stoltsverigefinne* campaign, on the other hand, gives young people with a Finnish background in Sweden a space to share their thoughts about everyday life, roots and identity as part of a national minority. The campaign has been realized as a so-called "relay account," meaning that individual users update the campaign account one week at a time. Instead of being run by minority language media or an ethnic organization, *Tukholman sissit* is in turn an independent activist group, which combines urban street activism and digital activism by placing Finnish-language stickers in the Swedish public space and posting photos of them on Instagram. The group uses Instagram also as a channel to share other content, such as digital images and news stories about Finns in Sweden or minority issues. To the best of my knowledge, the group consists of representatives of the young Swedish-born generation with Finnish background. The group defines itself as a leftist and anti-nationalist activist group that speaks for the national minority Sweden-Finns (Sonck 2017).

The analyzed campaigns can be defined as hashtag activism as they aim to provide visibility to Sweden-Finnishness and the Finnish language, and support community building and collective identity construction (see also Koivunen 2017; Lainio 2014). All campaigns and the activist account mobilize to a certain extent what Anu Koivunen (ibid.: 64) calls "an economy of pride and shame," overcoming "social stigmas and traumatic migrant histories," but they also operate in the contemporary Swedish minority political context, which highlights the strive for the cultural and linguistic revitalization of national minorities.

Analyzing contents of social media campaigns provides both opportunities and challenges. By being formed around specific causes or discourses, the campaigns also affect which discursive affordances are mobilized on an individual level. Social media campaigns also facilitate easy and low-threshold participation. However, based on how the social media users participating in the campaigns represent themselves in the material, the participant base represents very diverse backgrounds in terms of, for instance, migrant generation, age, linguistic skills, ethnicity, "race" and nationality. Therefore, social media material brings out very different experiences and voices under the common

notion of "Sweden-Finnishness" in all its ambiguity, also providing opportunities for a nuanced, critical and comparative analysis. This means, however, that the material is at the same time very fragmented, covering various themes and experiences, which can sometimes be only single tweets or posts. Therefore, the material has been first analyzed using broad content analysis to identify broader themes emerging from the material, and then further examined with critical discourse analysis (CDA) to examine how power, hegemonies and norms become discursively represented, but also contested (van Dijk 1993). While the analysis focuses mostly on texts, social media data is characteristically multimodal and therefore photos, videos, hashtags and emojis are also considered as participating in the construction of discourses.

As part of ethnopolitical campaigns and activism, the data used in this study is both publicly available and targeted at a broad audience. Therefore, information collection and dissemination is seen as appropriate in this specific context (Townsend and Wallace 2017). Nevertheless, the methodological choices of this study ensure that the focus is not on human subjects, but rather on language and discourse. In addition, the data has been anonymized, including also other possible information that might reveal the identity of individual social media users (replaced with "X"). This has been recommended as a good practice in studies where obtaining informed consent is not necessary or otherwise difficult when dealing, for example, with older social media material (ibid.).

"But You Are a Swede Now"—Invisible Finnishness

In most of the material, physical appearance is not represented as something affecting individual-level identification processes or the sense of belonging or non-belonging. Therefore, Finnishness in terms of physical appearance often seems to blend in the normative and hegemonic Swedish whiteness, being largely invisible. However, two separate groups of users can be identified, for both of whom Finnishness in terms of physical appearance is invisible, but whose comparison and analysis side by side is otherwise fruitful. These groups are the so-called new first-generation Sweden-Finns—young people mostly in their 20s, who have moved to Sweden as adults—and later-generation Finnish descendants—children or grandchildren of Finnish migrants—who also represent the same generation age-wise.

The relationship of these groups toward Finnish and Swedish societies differ most notably in terms of their citizenship/nationality, but often also linguistic skills. Today's Finnish migrants move to Sweden from very different prerequisites as the postwar migrants did, representing more individual, circular and privileged migration (Wahlbeck 2015). These users do not refer to themselves as "immigrants" in the material or discuss their position in Sweden in relation to other immigrants, confirming the notion that "immigrant" has become

increasingly racialized in Sweden (see e.g. Lundström 2017) and how Finns have climbed the ethnic hierarchies. Based on the contents of the material and some biographic self-descriptions, it is also evident that contemporary Finnish migration to Sweden is not completely homogeneous white, Finnish-speaking migration, but represents different linguistic and ethnic groups as well. These users, however, do not engage in discussions about physical appearance in defining Finnishness, Swedishness or Sweden-Finnishness.

When looking at the majority of those users who can be defined as new, first-generation Sweden-Finns, cultural elements such as food, material culture and Finnish characteristics emerge as ways to represent and perform Finnishness in the material. However, one clear marker which the users cannot choose voluntarily to signify their Finnishness is language and accent—something that Leinonen and Toivanen (2014: 163) call "audible visibility." Deriving partly from the discursive affordances of the campaigns, but also the improved status of the Finnish language and broader Sweden-Finnish identity politics, Finnish language and other ethnic markers are generally depicted in a very positive light on an individual level. For instance, in the *#Vågafinska* campaign, Finnish was described as a beautiful language or even as a "superpower." However, the material also includes some examples where these elements are represented negatively as a stigmatizing ethnic marker, revealing how boundaries or exclusion and inclusion are drawn.

Language skills of immigrants and later-generation descendants generally differ especially in terms of accent. Compared with the migrant generation, it is assumable that their children and grandchildren, who are born and raised in Sweden, seldomly have a Finnish accent when speaking Swedish. However, language skills are different and individual. The material includes an interesting example of a young, first-generation Finnish migrant whose accent, however, does not reveal their Finnishness:

> Where are you "at home"? I am happy to be able to say that I have two, Sweden and Finland. Nothing strange there, huh? I have however experienced that many who know me often deny my Finnishness. "But you speak Swedish so well, like no Moomin Swedish" "but you are a Swede now". Why should I need to choose? Why are so many with another or dual citizenship met with this attitude? (#Stoltsverigefinne, n.d.)

The Finnish accent is referred to in the example as "Moomin Swedish," referring to the Swedish version of the 1990s Moomin television series, which was dubbed in Finland in Finland-Swedish. Despite being a Finnish-speaking Finn and having migrated to Sweden as an adult, the user's lack of accent as an audible ethnic marker affects the perceptions coming from the outside. The example reveals that by sounding like a Swede (and also looking like a Swede, although not consciously reflected), taking a non-Swedish identity becomes

difficult despite one's country of birth or citizenship, contradicting with the user's own self-identification. However, the critical undertone of the example does not represent the outside rejection only as a rejection of the user's Finnishness, but more broadly as a rejection toward multiple (national) identifications and belongings, which are not seen as part of being a "Swede." In this example, the notion of Swedishness is constructed as exclusionary toward other national identifications.

Among later-generation Finnish descendants, the same non-consciousness and invisibility of Finnish whiteness is also present. In a similar manner, self-identification as Finnish is represented as something that is rejected from the outside, as the following example shows:

> It is an intriguing thing to be a Swede and feel like a Swede, but to simultaneously feel that I am a Finn. I do not long to move to Finland or follow the local Finnish news. But at the same time, I have a need to every now and then call myself a Finn. To every now and then be able to assert my Finnishness. Something that is often met with a playful dismissal: "You say that only to be cool, you are a Swede after all. If you like it so much, move there then." It is just nice to sometimes call myself a Finn without meaning anything deeper or greater than that. Only to uphold a heritage and a part of my identity. (#Stoltsverigefinne, n.d.)

While not discussing visual or audible markers, taking a non-Swedish identity is difficult as the user passes as a Swede in the eyes of others. In line with Weckström's (2011) and Koivunen's (2017) notions, Finnishness is represented rather as a feeling, which is enough to uphold the user's heritage and identity. The user highlights how their self-identification as a Finn is not tied to Finland in terms of cultural knowledge or geographical ties. On the other hand, the notion of Swedishness becomes constructed from the outside as something that does not refer to heritage or ancestry, but rather being born and raised in Sweden. Whereas the first example by a new, first-generation Finnish migrant represented the duality of their belonging as a matter of citizenship, this example represents the notions of "Finnishness" and "Swedishness" as separate from political memberships, but rather as cultural identities, formed as matters of heritage and geographical ties. However, the simultaneity of these identities is still represented as difficult.

In the previous example, Finnishness is valued as something positive and "cool" from the outside. This is not always the case, however, in the subjective experiences of later-generation Finnish descendants, as the following extract shows:

> We always spoke Finnish at home, in shops, on the telephone but when I went to junior high school some classmates imitated me with a Finnish accent and said repeatedly "Damn *finnjävel*". I remember that I had

> my locker close to the floor, it was marked with black strikes which came from these classmates having kicked my locker. They always wore big shoes with steel caps to scare and keep us who did not "fit in" at a distance. It was only for "fun" and everyone laughed. I have also heard countless times that "In Sweden we speak Swedish!". I am a third generation immigrant and minority who has not adapted and forgotten their language. There is a sacred border in Sweden. In Sweden it is the Swedish language which shall be seen and heard in the public. One country, one language. (#Stoltsverigefinne, n.d.)

While the examples show how Finnish can be used in everyday private life, in the public sphere of school, a Finnish accent becomes a marker of difference, revealing the user's non-Swedish background and leading to bullying and being called derogatory terms such as *finnjävel* [damn Finn]. The example highlights the role of audible markers, but shows simultaneously and non-consciously how looks play little role in these exclusionary practices. While the role of language is highlighted as a marker of Finnishness, it is also represented as a central marker of Swedishness, as the "sacred border" and the final frontier of belonging. Therefore, boundaries of Swedishness are not constructed only as white, but also as linguistic. However, this almost Herderian notion of one language—one nation—one state, which also reflects the current political atmosphere and the rise of xenophobia and neonationalism in Sweden to a certain extent, becomes contested in the example. Identifying as both "immigrant" and "minority," the user juxtaposes this duality against excluding nationalist ideologies. By emphasizing that they are a "third generation immigrant and minority," assimilationist and anti-assimilationist stances are further stressed.

In some posts by users who represent the new generation of Finnish migrants, the Finnish language is also represented as a notable boundary of difference in Sweden. For instance, in the *#Stoltsverigefinne* campaign, one user tells how they were worried about speaking Finnish publicly in Sweden before moving there. Another user participating in the same campaign writes highly positively about the Finnish language, but also shares negative comments that they have heard of it being called an "ugly, strange, nonsensical [and] meaningless" language.

In addition to language and accent, a Finnish-sounding name can also function as an ethnic marker, as the following example by a later-generation Finnish descendant shows:

> X [a Finnish last name]. A name that I both love and hate. Love because it is so beautiful. Hate it because it has been yet another reason to bully me. A name that has gotten my classmates to laugh their heads off and sneer. A name that has presented me as a person who knows all the Finnish words they want to know. A name that has made me

> seem different. Every damn time. But I will reclaim it. X is my last name. It is enormously beautiful and everyone who thinks else can beat it. (#Stoltsverigefinne, n.d.)

A Finnish name is represented here directly as something that has made the user "seem different"; it therefore reveals the user's Finnishness to the outside. The negative experiences of bullying and ridicule have led to a very ambivalent relationship that the user has toward their Finnish last name. This internal struggle has also been created by the contradiction that their name, signaling an insider position in a culture, and the lack of cultural and linguistic knowledge have created. Because the user has not been able to meet these expectations, the name has become a site of shame. The example, however, mediates a sense of empowerment and a will to reclaim the name—to become visible—which follows the discursive affordances of the campaign *#Stoltsverigefinne*, but also the broader Sweden-Finnish cultural narratives in the 2010s (see Koivunen 2017).

"I Do Not Look Like 'a Swede' or 'a Finn'"—Contested Finnishness

Finnish experiences in Sweden are not only limited to those of "white" Finns or Sweden-Finns, but experiences of "non-white" or racialized Finnish descendants are also present in social media, while quantitatively more marginally. This was also noted in one tweet in the *#Vågafinska* campaign, stating: "Sweden-Finns anno 2013. Not ethnically blond and no Finnish names. But Finnish moms and Finnish souls." The tweet is accompanied by a photo of *Sisuradio*'s reporter Ramin Farzin, holding a paper with the campaign hashtag #vågafinska. The photo was shared by Sisuradio as part of the campaign. The tweet comments on Finnish-Iranian Farzin's looks by noting that they diverge from the normative depiction of Sweden-Finnishness, which is represented as "ethnically blond." Farzin's name is also represented as divergent from "typical" Finnish names. The tweet constructs Sweden-Finnishness as something that has previously been dominantly white, but which is in a state of change, therefore making the whiteness of Finnishness visible. The changing character of Sweden-Finnishness is highlighted by the statement "Sweden-Finns anno 2013," the Latin word *anno* [in the year] mediating a sense of entering a new age or time period and inevitable change. In the absence of visible markers, which in the previous section made the whiteness of Finnishness invisible, the example constructs Finnishness instead as a matter of family, heritage and "soul," something inherited, but also something that cannot be seen from the outside, making the whiteness of Finnishness simultaneously visible and redundant. However, while the tweet reveals how non-white Sweden-Finnishness is readily observable, it also mediates acceptance and acknowledgment of new times,

identifying Farzin as a Sweden-Finn among many others who likewise do not fit into the old stereotypical image of what Finns in Sweden look like.

Subjective negotiations of the relationship between Finnishness and physical appearance in the campaigns show more often, however, that being non-white, yet with Finnish background, is often experienced as contradictory and as something that is rejected from the outside. For instance, a user representing themself as a later-generation Finnish descendant discusses the contradictions between country of birth, language, heritage and looks:

> For me it was self-evident, I am a Swede because I was born in Sweden. I speak three languages because my father is from X [country] and my maternal grandparents were born in Finland and have always spoken Finnish with my mom. But I was not believed. I cannot be a Swede. Or half-Finn. Because I am not white. I do not look like "a Swede" or "a Finn." (#Stoltsverigefinne, n.d.)

The user continues by explaining that they likewise do not physically look like their father and the ethnicity he represents. In this example, the user's own family background, different languages they speak, country of birth, and looks are intersecting but also contradicting in many ways. In terms of Finnishness, non-white looks are represented as an excluding element despite knowledge of the Finnish language and close family ties. The user consciously uses the term "white" as an important marker, which constructs both normative Finnishness and Swedishness, but simultaneously excludes the user from these communities. Despite family background and heritage, looks are represented as the most dominant ethnic marker from the outside, while for the user, their country of birth and language skills play an important role in their different self-identification processes.

In another example, whiteness is likewise represented as the visible norm of Finnishness, but the example additionally highlights the contradiction between non-white looks and speaking Finnish:

> I speak Finnish with my mother and my brothers, so Finnish is one of my strongest languages. Sure, it is somewhat surprising in someone's eyes and to their ears to see a non-white person speaking Finnish so well which can be provocative and sad for me. But that is another question and remains a problem of only one generation, hopefully… (#Stoltsverigefinne, n.d.)

Visible and audible markers are represented as contradictory to each other; therefore, the normative notion of Finnishness is again constructed as white and Finnish-speaking, even though it contradicts with the user's personal experience. The user further writes about their personal emotional reaction, which is caused by the non-conscious assumptions of what Finns or Sweden-Finns

should look like—the persistently existing white boundary of Finnishness. However, in line with the first example, the quote also highlights an ongoing change and contestation over the emphasized meaning of looks as the primary marker of one's cultural identity.

In a similar manner, a third example also discusses the normative assumption of white Finnishness and how language skills contradict non-white looks:

> I have worked as X [occupation] for six years. There, Finnish language has been put into good use. For example, once I walked past an old man who muttered in Finnish "check out that troll hair" [in Finnish]. In his defense, I had an afro, which was sticking out from the safety helmet to all directions. I turned around and said "what did you say" [in Finnish] which led to a moment of silence, but then with a wary voice he asked "do you speak Finnish?" [in Finnish]. What had begun as an unpleasant comment then led to many conversations at the workplace, during which I could practice my Finnish and he learnt not to judge a book by its cover. At the same time, I noticed how proud Finns, especially in Sweden, are when you know the language. (#Stoltsverigefinne, n.d.)

The elderly man makes an unconscious assumption that due to a person's non-white looks (presented in the text as observable due to afro hair) there is no possibility that the person could speak Finnish, thus maintaining a normative image of Finnishness as something tied to looks. While the example shows how the need to make such comments on other people's looks is experienced as uncomfortable, it also underlines certain generational differences. The user is, however, able to rise above the situation and the unpleasant first encounter becomes in the end a long-term relationship. It is transformed into active dialogue where both are able to learn from each other and find common ground in their shared knowledge of Finnish.

The presumed whiteness of Finnishness can also become visible in cultural contexts other than Sweden. In one example, the whiteness of another user's Finnish mother became visible when the family was living in the father's home country in South America:

> In X [country] it became obvious that my family contested norms in many ways. My mom was a blond, tall Northerner who was known in our neighborhood as "la gringa." Her looks raised attention wherever we went, and often she was idealized. All because of a beauty standard which is based on whiteness as the norm. At the same time, she had difficulties in finding true friends from X [the local population]. (#Stoltsverigefinne, n.d.)

In this example, the whiteness of their mother becomes visible for the user as it differs notably from the rest of the surrounding population. While having

challenges in integrating and finding friends, the mother's looks are at the same time valued positively from the outside because of the socially constructed white beauty standards. Here, Finnishness becomes constructed as part of normative whiteness in a broader global context. In line with some of the previous examples, the awareness of whiteness and structural normalization of certain looks is very conscious in the user's subjective identification processes.

"Hey China Swedes"—(Re-)racialized Finnishness

In a third discourse which emerges from the material, Finnishness becomes also represented as something visible—however, not as white as in the previous examples, but as excluded and differentiated from the normative Swedish whiteness (see also Beckman 2018). This discourse of marginalized and racialized Finnishness is mobilized especially in *Tukholman sissit*'s activism through references to the history of racial biology and categorizations of Finns. Therefore, the history of differentiation, which was discussed earlier in this chapter, is operationalized as part of this discourse.

In one prominent example from 2019, a digital image depicts four drawn eyes with a text "Epikantus on kaunis [Epicanthus is beautiful]" in the middle. Two of the eyes are different, depicting an eye-type with a so-called epicanthian fold, which is a skin fold that covers the inner corner of the eye, often regarded as an Asiatic ethnic feature. However, in this context, the post makes a reference to the 19th-century racial categorizations of Finns as Asiatic people or Mongols. The phrase on the photo mobilizes a counter-strategy typical for ethnic and social movements (such as the 1960s black cultural movement "black is beautiful," to which the text makes a direct reference) where negative stereotypes are reversed into something positive (e.g. Hall 1997). The rather long, timeline-style caption of the post is worth quoting fully:

> 2019-09-18, subway, Slussen, two teenage girls are talking. One understands that they are Finns when one of the girls answers her phone in Finnish and her mom calls. After the call, one girl says to the other: "You look so pretty today darling." "Dah, no. Look at my eyes, Chinese eyes, so ugly, I look so Finnish."
>
> 1930-07-29 Sports magazine's major headline: "Day of the Mongols on the stadium." What had happened? Yes—the Finnish athletes had succeeded on the Stockholm stadium, among others, the "slant-eyed" Matti Järvinen had thrown javelin longer than the at the time current world record.
>
> 1998: I was new in the class. A girl comes to me and says that I am good-looking. Good-looking for a Finn, in other words. I was just like: How did you know that I am a Finn? "I see it in your ching-chong eyes." Ok.

> 1942, Minnesota: "… because the Swedish kids, they knew our grandparents were from Finland, they'd go and put their fingers by their eyes and make slanty eyes and say "Hey, China Swede, hey China Swedes." "China Swede" was one term, "roundhead" was another. There were also more subtle forms of discrimination."[6]
>
> Epicanthus. Not ugly. Epicanthus is beautiful. Do not forget it. #sweden-finns #nationalminorities #epichantus (Tukholman sissit, n.d.)

Knowledge production and distribution is somewhat characteristic for *Tukholman sissit*'s activism and is especially prominent in this example, sharing insights into the "racial" histories of Finns in Sweden and beyond. However, it is relevant to note that the examples quoted above are posted without any broader context or sources to these stories, whereas some of the references are more nuanced than how they are represented in the caption.[7] Bringing these short quotes together should therefore be seen rather as the activists' subjective recontextualization, which participates in the discursive construction of Sweden-Finnishness as a national minority, as the hashtags in the post also reveal. The example also shows entanglement of individual and collective experiences, the unique experiences of the activists and the broader narratives and histories of Finnishness, pointing out how the history of differentiation continues to operate in the society. Nadja Nieminen Mänty (2017) has observed similar use of the entanglement of individual and collective experiences in other Swedish minority political material, functioning as a way to reinforce legitimacy of these narratives.

The example emphasizes the racialized otherness of Finns through physical features. "Finnish eyes" are depicted as a visible ethnic feature, described, however, as "ugly," or even with derogatory racialized terms such as "ching-chong eyes." While "China Swedes" in this example highlights ethnic difference, the term also interestingly constructs Finns as otherwise like "Swedes," but differentiated by their different-looking eyes. In all the examples except the first one, Finnishness is represented as something identifiable from the outside, both historically and in contemporary times. In the first example, the overheard subjective representation of "Finnish looks" as something ugly is on the other hand represented as internalized self-understanding, especially as the activists identify them as Finns only based on audible markers.

Tukholman sissit's activism is not limited only to promoting rights of Sweden-Finns as a national minority, but it also participates in contesting the broader normative hegemonies and structures that continue to affect the sense of belonging and acceptance of national minorities as part of the Swedish nation in both the past and the present. While the examples above make references to the nationally anchored notion of Finnishness, Finns in Sweden as well as Finnish Americans, it is notable that in all the examples, Sweden and Swedes are represented as the main antagonists in everyday encounters,

media and personal memories, creating juxtapositioning between "Finns" and "Swedes."

The salience of this discourse is not only limited to activism, but is also present in some individual-level representation of Sweden-Finnishness toward the end of the 2010s, revealing the emerging impact of the new narratives of Sweden-Finnishness that draw from the contemporary Swedish minority political context. The following, likewise a lengthy quote, is by a user who represents later-generation Finnish descendants:

> When I was in Egypt almost ten years ago, a street vendor greeted me with "*Terve!* [Hi!]" and I noticed that I did not like that I came across as a Finn. I realized that I thought that Finns are ugly. It took, however, many years before I began to ask why I thought like this. When I read about the position of Finns in Sweden's history of race biology, I began to think if racist ideas about my ancestors can have impacted what I thought when I looked at myself in the mirror.
>
> Classified as "Asiatic Mongols" many nationalists saw for long that Finns (besides the Sámi) were the greatest acute threat against the "pure race," beautiful Swedishness. Opinions legitimatized by Swedish researches who, for instance, stole and measured skulls from Finnish graveyards.
>
> The State Institute for Racial Biology was abolished only in 1958, two years before grandmother moved to Sweden. … One can, however, imagine that the ideas of "shortskulls" have lived on for longer than that and affected the Swedish view on "Finnish looks."
>
> What do you think? Can foolish historical ideas have affected our self-image? Do you think that what is considered as "Finnish features" is beautiful? (#Stoltsverigefinne, n.d.)

The post follows the style of *Tukholman sissit*'s post by entangling individual and collective experiences. The post also makes a reference to the skull repatriation case—topical around the same time—to demonstrate how legacies of the past continue to carry meaning in contemporary societies, often as invisible structures. The skulls in the center of the repatriation dispute are part of a collection of Swedish physician and anatomist Gustaf Retziuz, son of Anders Retzius, who developed a racial categorization system based on the size of human crania in the 19th century, and in which Finns were categorized as more inferior "shortskulls" (e.g. Keskinen 2019). For the activist group demanding the skulls to be repatriated, the collection represents symbolically the past injustices experienced by "the national minority Sweden-Finns." Through addressing the history of racial biological research and racial categorization of Finns, the group articulates claims for dignity and equality in Swedish society (see KI 2019). However, on an official level, the case has

so far been handled as an international issue between Finland and Sweden without addressing the Swedish minority political context. As of August 2021, the case is still open.

The example represents "Finnish features" also as a stigmatized ethnic trait and as something distinguishable from the outside. However, the example shows how new awareness of history promoted also by activism affects individual-level identification processes, igniting a process where one's own thinking and possible internalized behavior patterns are reweighted. By positioning Finns and the Sámi side by side as minorities and juxtapositioning them as different in relation to the "beautiful," in other words hegemonic, normative and also national notion of Swedishness, the example contextualizes Finnishness most prominently as a minoritized notion in the Swedish minority political context.

Both examples show a certain contradiction and even paradox in how they aim to contest structures and "foolish historical ideas," but how they simultaneously participate in racializing Finnishness as visible through specific, physical features as markers of difference and exclusion from Swedish whiteness. Stuart Hall (1997) points out that when stereotypes are contested, it might also lead somewhat paradoxically to their reification, however transforming them from negative stereotypes into positive ones. Whether as something positive or negative, in this context, Finnishness becomes represented as visible due to "racial" features, contradicting with the other discourses where Finnishness becomes constructed as "white," along with hegemonic Swedishness. At the same time, these examples represent Finnishness as something homogenous and as historically stable and fixed. While mobilizing a similar myth of culturally and racially homogenous Finnishness as pointed out by Miika Tervonen (2014) in reference to Finnish nation-building, as part of a minoritized notion of Sweden-Finnishness, such discourse participates now, paradoxically enough, in contesting myths of homogenous Swedishness.

In addition to the new social hierarchies and uses of the past which participate in the construction of Sweden-Finnish national minority identity, the racialized discourse of Finnishness appears in the material also in a completely different context, namely in the form of consumer genetic testing, or DNA tests. A post by a user, who identifies as both Tornedalian and Sweden-Finn, shows how Finnishness can also become visible through DNA:

> I am a very curious person. When the hype about DNA tests emerged on my social media feeds, I just could not restrain myself... Here you can see my results! 84,1% Finnish apparently. Slightly deceptive taking in consideration that because of the family research done by my relatives, I KNOW that my ancestors lived on the Swedish side too. Somewhat amusing that my DNA shows that I am more Central Asian and Inuit than Swedish 😂 Joking aside. Of course I am Swedish. I was born in

> Sweden, I know the Swedish language the best, I dream, think, and live in Swedish. But I am also a Tornedalian and a Sweden-Finn. My heart, my soul and my core says "*perkele, no niin och lissää löylyä* [damn, oh well and throw more water on the sauna stove]," so it is combinable. I am a living example. (#Stoltsverigefinne, n.d.)

The photo attached to the post shows a screenshot of the test results, showing different percentages next to categories such as "Finnish," "Eskimo/Inuit," "Central-Asian" and "Scandinavian." In the caption, the user equates the category "Scandinavian" with "Swedish", showing thus non-conscious boundary-drawing by including Swedishness in the category "Scandinavian." This demonstrates how ideas of "racial" belonging operate even today in everyday perceptions. Consumer genetic testing has been noted to have multiple problems and challenges, for instance, in terms of their interpretation and epistemic validity (Oikkonen 2018). The different "groups" that are categorized as genetic entities (such as "Finnish" or "Scandinavian" in this example) are based on databases of previously collected samples and categorized by the genetic testing companies (ibid.). While these divisions to a certain extent are reminiscent of former racial categorizations, it has been pointed out that in the field of genetics an idea of Finns as a genetically distinct, homogeneous population still exists today in the form of "genetic exceptionality" or "genetic romanticism" (see Chapter 1 by Aaro Tupasela in this book).

The test categorizes the user's genetic heritage dominantly as "Finnish," while they self-identify as Tornedalian, Sweden-Finnish and Swedish. The user, however, points out the contradictory nature of these results, as the user's ancestors have also lived on the "Swedish side"—the Torne Valley area in the north of Sweden being a highly multicultural and transnational border region. This interpretation reveals how the ethnic or "genetic" notion of Finnishness as well as Swedishness can become equated to geographical locations and thus projecting the modern nation-states Finland and Sweden as essentialized, static and unchanged in the past. However, the border between Finland and Sweden becomes constructed simultaneously as a "genetic" border, which is, however, in contradiction with different family histories and cultural identities. The user acknowledges this contradiction, thus defining the boundaries of "Swedishness" also as a matter of birthplace and language. Therefore, different national and minority identities are not represented as exclusionary, but as something that can exist simultaneously. While the user approaches the results with certain criticism, equating national communities and genetic identities with each other can create contradictions, collisions and tensions, as the example also shows (see also Oikkonen 2018). While genetic testing has been noted to potentially function as a way to maintain ethnic identities of later-generation immigrants in the USA (Waters 2014), together in the same social media space where the politicized and minoritized notion of Finnishness is discussed, genetic

testing additionally participates in constructing differences between "Finns" and "Swedes."

Conclusions

This chapter has examined representations of Finnishness and whiteness in the context of contemporary Sweden-Finnish identity politics in social media. The study shows that the notion of Finnishness in Sweden and its relation to whiteness is multidimensional and situational. The way in which "whiteness" is represented and discussed in the material is highly dependent on the different subjective social settings such as "race," generation, ancestry, citizenship and language skills, but also on the different collective meanings given to "Sweden-Finnishness." These, in turn, operate in different socio-political and temporal contexts emphasizing either similarities or differences between Finnishness and Swedishness. Applying the analytical lens of in/visibility on this particular social media material shows that Finnishness in Sweden can become represented as both visible and invisible in different contexts, but it also reveals that these notions have their internal complexities due to, first, the internal diversity and heterogeneity of those with Finnish background in Sweden, and, second, the mobilization of the historically shifting notion of whiteness in different socio-political contexts.

While some are able to pass as "Swedes" due to the invisibility of "race," for non-white Sweden-Finns, the whiteness of Finnishness (and Swedishness) becomes visible, but also exclusionary. In both cases, Finnishness and Swedishness are represented as part of the same, hegemonic whiteness, yet either as inclusive or exclusionary depending on the different subjective social locations of the social media users. While this chapter has focused mainly on how "race" and whiteness operate in representations of Finnishness, it is evident that "audible visibility" also plays an important role in the negotiations of belonging. For those who are otherwise able to pass as "Swedes," language, accent and even a Finnish-sounding name are represented as the primary markers of difference. These elements have the power to reveal one's Finnishness, but are mainly represented in social media as something tied to the stigmatized experiences of non-belonging. For non-white Finnish descendants, language, on the other hand, plays an important role as a marker of Finnishness, but also as a way to mediate belonging to the Finnish community, which is otherwise contradicted by their "non-Finnish" looks. Therefore, the boundaries of Finnishness as well as Swedishness are represented as white, but also linguistic.

The analysis shows additionally that the seemingly white notion of Finnishness can also become visible as something racialized and therefore as excluded from Swedish whiteness. This discourse operates most prominently in the contemporary politicized and minoritized context of Sweden-Finnishness, mobilizing past imaginations of differences in asserting the distinctiveness of the group as a national minority. Therefore, this study suggests that in addition

to the general tendency to depict Sweden-Finnish migrants as a white and homogenous group, also the recognition as a national minority participates in constructing similar essentialist notions of homogeneity. At the same time, a similar discourse of Finnishness emerges from the growing popularity of genetic testing.

These observations demonstrate how whiteness is socially constructed and a normative space of power and privilege, but also highly fluid, situational and even contradictory within the seemingly same ethnicity in the same national context. The study also reveals many ongoing changes and challenges. As part of publicly produced Sweden-Finnishness, the social media, and especially hashtag activism in general, emphasize emotions, grievances and claims (Jackson, Bailey and Foucault Welles 2020), which might promote polarized representations of Finnishness and Swedishness and make stigmatized experiences more prominent. The mobilization of Finnish national myths, as well as how the relationship between Finnishness and Sáminess is represented in the material as inhabiting the same marginalized position, reveal the complexity, entanglement and situationality of intra-ethnic histories and relations in the Nordic context. While the changing political status and institutionalization of new Sweden-Finnish minority narrative constructs Sweden-Finnishness to a certain extent as something essentialized and homogenous, it is at the same time contested by the heterogeneity and diverse realities of individuals with a Finnish background in Sweden.

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Notes

[1] Unless otherwise indicated, translations are my own.

[2] The translations of the Finnish- and Swedish-language quotes from social media follow the style of the original posts. Due to the empirical focus on individual users' own voice and experiences, the possible use of derogatory terms and slurs in the original texts are included as such, because they are often intended to rather contest use of such terms than reproduce their

derogatory meanings. The term "svartskalle" (singular) used in this example is a Swedish derogatory term for a dark-haired or dark-skinned person.

[3] See e.g. Kauhanen 2010; Huhta 2014; Pelli 2018.

[4] In April 2020, the name of the radio channel was changed to *Sveriges Radio Finska*.

[5] The name of the activist group is a reappropriation of the term "Slussenin sissit [Guerillas of Slussen]," which refers to a more or less urban legend of Finnish alcoholics and misfits, who held the intersection area of Slussen in central Stockholm as their "base" in the postwar decades. The term was popularized by the Finnish singer-songwriter Juha Vainio in his 1968 song *Slussenin sissit*.

[6] This paragraph is written in English in the original post. It is a quote from a transcript of a radio program from 1997, which discusses the experiences of Finnish migrants in Minnesota at the turn of the 20th century (see Losure and Olson 1997).

[7] For instance, the headline "Day of the Mongols" was from the pen of Torsten Tegnér, the then editor-in-chief of the Swedish sports newspaper *Idrottsbladet*. The headline caused a scandal in Finland, affecting even the relationship between Finland and Sweden in the field of sports (see Kanerva and Tikander 2017).

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CHAPTER 8

"We're Not All Thugs in the East"

The Racial Politics of Place in Afro-Finnish Hip Hop

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Abstract

This chapter explores the discursive construction of East Helsinki as a racialized and classed space in the Finnish cultural imaginary through an analysis of Afro-Finnish hip hop. Based on a critical discursive analysis of four songs by the rapper Prinssi Jusuf and the duo Seksikäs-Suklaa & Dosdela, I examine how rappers from East Helsinki challenge and negotiate the stigma associated with the district via their music. Using Loïc Wacquant's (2009) framework of *territorial stigmatization*, I show the ways in which these rappers deploy different discourses about East Helsinki that resist the stigmatization of East Helsinki, while also creating new discourses that transcend efforts to mitigate stigma. I argue that in addition to challenging the mainstream media-produced stereotypes about East Helsinki as a dilapidated and crime-ridden problem area, the rappers also "talk back" by producing counter-discourses about "the East" as a sphere of belonging, home and freedom, juxtaposed against broader experiences of exclusion. East Helsinki's reputation as the home of immigrants and

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low-income residents is also claimed as a point of pride, as a source of collective identification and as a sphere of belonging.

Keywords: discourse, East Helsinki, territorial stigmatization, hip hop, urban studies, Black studies

Introduction

Consider the following descriptions of East Helsinki, as provided by Finnish news media:

"*Maahanmuuttajalähiö*"[1]—"Immigrant suburb"

"*Stadin dissatuin alue*"—"The most dissed part of the city"

"*Lähi-itä Helsinki*"—"Middle East-Helsinki"

"*Ankea betonilähiö*"—"Desolate concrete suburb"

"*Se on kuin Somalia*"—"It's like going to Somalia"

"*Suomen väkivaltaisin lähiö*"—"Finland's most violent suburb"

"*Ongelmalähiö*"—"Problem suburb"

"*Maahanmuuttajavaltainen alue*"—"Immigrant-dominated area"

The above quotes come from a range of sources, including politicians, journalists, researchers and residents. Whether the focus is its ethnic composition, urban development or social outcomes, the eastern district of Helsinki is most often depicted negatively in Finnish news media discourses. Indeed, even positive depictions of the district are usually framed with reference to these negative discourses, illustrating the salience of what has been called *territorial stigmatization* (Wacquant 2009).

Scholars across disciplines and national contexts have examined the discursive stigmatization of urban spaces associated with immigrants, people of color and poor people, including in Australia (Birdsall-Jones 2013), the United Kingdom (Hancock and Mooney 2013) and Denmark (Waaddegaard 2019). Within the framework of territorial stigmatization, Loïc Wacquant (2011) has also proposed a differentiation of the myriad strategies that residents of stigmatized neighborhoods fashion to manage stigma, ranging from submitting to and reproducing the stigma to defying and deflecting the stigma (Wacquant 2011). Previous studies have also examined the ways in which residents of stigmatized urban communities around the world are impacted by (Peters and de Andrade 2017), mediate the effects of (Horgan 2018) and respond to (Cuny 2019) territorial stigmatization. In the case of youth from stigmatized

urban communities, studies have found hip hop culture to function as a kind of informal curriculum for making sense of territorial stigmatization, as well as a source of empowerment in the face of marginalization (Sernhede 2011).

This chapter explores the discursive construction of East Helsinki as a racialized and classed space in Finnish cultural discourse through an analysis of how Afro-Finnish rappers from East Helsinki negotiate the stigma associated with the district. Based on an in-depth analysis of four songs and their accompanying music videos by the rapper Prinssi Jusuf and the duo Seksikäs-Suklaa & Dosdela, I examine the ways in which these songs can be seen as a product of—and challenge to—the negative portrayals of East Helsinki in Finnish popular discourses. To do so, I approach hip hop as a living archive for the study of racialized lived realities and as a site for the production of counter-hegemonic discourses (Kelekay 2019). Using Wacquant, Slater and Borges Pereira's (2014) framework of territorial stigmatization in action, I show how these rappers deploy different discourses about East Helsinki that both resist and transcend stigmatization through the strategies of stigma inversion, rejection and defiance. In doing so, the rappers not only challenge the mainstream media-produced stereotypes about East Helsinki as a dilapidated and crime-ridden problem area, but also "talk back" (hooks 1986) by producing counter-discourses about "the East" as a sphere of belonging, juxtaposed against broader experiences of exclusion. As such, I argue that these rappers not only confront the territorial stigmatization of East Helsinki, but also challenge the discursive construction of East Helsinki as outside the Finnish national imaginary.

In order to contextualize the discursive context within which Afro-Finnish rappers make their interventions, in the following sections I describe the racial landscape of Finland and the terrain of Finnish racial discourses. I then introduce hip hop as a vehicle for alternative discourses and situate my study of Afro-Finnish rap within the broader fields of African diaspora studies and Finnish hip hop studies. Finally, I present my analysis and conclude with final remarks on the significance of Afro-Finnish hip hop for understanding "the racialization of space and the spatialization of race" (Lipsitz 2007: 12) in the Finnish popular imaginary.

The Finnish Racial Landscape

Finland is often considered one of the most ethnically homogeneous countries, even among the Nordics. For most of its young history, Finland was mainly a country of emigration rather than immigration, with Finns mostly emigrating to neighboring Sweden or former European settler colonies like the United States and Australia (Korkisaari and Söderling 2003). Those who did migrate to Finland were either returning Finnish emigrants from Sweden and Russia or

from elsewhere in Europe (ibid.). As such, as is the case with most of Europe, the racial landscape of Finland has been significantly shaped by patterns of post-colonial migration (Blakely 2009). Yet, unlike major former colonial powers like Britain and France, the communities of color residing in the Nordic countries do not come from their former colonies. Instead, the majority of non-European immigrants to Finland have been refugees, which has structured both the population dynamics and the local discourses around race, ethnicity and migration.

Although non-European immigrants had settled in Finland in smaller numbers for several decades, it was not until the early 1990s that a consequential number of refugees began to arrive from Africa and the Middle East. During the first half of the 1990s, an unprecedented number of African asylum seekers—mostly from the Horn of Africa—arrived in Finland, overshadowing all other refugee populations (Korkisaari and Söderling 2003). As conflicts in East Africa calmed, the number of refugees from Africa began to settle, with the majority of refugee arrivals in the 2000s coming from the Middle East, primarily from Iraq and Afghanistan (ibid.). Still, Somalis remain the largest non-European ethnic minority in Finland (Statistics Finland 2019). The rapid change from a society perceived as untouched by non-European immigration to a society suddenly becoming home to growing communities of Black, Brown and Muslim people caused a backlash that journalist Esa Aallas termed "Somali Shock" (Aallas 1991). "Somali Shock" was used to refer both to Finnish society's inability to adjust to the sudden presence of an African, Black and Muslim refugee population, but also, consequently, to that population's struggles to integrate into Finnish society. Decades after the arrival of the first African refugees, Finnish society appears to still be grappling with the "shock" of diversity, both in its acceptance of the East African refugees who arrived throughout the 1990s, as well as more recent refugee arrivals from Africa and the Middle East. It should be noted, however, that although Finnish society has undoubtedly experienced a rapid diversification over the past three decades, the historical struggles of the Sámi and the Roma communities remind us that the notion that Finland was a racially, ethnically and culturally homogenous nation prior to arrival of African refugees is more myth than reality. Yet, despite Finland's complex historical relationship with nation, ethnicity and identity—or perhaps precisely because of it—Finnishness remains normatively defined as whiteness in mainstream discourse (Rastas 2016).

Today, an estimated one in ten residents in Finland have a foreign background, with the number increasing to one in five in the greater Helsinki metropolitan area. Indeed, approximately half of all people in Finland with a foreign background reside in the greater Helsinki area (City of Helsinki 2019). While the former Soviet Union and Estonia are the most common countries of origin among immigrants overall, Somalis make up the largest non-European minority group in the country and the largest immigrant population

in the Helsinki area. Since 2015, people of Asian descent are the fastest-growing immigrant population, with the majority of new immigrants coming from Iraq, but also from Syria and the Philippines (Statistics Finland 2019). Finns of African descent, or Afro-Finns, are also the largest group among so-called second-generation immigrants, with Somalis making up the clear majority of people of African descent (ibid.).

Researchers have examined the experiences of Finland's African diasporic communities through studies of ethnic and transnational identities (Rastas 2013), African diasporic cultural production (Rastas and Seye 2016; Westinen and Lehtonen 2016) and experiences of racism (Rastas 2009; Zacheus et al. 2019). Research reports have consistently highlighted the prevalence of anti-Black racism as an institutional phenomenon in Finland, including through "ethnic profiling" by police (Keskinen et al. 2018), discriminatory practices in education and the workplace (Non-Discrimination Ombudsman 2020) and the impact of racial discrimination on health outcomes (Rask et al. 2018). In 2018, the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) published a report titled *Being Black in the EU*, which named Finland as one of the most racist European countries for people of African descent, highlighting that more than half of all Afro-Finns report experiencing racist discrimination, harassment or violence.

The Discursive Construction of East Helsinki

With over one-quarter of the nation's population residing in the Helsinki metropolitan area, it is, perhaps, unsurprising that most (although not all) non-European immigrants arrive and choose to stay within the capital region (Statistics Finland 2019). Furthermore, immigrants have also historically tended to reside in Helsinki's outer peripheries, with the neighborhoods of the Eastern district having become home to the largest concentration of immigrant populations (Kortteinen and Vaattovaara 2000). Indeed, within the Helsinki metropolitan area, roughly one-third (30 percent) of the city's population with a foreign background live in the city's eastern district, nearly double the city total of 16 percent (City of Helsinki 2019). For example, in 2016, over 34 percent of the East Helsinki neighborhood of Meri-Rastila's population was of foreign descent (Malmberg 2017). East Helsinki is also colloquially considered to be the main home of Black communities in Helsinki, as suggested by cultural references connecting East Helsinki to African immigrants. One of the most notable examples includes the short-lived 2006 comedy series dealing with the everyday lives of immigrants in East Helsinki entitled *Mogadishu Avenue*, a reference to the nickname of the main street in the Meri-Rastila neighborhood where many Somalis live (Marttila 2006). When Somali refugees first began arriving in the early 1990s, many were placed in social housing estates along the main street cutting through the neighborhood, earning the street its nickname.

Although no longer commonly used in a serious manner, the reference has nonetheless maintained its cultural salience among different populations and age groups (Ainiala and Halonen 2011).

East Helsinki has also historically been a working-class area, with the construction of several social housing estates contributing to the area's urbanization post-Second World War (Stjernberg 2015). The concentration of immigrants and people of color in the area is similarly a result of social policies placing newly arrived refugees in these social housing estates (Vaattovaara et al. 2010). As a result, the eastern district has accumulated disadvantages in the form of lack of access to resources and social services, higher rates of unemployment, lower rates of educational attainment and lower median income (Kortteinen and Vaattovaara 2000). These disadvantages disproportionately impact residents with foreign backgrounds, both compared to their fellow East Helsinki residents and the people with foreign backgrounds residing elsewhere in Helsinki (City of Helsinki 2019). This has sparked both public and scholarly debates about economic and ethnic segregation (Stjernberg 2015; Vaattovaara et al. 2010; Vilkama 2011), as well as unequal urban development (Kortteinen, Tuominen and Vaattovaara 2005; Kortteinen and Vaattovaara 2000). Researchers have also examined the impact of residential segregation, including notions of "social disorder" (Varady and Schulman 2007), so-called "white flight" (Vilkama, Ahola and Vaattovaara 2016) and the impact of urban renewal and transformation efforts (Kallio et al. 2019; Tuominen 2020).

News and popular media narratives about East Helsinki tend to perpetuate stigmatizing discourses about the district, often relying on its working-class and immigrant-dense reputation to construct it as a problem area. Indeed, East Helsinki is not only constructed as a hub of immigrant communities, but it is framed as a problem by describing it as an area dominated or "overtaken" by immigrants. This is illustrated in the common and uncontroversial use of the label "immigrant suburb" in media discourses, as well as the more loaded term "immigrant-dominated suburb." The perception of East Helsinki as somehow "overtaken" by immigrants is exemplified in recent far-right-staged manifestations at various locations in East Helsinki. In 2016, the neo-Nazi political party *Suomi Ensin* (Finland First) staged a protest at the shopping center *Puhos*, located in Itäkeskus, which is known for its immigrant-owned businesses and, consequently, its non-white clientele (Oksanen 2016). The protest, which was framed as an attempt to "stop Islamization," was held next to the mosque at Puhos. A similar protest was staged at Puhos in 2018 by the same group, following another protest outside the shopping center in the East Helsinki neighborhood of Kontula—a series of protests that the group framed as an attempt to save "Middle-East Helsinki" on behalf of the Finnish residents of the area and the Finnish nation as a whole (de Wit 2018). That same year, the neo-Nazi vigilante group *Soldiers of Odin* was reported to be "patrolling" Puhos, striking fear in shop-owners and visitors alike (Salmi 2018; Suomi 2018). Such neo-Nazi manifestations have even targeted elementary schools in East Helsinki, with the

Nordic Resistance Movement staging protests outside schools in both Kontula and Meri-Rastila in 2017 and 2018, respectively (Pietiläinen 2017; 2018).

Another narrative that is prominently featured in discourses about East Helsinki is that of East Helsinki as an unsafe place. The idea of East Helsinki as poor, dilapidated and immigrant-dominated often feeds into these discourses of the area's dangerousness. Kontula, another East Helsinki neighborhood well known for its immigrant-dense population, is often discursively constructed as the "worst of the worst" when it comes to Helsinki's urban peripheries (Juntunen 2019). As a result of a study mapping incidents of violent crime by neighborhoods in Finland, Finnish media framed Kontula as "the most violent suburb in the country," while highlighting the several East Helsinki suburbs ranking among the top ten (Lähteenmäki 2018; Vehkasalo 2020). Other media narratives have focused on residents' fear of crime and feelings of unsafety in East Helsinki, which are reportedly getting worse (Kääriäinen 2002; Paastela 2019; Tuominen 2013). Residents—usually white residents—are interviewed and describe feeling particularly unsafe in public spaces such as near shopping centers and metro stations, with Kontula again as the primary focus (Koskela 2020). These discourses about East Helsinki as unsafe have also been tied to the "white flight" phenomenon, with reports indicating that the area's reputation for social issues is listed as one of the reasons that (presumably white) residents tend to leave the area. One of the ways in which media discourses frame this white flight without explicitly discussing race is through the emphasis on "Finnish-speaking residents" moving and "Finnish-speaking school children" leaving the area's schools (Paastela 2020). Less subtle reports declared this trend as an "escape from immigrant-dominated schools" (Moisio and Mäkinen 2009). Indeed, the social issues that cause residents to want to leave East Helsinki have been attributed to "tensions brought on by multiculturalism" (Jaskari 2018).

Resident-produced and -influenced media discourses often attempt to counter the territorial stigmatization of East Helsinki, for example through articles countering claims made in previously published negative news stories (e.g. Virkkunen 2017; Vuorio 2013) or through the production of positive news stories about the area (Lehtonen 2018; Mokkila 2014). East Helsinki has also commonly been depicted in popular cultural narratives, including in film (Pirttilahti and Takkala 2016; Tujula 2012), television (Marttila 2006) and hip hop (Kärnä 2008). East Helsinki has been a staple in Finnish hip hop since the genre's mainstream popularization in the early 2000s, with narratives about "the East" both affirming and challenging the common stereotypes about East Helsinki.

Hip Hop as Alternative Discourse

Sociologist Patricia Hill Collins has highlighted that hip hop music and culture has historically served as a tool for intervention into dominant discourses that

often render racialized communities as simultaneously hyper-visible and invisible—hypervisible in that they frequently become the subjects of discourse, but invisible in that their own narratives are excluded from such discourses (Collins 2006: 7). Scholars of the global spread of hip hop have also emphasized the ways in which hip hop has historically and globally been a crucial cultural sphere in which to engage experiences of race and racism, gender and national belonging (Bennett 1999; El-Tayeb 2003; Mitchell 2000; Morgan and Bennett 2011; Prévos 1996; Weheliye 2009). In her book *European Others: Queering Ethnicity in Postnational Europe*, Fatima El-Tayeb argues that the new generation of European youth of color and activists have

> appropriated hip-hop as a tool of intervention that allows racialized communities across the continent to formulate an identity negated in dominant discourses; an identity that transcends mononational assignments through its multiethnic and translocal frame of reference, but that nonetheless, or arguably because of it, effectively challenges minorities' expulsion from national discourses. (El-Tayeb 2011: 19)

El-Tayeb highlights that it is imperative that we look beyond state-oriented definitions of racial others in Europe, urging that we instead center European racial minorities' experiences, perspectives and forms of cultural production in our inquiries about race and racism (2011). As numerous scholars have illustrated, hip-hop music and culture has played an important role in the development of African diasporic identities and communities (Morgan and Bennett 2011; Perry 2008). Scholars across the world have also long examined the relationship between hip hop, racial/ethnic identity, community and political consciousness in various contexts, including Germany (El-Tayeb 2003; Weheliye 2009), France (Prévos 1996), Canada (Ibrahim 1999) and South Africa (Hammett 2012). Indeed, hip hop is often considered to function as "the lingua franca of the African diaspora" (El-Tayeb 2011: 29). While hip-hop culture's global circulation has highlighted its translocal relevance and appeal, the myriad ways in which hip-hop culture has been translated to fit local contexts also illustrates the centrality of place and space for understanding hip hop. In *The 'Hood Comes First: Race, Space, and Place in Rap and Hip Hop*, hip hop scholar Murray Forman reminds us that "Rap music takes the city and its multiple spaces as the foundation of its cultural production" (2002: xviii). Forman points out that "the vast majority of spatial articulations within hip-hop emerge from within the contextual boundaries of the urban sphere, a factor that has remained consistent since the culture's inception and remains true even as hip-hop's forms and expressions have circulated globally" (2002: 26). Following El-Tayeb (2003) and Collins (2006), I approach hip hop as a living archive for the study of racialized lived realities, as a tool for constructing collective identities and as a site for the production of counter-narratives that "talk back" to stigmatizing

mainstream discourses (Kelekay 2019). By focusing on rap music produced by Afro-Finnish rappers *from* East Helsinki and *about* East Helsinki, I also heed Forman's (2002) call for scholars to pay more attention to spatiality and the relationship between race, space and place in analyses of rap and hip hop.

Centering Afro-Finnish Rap

Since its arrival in Finland in the 1980s, hip hop music and culture was, until recently, almost entirely dominated by white Finnish men, with little acknowledgment of cultural appropriation or discussion of its African-American roots (Tervo 2014). As journalist Koko Hubara discusses in her 2017 collection of essays about race and the experiences of "'Brown" girls in Finland, US hip hop became almost universally embraced by the first generation of Finnish youth of color in the 1990s, providing them with what was often the only source of both the visual representation of Black and Brown bodies and the discursive representation of narratives about and by members of racialized communities (Hubara 2017). This has been affirmed by studies highlighting that US hip hop culture provides Finnish youth of color with tools to navigate identity work (Nieminen 2015) and make sense of their relationship to Finnish society (Himma 2016). Hip hop culture has no doubt had a particularly significant impact on African diasporic youth in and from East Helsinki. Journalist Pietari Peutere (2008) has rationalized that this is because the increased popularity of hip hop in the 1990s coincided with when the first significant number of young Somalis were growing up in the area, which provided them with a cultural reference they could relate to and translate to the local context of life in the urban periphery. Moreover, Peutere argues that it also helped develop a generation of young white allies who might have been more hesitant to associate with the growing number of Black youths in their midst if it was not for their admiration for the increasingly popular Black cultural form. This, Peutere argues, facilitated the creation of a unified hip hop culture among urban youth that positioned itself in opposition to the white supremacist skinhead subculture that was simultaneously growing during the 1990s.

Finnish hip-hop scholars have previously examined the way in which East Helsinki has been crucial for the development of Finnish hip hop and how, in turn, hip hop has played an important part in shaping East Helsinki in the Finnish social imaginary (Kärnä 2008; Tervo 2014). East Helsinki hip hop has been recognized as a subarea of Finnish hip hop with a reputation for being particularly authentic, gritty and socially conscious (Kärnä 2008; Westinen 2014). While such analyses have highlighted the class critique and social marginalization that white East Helsinki rappers often center in their discourses, they have not explored the relationship between race, class and place in constructions of East Helsinki. Furthermore, while Finnish hip hop scholars

have also begun to explore so-called "migrant rap" (Leppänen and Westinen 2017; Westinen 2017; 2018), these analyses have not engaged with race as a historically, materially and socially constructed reality. With this study, I seek to contribute to the growing field of hip hop studies in Finland by placing critical analyses of race at the center. I approach the study of hip hop from a sociological perspective informed by the interdisciplinary fields of cultural studies and African diaspora studies.

The Present Study

Using an interdisciplinary critical discourse analytic approach, I examine a selection of songs and music videos released by Black rappers from East Helsinki to examine how they construct (and respond to) discourses about the area. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) as an analytical approach examines "the role of discourse in the (re)production and challenge of dominance" (van Dijk 1993: 249). While CDA has its underpinnings in linguistics, the critical discourse analytic approach has been utilized by scholars working inter- and trans-disciplinarily to examine power relations through discourse (Phelan 2017), including studies of how racism influences and is evident in news media (Teo 2000), political discourses (Capdevila and Callaghan 2008) and institutional discourses (Trochmann et al. 2021). CDA has also previously been used to study racialized discourses in reality television (Giannino and Campbell 2012), sports commentaries (Lavelle 2010) and hip hop (Helland 2018). In this study, I deploy CDA as a tool to interrogate the cultural "production of difference and its relation to power, exploitation, and the persistence of inequality" (Kelley 2020: 4).

To examine how rappers construct discourses about East Helsinki as racialized and classed space, I focus on Afro-Finnish rappers who are both from and rap about East Helsinki. I do so to emphasize the ways in which these rappers, as Black men, who are often the subject of racialized discourses about East Helsinki, understand, negotiate and produce their own discourses about "the East." I specifically analyze a sample of songs by Josijas Belayneh, Luyeye Konssi and Hanad Hassan, better known by the rap alias Prinssi Jusuf [Prince Jusuf] and as the duo Seksikäs-Suklaa [Sexy Chocolate] & Dosdela, respectively. These artists were chosen in part because they have over the last several years made a mark on public discourses about immigration, Finnishness and racism through both their music and their social media productions. As East Helsinki natives, the district has also been prominently featured in their lyrics, music videos and social media content.

Since his debut in the early 2010s alongside fellow Afro-Finnish rapper Musta Barbaari [the Black Barbarian], Belayneh, who is of Ethiopian heritage, has maintained a steady presence in the hip hop scene with music that

often explicitly comments on issues of identity, national belonging and racism. Rising to the public consciousness primarily through their social media skits about life in East Helsinki, Congolese-Finnish Konssi and Somali-Finnish Hassan have also translated their comedic talents into careers as rappers and entertainers more broadly. Although these men are not the only Black rappers on the Finnish hip-hop scene, they have become active media personalities, using their platforms to push forth a conversation about immigration, racism and what it means to be Finnish.[2] All artists also rap in Finnish, although they often infuse Black-American vernacular with Finnish urban (and specifically youth-of-color) slang.[3] As part of the first wave of a burgeoning Afro-Finnish hip hop scene, these rappers have also received a great deal of attention from Finnish hip hop scholars, most of whom have focused on sociolinguistic analyses of their construction of themselves as the "Other" (Leppänen and Westinen 2017; Westinen 2017; 2018; Westinen and Lehtonen 2016).

I have previously examined Afro-Finnish rappers' articulations of racial and ethnic identifications as a resistance to erasure and racism, their negotiations of imposed racial, ethnic and national narratives, and the salience of place for establishing spaces of community and belonging in the face of national exclusion (Kelekay 2019). Shifting from individual identification to collective identification, I focus here on how Prinssi Jusuf and Seksikäs-Suklaa & Dosdela articulate discourses around East Helsinki. In nearly all their songs, references are made to the eastern district of Helsinki, which is considered the primary home of African immigrants in Finland, and where all the men themselves grew up. Place is more central in some songs than others, and references vary, from different names to different modalities. The district is referred to as "East Helsinki," simply "the East" or by reference to individual neighborhoods within the district. East Helsinki is also prominently featured in their music videos, whether it is included in the textual narrative of the song or simply serves as a visual backdrop. This is illustrative of the way in which East Helsinki is inextricably tied not only to the individual and collective identities of the rappers, but to the production process itself. It is where the men live, so it naturally becomes part of their everyday lived experiences, which also makes its way into their music. It is where they write, and often where they record. It is where they set their music videos even when not explicitly trying to communicate locality. But by virtue of both the space it has come to occupy in the cultural imaginary, and the ways in which it is tied to their individual and collective identities, East Helsinki is featured as a common theme in their songs.

Although these themes are present in a larger body of these artists' songs, I have chosen to undertake a qualitative in-depth analysis of a small sample of songs and music videos to facilitate a closer and more nuanced look at how both the songs' lyrics and music videos reflect and engage with the racial (and classed) politics of place. For the purposes of this chapter, I explicate this

through an analysis of the lyrics and music videos of four songs; *Denssi*,[4] *Mis Asun*[5] [Where I Live], *Myönnä*[6] [Admit It] and *Niiku97*[7] [Like 97].[8] I have chosen these songs because of the ways in which they contend with the notion of East Helsinki as a stigmatized place. As such, I use Loïc Wacquant's (2009) framework of *territorial stigmatization* to analyze the ways in which these songs can be seen as a product of—and challenge to—the negative portrayals of East Helsinki in Finnish popular discourses.

Challenging Territorial Stigmatization

The stereotype of East Helsinki as a problem area that is unsafe, dilapidated and undesirable is widely perpetuated in Finnish popular discourse. Within the framework of territorial stigmatization, residents of stigmatized neighborhoods deploy a range of tactics to manage stigma, ranging from submitting to and reproducing the stigma to defying and deflecting them (Wacquant 2011). Which strategies residents deploy depends on their "position and trajectory in social and physical space," varying depending on age, ethnicity, gender and other factors (Wacquant, Slater and Borges Pereira 2014: 1276). While many (white) East Helsinki rappers have historically internalized the territorial stigma associated with "the East" and claimed it as a badge of honor for the sake of "street cred" to grant them hip hop authenticity (Kärnä 2008; Westinen 2014), Prinssi Jusuf and Seksikäs-Suklaa & Dosdela seem to take a different approach. Instead of internalizing the stereotypes associated with East Helsinki to establish some type of hip hop credibility, they either challenge them using humor to invert the stigma, outright reject them or defy them by deploying counter-narratives celebrating "the East" as a sphere of collective identity and belonging. This constellation of discourses aligns with the strategies Wacquant (2011) frames as "stigma inversion," "defense of the neighborhood" and "studied indifference," respectively.

Stigma Inversion: Humor as a Stigma Management Strategy

Humor has had a complicated place in Finnish hip hop. When hip hop first arrived in Finland, white Finnish rappers used parody as a tool to navigate their lack of credibility as performers of the African-American cultural form (Kärjä 2011; Tervo and Ridanpää 2016). However, these humorous adaptions of hip hop also caricaturized African-American culture as a way to "secure the ethnic Other" and thereby rendering the specter of racial difference—and the racialized politics of hip hop—non-threatening to white Finnish performers and consumers of hip hop alike (Kärjä 2011). Indeed, the parodic style exemplified in early Finnish hip hop can be seen as rooted in the tradition of Finnish

adaptations of Black face and minstrelsy, which were also adopted into local Finnish culture from the United States, with "some of the first rap performances [aiming] to parody African-American culture" (Tervo and Ridanpää 2016: 621).

Furthermore, by making their appropriations of hip hop humorous, early Finnish rappers managed to bypass the politics of authenticity (Kärjä 2011). The 2000s saw the rise of a more earnest Finnish rap scene, with groups like *Fintelligens* translating US hip hop culture for local youth culture (Tervo 2014). Despite the original caricaturized version of Finnish humor rap's loss of mainstream favor, it still remains part of the Finnish rap scene (Tervo and Ridanpää 2016). These Afro-Finnish rappers, however, use humor in a different way. Both in their social media content and in their music, Prinssi Jusuf and Seksikäs-Suklaa & Dosdela use humor to navigate stereotypes about immigrants, Africans and Black people more broadly (Kelekay 2019; Westinen 2018). Indeed, humor is commonly used as an anti-racist counter-strategy in response to racist stereotypes, both by Black entertainers and in Black social settings (Weaver 2010). As such, we can understand Afro-Finnish rappers' deployment of humor as a counter-strategy with which to contest what Stuart Hall called "racialized regimes of representation" (1997: 269; Westinen 2018: 135).

Seksikäs-Suklaa & Dosdela are also particularly known for their social media sketches playing with stereotypes about East Helsinki as ghettoized, poor, dangerous and crime-ridden. This has also made its way into their music. The song *Mis Asun* [Where I Live] is a prime example of this. The narrative of the song describes scenarios where the men experience rejection by women who find out where they live. The chorus sums it up:

Olit lähtemäs mukaan	You were about to leave with me
Sit sä kuulit mis asun	Then you heard where I live
Ois voinu olla jotain	This could have been something
Sit sä kuulit mis asun	Then you heard where I live
Sä sanot tääl kaikki on hankalaa	You say everything is difficult here
Ja mikään ei saa sua Kontulaan	And nothing will get you to Kontula
Meil ois voinu olla juttuu	We could have had a thing
Mut nyt sä kuulit mis asun	But now you heard where I live

The line "you say everything is difficult here, and nothing will get you to Kontula" drives home the point that it is not just a matter of the woman not wanting to leave with him because he lives in the periphery of the city, but that it is because of the stigma associated with the particular neighborhood he lives in. The first verse delivers the painstaking story of how Dosdela journeyed to the city center for a night out on the town.

Muistan vielä sen illan	I still remember that night
Tulin yli Kulosaaren sillan	I came over the Kulosaari bridge
Astuin baariin	Stepped into a bar
Näin kuuman daamin	Saw a hot dame
Jota aloin heti vaanii	I immediately began to prowl
Ei	No
Kysyin nimee	I asked for her name
Nimi oli Tuula	Her name was Tuula
Läppä lensi niinkun Arsi Harjun kuula	Our jokes flew like Arsi Harju's shotput
Kerroin sulle et mä asun Kontulassa	I told you I live in Kontula
Sanoit hyi niinku Adi L Hasla	You said eww like Adi L Hasla
Et korkokengilläkaan bussiin haluu astua	You don't even want to step into a bus with heels on
Bussilattiat on täynnä sipsilastuja	The floors of the bus are full of chips
Et suostu mennä jatkoille ilman taxia	You won't go to an afterparty without a taxi
Ilman taxii mulla ei käy flaksii	Without a taxi I'm out of luck
Sä etsit seurapiirin rakkautta	You're looking for high society love
Meil ei oo kai tulevaisuutta	I guess we have no future
Yht juttuu en osannut aavistaa	One thing I couldn't have predicted
Kuulin myöhemmin et reppaat Rastilaa	I heard later that you rep' Rastila

The music video features Seksikäs-Suklaa & Dosdela, along with producer and featured artist VG+, riding the Helsinki metro from its eastern end to the west. Scenes show the rappers hanging out at various metro platforms, in front of the Kontula shopping center and inside the train. The reference to "crossing the Kulosaari bridge" signals the crossing of both a physical and a symbolic boundary between East Helsinki and central Helsinki as "the East" is colloquially understood to begin on the other side of the Kulosaari bridge, even though the formal boundaries of the eastern district have been drawn in various ways over the years. Once in the bar, Dosdela meets a (Finnish, as indicated by the name) woman, with whom he gets along well (the line that "jokes flew like Arsi Harju's shotput" is a reference to a celebrated Finnish shotput athlete).

However, when he reveals that he lives in Kontula, the tone changes (the line "you said eww like Adi L Hasla" is a reference to a song by the rap artist). The woman's resistance to going to Kontula is framed as a question of socioeconomic stigma, with her refusing to take the bus—a reference evoking stigma all on its own, as the night buses running from the city center to East Helsinki after the end of metro services are colloquially thought to be filled with noisy, messy and drunk people. Instead, "Tuula" only agrees to go with him if he can afford

a taxi. Her classed expectations are affirmed with the line "you're looking for high society love," which he concludes renders them without a future.

Tuula's joint rejection of him based on his lack of class status is complicated by the last line, which reveals that she is actually from Rastila, another East Helsinki neighborhood. In the video, Dosdela waves his hand in disapproval of her hypocrisy when uttering the line, after which the chorus repeats. The revelation that the woman is from Rastila can be interpreted in different ways. She seems to "rep" Rastila without inhabiting the expected collective identification, perhaps indicating that she has internalized the stigma about East Helsinki and is only interested in dating "up" the social ladder. It also, however, evokes the hyper-stigmatization of Kontula even within East Helsinki, suggesting that her aversion to joining him is not about an unwillingness to go to "the East," but is specifically about an avoidance of Kontula. This interpretation is supported by the earlier line that "nothing will get you to Kontula." The narrative of unsuccessful attempts at wooing women because of the stigma associated with being from Kontula is juxtaposed against the upbeat vibe of the song's Afrobeats production. It is the combination of the music, text and video that establish the humorous tone of the song, thereby displaying a simultaneous inversion of, and indifference to, the stigma.

Another way that Seksikäs-Suklaa & Dosdela use humor is by creating and playing out over-the-top narratives based on common stereotypes about East Helsinki and its residents. Playing with the stereotype of East Helsinki as crime-ridden and dangerous, they released the single *Denssi* in 2018. Denssi, which is a slang term for snuff, is derived from the name of the popular snuff brand Odens. Although the sale—but not the use—of snuff has been banned in Finland since 1995, it remains commonly used by Finnish male youth and men, and is today more commonly used among youth than cigarettes (Ruokolainen and Raitasalo 2017). As a result of the sales ban, people commonly travel to buy snuff for personal use or illicit re-sale in Finland (Collin 2019). It is against the backdrop of this legal and social climate that the song *Denssi* was produced. Lyrically, the song parodies gangsta rap narratives about drug dealing, portraying themselves as successful dealers of the strongest "black dirt." The music video takes the parody further by making cultural refence to the popular Netflix drama *Narcos*, which depicts the story of Colombia's drug trade through the lens of infamous cartel kingpin Pablo Escobar. The first frame displays the date and location as the year 2045 in Helsinki. The opening scene shows a man sitting down in front of the camera to be interviewed, his face blurred out, telling a story in Spanish about two infamous Helsinki drug dealers:

> The year 2018, we had a really difficult situation in the Helsinki area. Two dudes dominated the markets at that time. Their names were El Chobo aka Seksikäs-Suklaa and his partner the Eagle. Those times were really hard for all of us. We lost a lot of good men during that time and the atmosphere in the city was really tense all the time. Really hard times … A lot of people were traumatized because of the situation.[9]

Next, Seksikäs-Suklaa—his face also blurred—sits in the interviewee's chair. Switching to Finnish, he explains:

> Yeah, the snuff trade got out of hand, if someone tried to get in on our territory, we immediately hit them with a brick to the back of the head, you know. The business was really dirty, you know. But it's no big thing, you know, if you try to be on our territory, you try to do your own thing, you were hit in the head. Right away, hit with Timbs in the face. The competition was eliminated, we dominated this, you know, this is completely next level. I don't know what the snuff situation is like right now but then, *back in the days* [in English], but then it was a brick to the back of the head if your opponent tried something. *I don't give a shit ni**a, straight out of Kontula man* [in English]. The black loose stuff, fuck.

Seksikäs-Suklaa's interview elicits depictions of urban gang warfare over drug territories. Yet, while talking about violently "eliminating the competition," he does not talk about "hits" in terms of shootings; instead, he describes literally hitting opponents in the back of the head with a brick or hitting them in the face with Timberland shoes. The second-to-last line, spoken in English, summons the gangsta rap group N.W.A. by appropriating their hit song *Straight Out of Compton* and localizing it by reference to the Kontula neighborhood.

After the interview scenes, the screen reads "East Helsinki, 2018," before switching to the next scene. The rest of the video features scenes parodying depictions of drug dealing, beginning with scenes of clients coming to Seksikäs-Suklaa's house to purchase this especially strong snuff, after which they are seen to have an overwhelming, overdose-like physical reaction. The lyrics to the chorus proclaim "fuck, denssi hits you like a fist". Another setting shows Seksikäs-Suklaa sitting in front of a red-velvet curtain behind a table topped with towers of Odens containers and a comedically oversized bottle of cognac while Dosdela stands beside him in a guarding position, casting Seksikäs-Suklaa is the man in charge and Dosdela as his right-hand-man. Men come in and out of the room to exchange bags of cash for disks of snuff. They wave toy guns around while planning their next conquest on a paper map of the city. In one scene, police officers (one of whom is incidentally played by Prinssi Jusuf) enter the building in a raid-style operation, surprising the dealers with guns drawn. However, rather than arresting them, the officers laughingly throw some cash on the table and walk away with a few towers. Having left the building, the police officers are seen excitedly opening one of the containers of snuff and happily using it. One of the lines in the song begs "Can this dirt be legalized… Cigs have never been Suklaa's thing". While the theme of the song and the music video align with the stereotype about East Helsinki as a hub of criminal activity, the humorous low-budget portrayal of themselves as drug kingpins deflates the seemingly hyperbolic claiming of the stereotype. The fact

that the entire scenario of the music video—and the topic of the song—is about a form of tobacco rather than illicit drugs effectively elevates the caricature to the level of ridicule. In carefully curating this purposefully ridiculous depiction of the stereotype, they successfully invert the stigma while also stripping it of its power.

Rejecting the Stereotype

In other cases, the rappers also challenge territorial stigma through straightforward rejection of stereotypes. This can be seen in Prinssi Jusuf's song *Myönnä* [Admit It]. One of the stereotypes evoked is that of "the East" as crime-ridden and, by extension, its residents as criminals. The other, albeit discursively related, stereotype is that of residents of "the East" (and particularly immigrant men) being lazy and relying on unemployment benefits rather than working. The song is an aggressive assertion of his status as a determined and hard worker, with the title repeated throughout the chorus of the song as a demand for recognition:

(Myönnä)	(Admit it)
Kaikki mitä mä teen	Everything that I do
Mitä mä teen veli	That I do bro
(Myönnä)	(Admit it)
Kaikki mitä mä teen	Everything that I do
Se on pressii veli	It's press bro
(Myönnä)	(Admit it)
Kaikki mitä mä teen	Everything that I do
Mitä mä teen veli	That I do bro
(Myönnä)	(Admit it)
Ei välii kuka teki ensin	It doesn't matter who did it first
Vaan veli kuka teki parhaiten	But bro who did it best

Both the sound and the music video have an aggressive, dark and grimy feel to them, amplifying the forcefulness of his message. However, rather than channeling the aggression into a hyperbolic claiming of the stereotype about Black men as threatening, he deploys it as a way to claim mainstream social status ("Everything that I do, it's press") and to illustrate his determination for success ("It doesn't matter who did it first, but bro who did it best").

The first verse continues with the theme of braggadocio and hard work, ending with the shouted declaration "my home is in the East" before going into the chorus, which now begins with a repetition of the line "I've got this euro and a dream". The placement of these lines creates an association between being from the East and socioeconomic status. Rather than the line

simply communicating being poor by referencing having a single euro, the combination of a euro and a dream paints the picture of a driven underdog declaring his intentions to overcome his conditions. Prinssi Jusuf continues along these lines in the second verse:

En mä tullu leijuu	I didn't come to show off
Mä vaan kerron miten se on	I'm just telling it like it is
Ei kaikki oo reiluu	Not everything is fair
Mä vaan kerron miten se on	I'm just telling it like it is
Jos haluut mukaan mun reissuun	If you want to join my journey
Mä kerron miten se menee	I'll tell you how it goes
Mee duuniin boi	Get to work boy
Ei me luoteta vaan tuuriin boi	We don't just trust luck boy
Ei uusiintoi	No reruns
Täällä tehään vaan toistoi	Here we only do reps
Toistoi	Reps
Eikä mietitä kunpa meitsi ois toi	And we don't think about I wish I was them
Ois toi	Was them
Ei tääl Idäs oo vaan roistoi	It's not just thugs here in the East
Roistoi	Thugs
Ei tää ghetoks muutu vaik toivois	It won't turn into a ghetto even if you hope so

The first parts of the verse continue to assert Prinssi Jusuf as hard working and unassuming ("we don't just trust luck boy"). The second part turns the narrative from the individual to the collective, using weightlifting as the metaphor for hard working, asserting it is the way "we" do things here ("here we only do reps"). The line "and we don't think about I wish I was them" also constructs a narrative about focus and dedication, creating distance from the stereotype of the lazy welfare recipient. The last two lines directly challenge the common conception of the East as a ghetto and a place overrun by crime. While the first line appears as a direct statement of fact that contradicts the stereotype ("it's not just thugs here in the East"), the second line goes a step further by suggesting there are those who would hope for the East to become a ghetto, directly implicating the producers and recyclers of stigmatizing discourses. In this way, Prinssi Jusuf explicitly rejects stereotypes about the East and—by extension—about men like him as a strategic maneuver to challenge territorial stigmatization.

Defying Stigma through Counter-Narratives

In addition to inverting stigmatizing discourses and out-outright rejecting stereotypes, Prinssi Jusuf and Seksikäs-Suklaa & Dosdela also deploy

counter-narratives that are seemingly indifferent to territorial stigmatization, instead celebrating the East as a sphere of belonging and home, often juxtaposed against broader narratives of exclusion. In Prinssi Jusuf's song *Myönnä* [Admit It], this ranges from explicit declarations of "the East" as home, such as the previously discussed line "my home is in the East," to more nuanced framings of the East as a sphere of belonging. Later in the same verse, Prinssi Jusuf announces:

Meil on kossei ja somppui	We've got Kosovars and Somalis[10]
Meil on romanei ja kinkkei	We've got Roma and ch**s[11]
Meil on kurdei ja arabei	We've got Kurds and Arabs
Oma koti kullan kallis	Home sweet home

The different ethnic groups listed are a reflection of the racial landscape of East Helsinki. While there are other immigrant groups who are more numerically dominant among the population, it is the local Roma and refugees from the Balkans, Africa, the Middle East and Southeast Asia who make up the racialized communities associated with East Helsinki. The summarizing line "home sweet home" illustrates the collective identifications formed through common experiences of racialization and marginalization. Indeed, the rappers often refer to East Helsinki in both racialized and spatialized terms. Rather than accepting it as a stigma, it is claimed as a source of collective identification and pride.

The first single released by Seksikäs-Suklaa & Dosdela, *Niiku97* [Like 97], perhaps serves as the most explicit example.[12] The title, as well as the chorus of the song, serve as a reference to the area code and corresponding bus line, which runs to the East Helsinki neighborhoods of Kontula and Mellunmäki:

Bussi täynnä somalei	Bus is full of Somalis
Somalei	Somalis
Bussi täynnä somalei	Bus is full of Somalis
Somalei	Somalis
Bussi täynnä somalei	Bus is full of Somalis
Somalei	Somalis
Niiku 97	Like 97
Niiku 97	Like 97
Niiku 97	Like 97
Kontulan kentällä	On the Kontula field

The music video to the song features a bus full of young Black passengers—including many other Black/Afro-Finnish rappers—driving around in circles on this field as they dance along to the trap beats of the song. The use of the bus—a racialized and classed public space in its own right—to represent the social dynamics of the broader community is not only relevant to the

extent that it serves as a marker of who may be represented as passengers on a given bus line, but it also speaks to local common-sense understandings of what George Lipsitz refers to as the racialization of space and the spatialization of race (2007: 12). Indeed, bus lines in Helsinki are overwhelmingly (although not exclusively) numbered according to the area codes they serve in the northern and eastern working-class suburbs, thus symbolically marking bus lines as extensions of the communities they serve. The bus line someone takes, then, serves as a colloquial signifier of the community they are from. From this perspective, the staging of the 97 bus as a Black social sphere is not that unusual.

At the same time, "Like 97," in combination with the reference to the Kontula field, also invokes the infamous 1997 attack in which a group of Nazis assaulted Somali youngsters playing football on a field in Kontula—an attack which reverberated throughout Finland's Black communities (Sarhimaa 2016). The seriousness of the racial violence is thus juxtaposed against this celebratory image of community. It is also illustrative of the tongue-in-cheek spirit of the song, as exemplified by the first verse's commentary on going "clubbing" as an illustration of classed differences:

Koko maa, koko squad	The whole country, the whole squad
Klubil täyttyy kokonaan	The club fills up completely
Sä tulit tilataksil	You came with a pre-ordered cab
Me tultii yödösäl	We took the night bus
Sul on 50 tonttuu	You got 50 thou'
Meil on 50 somppuu	We got 50 Somalis
Bussi täynnä somaleit ku Kontulan kentällä	Bus full of Somalis like the Kontula field
Elämä on kovaa Kontulan kentällä	Life is rough on the Kontula field
Ne ei pysäyttäny meit ees maihinnousukengällä	They didn't even stop us with combat boots
Bussi täynnä somaleit, iso kolari	Bus is filled with Somalis, big accident
Puhokses ne riitelee	At Puhos they're arguing
"Onks Puff Daddy somali?"	"Is Puff Daddy Somali?"

The image of leisure is again juxtaposed against the "rough life" of Kontula. With another reference to the '97 attack, this verse also asserts resilience in the face of militant racism ("they didn't even stop us with combat boots"). Indeed, the music video continues to show the young passengers of the bus getting out onto the field and enjoying an impromptu block party complete with games, dancing and barbequing. The juxtaposition of the field as a symbolic site of the struggles of Black communities in Finland against images of celebration, then, signals a deliberate reclaiming of embattled public space. The song's reading as an ode to East Helsinki as a Black/African diasporic space is made explicit in the second verse, as they call out various eastern neighborhoods:

Tää lähtee kaikille Kontulast Itiksest, Vuosaarest mis vaan on somppuja	This goes out to everyone from Kontula From Itis, Vuosaari, wherever there are Somalis

These creative re-imaginings of marginalized spaces as spheres of community and belonging represent a core feature of Black community-making in the African diaspora, as well as a central component of hip hop culture.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the discursive construction of East Helsinki as a racialized and classed space in Finnish cultural discourse through an analysis of the ways in which Afro-Finnish rappers from East Helsinki negotiate the stigma associated with the district. Based on an in-depth analysis of four songs by the rapper Prinssi Jusuf and the duo Seksikäs-Suklaa & Dosdela, I have shown how the rappers not only challenge the mainstream media-produced stereotypes about East Helsinki as a problem area, but also "talk back" (hooks 1986) by producing counter-discourses about "the East." Using Wacquant, Slater and Borges Pereira's (2014) framework of territorial stigmatization in action, I have illustrated how these rappers deploy different discourses about East Helsinki that both resist and transcend stigmatization through the strategies of stigma inversion, rejection and defiance. Indeed, rather than simply critiquing exclusionary discourses, the rappers instead (re)claim East Helsinki's reputation as the home of immigrants and low-income residents as a point of pride, as a source of collective identification, and as a realm of socio-spatial ownership and belonging. In this way, their work not only provides a critique of the racialized and classed politics of place in Finnish discourses, but also (re)articulates stigmatized territories as spheres of belonging and possibility.

Through this work, I have tried to heed hip hop scholar Murray Forman's call for more nuanced analyses of spatiality in hip hop by approaching rap texts as "the product of particular kinds of spatial relations and spatial histories" (2002: 17). I outline the terrain of mainstream media discourses about East Helsinki to illustrate the active production of territorial stigmatization. These discourses not only represent the symbolic marginalization of East Helsinki, but have social and material consequences that impact the daily lives of its residents. They are part of the spatial relations and spatial histories that produce the immediate context in which Afro-Finnish rappers from East Helsinki live and, as such, the cultural space from which they produce their music.

Rather than simply representing a new generation of East Helsinki rap or an instance of what scholars have defined as "migrant rap" (Leppänen and Westinen 2017), Afro-Finnish rappers are carving out a particular space for themselves in the hip hop scene that is defined by both the hybridity and translocality that is illustrative of African diasporic cultural production, as well

as the "hyperlocality" that is paradigmatic for hip hop (Forman 2002). These spatial dynamics are also reflected in the discourses of identification deployed by Afro-Finnish rappers. I have previously illustrated that hybridity is central to articulations of racial, ethnic and national identifications in Afro-Finnish hip hop, as well as the ways in which Afro-Finnish rappers use US American Blackness as a resource for constructing their own identities and strategies for navigating racism in Finnish society (Kelekay 2019). In turn, I have here explicated how "hyperlocality" is discursively deployed in the form of neighborhood identification. What distinguishes Afro-Finnish rappers' discourses of neighborhood identification from that of earlier generations of white East Helsinki rappers is the ways in which their ideas about place are intertwined with discourses about not only class, but also race.

Instead of internalizing the territorial stigmatization of East Helsinki in order to establish some notion of hip hop credibility, the rappers either outright reject the stereotypes about East Helsinki, challenge their power through the use of humor or deploy counter-narratives celebrating "the East" as a sphere of collective identity and belonging. Given hip hop's origins as an African diasporic cultural form, they do not need to highlight their association with a stigmatized territory in order to gain credibility as rappers—their Black bodies already grant them this credibility. Moreover, the discursive construction of East Helsinki as a racialized space—and particularly a Black space—alongside its construction as a rough urban periphery also means that they effectively embody the stigma associated with East Helsinki in addition to the stigma associated with race. This is emblematic of "the racialization of space and the spatialization of race" (Lipsitz 2007: 12). Rather than internalizing the stigma, the rappers in this study deploy discourses that manage, challenge and defy the territorial stigma. In doing so, they also challenge the discursive construction of East Helsinki—and by extension its racialized residents—as outside the Finnish national imaginary. As such, these works not only provide a critique of the racialized and spatialized boundaries around the discursive construction of Finnishness, but also an assertion of who, what and *where* is Finnish. Finally, these rappers can be seen as actively inventing, producing and rearticulating not only an *Afro*-Finnish hip hop scene, but also a diasporic yet localized Afro-Finnish culture, more broadly.

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Notes

[1] The term, "lähiö", translates to the English word "suburb". Derived from the Finnish word "lähellä" meaning "close", it connotes areas on the margins and yet in relative proximity to urban centers. The term is culturally and politically associated specifically with working-class suburbs with high-rise dwellings, historically constructed in parallel with the development of the Finnish welfare state in the 1960s and '70s. In Helsinki, in particular, the term is also particularly associated with residents with immigrant backgrounds. For further discussion of the development of the term and its representation in Finnish cinema, see Viitanen 2018.

[2] See e.g., Kuusela 2016, Kytölä 2015 or Mansikka 2018 for news media interviews with Seksikäs-Suklaa and Prinssi Jusuf about racism in Finland.

[3] For a linguistic analysis of some of Musta Barbaari and Prinssi Jusuf's songs, see Westinen 2017.

[4] See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fTkfNY-3s5s&t=88s&ab_channel=SeksikasSuklaaVEVO

[5] See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2W4oCv56BZ0&ab_channel=SeksikasSuklaaVEVO

[6] See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0SrVdeJAv7M&ab_channel=PrinssiJusufVEVO

[7] See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YRQT_aWvqaw&ab_channel=Seksik%C3%A4sSuklaa%26Dosdela

[8] All lyrics are translated from Finnish to English by the author and, as such, include a level of personal interpretation.

[9] The music video subtitled the spoken Spanish in Finnish, which the author then translated to English.

[10] In the original Finnish, Prinssi Jusuf uses the slang terms "kossei" and "somppu" for Kosovars and Somalis, respectively.

[11] In the original Finnish, Prinssi Jusuf uses the racial slur "ch*nk" as a slang term for Chinese people.

[12] The analysis of this song was previously published in *Open Cultural Studies* 2019; 3: 386–401 as part of my article "'Too Dark to Support the Lions, But Light Enough for the Frontlines': Negotiating Race, Place, and Nation in Afro-Finnish Hip Hop."

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CHAPTER 9

Being Jewish in Contemporary Finland

Reflections on Jewishness from Project Minhag Finland

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Abstract

This chapter asks what being Jewish may mean in contemporary Finland by examining interviews of members of the Jewish congregations, collected in 2019 to 2020 in the research project *Minhag Finland*. The chapter first offers a brief assessment of the history of the Jewish community in Finland from its origins until present day, followed by a review of previous research on Nordic Jewish identities. Jewish identities in Finland are observed from three topical perspectives: how the informants negotiate their membership in an Orthodox Jewish congregation while living in a secularized society; how the elusive concept of "Finnishness" (national identity) interplays with just as elusive "Jewishness" (ethnic/religious identity); and, finally, the informants' confrontations with antisemitism and racism in Finland. The chapter shows that during the

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last 30 years the Finnish Jewish community has evolved from a homogenous Ashkenazi (East European Jewish) community into a multicultural community. The community embraces many elements of "Finnishness" (national symbols and narratives), while the "difference" inherent to their Jewishness is not forgotten or suppressed. The chapter also shows how differently the mechanisms of antisemitism and racism in Finland influence the members of this diverse community.

Keywords: Finnish Jews, Finnish Jewish identity, Orthodox Judaism, Antisemitism

Introduction

In this chapter, I will discuss what Jewishness or being Jewish in Finland may mean today to some Jewish Finns/Finnish Jews. Through analyzing recent interviews of members of the Jewish community, I asked my sources how they see their Jewish identity in Finland and how these self-perceptions have changed. In addition, other identity traits such as gender, origin and "race"[1]—the interaction between such markers as whiteness and Jewishness—are of interest. I will use the terms "Jewish Finns" and "Finnish Jews" in no particular order, although the latter term is widely used in English articles and books dealing with Finnish Jewish history. This conscious choice reflects the multidimensionality of being both *Finnish* and *Jewish*. As Shaul Magid (2013: 1) has aptly noted, these are not arbitrary choices: "American Jews or Jewish Americans? American Judaism or Judaism in America? … Is it simply a hierarchical question of identity: American or Jewish? … One *is*; the other describes." (Original emphasis.) In Finnish, the local community is most often referred to as *Suomen juutalaiset*, "the Jews of Finland."

The main aim of the chapter is to bring out various existing possibilities and pluralities of Jewishness in Finland; this chapter therefore does not present an exhaustive analysis, but seeks out variability and change. The Finnish Jewish community is an established part of the secularized but predominantly Lutheran Finnish society: until the 1990s, the community was mostly "Cantonist" (originally Ashkenazi[2] descendants of Russian Jewish soldiers), but during the past 30 years, it has become increasingly more diverse and multicultural. Currently, there are approximately 1,200 registered members in the Jewish congregations of Helsinki and Turku, the majority of them in Helsinki.

The interviews were collected in 2019 and 2020 in the research project Minhag Finland.[3] The goal of this ongoing multidisciplinary project is to study Judaism as a vernacular religion in the Finland of today and the shifting identities of Jewish individuals (see e.g. Illman 2019; McGuire 2008). In the semi-structured interviews, the informants were asked about their family background, religious

and culinary traditions, local *minhagim* (authorized local customs) and about being Jewish in Finland.

All the informants interviewed in the project are members of a Jewish congregation. Due to the informal nature of the interviews, they treated many topics related to Jewish identity from conversion to experiences of antisemitism. Altogether 101 informants, all above the age of 18, were interviewed; 54 were female and 47 were male. A total of 25 percent of the informants were born abroad: interviews were conducted in Finnish, Swedish, English, Hungarian, German and Russian. An announcement looking for participants was published in the community newspaper *Hakehila* in fall 2018 as well as in other media outlets of the congregations. Participation in the interviews was voluntary, and informed consent of the informants was obtained at the beginning of the interview. To protect the anonymity of the informants, I refer to them either anonymously or with aliases and do not disclose any recognizable traits.

In addition to the interviews, I have also closely read two memoirs written by Finnish Jewish authors: Boris Grünstein's (1919–1992) *Juutalaisena Suomessa: hirtehishumoristisia tarkasteluja* (1989, "As a Jew in Finland: Observations in Gallows Humor") and Eva Odrischinsky's (b. 1953) *Som alla andra: min judiska familj och jag* (2019, "Like Everyone Else: My Jewish Family and I'). Grünstein was a lawyer, led a fur company in Helsinki and served for decades in the administration of the Helsinki Jewish congregation. Odrischinsky is a theater director who currently lives in Israel. Born in 1919, Grünstein represents the generation of Finns who went through the war, while Odrischinsky (b. 1953) grew up during the cultural changes of the 1960s and 1970s. Gender plays a significant role in these memoirs: for example, Grünstein writes humorously on "macho" masculinity and his sexual conquests, whereas Odrischinsky describes the rigid frames the women of her mother's generation—the same generation as Grünstein—confronted. Both Helsinki-based authors record flowing moments of belongingness and alienation emphatically from a Finnish Jewish perspective. Grünstein's memoir is structurally more conventional and follows his life in a chronological order; by contrast, Odrischinsky focuses on certain key moments of her life, moving back and forth in time. Memoirs are typically works of selective memory; yet, both contain a wealth of information on the Finnish Jewish experience in the 20th century and thus act as an additional source of information besides the interviews.

I first briefly narrate the outlines of the history of the Finnish Jewish community, as this is meaningful for the ensuing analysis. I then discuss previous studies of Jewish identities in the Nordic Jewish context. This is followed by a three-part analysis of what being Jewish/Jewishness in Finland may entail: first, the enduring paradox of an Orthodox Jewish community in a highly secularized Finnish society; second, the approaches of the informants toward "Finnishness" and its definitions; and, third, estranging encounters with antisemitism and racism in Finland.

The Jewish Community of Finland: From "Cantonists" to a Multicultural Community

The Jewish community of Finland is one of the oldest ethnic and religious communities in the country alongside Muslim Tatars: both groups arrived in Finland from Russia in the 19th century. Forcibly recruited as young boys and educated in Cantonist military schools, Jewish soldiers of the Czar's army were deployed in the Grand Duchy of Finland, an autonomous region belonging to Imperial Russia. After their discharge, some soldiers and their families were allowed to stay, founding the first Jewish congregation in Helsinki in 1858. This Russian military background is a frequently repeated trope in the history of the community. While not all Jewish soldiers stationed in Finland had attended a Cantonist school (and the system was abolished in 1856), all descendants of the pre-war Ashkenazi community are known as the "Cantonists" even today (Muir 2004: 20; Swanström 2016). Before 1917, Jews with no connection with the Russian army moved to Finland from Eastern Europe. In the 1920s and 1930s, Jewish refugees fleeing the Russian Revolution and Nazi Germany settled in the country. Until the Holocaust, Finnish Jews stayed in close contact with their families and networks in Eastern Europe (mainly Lithuania, Belarus and the Poland of today) (Muir and Tuori 2019).

From the late 19th century onward, Finnish historians began to construct a nationalist narrative of a culturally homogenous Finland. Minorities were not suitable for the needs of this narrative, but were labeled as culturally and linguistically different, or even pushed to the margins (Tervonen 2014: 138–41). According to Suvi Keskinen (2015: 178), this modern state- and nation-building process "created 'Others' of the Indigenous and minority populations, who were perceived as biologically and/or culturally inferior"; Finnish scholars of the time were worried about Finns being inferiorized in the racial hierarchy of the Nordic races (Keskinen 2015: 173–75). The small community of Jews was perceived as a "foreign element" in Finland, and debating their civil rights, the representatives of the Finnish Senate resorted to antisemitic imagery borrowed from German newspapers and literature (Jacobsson 1951; Torvinen 1989). Jews residing in the Grand Duchy of Finland lived in fear of deportation, and their income was restricted to trade of second-hand clothes and goods (Ekholm 2019; Ekholm and Muir 2011: 30).

Jews received rights to Finnish citizenship in January 1918, one month after the declaration of independence. Despite this step forward, Finnish society—the press, Lutheran Church, academics—continued to foster anti-Jewish attitudes, frequently with concrete consequences; a Jewish Finn could graduate from a university, but was barred from pursuing an academic career (Ekholm 2014: 167). As a reaction to their vilification, Finnish Jews faded some of the noticeably Jewish markers of the community, developing, like contemporaneous American Jews, "strategies of invisibility" (Levine-Rasky 2009: 141). Swedish

and Finnish were favored over Yiddish of the Ashkenazi Jews, and during the 1930s, some "foreign-sounding" (especially Slavic) names were changed (Ekholm and Muir 2011: 29, 47). Despite their insecure status and overt discrimination, upward mobility to middle class and what Laura Ekholm (2019: 73) has called the "proverbial 'rags-to-riches' story" were characteristic of the lives of the Finnish Jews, many of whom continued to work in the clothing trade and manufacture.

Finland fought against the Soviet Union as an ally of Nazi Germany during the Continuation War (1941–1944), forcing the Finnish Jews into an ambivalent position. Ekholm (2014: 170) has noted that the war created "an absolute crevasse between [the Finnish Jews] and the simultaneous destiny of the European Jews." While the community is one of the few Ashkenazi communities that was not destroyed in the Holocaust, Finnish Jews lost family members in the Holocaust, lived in fear of deportation to extermination camps and had an emergency escape plan in case of a possible Nazi coup after peace negotiations with the Soviets. Although Jews with Finnish citizenship were not deported, several Jewish refugees and prisoners-of-war were turned over to the Nazis and murdered (Ekholm 2014: 171–72; Muir 2016a; Suolahti 2017). Fighting in the Finnish army and sharing the human losses of the war (23 fallen Jewish Finns), the community "redeemed their place in Finnish society" (Muir 2019: 228). This narrative of a minority fighting *pro patria* is repeated in Finnish academic studies[4] and has become a fundamental part of the self-understanding of the community itself (Ekholm 2014: 173–75). Finns in general take pride in not having deported any Finnish Jews despite Nazi demands; on the other hand, no one knows what would have happened if Germany had won the war.

After the war, as described by one of the informants in his mid-50s, Ron, the congregation in Helsinki was mostly "Cantonist" (Eastern European Ashkenazi) until the 1980s. The situation began to change when Jews from the Eastern Bloc and Israel moved to Finland for work or for a Finnish partner, especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. The demographics of the community have since significantly changed, and according to Ron (himself of Cantonist heritage), members who now actively attend the synagogue are not the Cantonists, but "newcomers" (e.g. Israelis often from Sephardic or Mizrahi background and converts). Nevertheless, both in the administration and in the religious associations the descendants of the Cantonists continue to be a dominant force, and according to some estimates, half of the community is still Cantonist (Larsson 2014: 30). Many Cantonist descendants interviewed in the project belong to the same extended families that had arrived in Finland in the 19th century. The communities of Helsinki and Turku form "a functioning civil society" (Dencik 2011: 135) by having democratically elected boards, the community runs a kindergarten and a Jewish coeducational school in Helsinki, and various clubs and religious associations serve the needs of both congregations. There are no statistics on how many Jewish Finns have

immigrated to Israel under its Law of Return, but many informants have family living in Israel.[5] During the first two decades of the 2000s, the community has rapidly transformed and become more diverse: it is going through the same developments that are presently taking place everywhere in Finnish society (Czimbalmos and Pataricza 2019).

The Study of Jewish Identities in the Nordic Countries

In the following, I will offer a brief historiographical account of previous research on the identities of Jews in the Nordic countries. While Judaism is a religion (i.e. a belief system involving worship of a supernatural being), being Jewish has traditionally required a genetic association: according to Jewish law (*halakhah*), a Jew is born to a Jewish mother. Especially under the rapid societal changes of secularization and modernization, Jewishness is now often a *chosen* identity (Buckser 2003: 3). A person may also define herself or be defined by others as Jewish without embracing any religious beliefs. Jewish identity issues have been extensively discussed and problematized in the current global Jewish centers, Israel and the United States (see e.g. Cohen 2010; Gitelman 2009; Glenn and Sokoloff 2010; Popkin 2015). Many questions persist in these studies: Has modern Jewish identity "freed" itself from tenets of faith and become more contingent upon cultural values? If a genetic connection is usually prerequisite for being Jewish, how does this affect a person who converts to Judaism? These complex questions often came up in the interviews with the Jewish Finns.

In Sweden, Rita Bredefeldt (2008) has studied historical identity developments among the Jews in Stockholm, and Lars Dencik (e.g. 2005; 2009; 2011) has conducted several survey-based analyses on modern Swedish Jewish identities. In Denmark and in Norway, the impact of the Holocaust on the communities has been under scrutiny, whereas postwar developments have stirred less attention: Andrew Buckser (1999; 2000; 2003; 2005) has studied later developments of Jewish identity in Denmark, and there is an ongoing project focused on the Norwegian Jewish identity in Oslo (see Banik 2016; Døving 2016; Herberger 2018). Recently, Vibeke Kieding Banik and Laura Ekholm (2019: 120–21) have noted how the Nordic Jews have "remained Jews while at the same time becoming Swedes, Finns, Danes, and Norwegians." Established in their respective societies, each Nordic community represents a case of its own in terms of history and demographics. The first Jews in Denmark (late 17th century) and Sweden (late 18th century) were immigrants from Western Europe (*Westjuden*). The communities of Finland and Norway developed slightly later, from the 1850s onward with the arrival of Jews mainly from Eastern Europe (*Ostjuden*). (Buckser 2000: 717; Banik and Ekholm 2019: 121; Hoffmann 2016; Døving 2016: 2.). Differences between the Nordic Jewish communities become particularly sharp when it comes to their fate during the Holocaust: Jews in

Denmark and in Norway faced Nazi occupation, and most of the latter were deported and murdered. Sweden remained neutral, but participated in the rescue operations of Danish and Norwegian Jews. After the war, Finland absorbed a relatively low number of Holocaust survivors; by contrast, many survivors settled in Sweden and in Denmark (Dencik 2005: 21; Muir 2016b). After the antisemitic purges in Poland in 1968 to 1970, many Polish Jews moved to Sweden or Denmark, and since the 1990s Jewish immigrants from the Middle East have settled in Scandinavia (see e.g. Buckser 2003: 8).

As a distinct object of study, Finnish Jewish identities have not drawn much academic attention, probably due to the small size of the community. A valuable summary on the most recent Finnish historical and linguistic research on the Jewish community is offered by Laura Ekholm, Simo Muir and Oula Silvennoinen (2016), and several MA theses have dealt with identity issues of the community (Kotel 2000; Larsson 2014). Both Bredefeldt (2008) and Dencik (e.g. 2009) briefly include Jewish Finns in their studies of Nordic Jewish identities. Muir (e.g. 2004; 2016a; 2016b) has studied the memory, cultural history and Yiddish of the Finnish Jews, and Ekholm (e.g. 2013; 2019) has studied Finnish Jewish economic life: these studies also address identity developments in the community. Svante Lundgren (2002) has conducted a survey on the beliefs, customs and attitudes of Finnish Jews: according to his results from nearly two decades ago, half of the Finnish Jews felt that they were just as much Finnish as Jewish and saw assimilation—losing Jewish identity—as a major threat for the community (Lundgren 2002: 40–41). Elina Vuola (2019) and Elina Vuola and Dóra Pataricza (2017) have recently interviewed Finnish Jewish women focusing on their religiosity in Finland. In what follows, I will refer to these earlier Nordic studies as a basis for comparison.

Finnish Orthodoxy and Jewish Identity in Finland

Both congregations in Helsinki and in Turku are Modern Orthodox,[6] which is visible during the synagogue service, where men and women are separated, and in certain religious duties that are reserved only for men, such as the *minyan* (certain prayers requiring ten adult men). Unlike in the larger Jewish community of Sweden, liberal denominations have mostly not taken root in Finland. Yet, most members of the Finnish Jewish community rarely follow Orthodoxy in their daily lives, such as strictly keeping kosher kitchen or observing the Sabbath: kosher food is not readily available, and Jewish holidays are not nationally recognized in Finland. As kosher slaughter (*shehitah*) is forbidden in the Nordic countries, kosher meat must be ordered from abroad. Many informants said that they only eat vegetarian food; some for ethical reasons, some for the fact that it is otherwise impossible to follow *kashrut* in Finland (see more in Pataricza 2019). Vuola (2019) has named this combination of official religiosity and communal elasticity "Finnish Orthodoxy": Jewish Finns follow Orthodoxy

in the synagogue, but rarely outside it. The situation is similar to other small Nordic Jewish communities, especially in Norway: the congregation in Oslo is Orthodox, while most of the members in practice are not (Herberger 2018; Stene 2012: 149).

All the informants interviewed in the project are members of a Jewish congregation and share a sense of self-identification as Jewish. However, the interviews of the project Minhag Finland show that the informants disagree over many elements of Finnish Jewish Orthodoxy: the level of observance, conversion and intermarriage, gender roles and segregation. Some maintain their membership although they are admittedly highly secularized, non-religious or indifferent. Others do not take any part in the activities but prefer the *status quo*; this is probably similar to the behavior of many Finnish members of the Lutheran Church (cf. also Lundgren 2002: 52). The nominally Orthodox nature of the community came up often in the interviews. One informant estimated that as many as 97 percent of the Jews in Helsinki are not Orthodox. This is close to Lundgren's (2002: 51) earlier survey, where 1 percent of the respondents identified as Orthodox. Some informants entertain the idea of the community becoming more liberal, especially in its views on the role of women (for more on this topic, see Vuola 2019). However, informants from a "Cantonist" background ascribe Finnish Orthodoxy to their nostalgic childhood memories, although as adults many of them only rarely visit the services. For them, "Finnish Orthodoxy" is mostly about keeping this historical connection alive. Others believe that Orthodoxy is the only way to keep the small community viable: as noted by Buckser (2003: 64) about the Orthodox/Conservative Jewish congregation in Copenhagen, if the congregations changed their policy, the active Orthodox members might leave, whereas liberal-oriented members will always compromise. On the other hand, there are no statistics on how many individuals have left the congregation due to disagreements with Orthodoxy.

Keeping Finnish Orthodoxy viable has required outside help, and the growing presence of international Jewish organizations demonstrates how relationships outside the borders of Finland are influential in the development of local Jewish identity and religious practice (cf. Buckser 2003: 12). Since the early 2000s, the Finnish Jewish community has hosted emissaries from global Orthodox organizations, the Hasidic *Chabad Lubavitch* and the religious Zionist youth organization, Israel-based *Bnei Akiva*. Chabad is a Hasidic outreach movement with roots in 18th-century Eastern Europe, now based in New York. It encourages secular Jews to embrace traditional (Orthodox) Judaism, and currently dozens of members of the Helsinki congregation take part in their activities. Chabad divides opinions both in Scandinavia and elsewhere because of the purportedly messianic claims of its late leader (Rebbe), Menachem Mendel Schneersohn (Fischer 2019: 49). Some of the informants said that they enjoy Chabad's get-togethers even more than the services in the synagogue, especially as these are offered in English instead of Finnish. Some of the informants were not pleased

with the strictly Orthodox stream that Chabad represents, including traditional gender roles and a rejection of intermarriages; others, however, saw these aspects of Chabad as more "authentically" Jewish. Until the end of 2019, Bnei Akiva's Israeli emissaries were hired directly by the congregations to work with young people in Helsinki and in Turku. Both organizations, especially Chabad, have developed into important transmitters of Orthodox Judaism and, in Bnei Akiva's case, religious Zionist values among the Finnish Jewish segment.

What Is Jewishness?

All the informants are objectively Jewish: they are members of a Jewish congregation, whether born into a Jewish family or later converted. Still, even for them, the question of "who is Jewish" remains "one of the most vexed and contested issues of modern religious and ethnic group history" (Glenn and Sokoloff 2010: 3). When asked, some informants automatically followed the traditional Jewish law: a person born to a Jewish mother or converted to Judaism under the *bet din* (court of law with authorized rabbis) is Jewish. A few, however, put emphasis on genetic relations: a person can only be *essentially* Jewish if it runs in the family (in the "blood")—be it either mother or father. Conversely, some informants would welcome anyone who feels Jewish or wants to be Jewish to be part of the community.[7]

Buckser (2000: 713) has noted on Danish Jews that "[t]hey include people with a variety of different understandings of what Jewishness is, what it implies, what obligations it imposes and what practices it requires." In a similar vein to Buckser's analysis, the Finnish Jewish informants differ on what Jewishness is, means or entails. Some see it as a constant part of their religious identity and their daily choices. In Finnish, the word *juutalaisuus* can refer both to Judaism (as a religion) and Jewishness (which can be understood more as a way of life): some informants strongly define themselves as non-religious and see Judaism/Jewishness as a culture and an intimate part of their family heritage, confirming Dencik's (2009) general observation on the Nordic Jews: "a majority of Scandinavian Jews view their Jewishness as an ethnic identity rather than as a religion." Being Jewish is for some non-verbal and emotional: several informants said Jewishness is something they just feel. It can also be something ethically binding: "A Jewish person is a good person," concluded one of the informants. Some wished to define their own version(s) of Judaism, for example, by blending liberal humanism and egalitarian values with Jewish tradition, which may bring or has already brought them into a conflict with traditional Orthodoxy. Dencik (2009) has named this pluralism typical of the Nordic Jews "the 'Swedish smorgasbord' situation … where both Jewish and non-Jewish customs are available to the population": each person makes their own decisions what to choose from tradition(s) and what their level of religious commitment is.

Gender Roles, Marriage and Conversion

Finland is known as a country where gender equality is an important value; yet, not only the rabbis but also major leading figures of the Jewish community have usually been male, although the boards of the congregations are democratically elected with both men and women. Inside Modern Orthodoxy, a new worldwide trend aims to alter some of the traditional views on gender: as noted by Adam S. Ferziger (2018: 493), 'involvement of women in aspects of Orthodox religious life that were previously officially closed to them has increased dramatically'. The first female Orthodox rabbis were ordained in Israel in 2015, albeit with limited authority compared to male rabbis (Ferziger 2018, 497). Finnish Jewish women have always been active in the community and especially in its various associations, but some informants—including women who identify as traditional/Orthodox—see male hegemony in general as problematic, which, however, does not necessarily call for revoking all the policies of Orthodoxy. They simply wish to make gender more visible and female voices more heard; some of the informants cited positive examples of this happening abroad (see also Vuola 2019: 62–63).

Earlier, the Finnish Jewish community rejected marriages between Jews and non-Jews, but since the 1950s, the high rate of intermarriages has effectively blurred the boundaries between Finns and Jews (Lundgren 2002: 30; Czimbalmos 2021). Lundgren (2002: 20) ominously has noted that in Orthodox Judaism intermarriage is seen as "the death of Judaism" as they are not considered halakhically valid. In most global Jewish communities, their high numbers cause concern, the threat being the status of the potential children in these unions: will the children be raised as Jewish or not? In the interviews, roughly estimating, many informants born before the 1950s had Jewish spouses, while those under the age of 60 had mostly married non-Jews of whom some had at some point converted to Judaism. Older informants shared bitter family histories due to their choice of a partner, and René Nyberg (2016) in his biography of his Jewish family in Latvia describes how his Finnish-Jewish mother was forced out of the family after marrying a Finnish Christian man in the 1930s. For the memoirists Boris Grünstein and Eva Odrischinsky, "mixed" relationships and romantic involvements across religious boundaries are a norm. Nevertheless, Odrischinsky (2019: 83) writes that in her childhood in the 1950s intermarriage was still considered taboo or even a "crime." Her father had dated a non-Jewish woman in his youth in the 1930s; after the war, he traveled to Sweden to find a Jewish wife. "As a member of a tiny Jewish congregation, Jascha [her father] and his generation sat in a screw vise. They 'must' marry among their own, but the selection of marriage candidates was so limited that it felt incestuous" (Odrischinsky 2019: 198). Herein lies the reason for the high number of intermarriages in Finland: the number of potential Jewish partners is limited.

Judaism is not a proselytizing religion—quite the contrary, conversion is often discouraged. In Orthodoxy, gatekeeping has traditionally been vigorous: conversion requires years of study and official endorsement. In Orthodox Judaism, children with Jewish fathers have to convert to Judaism; in Helsinki, this usually happens in the early teens (*bnei mitzvah* age). Informants shared many personal experiences of conversions, some of them conducted in Finland but quite a few in Sweden, the United Kingdom and Israel. In Lundgren's (2002: 33) survey, 18 percent of the respondents were converts, of whom 25 percent had a Jewish father; most of the rest were married to a Jewish person and converted. In 2002, only 13 percent of the converts did not have any previous Jewish family connections. Some had either personally gone through the process or had close family members who had converted; some had converted abroad first in the Reform/Conservative framework, and later on had had an Orthodox conversion (e.g. to have a halakhically valid Jewish wedding in Finland). Statistically, the person who converts to Judaism in the Nordic countries is typically a woman who is marrying a Jewish man (Czimbalmos 2021; Dencik 2009; Lundgren 2002: 20). According to Dencik (2009), "[t]he reasons for these differences have not been adequately analyzed, yet it seems justified to suppose that a patriarchal element persists in governing this pattern."

During the 2000s, an increasing number of people in Finland with no previous Jewish family background or marital ties have converted to Judaism. Currently we do not know the reasons for this new development and, undoubtedly, it must be examined in depth in the future: this phenomenon may be unique to Finland. Approximately 25 percent of the informants were adult converts. Many informants noted that new converts from an ethnic Finnish background have become more visible in the synagogue services and in the administration of the congregations. According to Jewish law, converts are to be accepted as fully Jewish. In practice, the experiences of the informants who are converts sometimes resemble Dencik's (2011: 123) estimation of Swedish converts: "If someone has converted into Judaism, it is not appropriate to mention or discuss the topic; however, in actual practice they are not accepted as 'real Jews' like 'born Jews.'" Lundgren (2002: 33) is perhaps overly optimistic writing that in Finland no difference is made between converts and non-converts: according to the informants' experiences, the transition into Judaism is not always smooth. Odrischinsky (2019: 88) describes how in her childhood in the 1950s and 1960s either-or ideology reigned: the children of non-Jewish mothers and Jewish fathers, for example, were not considered Jewish on her parents' "strict scale" even after conversion. Nevertheless, one of the Cantonist informants in his early 70s, Isak, believed that the new converts are in fact providing continuity for the community:

> I have said, as a joke, that … thanks to the converts our congregation still exists, in quotation marks. I think it is an important matter. Our

> religion forbids proselytizing … so we cannot take the first step … but still I wonder why so many people want to convert to Judaism. Don't they have enough problems!

Some informants would keenly modernize the existing Finnish model of Orthodoxy toward the actual religiosity of most members and alter the community toward the style of the Swedish *Einheitsgemeinde* where all the denominations from the Orthodox to the liberals assemble under the same roof. Then again, some informants—including some new converts—strongly identify as Orthodox, albeit with varying levels of observance. It is also possible that those members who identify as "more" religious took part in the interviews in greater numbers than the 1 to 3 percent of the "actually" Orthodox members would guarantee. Many of these informants have obtained Jewish education abroad and/or sought for support from worldwide Orthodox Jewish organizations (e.g. Chabad). One of the informants, Dina, was herself non-religious, but cherished the old Cantonist/Ashkenazi traditions of her childhood. She remarked that while Finnish society has become more pluralistic and secular, *devoutness* (in Finnish, *uskovaisuus*, "being a believer") has recently become more visible than it used to be: "In a way, this [visibility of new, devout members] is reflected in the Jewish community that has also become more pluralistic."

Different—Yet the Same? Approaches to "Finnishness"

Defining what being Finnish means is undoubtedly as convoluted as defining Jewishness. Finnishness is attached, for example, to certain things, objects, phenomena or people that have been defined as "Finnish" during a long historical process: national languages, foods, and shared symbols and heroes function as social representations of Finnishness (Anttila 1993: 108). In the interviews, many "Finnish" foods (salmon, whitefish, bilberries, lingonberries, etc.) appear in contexts that are distinctively Jewish, for example, Nordic salmon served on the celebrations of *bnei mitzvah* and funerals (Pataricza 2019: 88; informants). Sauna, as well, appears as a quintessential symbol of Finnishness, as shared family time, both in the interviews and in the memoirs: in Odrischinsky's (2019: 90–91) childhood, she would bathe in the sauna with her father and uncle.

One of the most vivid symbols of Finnishness is part of the "national story" of Finland: the collective memory of the wars against the Soviet Union in 1939 to 1944 upon which the modern Finnish national identity is constructed (Rantala 2011: 495). The wars are a crucial part of the Finnish Jewish culture of remembrance: one of the informants, in his early 70s, Yaakov, said, "What is a Finn, really? A Finnish Jew is also a Finn, who remembers all our fallen heroes." Yaakov's words echoed Ekholm's (2014: 173–75) observation on how the war has become an integral part of the patriotic narrative of the Finnish Jewish community. The community memorializes this narrative during the national

memorial days and on the pages of the community newspaper, *Hakehila*. In a recent *Hakehila* (3/2019), for example, an article was published about the memorial plaques set on the gravestones of the Jewish members of the Lotta Svärd, women's paramilitary troops during the Second World War. Finnish historians have also contributed to the narrative as the *shared* national destiny. Taimi Torvinen (1989: 167) describes the Finnish and Jewish war veterans as indistinguishable: "When the [Jewish] veterans convene, their talk is *in no way different* from the talks of the Finnish veterans" (emphasis added). An overwhelming bulk of Boris Grünstein's memoirs is dedicated to the war. Using a lot of (gallows) humor to portray traumatic events, he describes his encounters with antisemitic Finnish officers and with the German troops stationed in Finland. As noted by Ekholm and Muir (2011: 47), the war as a national symbol for Jewish Finns may hide the fact that discrimination and antisemitic threats did exist before the war and during it. Problematic memories of the time, however, could set the community apart from the rest of the nation-state.

Counting those who have Swedish as their first language and those who are fluently bilingual, approximately half of the Finnish Jews were Swedish-speakers in 2002. The use of Finnish has been on the rise for several decades, especially because the Jewish School operates in Finnish (Lundgren 2002: 35; informants). Most Jewish Finns are bi- or trilingual: alongside Finnish and/or Swedish, many speak Hebrew, Russian and English. Yiddish and Russian were the original languages of the Cantonists, switched to the national languages (Swedish and Finnish) already before the Second World War (Ekholm and Muir 2011: 29). Some of the oldest informants had heard Yiddish at home from their parents. Most Cantonist descendants still recognize and use certain Yiddish words and phrases (see also Muir 2009). For several informants, the Swedish-Finnish culture, especially the language, was a central marker of identity. Both Grünstein and Odrischinsky wrote their memoirs originally in Swedish. Grünstein describes his identity as a Swedish-speaking Finn sarcastically: "I was Jewish, although I also saw myself as a Swedish-speaking Finn, and this combination became a double label of being a minority and not even in my case without its problems" (1989: 45–46). After a couple of drinks, Grünstein's Finnish-speaking friends once compared his status as a Jew to Swedish-speaking Finns, adding that he has "nothing to fear." While creating many positive feelings of belongingness, the language sets the Swedish-speaking Jews apart into yet another minority group. One of the informants said: "I am like minority two times one … Swedish-speaking and Jewish." Another informant felt strengthened by the combination: "Being a Jew and also Swedish-speaking, being two minorities [at once]—[it] makes you hard-boiled."

Vuola (2019: 66) has noted about the Finnish Jewish women she has interviewed: "For my informants, Finnishness and Jewishness are inseparable—overlapping but not identical." "Finnishness" and "Jewishness" sometimes operate in a different way depending on the context. One of the informants, Ron, shared an intriguing joke: "If you place a group of Finnish Jews among

Finns, they are Jewish to the extreme; if you place a group of Finnish Jews among Jews of another country, they are Finnish to the extreme." The joke is, perhaps deliberately, ambiguous: do Finnish Jews become more "Jewish" when they interact with Finns, or are the non-Jewish Finns treating them as "different," as Jews rather than Finns? A person may become (more) aware of their minority identity precisely because *others* pay attention to it. The latter part of the joke reveals another contradiction; the "Finnishness" of a Finnish Jew becomes acutely visible/palpable among the *non-Finnish* Jews. One informant, Chana, who had moved to Finland as an adult, confirmed Ron's joke: "[T]he Jews in Finland are very much like the Finns themselves." Likewise, John, a young man who had also moved to Finland as an adult, described the Finnish Jews as "really, really Finnish":

> The Jews in Finland are really Finnish in many ways. I see them as Finnish, I cannot see them as a—now it sounds really, really bad, but I cannot see them as a—let's say, I do not see something special culture in them. … Let's say that they are really well established in the society and many of them are really Finnish. … And also because they were not so many. In Sweden, there are so many Jews and it is much easier to … be with the other people.

John struggles to define what "being really Finnish" means and suggests that it manifests itself in an absence of (Jewish) qualities, adding an apologetic aside: "It sounds really, really bad." John mentions two reasons for his overemphasis on "Finnishness": the small size of the community—compared to Sweden—and its well-established status. John's view supports the last part of Ron's joke: when with non-Finnish Jews (John situates himself as an outsider-insider), the Jewish features ostensibly fade and the "Finnishness" of the Jewish Finns is somehow intensified.

Being a Jewish Finn is sometimes playful balancing between stereotypical characterizations of both the "Finn" and the "Jew": occasionally, the Finns (or "Finnishness") represent the "Other" against which the Finnish Jews mirror their own distinctive characteristics (cf. Ollila 1998: 128). Some informants talk about feeling and acting different from other Finns. They are lively and more loquacious; sometimes they must hold back in order to fit in with the more guarded, "Finnish" way of being: the "Finn" is stereotypically quiet and reserved. Such negotiations on being *similar* yet somehow *different* appears in Odrischinsky's memoir, beginning from its equivocal title (*Som alla andra*: "Like Everyone Else"). Following a long absence from her (non-Jewish) school during Jewish festivals, Odrischinky (2019: 104) writes how she had learned to be proud to be Jewish, to be *different*: "I myself take advantage of the misfortune [of absences] to *make myself remarkable, to show me special, because that's what I am*" (emphasis added). As a child, she is mistaken for a Roma girl, and she

enjoys the confusion: "… we like that *you cannot place us*, and we also sympathize with them [the Roma], they are also dark, not pale like ordinary Finns" (Odrischinsky 2019: 116).

In contrast, it is not the difference but the *sameness* of the older, established minorities—especially Jews and Tatars—that is preferably highlighted in the Finnish media. In 1991, for example, the Finnish weekly *Suomen Kuvalehti* published a feature article with the opening line: "The Jews of Finland are a small minority, mostly living their daily life and working *just like the majority of the Finns*" (Carlson 1991, emphasis added). A minority that is conducting their lives "just like us" is not that different from the majority ("us"). Characteristically for the Finnish "mentality," *work* creates useful members of society (Ollila 1998: 135). As pointed out by Ekholm (2014: 163), descriptions of "successful" minorities are common when older Finnish minorities are in focus in the Finnish media: for example, the Muslim Tatar community is referred to as "model" Muslims who have assimilated in a "successful" way into Finnish society. Lundgren (2002: 10), for example, has written that "the Jews have managed to integrate successfully in our society while maintaining their special features. Another old minority that has succeeded in this are the Tatars." The implicit idea seems to be that not all minorities have been as successful and that the recipe for "success" can be found in the integration of Jews and Tatars.

Historically, the Finnish Jewish stance to "Finnishness" could perhaps be compared to early 20th-century American Jewish identity negotiations: "[American] Jews concerned themselves primarily with marking themselves off as being different from the perceived mainstream, but not so different as to cause alarm" (Alexander 2007: 96). As a small minority, Finnish Jews often "creatively straddle both worlds" (Kupari and Vuola 2020: 8). However, as will be discussed next, being considered *too* different can sometimes be precarious.

Antisemitism and Racism in Finland: Finnish Jewish Experiences

According to Cynthia Levine-Rasky (2013: 6), racism is not an aberration, but typical of all social relations and normalized within North American society.[8] Finland, too, has a long history of legislation that has discriminated against minorities, especially the Roma, and recent studies made in Finland confirm that "racism runs deep also in our society" (Report of the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman 2020). Antisemitism is a modern form of hatred that targets one ethno-religious group, Jews, and has deep roots in Christian anti-Judaism and 19th-century race theories. As noted by Ekholm and Muir (2011: 30–31), in Finland antisemitism tends to be noticed when it manifests itself in physical attacks against Jewish facilities, typically coming from the far right. Latent

antisemitism—structural discrimination or offhand "jokes"—has been less scrutinized as a phenomenon.[9] An international survey on antisemitism discovered that 15 percent of Finns foster openly antisemitic attitudes (Sharma 2018).[10] These attitudes surface in surprising contexts. In English (as well as in many other languages), the word "Jew" has negative historical resonances as an ethnic slur—the mythical *Jew* as a symbol of the "Other" in Christianity and the subsequent Nazi dehumanization of the Jews—and the adjective "Jewish" is preferred (Baker 2017: 11). While the Finnish word *juutalainen* is used both a noun and an adjective ("Jew," "Jewish"), it also holds negative connotations: in 2013, the Finnish Court of Appeal used the words Jew (*juutalainen*) in a derogatory way in their off-the-record discussions, along with gay (*homo*) and the N-word (Fredman 2015).

As succinctly noted by Ekholm, Muir and Silvennoinen (2016: 46), "[d]uring the past fifteen years the previously favored idea that there was never any notable antisemitism in Finland has been questioned." The memoirists Grünstein and Odrischinsky show that Finnish Jews have a history of alienating experiences that are difficult to describe without them being minimized or dealt with humor. In the 1930s, law student Grünstein (1989: 43–44) encounters antisemitic descriptions of "disloyal" Jewish businessmen in his textbooks at the university. Pointing this out to his non-Jewish friends, he is called "overly-sensitive." Odrischinsky describes the physically "Jewish" qualities of her family of *Ostjuden*, their shape of the nose and dark hair, comparing them to the pale and blond Finns. This perceived difference from the "whiteness" of the surrounding society brings out her first encounters with racism: on the playground of the Jewish school, children of the neighborhood throw racial slurs at her. This was a typical experience of her childhood in the 1950s and 1960s: "We are used to having our looks commented on" (Odrischinsky 2019: 115–16).

According to Dencik (2011: 144), half of the members of the Swedish Jewish communities had been exposed to antisemitism at some point in their lives, and for half of them the experiences were recent. When asked, many Finnish Jewish informants had at least one such episode to share (see also Vuola 2019: 67–69). One informant, John, said that he does not feel comfortable wearing a *kipah* on the street; a few other informants also said that they had recently stopped wearing any visibly Jewish markers on their bodies: *kipah*, *Magen David* (Star of David) or visible Hebrew letters—anything that could be related to the State of Israel and/or Judaism. One informant used to wear a *Magen David* in public but had stopped; not because something particular had happened, but because of "general talk," probably referring to the fact that people also talk more about the threats. Another informant told that wearing any sort of Jewish paraphernalia may also attract "positive" (Philo-Semitic or pro-Israel) attention or Christian missionary aspirations (often at the same time).

The Finnish Jewish community has been exposed to several blatantly antisemitic attacks during recent years. Several murderous attacks against synagogues

and Jewish facilities in France, Belgium and Denmark since 2015 have left a mark on their sense of security. Recent cases of targeted harassment include antisemitic stickers and bomb threats in Helsinki, red paint thrown at the Turku synagogue and vandalism in the old Jewish military cemetery in Hamina. The attacks sometimes coincide with vandalism directed toward the Embassy of Israel in Helsinki; any escalation in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict stirs antisemitic attacks against the Finnish Jewish community. All public events organized by the Jewish congregations have heightened security measures; in 2019, the Finnish government granted financial aid to cover some of the security costs. In the Finnish media, antisemitism is often a cause for concern and both politicians and pundits pointedly condemn attacks. Nevertheless, stereotypes about the "Jews" and jokes about the Holocaust seem to persist beyond the public eye.

Some informants with an Ashkenazi/Cantonist background saw any antisemitism as isolated incidents. A Cantonist man in his mid-70s, Aaron, for example, had almost never experienced any antisemitism in Finland:

> It is easy to live and be accepted in Finland, even though I know that people think it [antisemitism] exists but I believe it does not. I have never encountered [it]. Sometimes people make ugly jokes but as far as I understand it, they do not have bad intentions.

While Aaron questions the existence of antisemitism in Finland, he has noticed the *ordinariness* of "bad jokes." Yaron Nadbornik, the chair of the Jewish community of Helsinki, in an interview published by *Suomen Kuvalehti* (Sharma 2018), doubted that the Finns "actually hate the Jewish people," but believed that there are both positive and negative stereotypes that intermittently turn up, especially as "harmless" jokes about the Holocaust. Both Nadbornik and Aaron thought these were thoughtless acts without bad intentions; still, Nadbornik had grown tired of the ubiquity of the jokes.

For Hanna, a woman in her mid-30s from a Cantonist background, antisemitism had also never been an issue. Reactions to her Jewishness had been almost nonchalant:

> People do know that Jews exist but I have never experienced antisemitism. If it turns out that "OK, you're Jewish, well, that's alright": it is just nothing. Maybe somebody then asks a thing or two about it, but in general, Finns do not ask about things.

Hanna, however, thought that her "Finnish" looks plays a role in this:

> I don't have striking features. Being shouted at on the street [happens] when someone has darker skin. … When people see something that looks strange, they will stare.

According to Levine-Rasky (2013: 6), whiteness is more than the physical looks of an individual: it is a social construct, a set of cultural practices and a location of structural advantage, and a standpoint from which white people understand themselves in relation to racialized others. Hanna was onto something: Finnish Jews who "pass" as white rarely face overt antisemitism, but for some Jewish Finns "race" is continuously made visible—by others. Thus, Jewish identity in Finland is not to be "conflated with a monolithic racialized whiteness" (Levine-Rasky 2013: 134).[11] Some informants reported how people had reacted to their "foreign" looks: John, for example, said that it was getting increasingly difficult to be Jewish in Scandinavia "especially [for] Jews that look like me [Middle Eastern]." John added that many Mizrahi Jews experience discrimination on many levels also in Ashkenazi-dominated Israel (see e.g. Levine-Rasky 2013: 134; Shadmi 2003). He was frustrated with the antisemitism and blatant racism he ran into frequently in Finland:

> I experience so much racism. Daily racism that I never experience in other countries. … It comes actually from Finnish people. … And they actually do not—you know, they are not saying "we do not like you" but when they are saying: "Oh yeah, you are a Jew and you are rich and so on and you have money." Or, you know these small things that "Ah, you are a Jew, you can pay for us."

John's experiences of antisemitism included old stereotypes of the "rich Jews" flung as innocuous jokes and sinister conspiracy theories probably spread online. John had also noticed that anyone—especially a young man—who looks Middle Eastern or African can become a target for Islamophobes and racists; according to a survey done by the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman (2020) in 2019, Africans coming from below Sahara rated Finland as the most racist country of Europe. In 2015, Koko Hubara, a Yemenite-Israeli-Finnish journalist, published a collection of essays, *Ruskeat tytöt* ("Brown girls"), writing about her experiences with racism and structural discrimination in Finland: the book soon developed into a popular media platform for racialized Finns. The interviews of the project Minhag Finland also confirm that experiences of racism are far from uncommon in Finland, and this may have far-reaching negative effects on the private and professional lives of individuals. John, for example, considered leaving Finland.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed what being Jewish/Jewishness may mean to Jewish Finns, based on the recent interviews of the members of the Finnish Jewish community. In addition to the interviews, two memoirs that focus on the 20th-century Jewish experience in Finland were included as part of the description.

After introducing the readers to the history of the community, I approached the material from three perspectives: the challenges of Jewish Orthodoxy in a secularized society, the Finnish Jewish approach toward "Finnishness," and the informants' experiences of antisemitism and racism.

At the beginning of the project Minhag Finland in 2018, one member of the community approached me and asked if the project was interested only in the views of the "Cantonists"—the Ashkenazi descendants of the 19th-century Russian soldiers—as the *authentic* Finnish Jewish experience. According to this member, such a view would alienate those members of the community who had roots elsewhere or who were converts. In Lundgren's 2002 survey, for example, the Finnish Jews from Russia and Israel were not included because they would not have been able to answer the questionnaires in Finnish/Swedish (Lundgren 2002: 12). During the interviews, I realized that many of these "new" members have now been part of the community for decades or all their lives. The older stratum of the Cantonist Ashkenazi tradition is changing and becoming diversified by the various (Sephardic/Russian/Iraqi/Yemenite, etc.) traditions of the "newcomers." Furthermore, global Jewish networks of the (both old and new) members exert influence on the religious practices of the community.

Finnish Jewish experiences offer previously unexplored views on whiteness, racism and racialization in Finnish society. In Finland, antisemitism is easily recognized when it comes from quarters that do not hide their hatred. One recent example is the antisemitic (nowadays online) newspaper *Magneettimedia*, whose editor-in-chief was convicted in 2013 of agitation against an ethnic group. Informants rarely confront such open antisemitic vitriol, and few believed that Finnish people in general actively harbor antisemitic ideas. One reason for this may be the fact that the Finnish-Jewish community is so small that it is often invisible to non-Jewish Finns. However, nearly all informants (and both memoirists) have experienced "casual" antisemitism and heard rude remarks. Disturbingly, a few informants from a non-European background told that they have been harassed, not necessarily for being Jewish, but for looking like a "foreigner." The informants who "pass" as white notice less antisemitism/racism, whereas those who are racialized cannot avoid it. These varied experiences must be heard in future studies of antisemitism and racism in Finland.

In 2002, Lundgren (2002: 95) concluded that "[a]lthough there will always be those who find the stance of the congregation too Orthodox, there are no alternatives to the current policy. The congregation will obviously change, and various reforms may occur, but the congregation will remain Orthodox." Almost 20 years later, Lundgren seems to be correct in his estimation. Nevertheless, Jewish Orthodoxy itself is globally changing and, for example, women are becoming more visible and vocal in domains traditionally reserved for men. Some may see assimilation and intermarriages as existential "threats"; nevertheless, the community is determined to continue the Finnish version(s) of Judaism. I believe that one key to the future of the community lies in demographics: will

the old "Cantonist" segment stay in power? Will the Sephardic/Israeli-hybrid traditions become more dominant in the synagogue? Will the Orthodoxy of the global Jewish movements, such as Chabad, become a more integral part of "being Jewish" in Finland? These questions will hopefully be answered by future generations of scholars.

Notes

[1] I am using the quotation marks deliberately: as noted by Greenberg (1998: 58), "race" has meaning in the United States (and most of the rest of the world) based on the widely divergent historical experiences of populations whose ancestors came from different continents and who enjoyed differential access to power based on that ancestry. In other words, "'race' has historical meaning *because people acted as if it had meaning*" (emphasis added).

[2] The major historical Jewish division is between the East European, originally Yiddish-speaking Ashkenazi Jews and Sephardic ("Spanish") Jews who since the late 15th century have lived along the Mediterranean (North Africa, the Levant). Jews from the Middle East (e.g. Iraq and Iran) are known in Israel as Mizrahi ("Oriental") Jews.

[3] All the sensitive data have been analyzed in accordance with the guidelines of the *Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity* and of the *ÅAU Board for Research Ethics*. All the interviews will be stored by *Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura* (the Finnish Literature Society).

[4] Cf. Lundgren (2002: 20): "Jews anyways did what they were supposed to do [in the war] and the result was good" ("Juutalaiset tekivät kuitenkin mitä pitikin ja lopputulos oli hyvä").

[5] The history of the Finnish Zionist movements is a complicated topic that lies outside the scope of this chapter. Since the early 1900s, the community has in many ways embraced Zionism, including volunteering in the Israel/Arab wars (1948, 1967 and 1973) and establishing various Zionist fundraising societies. Lundgren (2002: 19–20) estimates that hundreds of Finnish Jews have moved to Israel. In the project Minhag Finland, the relationship to Israel was not explicitly asked about; however, the topic naturally came up several times. The relationship of individual Finnish Jews to Israel ranges from full support to criticism.

[6] In the 19th century, traditional Judaism was split into three denominations. Reform and Conservative movements adopted a more liberal attitude toward modernity, for example, by promoting women's participation in Jewish rituals. The Orthodox movement retained the traditional interpretation of *halakhah* and soon evolved into two directions, Modern Orthodoxy and Haredi Orthodox Judaism (also known as Ultra-Orthodoxy), the latter turning hostile to any reforms. It should be added that none of these modern and global Jewish movements/denominations is monolithic, and even inside Haredi Orthodoxy there is much diversity.

[7] Compare this to the similar results in Lundgren's (2002: 73) data: 43 percent think that if you are born to Jewish mother or a convert, you can join the congregation; 35 percent would approve of those born to a Jewish father; 25 percent if marrying a Jew; 18 percent said anyone could join.

[8] Levine-Rasky is a sociologist who has studied whiteness in the theoretical framework of critical race theory, focusing on race and racism especially in the North American context. In Finland, research on racism, racialization and whiteness is a relatively recent perspective; see Keskinen, Seikkula and Mkwesha 2021.

[9] The study of antisemitism in Finland has tended to focus to pre-Second World War events. Paavo Ahonen has studied antisemitism in the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church in the 1930s; antisemitism before and during the Second World War is analyzed in *Finland's Holocaust: Silences of History*, edited by Simo Muir and Hana Worthen (2013). Ahonen, Muir and Silvennoinen (2019) have published a survey article on antisemitism in Finland, also focusing on the period before the Second World War.

[10] The survey quoted by Sharma (2018) was conducted by the US-based non-governmental organization Anti-Defamation League (2014).

[11] Levine-Rasky obviously refers in her quote to the North American Jewish communities. In the pre-Second World War United States, Jews were counted among the "non-white races" with the Irish, Polish and Italian (i.e. non-Anglo-Saxon) immigrant communities. White identity was "adopted" due to their rapid rise to the middle class and due to the existence of the racialized "Other," the Black community. Probably 20 percent of American Jews are racialized (Black, Mizrahi) Jews (Levine-Rasky 2013: 134–37). On various developments of the American Jewish identity and its negotiations with whiteness, see also Goldstein 2007.

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PART IV

Imperialism and Colonization

CHAPTER 10

The English Language in Finland

Tool of Modernity or Tool of Coloniality?

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Abstract

English is the dominant lingua franca of the modern world, used by an estimated 1.5 billion people (Peterson 2020; 2 billion people according to MacKenzie 2018). The ubiquity of English is in large part due to its colonial history, which resulted in extreme pluricentricity (Clyne 1992). English is also the world's most commonly taught foreign language, for example in places like Finland, where the majority population claims to be proficient in English (Leppänen, Nikula and Kääntä 2008). By some measures, the "best" non-native speakers of English are the Nordic populations, including Finland (European Commission 2012). Contemporary ideologies of the Nordic countries, Finland included, are at odds with the linguistic attitudes and discrimination that are a composite component of English. That is, Nordic countries value ideologies of equality (Keskinen, Skaptadóttir and Toivanen 2019), yet the English language is known to reflect social biases and to perpetuate social inequality based on

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race, economic status and gender (Lippi-Green 2012; Milroy and Milroy 1999). How then, does the use of English play out in a setting like Finland? Does English perpetuate Nordic values of equality, or colonial values of whiteness and elitism? The chapter explores these notions through the lens of the Extra and Intra-territorial Force Model (Buschfeld and Kautzsch 2017), a model designed to apply to non-postcolonial settings of English.

Keywords: English as a foreign language, language attitudes, language ideologies, English as a global language, coloniality

Introduction

A news article in the weekend supplement to *Helsingin Sanomat*, Finland's biggest daily newspaper, ran this headline and subheading for a story dated January 23, 2020:

> Katri Kulmuni's delightful British English dropped jaws on social media—we asked linguists if she would be an upper- or lower-class Brit. Twitter delights once again over Katri Kulmuni's British English. Linguists say Kulmuni's language skills are on par with native speakers—and such a high level among Finns is only an advantage.[1]

The article goes on to describe how the then-Finnish Minister of Finance, Katri Kulmuni, was not an embarrassment to Finland like other Finnish politicians had apparently been, due to their supposed lack of skills in speaking English. The story was published after a video interview circulated on Twitter featuring Kulmuni speaking English with the international press in Brussels, garnering praise for Kulmuni's English skills.

There is plenty to unpack in even this brief example. Not least is that a positive assessment of a Finnish politician's English skills merits space in the weekend supplement of the nation's most-read newspaper. The fact that this story was considered newsworthy can be attributed to a number of factors. Foremost, no doubt, is that a public figure representing Finland received positive assessment on the international stage. The fact that this assessment has to do with her use of English merits further attention. The same article goes on to mention the self-disparaging notion of "rally English," a term coined at the expense of Finnish competitive rally drivers, who have traditionally been considered to speak "shameful" English—an adjective used in the article. Rally English is used in Finland to describe English spoken with a distinctive Finnish accent coming through. Parallel terms in other languages, also normally used in a disparaging manner, include *steenkolenengels* "coal English" in Dutch, *inglese maccheronico* "macaroni English" in Italian and *Engrish* in Japanese. The observation about

rally English is raised in the news article to highlight that there is an overall improvement in the English skills among the Finnish population, and that this is a positive outcome. On the surface, the story is an innocuous, feel-good piece typical of a weekly supplement: attention is brought to the fact that a local politician has been praised for her ability in speaking English.

Below the surface, however, the overall tone and language use in the article point toward clear ideologies about language, and specifically about the use of English. To start, why is "British English" considered "delightful"? Would the same adjective be used to describe another variety of English — say, Indian English or US Southern English? Why, in particular, would a Finnish politician's use of "British English" cause "jaws to drop"? Is the implication that speaking a highly regarded variety of English is something unexpected or out of reach for Finnish people? Furthermore, and more to the aims of this chapter, what is achieved by determining, based on expert insights from linguists, whether the "British English" in question is higher or lower class? What if, in fact, the resulting assessments had been "lower class," rather than the "civilized and educated" assessment that came from language experts (later in the article)? Would this story still have been newsworthy if Kulmuni had been considered to speak a lower-class variety of British English? And, finally, why is it considered an "advantage" for Finnish people to sound like "native speakers" of English—and, based on the article, presumably higher-class British English speakers?

Newspapers are known to simultaneously reflect and feed into public discourse and ideologies through audience design (Bell 1984). With this in mind, it appears as a straightforward and uncomplicated issue that the concept of "British English" is something both desired and desirable for the newspaper and its readers. We can safely refer to this as an example of *standard language ideology*, which has been described as "… the promotion of the needs and interests of a dominant group or class at the expense of marginalized groups, by means of disinformation and misrepresentations of those non-dominant groups" (Lippi-Green 2012: 67). With regard to the English language, that is, the standard variety of the language is that which is associated and perpetuated by a socially dominant, elite part of the English-speaking population. As described later in this chapter, the historical roots of language ideology in English are part of its background as a language of colonization and coloniality. A key point that emerges in relation to the newspaper article detailed here is that language ideologies about a *foreign language*, English, are part of the story's newsworthiness. This fact alone—that the language in question is English—is part of what makes it newsworthy. One can well assume that the same treatment would not have been evident if Kulmuni had appeared in media interviews speaking a standardized version of another language, such as *hochdeutsch* or *rikssvenska*. It is also unlikely that Kulmuni's Finnish language would ever be directly evaluated in terms of social class in the same manner her English was. In fact,

evaluating a politician's Finnish as sounding "high class" rings as artificial or even ridiculous, a clear distinction from the treatment of English.

As a language-focused contribution to this volume, this chapter takes an exploratory stance to investigate the relationship between a foreign language, English, in the Finnish context and that language's roots in colonization, coloniality and elitism. As described in this chapter, these aspects of English are well established within its native settings and beyond. Within the context of Finland, a critical question is how these historical and social sides of English play out in the Finnish context, where people speak English as a foreign (not as a post-colonial) language. It is of interest to observe if the receiving community of English speakers accepts or rejects the ideological aspects inherent to the coloniality of English, and if it perpetuates these ideologies among its own speakers of English. It is also of interest to note if English takes on properties and functions in the receiving setting that relate to perceptions of Finnish, whiteness and prestige that are particular to the setting of Finland. These questions are explored mostly through the framework supplied by Sarah Buschfeld and Alexander Kautzsch (2017), which in turn is based on the foundational work of Edgar W. Schneider's Dynamic Model (2003; 2007). These models are used to assess the situation in Finland with regard to the use of English, as well as to explore the connection to coloniality through language.

Race, Colonialism, Coloniality and the English language

There are an estimated 1.5 billion speakers of English in the world today (Peterson 2020; cf. Pennycook 2017 and MacKenzie 2018). An accurate number of speakers is difficult to calculate with any certainty, given the different kinds of speakers and also by what standards we judge what it means to be a "speaker of English." Notwithstanding, this is an incredible number of speakers if we consider that a mere 500 years ago the estimated number of English speakers was around 5 million (Pennycook 2017). How does a language grow from having 5 million to 1.5 billion speakers in a 500-year period? The answer, of course, is colonialism, followed by coloniality and cultural imperialism.

The British were relative latecomers to colonialism compared to the Portuguese, Dutch and Spanish (Gramley 2018; see also Hickey 2019), and yet it is English that took hold and spread to the extent that is now the most-used language in the world, most notably as a foreign language. As stated succinctly by Mario Saraceni (2019: 642):

> The imperial origin of the spread of English worldwide could be said to be twofold: The British Empire literally took the language to its colonies but, after its collapse, it was the economic, financial, cultural, and military might of the USA—the imperialism of capitalism—that kept and boosted the global status of English.

As discussed, for example, in the introduction to this volume, this set of circumstances is a component part of coloniality, or in other words reaping the benefits of colonial complicity, while simultaneously reaping the benefits of modernity and Westernization.

The ultimate outcome of these phenomena is that there are distinctly different types of English-speaking populations, and the relative value placed on the English used by these populations depends in part on how English came to them. In general terms, this distinction can be described based on terms rooted in colonialism: *native speakers*, *second-language speakers* and *foreign-language speakers* of English. Another way of viewing these distinctions is based on race and ethnicity: the standards of native speakers are associated with whiteness, while the English associated with second-language speakers and non-standard varieties is often associated with other ethnicities and brownness (Rosa 2018). A famous model of Englishes introduced in the 1980s by the linguist Braj Kachru is informed by colonialism. Kachru's (1982) Three Circles Model categorized World Englishes according to their position in three concentric circles, in which the so-called "inner circle" represents "native speakers" of English, the "outer circle" mostly represents (former) British colonies and the "expanding circle" refers to the worldwide users of English in locations where English has no official status; that is, where English has foreign language or lingua franca status. The model itself is thus based on a colonial understanding of English: inner-circle speakers are from the United Kingdom or then from settler colonies such as Ireland, the United States, Canada and Australia; outer-circle speakers tend to be from exploitation colonies such as India, Singapore and Nigeria; and expanding-circle speakers are associated with the post-colonial global expansion of English (Schneider 2011).

There are many criticisms of the Three Circles Model, one of them being that it does not capture the constant change and use of English language use in diverse populations. Schneider (2003; 2007) has introduced the Dynamic Model, which attempts to capture the process and possible outcomes of English use in a given population, pertaining especially to postcolonial settings. In the model, Schneider identifies five phases, summarized as: (1) foundation; (2) exonormative stabilization; (3) structural nativization; (4) endonormative stabilization; and (5) differentiation. One of the main contributions of the Dynamic Model is that it allows English use to be assessed as any stage along a continuum.

While the Dynamic Model was designed expressly for accounting for postcolonial Englishes, a point that remains unclear is whether and how it applies to non-postcolonial settings. As mentioned previously, the labels often assigned to English-speaking settings make specific note of any colonial history: a first-language setting generally has a settler history, a second-language setting a colonial history, or foreign-language settings are where English is primarily learned in schools. In terms of overall language outcome, however, many researchers, including in Finland, have observed that the line between foreign language,

second language and first language is becoming increasingly problematic (see e.g. Leppänen and Nikula 2008; see also Buschfeld 2019; Buschfeld and Kautzsch 2019).[2] As noted, for example, in Buschfeld and Kautzsch (2019) and by Schneider himself (2014), the Dynamic Model was not designed to account for non-postcolonial Englishes, and, in fact, there has been no model that could be applied to English-speaking settings that do not have a settler or colonial history.

Buschfeld and Kautzsch (2017) attempted to remedy this dilemma by introducing the Extra- and Intra-territorial Forces (EIF) Model, with the aim to salvage the parallels, but also account for differences (ibid.: 113). Briefly, the model consists of five partially overlapping subcategories that can be applied to the trajectory and use of English in postcolonial and non-postcolonial settings, or what the authors call extra-territorial forces versus intra-territorial forces. These are:

(1) colonization OR attitudes toward colonizing power
(2) language policies OR language attitudes
(3) globalization OR "acceptance" of globalization [quotation marks in the original]
(4) foreign policies
(5) sociodemographic background

As mentioned by the authors (Buschfeld and Kautzsch 2017), an advantage of the EIF model is that it can account for the heterogeneous reality of many English-speaking contexts and allows for granularity between different speaker groups, taking into account aspects such as age, ethnicity, social status and gender (Buschfeld and Kautzsch 2017: 66). Their own analysis, in the publication in which the model was introduced, was of Namibia. In many ways, Namibia is not a prototypical non-postcolonial territory, as noted also by the authors. In this chapter, we apply the setting of Finland to the EIF model, a setting which in many ways can be considered prototypical of today's non-postcolonial setting for English.

Language Attitudes and Ideologies in English

An often-quoted line among scholars of English is from the play *Pygmalion*, by George Bernard Shaw: "It is impossible for an Englishman to open his mouth without making some other Englishman hate or despise him." The central social parameter in *Pygmalion*, of course, is social class, and both this quotation and the play itself center around the relationship of social class to attitudes and perceptions of varieties of English in Great Britain. In this chapter, language attitudes and ideologies are treated as related and overlapping concepts. *Attitudes* is the term used to describe more localized or in situ language use, which is in turn and can both stem from or contribute to ideologies about language.

Ideologies, in turn, refers to broader views of language at a societal level, related to social structures and access to power, for example. As noted in the EIF model, attitudes and ideologies about language are a crucial component in accounting for its overall use and presence in a given setting.

With regard to English in the United Kingdom, there are decades of research about attitudes toward the varieties of English spoken there. The major deciding factor in how varieties are regarded has been found to be social class and how it relates to language variation (Garrett 2012). Traditionally, the lowest regarded varieties of English in the United Kingdom have been regional dialects that are in turn associated with the working class, pointing toward an ideology of valuing higher-class language over working-class language. For example, for decades, Birmingham has been the most harshly judged of regional UK dialects (Garrett 2012; Sharma et al. 2019). As the United Kingdom has become home to more and more people of non-white British backgrounds, however, including (but not limited to) speakers of languages other than English (Fox and Torgersen 2018), there is a shift toward negative evaluations of English associated with race rather than—or, more accurately—in addition to social class. For example, a recent study (Sharma et al. 2019) testing five different varieties of UK English showed that the most harshly judged was Multicultural London English (Cheshire et al. 2011), a working-class variety in London characterized by a majority of foreign-born and non-white speakers of English. MLE was the only of the five varieties tested that was marked for race, ethnicity and region, rather than just region—a strong indicator of intersectionality (see other chapters in this volume).

Race has long been a deciding factor in the social evaluations of English in the United States (Lippi-Green 2012; Rosa 2018), while the corresponding factor in the United Kingdom has traditionally been social class. Increasingly, these previous distinctions come to overlap, as socioeconomic class divisions correspond more and more with racial, ethnic and immigrant background (Lippi-Green 2012; Peterson 2020). It would be remiss to assume that judgments about how English relates to class and ethnicity do not carry over into foreign-language environments. Indeed, as demonstrated later in this chapter, the very decision to persist with the teaching of standardized "white" English as a target model in foreign language environments is rife with colonialism and elitism (Ramjattan 2019).

English Language in Finland

A 2012 EU Barometer survey asked EU citizens the question: "What languages do you speak well enough to have a conversation?" (European Commission 2012). The outcome shows that citizens of the Nordic countries and the Netherlands claim to have much higher capability in English than other countries in the European Union. The population of the Netherlands claimed nearly

as high a level of proficiency as the United Kingdom: 90 percent compared to 95+ percent. In Denmark and Sweden, 86 percent of those polled said they could have a conversation in English. In Finland, 70 percent of respondents claimed they could have a conversation in English. As mentioned by Buschfeld (2019: 569), making such a claim on a survey tells something about current sociolinguistic realities in the European Union and the status and roles of English worldwide. What has happened in these countries to lead an overwhelming majority of the population to lay claim to English? And, importantly for this chapter, what ideologies or stances are being enacted or drawn upon to say "yes"?

The first explanation is a historical and demographic one: how have people in the Nordic countries and the Netherlands become so good at English? This question has been addressed many times, and is summarized, for example (specifically with regard to the Netherlands), in Alison Edwards and Philip Seargeant's work (2019). In short, in these countries there has been a combination of formal schooling in English, starting in the early years of basic education (and with increasing bilingual education at even younger ages), higher education use of and instruction in English, and subtitling rather than dubbing of television and foreign films.

Other explanations that have been advanced include the relatively small populations of these countries, their geographical location and the fact that they tend to be countries in which Germanic languages, genetically close to English, are spoken. A puzzling aspect is that any and all of these explanations can be countered. For example, equally small populations in Europe do not exhibit such a level of proficiency in English. Finnish is not a Germanic language, and yet Finland boasts proficiency on a par with countries where the majority language is Germanic. Equally educated populations do not exhibit high proficiency in English—and so on.

In contemporary Finland, there are multiple ideologies about English and how it relates to the national languages, Finnish and Swedish. One example is the "success of English in Finland" story, which in popular discourse is often presented with Finland as an active agent in procuring high proficiency in English as a measured strategy to ensure its competitiveness and viability on the world stage (see e.g. Pahta 2008). From an external perspective, however, agency can be flipped or at least seen as a mutual endeavor, also on the part of the UK and US governments. That is, in conjunction with the end of the Second World War, there was a concerted effort from both the United States and the United Kingdom to spread English-language learning in different global settings.

The Spread of English in Foreign Language Environments

The post-Second World War period was a time of significant growth for the English language (Edwards and Seargeant 2019; see also Phillipson 1992).

English was the "language of the liberators, the money providers and progress" (Ridder 1995: 44; cited in Edwards and Seargeant 2019: 345). Finland was an active participant in this growth spurt for English-language learning. In the fieldwork for my PhD dissertation (Peterson 2004), conducted in Helsinki in 2000, a recently retired man told me in an emotional face-to-face interview (in English): "You don't know what is was like in Europe after the war. America was the hope of the world, and the English language was part of that hope." Up until the Second World War period, the major foreign language in Finland had been German, but naturally, after the war, the Finnish population was eager to distance itself from the language associated with Germany, Nazism and bitter losses suffered during the war. English was an obvious alternative. English was a means of Finland symbolically tying itself to countries that had a more "triumphant" history (see the definition of coloniality), especially after the Second World War. (In the case of Britain, in particular, the use of quotation marks around the word "triumphant" are used to highlight that a colonial history was part of that supposed triumph.)

Great Britain was quick to respond to the desire to learn English, not only in Finland, but throughout Europe. During this period, like in other places in Europe, English-language classes were introduced through the British Council. English came to Finland in the late 1940s (see e.g. the memoir of Diana Webster, who came to Finland as an English teacher in 1952; Webster 2013). As early as the 1930s, Great Britain considered English to be a tool for fighting fascism, as seen in this quote from the Prince of Wales (later Edward VIII), cited in Alastair Pennycook (2017), from the 1935 inauguration of the British Council:

> The basis of our work must be the English language … [and] we are aiming at something more profound than just a smattering of our tongue. Our object is to assist the largest number possible to appreciate fully the glories of our literature, our contribution to the arts and sciences, and our pre-eminent contribution to political practice. This can be best achieved by promoting the study of our language abroad. (White 1965, cited in Pennycook 2017, ebook)

It is difficult to interpret this quotation as anything but nationalist—and indeed, this was the apparent, unapologetic intention. The "object" "to assist the largest number possible" can be seen as similar in intention to the language policy enacted, for example, through the famous Monroe Doctrine in colonized territories such as India.

Indeed, the success of the propagation of English-language learning by the British Council and other organizations, even today, is staggering. For places like Great Britain and the United States, the benefits are clear: there is no mystery as to why a country would want "its" language to serve the purpose of a global lingua franca. Such countries reap enormous benefits from the fact

that global business, politics, shared culture and knowledge are all in the language used by the majority of its own population (as outlined e.g. in Pennycook 2017). These factors bring "very real economic and political advantages to the promoters of [the spread of English]" (Pennycook 2017, ebook). Ingrid Piller writes: "Investing in global English means investing in teachers, teacher trainers, materials, and instructional technology originating primarily from Anglophone center countries, constituting in effect a financial flow from periphery to center" (Piller 2016, ebook). Piller cites studies showing that Ireland and the United Kingdom benefited from Continental Europe to the tune of €16–17 billion per year because of the dominance of English, and the US economy saves up to US $19 billion per year by not needing to spend time and effort learning or using other languages.

In summary, the aims and ideologies driving the widespread adoption of English in Finland were a concerted effort for globalization and Westernization, along with an element of symbolic power through language (Bourdieu 1977), English being the language of the victors.

Coloniality and English

Against the backdrop presented in this chapter so far, the next step is to make use of the framework supplied by Buschfeld and Kautzsch (2017), which in turn is based on the foundational work of Schneider's Dynamic Model (2003; 2007). These models are used to assess the situation in Finland with regard to the use of English, as well as offering a lens through which to observe the major themes of this volume: whiteness, Finnishness and coloniality.

Several of the five subcategories of the EIF model are, for the purposes of this chapter, relatively straightforward and do not merit in-depth scrutiny. For example, as described in the third section of this chapter, English was introduced to Finland through a combination of intra- and extraterritorial forces. Thus, phase 1 of the model, *colonization or attitudes toward colonizing power*, can be described in Finland as a concerted effort by the organizations such as the British Council, complemented by the strong desire in Finland's public and private sectors to promote the English language. Although English had been taught and used as a foreign language prior to the Second World War, it was the end of the Second World War era that brought English into Finland as a strong foreign language, growing steadily until the 1970s and reaching its current climax in approximately the 1990s and 2000s (Leppänen, Nikula and Kääntä 2008). Thus, in line with the EIF model, the foundational introduction of English began in the 1940s, not through colonization, but through its widespread adoption as a foreign language.

Another subcategory of the model is *globalization or "acceptance" of globalization*. While this might seem a rather straightforward criterion, in many settings it is not. For example, as pointed out by Buschfeld and Kautzsch, there

are contexts where openness to forms of media and, in connection, English, is proscribed by the state, for example, North Korea, China and Turkey (Buschfeld and Kautzsch 2017: 214). In the case of Finland, the globalization phase, like the foundational phase, can be viewed as both an intra- and extra-influence. This is because Finland "finds expression in, for example, linguistic and also cultural influences coming from the Internet, US popular culture, and modern media as well as trading relations between countries," while at the same time offering an openness to accepting and not limiting access to these influences (ibid.).

A further subcategory introduced but not taken up at length is *foreign policies*. In short, this subcategory accounts for allies, opponents and diplomatic relations, a negotiation between extra- and inter-territorial influences.

It is the EIF subcategories *language policies / language attitudes* and *sociodemographic background* that are most applicable to the questions laid out in this chapter, and these concepts are explored here in light of the chapter's main aims of exploring the relationship between the English language and whiteness, Finnishness and coloniality.

Language Policies and Language Attitudes

The second phase or component of the EIF model concerns language policies and language attitudes. The EIF model builds on the foundation laid by Schneider's Dynamic Model and considers at all stages the influences of both internal and external forces. With regard to the language policies and attitude phase of the EIF model, this means that policies and attitudes can be influenced by a number of sources stemming from extra- and intra-territorial influences.

From the foundational stage, English in Finland has been exonormative (according to criteria from Schneider's Dynamic Model), meaning that norms of correctness and the overall target were prescribed according to the model of an external example, namely British English (more specifically, Standardized Southern British English). In Europe it is not unusual to adopt ideologies about English that are characteristic of native-speaking settings, namely those relating to class and elitism. That is, the social value placed on the use of English mirrors those found in native-speaking environments (Piller 2016).

The newspaper article used to begin this chapter is an example of an exonormative criterion for evaluating the use of English. The report stated that Kulmuni used "British English," which presumably means Received Pronunciation, defined in the second section of this chapter as the variety of English most closely associated with overt, elite prestige in the United Kingdom. Further examples of exonormative criteria are to be found in other public settings. For example, I routinely query English majors at the university (as part of a course on language attitudes) about which variety of English they use,

compared to which variety they would like to speak. Most recently (in 2020), among 97 students who were asked in an anonymous survey "What variety of English do you speak?" the largest proportion, 37 of them, reported that they speak American English. However, out of the same students, a majority (43 students) reported that they would like to speak British English.[3] The fact that the students responding to this survey were English majors is not particularly revealing; that is, it is not surprising that most of these English students have internalized the ideologies about the English language that surround them, as demonstrated earlier in this chapter.

This finding concerning the desirability of British English is in conflict with what Finnish students are taught in the current era. According to the latest English-language curriculum, Finnish students today are exposed to a range of different English accents in their English classes. However, it is still the case that the two main global target varieties, standardized Southern British and US English, are the most familiar and apparently the most admired. Additionally, there are differences in how these two varieties are perceived and situated. Research has shown that "American English," while lacking the overall social prestige of "British English," is more associated with leisure activities, bottom-up learning and personal use of English. For some Finnish people today, particularly younger people, "British English" seems to be associated with the formal setting of the classroom (see Peterson 2020).

Another example of an exonormative orientation, also from the university setting, concerns the language requirements for international MA and PhD students to Finnish universities. A forthcoming examination of language policy documents and language requirements (Peterson and Hall, forthcoming) from Nordic universities shows that the core exemptions for English medium programs across Nordic universities are citizens of Australia, English-speaking Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States. Other language-related exemptions vary widely from country to country, but these six nations, in addition to Nordic citizens who have schooling in English and/or an appropriate level of English, are those who are admitted to degree programs without having to demonstrate proficiency in English through a standardized test such as the TOEFL.

These examples prompt interesting questions relating to coloniality. As explained by Edwards and Seargeant (2019: 347), overt attitudes about how English "should" be spoken are often "firmly exonormatively oriented," meaning the ideologies are coming from places such as Britain and the United States, not developed internally within the recipient English-speaking community. With this observation in mind, it is not surprising that exonormative criteria would be applied in settings such as politics, professional media and universities, as they are highly visible and influential functions within a society. At the same time, however, it is noteworthy, perhaps even surprising, to observe the wholesale adoption of views about language, social class and access

to power that are apparently played along with as part of high-stakes participation in realms such as higher education. While in some ways adherence to accepted norms may seem logical or even unavoidable, the use of English in other locations around the world tells us this does not need to be the case. That is, it is possible to use English in various contexts without reinforcing aspects of coloniality.

Another possible outcome is *endonormativity*, a component of what Schneider (2007) refers to as stabilization. Endonormative stabilization is the fourth stage of his Dynamic Model, occurring when a post-colonial territory has established its own norms of use of English that no longer look outward to the colonizer to provide a model. Notwithstanding inner-territory variation, contemporary examples include places such as the United States, Australia and India. For non-postcolonial English settings, however, Buschfeld and Kautzsch (2017) note that it is rare and even unattested to undergo stabilization of English. This is due to a number of factors, such as the adoption of the ideologies present, for example, in language teaching materials, and also because access to English-language media and attitudes reinforce exonormative perspectives (ibid.: 118).

A plausible explanation for why English is not likely to develop endonormative status in Finland in the foreseeable future stems from the fact that English tends to be used within only specific domains for internal purposes (e.g. online gaming) or for external purposes with people who do not share a mother tongue. For example, Anna Mauranen (2012) points out that it would be odd in everyday circumstances for Finnish people to speak English with one another. In the absence of such internal usages, an endonormative variety does not have the right conditions to emerge. The closest parallel to something endonormative in Finland is what Mauranen calls a *similect*, or in other words a manner of speaking English in which traces of the speaker's first language are apparent. It is critical to note that in a foreign language context such as Finland, the boundary between features of language learning and nativization is blurred, and one of the central concerns becomes distinguishing English endonormativity from settings such as Nigeria or India, for example. The closest equivalent to endonormative English in Finland is a style often (disparagingly) characterized as *ralli*enˈglanti "rally English," as discussed in the introduction to this chapter. While it is possible to find positive assessments of this style of English, the most common perception is likely in line with that revealed in the *Helsingin Sanomat* article: that "rally English" is something to be ashamed of. This observation earns backing from the survey administered to students of English at the University of Helsinki: in response to the question "What variety of English would you *like* to speak?" no one out of nearly 100 students chose "Finnish English."

The linguist Peter Trudgill has noted on several occasions that it is "perfectly normal" for people to speak English in a way that reflects where they come from, and this assessment naturally extends to non-native speakers as well. The

fact that it can be considered shameful to sound Finnish when one is, in fact, Finnish, raises numerous questions about language rights, access to language and language attitudes (Trudgill 2016; see also Peterson 2020). In a previous analysis of ideologies of English in Finland, Sirpa Leppänen and Päivi Pahta (2012: 163) reflect on the complexities of proficiency in English: on the one hand, it indexes "elite, expert status," while on the other it indexes the "vulgarity and low social class of its speakers".

In addition to exonormativity and endonormativity, a third possible outcome not explicitly mentioned in either the Dynamic Model (Schneider 2007) or in the EIF (Buschfeld and Kautzsch 2017) is that English is a neutral entity. In this type of outcome, English would be a commonplace communication tool that functions simply as such. This is an idealized—and probably an unattainable—outcome for any language, even one that serves as a lingua franca. Language never exists in a vacuum; it always reflects and simultaneously contributes to the social capital of those who use it (Bourdieu 1977).

For a language to be considered neutral implies an accessibility to everyone in a given population, as well as uniform distribution among all users. This is rarely, if ever, the case. Language is a complex communication tool that, among other things, reflects and contributes to social inclusion and exclusion. Even in a monolingual community, language reflects social divisions. A foreign language is no exception. In Finland, for example, English is available to some, but not all (Blommaert Leppänen, Pahta and Räisänen 2012). Exceptions to the common wisdom that "everyone speaks English" include older generations, people in lower socioeconomic categories and people from non-Finnish backgrounds. Even among younger generations, who at this point in time are the population most exposed to and proficient in English, there are exceptions based on issues such as region and social class (Finnish National Board of Education 2015; Leppänen 2008). These observations offer a transition into the final subcategory in the EIF Model, *sociodemographic background*.

Sociodemographic Background

The final subcategory of the EIF model relates to, in the words of the authors, the overall number of inhabitants of a territory, the overall number and ethnic distribution of immigrants, and age distribution (Buschfeld and Kautzsch 2017: 114–15), among other factors. The authors also note the well-recognized role of younger people in many settings as purveyors of English.

The properties of this subcategory are especially insightful in a setting like Finland. As mentioned previously in this chapter, a majority of the overall population in Finland reports having at least conversational skills in English. This fact alone raises questions for further introspection. For example, if "most people" speak English, what does this reality mean for those who do not? Paradoxically, if the common wisdom is that "everyone speaks English," is someone

who does not speak English somehow less Finnish than those who do? All other factors being equal, does someone who speaks English, especially an exonormative model of English, have more access to social capital in Finland than someone who does not? Returning to the themes of Finnishness, whiteness and coloniality, these issues carry extra layers of meaning, at their core exposing either incidental or purposeful adherence to language norms rooted in white supremacy, social class distinctions and exploitation.

At a finer-grain level, demographic division in the use of English shows further disparities (e.g. across region and age groups). To date, the most comprehensive study on the English language in Finland is a written survey conducted in the first decade of this century (Leppänen, Nikula and Kääntä 2008). This large-scale survey, with responses from 1,495 people in Finland, showed that English tends to be more commonly used by younger people in relatively more urban areas. In fact, there was a distinct difference, with respondents living in cities claiming a much higher proficiency in English than respondents living in rural areas. The consequences of an urban/rural and age divide between those who speak English and those who do not is effectively captured in an ethnographic study of a married Finnish couple in their 90s who lived in southwest Finland (Pitkänen-Huhta and Hujo 2012). The couple, who the authors called Aino and Erkki, are shown to demonstrate evidence of a lack of self-respect and marginalization related to their (lack of) multilingualism.

In addition to highlighting region and age, there is also a relationship between socioeconomic status and proficiency in English. It is worth noting that in the most urbanized region of Finland, the greater Helsinki area, a report by the newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat* shows a relationship between high socioeconomic class neighborhoods and the number of residents who speak English as a mother tongue.[4] As highlighted in other chapters in this volume, other regions in urban Helsinki are associated more with foreign languages such as Somali, Arabic and Russian.

In the history of the English language in Great Britain, a well-documented shift in the use of English regional dialects occurred in large part due to the Education Act in England and Wales in 1870 (Hughes, Trudgill and Watt 2012). Up until 1870, only the wealthier and more privileged families could afford to send their children to school. When education became available for everyone, a consequence was that richer families sent their children to private schools, where they contributed to the development of the now-famous upper-class accent, RP (see above), which is still in evidence today. That is, when education became available for everyone, the upper class sought out a way to further distinguish themselves symbolically through language (Bourdieu 1977).

It is interesting to note a somewhat comparable phenomenon in Finland with regard to proficiency English. After the Second World War era, it became socially prestigious in Finland to be proficient in English (see Pahta 2008). Being proficient in English was at the time reserved primarily for the highly

educated, globally oriented people who could afford and participate in such a lifestyle. As the number of proficient English speakers in Finland has risen, it appears that the stakes have become higher in symbolizing the same level of social capital as a few decades ago. For some, it is no longer enough to be just proficient in English; one has to prove "native-like" proficiency and "native-like" attitudes and language awareness—the same styles considered the most prestigious in native-speaking settings are likewise considered the most elite in Finland. It would be of great interest to conduct research on the ideologies surrounding English-language medium schools in Finland. It is telling, but also a consequence of Finland's social welfare system, that private and tuition-based schools in Finland are also English-medium schools. In fact, the majority of private schools in Finland are English-medium schools, with a smaller number of private schools having foreign languages such as French, German and Russian as the medium of instruction. Connected to the ideologies about English-medium schools is the equally fascinating occurrence of Finnish-speaking parents choosing to use English as a family language with their own children. This phenomenon is attested in other countries (see Piller 2016), but appears to be under-investigated in the Finnish context.

As a final note, recent research in Finland (Koskela 2020) addresses the question of integration of skilled and unskilled workers in Finland, including with regard to language. Without question, language is a key factor in integration, as found also in other settings (see e.g. Baran 2017 regarding the United States; Sharma et al. 2019 regarding the United Kingdom). Through an ethnographic study amounting to hundreds of participants, Koskela found that while skilled migrants to Finland experience the same racialized attitudes and stereotypes as other migrants, the white skilled migrants in fact enjoy relative ease compared to other migrants who are non-Western, non-skilled and non-privileged. While the study did not have an explicit aim of studying language, an overall finding was that highly skilled workers who spoke English were afforded exemption from learning Finnish in a way that unskilled workers were not.

A consequence of the attitudes about the English and the demographic properties described in this chapter is that certain disadvantaged segments of the overall population are excluded from the benefits that come with proficiency in English. These populations, as described here, include older people, those in rural areas and certain immigrant groups, in some cases coinciding with a lower socioeconomic status. It is fascinating but also disheartening to chronicle the cycle of disadvantage, if not outright exploitation, related to the English language and carried over into a new setting. As a foreign language setting of English, Finland would presumably have choices regarding the use of English, choices that would not need to perpetuate and mirror the disadvantages inherent to English in native-speaking environments.

In an earlier work (Peterson 2020), I described the relative freedom of individual speakers of English from expanding circle settings, due to the overall lack of a sociolinguistic backdrop, or what I referred to as "linguistic baggage."

I made an example of a first-language speaker of Danish who created a New York City guise of English for himself because he was willing and able to do so. The same linguistic freedom, I argued, would not necessarily be possible—or suitable—for a mother-tongue speaker of English. In light of the information presented in this chapter, I must retract or at least modify my earlier claims. That is, at the societal or overt level (see Buschfeld and Kautzsch 2017), the advantages that go along with adherence to exonormative uses of English, along with all of its ideological trappings, appear to outweigh the advantages of moving toward less divisive ideals of English.

Yet, as demonstrated here and in other sources (see e.g. Peterson 2020), the use of English in foreign-language settings is characterized by wide variability across social groups and individuals, exhibiting a full range of proficiencies and attitudes that go along with those proficiencies. Finland is no exception to this variability. In Finland, there is evidence of an exonormative idealization of English, as highlighted at the beginning of this chapter. In terms of the main themes of this volume, an exonormative idealization, borne out of the introduction of English to Finland, is on the one hand a relatable measure (i.e. "there have to be standards"), but at the same time there is no denying the fact that these attitudes, mirroring norms of correctness chiefly from Great Britain, are rooted in centuries of colonialism, exploitation and elitism. Rather than diminishing in the Finnish context, there is evidence that exclusion through English lives its own life, constituting a driving force between those who have access to social privilege through language and those who do not. Adding to the complexity, at the same time, there is evidence that English in Finland is viewed as a necessary and possibly even neutral communication tool at least to some extent, indicated by the acceptance among some of Finnish-influenced English. Yet, in official contexts, such use of English is often viewed as a source of shame and embarrassment.

Conclusions

The model utilized to explore the phenomenon of English in the Finnish context, the EIF model (Buschfeld and Kautzsch 2017) offers a suitable framework for many reasons. Chief among these is that the model applies to English-speaking territories that do not have a British colonial past. As such, the model allows for consideration of the balance between internal and external forces. In Finland, English has grown as a highly valued component part of modern life, global inclusion and all that this entails. Finnish society and public policy ensure through their openness that exonormative norms of English, for example from the United Kingdom and the United States, persist through generations of new English speakers, complemented through formal learning in the classroom. The EIF model was of particular interest to the situation in Finland with regard to language attitudes and demographics. These subcategories

allowed for further introspection into connections with coloniality and, in turn, elements of exclusion and inclusion relating to the use of English in Finland. The dominant conclusions of the investigation are that processes of coloniality relating to English, such as adherence to white, upper-class norms, are highly regarded and perpetuated in the Finnish context, in some ways creating divisions between highly proficient speakers of English and those who do not have native-like skills. While Buschfeld and Kautzsch did not explicitly address issues of coloniality in the description of their model, the model is successfully flexible enough to incorporate such a perspective.

A notable outcome of these findings is that the social realities and attitudes relating to the English language in Finland appear to operate in their own realm, distinct from the use and attitudes of Finnish. Namely, with regard to English, there are overt attitudes in evidence about how English should be used, and these attitudes mirror the class- and racially/ethnically based distinctions found in native-speaking settings. A key ideology in the Nordic countries in general, including Finland, is social equality, and this ideology extends to languages (Mooney and Evans 2015; Keskinen 2019; see also this volume). Indeed, it is likely even a social taboo to openly discuss issues such as race, ethnicity and class distinctions in relation to Finnish language—although immigrant Finnish seems to be another story. The information in this chapter suggests that further investigations of the relationship between social divisions and the use of English are well warranted in the context of Finland.

As described in this chapter, a recognized outcome of English use in postcolonial settings is a movement toward endonormativity and differentiation (Schneider 2007). In Finland, English has now been the most taught and widely used foreign language for some 70 years. During these decades of use, overall proficiency has increased, with the result today that the majority of Finns claim they can have a conversation in English. In postcolonial settings, the likely expectation is that with proficiency and increased everyday use, English becomes localized. However, in Finland, a non-postcolonial setting, the outcome is different—and, as expected, it is highly variable across the overall population. In some ways, as overall proficiency in English has increased, so have expectations about how English should be spoken; if "everyone" speaks English, then it becomes necessary to distinguish one's own English through ever-increasing native-like proficiency. By applauding and upholding these norms in the Finnish context, the Finnish population—perhaps innocently and unknowingly—perpetuates the injustices of a colonial past that they do not share. Such an outcome is at odds with a society that supposedly idealizes values of equality and lack of social distinctions among its population. Rather than English becoming a communication tool for practical purposes in Finland, it instead appears in some ways to be more accurately described as a tool for perpetuating inequality.

It is interesting to observe that the same kinds of survey results applying to proficiency in English are mirrored in world "happiness" ratings. That is,

the Nordic countries are routinely ranked the "happiest" in the world, with Finland being the top-ranked "happy" for a fourth year in a row (Helliwell et al. 2021). In recent years, there have been many accounts, both critical and positive, explaining this phenomenon (for an overview, see Levisen 2012). While there is no obvious link between being proficient in English and being "happy," the common link between these two phenomena seems to be the social welfare system in the Nordic countries, and the related value placed on public education. So-called "Nordic exceptionalism," as described in the World Happiness report, is linked closely with education, which is in turn linked to proficiency in English as a component part of public education.

A challenge arises with regard to English-language education and use in Finland. Is it possible for Finnish society to make use of the benefits of English without being complicit in the perpetuation of English as a tool of inequality and exclusion? As described in Keskinen (2019), Finland is not exempt from participation in colonialism. The evidence presented in this chapter demonstrates that, likewise, Finland is not innocent when it comes to linguistic inequity with relation to English.

Notes

[1] The original headline and subheadline in Finnish were: *Katri Kulmunin ihastuttava brittienglanti loksautti leuat somessa—kysyimme kielentutkijoilta, olisiko hän ylä- vai alaluokkainen britti. Twitterissä ihastellaan jälleen Katri Kulmunin brittienglantia. Kielitieteilijän mukaan Kulmunin kielitaito on lähes syntyperäisen tasolla—ja raoista pilkistävä suomalaisuuskin on vain eduksi*. Translation by the author.

[2] Already in 2008, Finnish researchers published an article titled "Englannin merkitys muutoksessa: englanti ei ole suomalaisille enää vieras kieli" ["The Changing Significance of English: English Is No Longer a Foreign Language to Finns"] (Leppänen and Nikula 2008).

[3] A breakdown of the results of this poll are as follows: What English do you speak? British English 18/97; American English 37/97; Finnish English 17/97; Other/I don't know 25/97. What English would you "like" to speak? British English 43/96; American English 36/96; Finnish English 0/96; Other/I don't know: 17/96. Survey participants selected an option from four answers; there were no free-form responses.

[4] *Helsingin Sanomat*. "Satatuhatta helsinkiläistä." July 3, 2020, https://dynamic.hs.fi/a/2020/helsinginkielet/.

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CHAPTER 11

All I See Is White

The Colonial Problem in Finland

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Abstract

The question of whiteness is inextricably linked to colonialism. This chapter considers common misconceptions of colonialism in Finland through a lens of the "Sámi problem." These misbeliefs include: colonialism is (mostly) about the past and, thus, we can only talk about "coloniality" or legacies of colonialism; colonialism is only about colonies; and the concept of colonialism is confusing, difficult or too broad to have analytical value. All of these views are frequently applied both in general terms and specifically with regard to the Sámi people. The chapter examines the ways in which the "Sámi question" is a part and parcel of bona fide colonialism, not a "separate chapter" as is frequently suggested in the Finnish discourse of colonialism. The problem of colonialism vis-à-vis the Sámi is commonly framed in terms of "internal colonialism" and thus assumed and presented (if discussed at all) as distinct from other colonial and colonization processes. This chapter suggests that a more correct understanding could be arrived at through the concept and analysis of settler colonialism, which emphasizes structural injustice and the ongoing character of colonialism. In conclusion, the chapter discusses white privilege and considers the key ways in which it plays out in Finland vis-à-vis the Sámi.

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Introduction

White is the invisible color of not only normativity, but also domination, unmarked, unacknowledged and unexamined; the enabler of the status quo that effectively veils the structures of power and denies its own complicity. It problematizes the "other," whoever that may be at a given time, and then either racializes or culturalizes this "problem." In this way, the problem is located in and constructed in terms of cultural differences or other people's cultural practices, not in racism, sexism, heteronormativity or homophobia of the dominant society. To remedy the problem, we promote cultural diversity or sensitivity training on an assumption that "with a little practice and the right information, we can all be innocent subjects, standing outside hierarchical social relations, who are not accountable for the past or implicated in the present" (Razack 1998: 9).

Culturalization frequently occurs with regard to Indigenous peoples. Rather than regarding them as existing societies with an ongoing history of political, social and legal systems of their own, they are seen merely as cultures to be recognized or celebrated in the name of diversity. Even when done unwittingly, it is not without serious consequences, as it renders Indigenous peoples into minorities and their rights as minority rights. The fundamental distinction between Indigenous and minority rights is that Indigenous peoples' rights are premised on the right to self-determination and land and resource rights due to their status as "peoples" (Eide and Daes 2000; Schulte-Tenckhoff 2012).[1] Culturalization also performs a function similar to race biology and racial science by signifying the inferiority of the other. It is a practice that underpins "an important epistemological cornerstone of imperialism: the colonized possess a series of knowable characteristics and can be studied, known, and managed accordingly by the colonizers whose own complicity remains masked" (Razack 1998: 10).

From the position of whiteness, there are a number of problems in Finland, one of which is the "Sámi problem."[2] The problem is not solved or diminished by the reality that at times the Sámi are viewed as the "white Indians" of Europe and met with deep suspicion by other Indigenous peoples due to their "white looks" (Kuokkanen 2006). Notwithstanding our light complexion and location in Europe, "the belly of the beast," the Sámi as a people are not in the position of normativity or domination. One of the key privileges of whiteness is to be "non-raced," meaning that the racial identity of "those who occupy positions of cultural dominance" remains invisible and thus establishes the taken-for-granted norm (Moore 2012). Like other Indigenous peoples, the Sámi are racialized (incorrectly) as an "ethnic minority." The racialization of the Sámi

has a long history and runs deep in science which, for decades from the late 19th to the early 20th centuries, sought to prove the Sámi as part of the "Mongoloid race" and, hence, inferior on all counts (Broberg 1995; Isaksson 2001; Kyllingstad 2012; Schanche 2000).

In short, the Sámi are not and cannot be considered white, no matter how some individual Sámi may feel (see Dankertsen 2019). Scholars have described the discrepancy between personal identification and externally ascribed racial identity as "race discordance" (Pirtle and Brown 2016) and consider instances of "race refusal" where individuals refuse the identity to which they are attributed (Kowal and Paradies 2017).[3] As an example, some light-skinned Indigenous people in Australia refuse a white identity because they consider themselves Indigenous. By doing so, they also refuse to disappear as Indigenous people and, consequently, this refusal becomes a political act (ibid.). At the same time, we need to recognize and acknowledge how the "white" Sámi (like other light-skinned Indigenous people) can and do benefit from some aspects of white privilege as they can pass as white and avoid being targets of racism on the basis of their skin color (cf. Dawkins 2012). Equally importantly, this does not mean the Sámi are free from racist attacks or state racism (see Åhrén 2001; Alajärvi 2015; Allard et al. 2015; Eira 2018; Satokangas 2020).[4]

The question of whiteness is inextricably linked to colonialism. In this chapter, I consider common misconceptions of colonialism in Finland through a lens of the "Sámi problem." These misbeliefs include: colonialism is (mostly) about the past and, thus, we can only talk about "coloniality" or legacies of colonialism; colonialism is only about colonies; and that the concept of colonialism is confusing, difficult or too broad to have analytical value.[5] All of these views are frequently applied both in general terms and specifically with regard to the Sámi people. The overarching goal of this chapter is to demonstrate how the "Sámi question" is part and parcel of bona fide colonialism, not a "separate chapter" as is frequently suggested in the Finnish discourse of colonialism. The Sámi, like other Indigenous peoples, "have been subject to similar processes of territorial conquest and colonization as overseas colonies" (cf. Kymlicka 2001: 123). The problem of colonialism vis-à-vis the Sámi is regularly framed in terms of "internal colonialism" and thus assumed and presented (if discussed at all) as distinct from other colonial and colonization processes. Whether this is done in order to avoid addressing one's own messy backyard or because of scholarly sloppiness, it is incorrect to suggest—whether explicitly or implicitly through the omission of the Sámi from the discussion altogether—that the "Sámi question" is somehow divorced or different from standard discussions of colonialism. As this chapter shows, there is no "internal colonialism" that is separate from colonialism proper. At the end of the chapter, I return to the question of white privilege and consider key ways in which it plays out in Finland vis-à-vis the Sámi.

Colonization, Finland and the Scramble for Sápmi

While it is true that colonialism is a multifaceted and challenging concept, it cannot be a justification for academics to evade or dismiss it. Given its complexity, it might be useful to consider colonialism as a foundational concept that encompasses many distinct (yet often intersecting) processes and structures at multiple levels and spheres. Failing to acknowledge the complexity of the concept distorts the underlying character of colonialism which, at best, distorts the reality and, at worst, erases the experiences—sometimes very traumatic and violent—of the colonized.

Obviously, there are many ways to approach the complexity of the concept. In the classroom, I begin to unpack colonialism with the help of a chart that shows how "colonialism" at the most general level consists of two main strands, classic colonialism and settler colonialism, and, in addition, is closely linked to imperialism and capitalism. Both colonialism and imperialism pivot on control and subjugation of other peoples and territories and are driven by capitalist interests. As economic enterprises, they both historically drove the development of capitalism. To establish a crude distinction between colonialism and imperialism, the former is about exploitation and occupation of remote or overseas territories and peoples (colonization), and the latter is about global geopolitics and political and economic control of other regions. Volumes have been written about the complex relationships between colonialism, imperialism and capitalism, and there is no unanimity on definitions of the terms or what specifically distinguishes one from the others (see e.g. Cesaire 1972; Lenin 1948; Said 1993; Wallerstein 1974; Young 2015).

In Finland, the focus has been almost exclusively on so-called classic colonialism, even though it is usually discussed without the prefix "classic"—which most likely explains at least in part the conflation of classic colonialism with the entire colonial project.[6] Classic colonialism signifies a relation of external domination by a minority over a native majority population, governed from a distant imperial center. Typically, it refers to the establishment of colonies in the name of exploiting the region's natural and human resources (slavery) for the accumulation of wealth and prosperity in the imperial centre located in Europe. In most cases, colonies were located in distant regions from Europe, separated from the colonial centre by an ocean (the Americas, Asia and Africa). The question of geographical separation of the colonies became critical during the formal decolonization era in the postwar years, when the United Nations began deliberating self-determination of peoples in colonized territories. Two major competing doctrines were debated. The Belgian thesis advocated self-determination for all colonized peoples, including Indigenous peoples in the United States. In opposition to the Belgian thesis, the blue water thesis favored a more limited approach, arguing that only territories that are separated from the colonizing country by "blue water" (or "salt

water," i.e. sea) are eligible for decolonization, which in this context implied formal political independence (Anaya 1996; Lâm 2000). Alas, the blue water thesis prevailed, which likely explains at least partly the excessive focus on colonies when discussing colonialism in general and, specifically, whether or not a country such as Finland engaged in colonialism in Africa, Russia or Asia, for example.

Classic colonialism started in the 16th century out of the crisis of mercantilism in Europe and when Latin America was divided between Spain and Portugal after the crusades. The second phase of colonialism began at the end of the 19th century, when European empires began competing over acquiring colonies. Called the age of New Imperialism, the period from 1870 to 1914 saw events such as the Berlin Conference in 1884–85, where the rules of colonial expansion in Africa were agreed upon between European countries, followed by the subsequent Scramble for Africa. Colonialism was advanced also by a range of state institutions, most centrally the church and education system. The colonization process and subjugation of peoples outside Europe was justified in a number of ways, one being the "White man's burden," according to which it was the duty and responsibility of the European "superior race" to bring civilization, culture and religion to the rest of the world and, in this way, to save the "dark races" from themselves and their primitive habits (cf. Kipling 1899). Missionaries traveled around the globe preaching God's word, from Latin America and Africa to the Arctic, often with disastrous consequences of eradicating existing religions, languages and social and cultural practices (Deloria 1969; Jennings 2010; Pakenham 1991).

The Scramble for Sápmi, its territories and resources began in earnest during the first phase of global colonialism. In the 16th century, the surrounding kingdoms of Sweden, Denmark and Novgorod (Russia) started more systematically competing over the control of the Sámi territory, which had been vied for by its neighbors for its land and resources (initially mainly furs) already in the early Middle Ages. Sápmi became a war zone between the Nordic kingdoms and the Czar state of Novgorod in the 13th to 14th centuries, and in 1326 Denmark and Novgorod agreed to unilaterally (without consulting the Sámi) expropriate a "common tax area" where both kingdoms were "allowed" to collect taxes from the Sámi in the form of furs (Solbakk 1994).[7]

In addition to extracting wealth from Sápmi to the crown, taxation was seen as the main means of claiming ownership over a certain Sámi territory. The Sámi siidas (autonomous communities) were levied taxes, some siidas bearing the brunt of double or even triple taxation, which greatly impoverished some individuals and communities. The multiple taxation continued until the 1751 Strömstad Peace Accord between Denmark and Sweden, when one of the oldest political borders in Europe was imposed (Bergsland 2004; Müller-Wille and Aikio 2005). The conflict in and competition over Sápmi further intensified in the 19th century, resulting in new border closures with devastating

consequences to many Sámi families and siidas, including forced migration and loss of livelihood (see Lehtola 2002).

Another central means of colonization of Sápmi occurred through the institution of Christianity, as establishing missions was viewed as an effective way to consolidate nation-building. The earliest churches were built on the coastal areas as early as the 13th century and in the 14th century the Danish-Norwegian crown passed a decree granting smaller fees for criminal charges for Christianized Sámi. The Christian influence among the Sámi remained limited until the 17th century, when the competition over Sápmi by surrounding kingdoms was at its peak (Solbakk 2000).

Sometimes the debate in Finland revolves around the question of the colonial agent—can we discuss colonialism if it was not practiced by a nation-state? Can Finland be implicated in colonialism before acquiring independence in 1917? Notwithstanding the close connection between the nation-state and colonialism, colonialism was practiced also by others, particularly by trading companies (the most well known globally being the Hudson's Bay Company in Canada and the East India Company in Southeast Asia). Countless Finns participated and were complicit in the colonial enterprise, including conquest and war, trade, and the establishment of colonies and missions. Some scholars emphasize how Finns cannot take solace with the fact that Finland was not a colonial power, given how the country is firmly part of and has greatly benefited from the Western, capitalist economic order. Simply put, Finland did not need colonies in order to reap the rewards of the colonial system (Keskinen 2019; Kujala 2019).

In the age of New Imperialism, Finland (at the time, the Grand Duchy of the Russian Empire) did not formally participate in the Scramble for Africa. This is often cited in public discourse as evidence that there was no colonialism in Finland (in addition to citing the history of Finland as "colonized," first by the Kingdom of Sweden, and later by the Russian Empire). Scholars and others have suggested that due to the absence of colonies, Finnish colonialism has been informal. Yet, there was a prevailing dream of acquiring a colony in Africa, notably in the Ovambo region in Northern Namibia, where Finnish missionaries were particularly active since the establishment of the first missions in the 1870s (Löytty 2006; Mäkinen 2015; Raiskio 1997).

In the 19th century, Finnish missionaries operated both in Africa and Sápmi, converting and civilizing heathens who were not considered fully human. In Sápmi, this implied eradicating the Sámi "religion" (which in fact was a land-centered worldview with its specific practices of living in good relation with the non-human world), stealing or burning Sámi drums and convicting Sámi noaidis or spiritual leaders (e.g. Solbakk 2002).[8] 19th-century Europe also witnessed the rise of romantic nationalism, an ideology that grew out of imperialism that sought to consolidate the nation under one "race," culture and language, and bolstered claims of primacy and racial superiority. In establishing the unity of language, culture and ethnicity of a nation, "foreign elements" of

the nation were to be eliminated. A potent tool in this regard was the education system, which, for example in Norway, was seen as "the battlefield and teachers as frontline soldiers" (Niemi 1997: 268).[9] The Sámi were to be assimilated into the majority society "in language, culture, and in their overall view of themselves" (Todal 1999: 127; see also Lehtola 1994; Minde 2005).

Even though Finland never had formal colonies, there is a fairly common view that the northernmost part of Finland—the Sámi territory and the region of Lapland more broadly—has been and still is a colony (e.g. Kojo 1981; Tamminen 2020). Historically, the concept of Lapland has been highly indeterminate and applied inconsistently to refer to the Sámi territory or the administrative area that was part of larger region (Paasi 1986). Also 18th- and 19th-century geography textbooks both in Finland and Sweden displayed an ambiguous relationship between Lapland and Finland. As an example, a well-known 1794 Swedish textbook suggests that Finland ends at the southern border of Lapland (Isaksson 2001: 190). Today, Lapland denotes the northernmost (and by far largest) region of Finland. Yet, prior to 1809, it did not belong to Finland administratively and it received a provincial status in Finnish cartography only in the 1910s (Paasi 1986).

Knowledge Production, Colonialism and Whitewashing in Research

Colonialism is premised on the persistent reproduction of mutually exclusive hierarchies in which the dominant group maintains its superiority (Balandier 1966; Osterhammel 1997). Science and scholarly disciplines have greatly contributed in establishing these hierarchies. Early philosophers created theories and deliberately advanced culturally specific assumptions about other than Western social, political and cultural institutions such as property, land ownership and society and, thus, legitimized colonial expansion and control. Particularly John Locke's views of property, political society and uncultivated land being open to acquisition played a pivotal role in justifying the takeover of Indigenous territories. Locke's arguments were taken up by Emeric de Vattel, who argued that agriculture and political society with laws (as understood and practiced by European imperial powers) were a precondition for sovereignty and nationhood in international law (see Tully 1993).

With regard to academic disciplines, particularly anthropology and geography have long been criticized for being handmaidens of colonialism. In his seminal *Custer Died for Your Sins*, late Vine Deloria, Jr. lambasted anthropologists for their objectification of Native American societies, employing them as living laboratories to advance academic careers and contributing to detrimental policy and decision-making and the loss of Native American identity (Deloria 1969). Anthropology's problematic legacy as the study of the other and their primitive societies, often in the service of colonial endeavors, has

been widely debated since (e.g. Biolsi and Zimmerman 1997; Clifford and Marcus 1986; Geertz 1973; Kuper 1988; Trinh 1989). Geography's complicity in colonialism is perhaps most evident in its practices of mapping and surveying, through which colonial relations of space were established and naturalized, but also providing methods for practices of exploration and colonization (Heffernan 2003; Hudson 1977; Morrissey 2003).

In spite of growing recognition and critical reflection, scientific concepts and theories continue to reflect Eurocentric biases, exclusions and practices of dispossession, thus impacting contemporary research and knowledge production (Said 1978). On the whole, the function and complicity of disciplines and their knowledge production in advancing and legitimizing the colonial project is well established in critical scholarship, but is still not adequately discussed in undergraduate education (for Finland, see Hakala, Hakola and Laakso 2018).[10] Although significant headway has been made by Indigenous studies[11] and other fields critical of colonizing research and science, glaring gaps of understanding and methodological flaws remain related to Indigenous peoples in research (e.g. George, Tauri and MacDonald 2020; Smith 1999).

With regard to research involving the Sámi people, there are some major concerns that seem common in Finland and other Nordic countries. First is a version of culturalization of Indigenous peoples. There is a tendency, even in major international, collaborative research initiatives, to "whitewash" the constitutionally recognized status of Indigenous peoples and to conflate Indigenous peoples with "local communities" and/or "stakeholders." This is an approach that neglects and erases central legal and political differences between Indigenous peoples on the one hand and "local communities" or stakeholders on the other. It deliberately ignores that Indigenous peoples are self-determining polities with regard to their own affairs, including knowledge production (Kukutai and Taylor 2016; Latulippe and Klenk 2020). Indigenous peoples are rights holders with constitutionally protected status and rights *as* Indigenous peoples, most notably the right to self-determination. Further, the whitewashing approach neglects to acknowledge that "local communities" typically have a very different access to institutions, power, policy and decision-making, as well as resources, than Indigenous peoples do.[12] As a whole, their concerns, needs and voices are heard much more readily—and differently—than those of Indigenous peoples. An excerpt from a recent statement by the Sámi Council at an Arctic Council meeting illustrates this well:

> We regard that the local knowledge holders have well-developed mechanisms to impact policies and decision-making in their respective countries, we regard that the local-knowledge perspective are [sic] well taken care of in their respective countries. There are farmers unions, with local structures that unite the farmers holding local knowledge, there is the Fishermen's Association, and whom are they representing if not the local fishermen through local chapters that can impact the national

> level board that lobby the government. There are forest workers' associations and national hunter and fishers' organisations. Saami people will never achieve a majority in these organisations, except from in some small local chapters—maybe. These organisations are regarded as quite influential on National policies, in a way no Saami association have been so far. (Sámiráđđi 2018)

The second problem relates to choosing to close their eyes to colonialism and proceed as if it does not exist. Whether this oversight is due to the complexity of the colonialism or something else, such proverbial burying one's head in the sand—ignoring and refusing to think about a problem or avoiding an issue by pretending it does not exist—is slack scholarship, which surprisingly often is not called into question in public. Whatever the reason for the omission, not examining colonial relations and assuming a level playing field free of structures of power results in either misleading or unsound analysis and research results—and an issue that should also be of concern to the funding agencies. Arguing that there is a level playing field for Indigenous peoples and "local communities" and/or "other stakeholders" is an example of the discursive practices of whiteness and a move to innocence (discussed below) that conflates various experiences and historical realities of colonization (Moore 2012; Tuck and Yang 2012).

Internal Colonialism or Settler Colonialism?

Returning to the concept of colonialism as a foundational concept that encompasses many distinct though often overlapping forms, I have above considered the ways in which classic colonialism operated globally and in Finland through very similar processes. Settler colonialism, another main form of colonialism, has thus far received limited attention vis-à-vis the Sámi people either in Finland or the other Nordic countries.[13] Instead of discussing settler colonialism, colonialism in the Sámi context is typically talked about in terms of "internal colonialism" and, as such, is separated from colonialism writ large.

Internal colonialism was first discussed by early Marxist thinkers to refer to the unequal economic relations within a state. Somewhat later, it was adopted by civil rights leaders to raise questions about the segregation and deprivation of African Americans in the United States (Hicks 2004). Among the first to theorize internal colonialism in relation to classic colonialism was Cherokee anthropologist Robert K. Thomas, who argued that internal colonialism might be

> less observable, but has to a large degree the same kind of effects [as classic colonialism]. One people still specifically administers another, but by institutional relationships that are pulled out of one economic level, one community, and place in another one, although the one

> community may be part of the general overall society in which the subordinate community also exists. (Thomas 1966/1967: 38)

The concept of internal colonialism was also employed early on to discuss circumstances in Latin America (González Casanova 1963). In Canada, it was used by the Québécois and Indigenous leadership in the 1970s (Hicks 2004). For example, the Dene nation in the Northwest Territories was considered an internal colony (Watkins 1977).

The idea of internal colonialism has been criticized for reasons similar to diversity and multiculturalism approaches that culturalize Indigenous peoples. Internal colonialism theory overlooks the historical and present-day reality of Indigenous peoples as distinct peoples or nations with a right to self-determination and reduces them as a single ethnic, racial or cultural minority within the national borders (see, e.g., Kymlicka 2001). It portrays the states as multicultural nations that need to address *only* their legacies of racism, not their colonial histories and the colonial presence built in the structures and policies of the state.[14] Through these structures and policies, Indigenous peoples are constructed as minorities "with no prior claim to nation or territory" that would transcend the states' existence, right claims or unilateral imposition of sovereignty (Byrd 2011: 126).

Therefore, to examine the Indigenous experience through the lens of internal colonialism provides not only a limited but also inaccurate analysis. Although there are scholars who continue to rely on it (in the context of Sápmi, see Minnerup and Solberg 2011), in the field of Indigenous studies it has been largely replaced by the much more robust and nuanced analysis of settler colonialism. The theory and framework of settler colonialism better accounts for the contemporaneity of colonialism and the complexity of the interlocking structures and relations of power—racism, patriarchy, heteronormativity—that intersect and are mutually constructed and reinforcing.

In the settler colonial situation, the dominant group settles and unilaterally imposes its sovereignty over another jurisdiction. Obtaining the land for the purposes of establishing a new society invariably requires the elimination of Indigenous peoples and their societies through a variety of means, including extermination, assimilation, the elimination of Indigenous political and legal orders, and treaty-making (Veracini 2010; Wolfe 2006). The logic of elimination implies that Indigenous peoples are eliminated *as* Indigenous, through which their claims to their territories are extinguished. Settler colonialism is also characterized by a simultaneous and persistent drive to naturalize its ongoing existence and domesticate settlers as native. Through this naturalization, the settler colonial system becomes the taken-for-granted and self-evident background and reality for settler existence and their political and legal structures (Rifkin 2013).

The elimination of Indigenous peoples varies from outright warfare and genocide to more subtle means of assimilation through legislation and policies.

In Canada, for instance, the registration provisions of the Indian Act carefully delineate and radically restrict who counts as "legal Indian," eventually amounting to legislating Indigenous people out of existence (e.g. Palmater 2014). The elimination of Indigenous political and legal orders has occurred through banning or replacing Indigenous institutions and practices by Western ones, and categorizing them as "culture" (the most well-known examples from North America include the Potlatch and Sun Dance). Settlers came to stay, imposing their sovereignties and jurisdictions over existing ones. In Sápmi, the new property and administrative regime slowly eradicated the siida system, the traditional local Sámi governance structure, as the settlement rapidly increased in the 18th century. At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, Sámi rights and ownership were no longer upheld or recognized in official state documents, although Sámi in Finland paid taxes for their territories until 1924 (Korpijaakko 1989).

Third, treaty-making between the Crown and Indigenous nations has been a way of dispossessing Indigenous peoples of their territories and resources. Not all Indigenous peoples have negotiated and signed treaties, but in places such as present-day Canada, the United States and New Zealand, it was a common practice and, in some countries, continues today (the modern treaty or the comprehensive land claim process in Canada, the treaty process in Australia). Many historic treaties are characterized by a deep ambivalence in terms of their scope, meaning and interpretation. For Indigenous peoples, treaties typically represent sacred covenants signed between two sovereigns to share the land and resources. Many Indigenous nations signed treaties, understanding them to be peace and friendship agreements that would not change ownership or control of their traditional territories. Many describe treaties in kinship terms, emphasizing the bond of established relationships that require periodic renewal (Johnson 2007; Venne 1997). For the Crown and settlers, rather than binding agreements according to international law, treaties were commonly regarded as contracts through which Indigenous peoples surrendered their rights to their territories in exchange for reservations, annuities, goods and promises of education and health care (RCAP 1996).

One of the key insights of settler colonial theory is the ongoing character of colonialism. Because settler colonialism entails permanent settlement, it is a structure rather than a historical event or epoch. As an enduring structure, settler colonialism is foundational to the existence of settler states. Put differently, settler states owe their existence for—and depend on—settler colonialism. Indigenous peoples continue to live and experience settler colonialism in the present day. In the words of Anishinaabekwe Leanne Simpson:

> I certainly do not experience [settler colonialism] as a historical incident that has unfortunate consequences for the present. I experience it as a gendered structure and a series of complex and overlapping processes that work together as a cohort to maintain the structure. The structure is

> one of perpetual disappearance of Indigenous bodies for perpetual territorial acquisition, to use Patrick Wolfe's phrase. (Simpson 2017: 45)[15]

I have considered the nature of settler colonialism in Finland in detail elsewhere (Kuokkanen 2020a; Kuokkanen 2020b), but the point that needs to be emphasized here is that given settler colonialism's continuing presence, it is incorrect and inadequate to restrict our analysis only to various *legacies* of colonialism in contemporary societies or Indigenous-state relations. As elsewhere, the appropriation of lands in Sápmi continues unabated in the interest—whether environmental, energy or otherwise—of the mainstream society, while Sámi concerns are routinely sidelined and their rights claims constructed as marginal or "special interest" (Aikio 2012; Lawrence 2014).

Guilt and Responsibility for Structural Injustice

One of the concerns that frequently arise when discussing colonialism in Finland, perhaps particularly vis-à-vis the Sámi people, is holding the majority population in general or Finns in particular responsible for past injustices in which they played no role (e.g. Juuso 2018: 249). Even if it is agreed that there *was* colonialism in Finland in the past, "we" (i.e. Finns today) cannot be held accountable for it. By no means, defensiveness or denial of responsibility for and complicity in colonialism is common world over, and very much a function of colonialism. At the affective level, settler colonialism operates through certain emotions (anger, denial, guilt) that support historic and contemporary settler colonial narratives of benevolent actors (institutional or individual) improving the lives of the colonized. Settler denial refers to practices of refusing to recognize or admit the existence of structural oppression and white people's connection to these structures (Grey and James 2016; Nagy 2012). Settler denial is premised on what scholars have called the race to innocence or settler moves to innocence; strategies through which one can claim to be unimplicated in the subordination of others and, thus, absolved from responsibility and accountablity (Razack and Fellows 1998; Tuck and Yang 2012). Further, deflecting one's own involvement in colonialism becomes a self-perpetuating cycle that enables the closing of eyes from the colonial circumstances that facilitate ongoing structural injustice.

Understanding structural injustice in this context is critical. The concept of structural injustice was developed by political theorist Iris Marion Young, who in her book *Responsibility for Justice* distinguished between a "social connection model of responsibility" for structural injustice and a "liability model" of responsibility. The latter refers to common practices of assigning responsibility which focus on locating "who dunnit": "for a person to be held responsible for a harm, we must be able to say that he or she caused it" (Young 2011: 95). For structural injustice, however, such tracing is not possible. While locating

individuals who contribute to structural processes can be done, it is not feasible to determine how an individual or a collective agent "has directly produced harm to other specific individuals" (Young 2011: 96).

Young's social connection model of responsibility advances the idea of a shared responsibility of individuals for participating in structures that are unjust. She notes, "The social connection model of responsibility says that individuals bear responsibility for structural injustice because they contribute by their actions to the processes that produce unjust outcomes" (Young 2011: 105). Young discusses the ways in which the term "responsible" is used in ordinary language. On the one hand, somebody is considered responsible according to the liability model (the paradigmatic use): "to be responsible is to be guilty or at fault for having caused a harm and without valid excuses" (Young 2011: 104).

We also hold people responsible "by virtue of their social roles or positions" as, say, a teacher, politician or doctor, or "we appeal to our responsibilities as citizens" (Young 2011: 104). In the latter meaning, Young argues, "finding someone responsible does not imply finding at fault or liable for a past wrong; rather, it refers to agents' carrying out activities in a morally appropriate way and seeing to it that certain outcomes obtain" (Young 2011: 104). It is this latter usage of the term which the social connection model of responsibility draws on. What is more, the social connection model is first and foremost forward-looking (unlike the liability model that is backward-looking). Thus, with regard to structural injustice, one is responsible through having "an obligation to join with others who share that responsibility in order to transform the structural processes to make their outcomes less unjust" (Young 2011: 96).

Therefore, there is no room for settler denial or moves to innocence when it comes to taking responsibility for colonialism. As Young so clearly demonstrates, the question is not holding individuals or collectives liable for actions, past or present, to which they have not directly contributed. Rather, it is a question of holding everyone accountable for the structures of injustice they participate in and/or benefit from directly or indirectly. What follows from this accountability is having responsibility and obligation to "do something" about those unjust structures, which in our case at hand is settler colonialism. As an example, nobody is holding today's teachers responsible for the boarding schools and the discrimination, racism and assimilation practices that took place in those schools. Teachers have, however, a shared obligation to ensure they include the Sámi people—their history, society, culture—as part and parcel of their teaching and do their own homework so they do not relay incorrect, outdated or stereotypical information to their students. Shared responsibility can further take the form of advocating or supporting Sámi language teaching, increased funding for Sámi textbooks and addressing systemic inequalities in terms of access to education to one's mother tongue, to mention a few examples.

Yet, education or information alone is not enough to change the situation, unless people become aware of the overtly or covertly racist, discriminatory or

disrespectful attitudes and values within themselves and in others. The most challenging task, however, is to recognize and become aware of one's own privilege.

In 1988, American feminist scholar Peggy McIntosh coined the term "white privilege" and identified 46 ways in which white privilege affected her daily life without her being particularly aware of it. McIntosh writes that white privilege and the identification of its different manifestations has been an elusive project that is difficult to put into words. There is great pressure to avoid and deny the existence of white privilege because recognizing it requires letting go of one's belief that societal advancement can be attributed solely to an individual's own capabilities. Another reason why white privilege is such a challenging topic is that people who belong to the dominant group have not been taught to see the different forms of subjugation and discrimination (racism, sexism, heteronormativity and homophobia). As a white woman who belongs to the dominant group, McIntosh states that she cannot see herself as a racist person, because she has been taught to see racism only in individual acts of meanness and not in the invisible system that grants dominance at birth to the group of people she represents (McIntosh 1988).

McIntosh's list includes a number of ways in which white privilege creates inequality that are applicable to the Sámi people as well. Listed below are ten items from McIntosh's 46-point list. They highlight the inequality that may exist between a Sámi person and a Finnish person. While an average Finnish person would be, in most cases, able to answer "yes" to the following statements, the statements most likely would not hold true for a Sámi person. I have quoted the statements freely from McIntosh's list of 46 privileges, replacing her term "race" with "ethnic background."

(1) I can, if I wish, arrange to be in the company of people of my ethnic background most of the time.
(2) I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my ethnic background widely represented.
(3) I can be sure that when I send my children to school, their study materials will reflect their reality, history, and society—in their own mother tongue.
(4) I am never asked to speak for all the people of my ethnic group.
(5) I can criticize our government, its policies, and its behavior without my words being labeled as whining or anger that is "typical" of my ethnic background.
(6) I can go home from meetings of organizations feeling somewhat connected to them, rather than isolated, out of place, outnumbered, or unheard.
(7) I can choose to be ignorant about the power and views of other ethnic groups.
(8) I can worry about racism without being regarded as self-seeking.

(9) I can take a job without having my co-workers suspect that I got it because of positive discrimination.
(10) I can be late to a meeting without having the lateness reflect on my ethnic background. (McIntosh 1988)

According to McIntosh, disapproving of or condemning inequitable and discriminatory social structures is not enough to change them. It will take more than changing the attitudes of white people to end racism. McIntosh writes that, in the United States, "white" skin color opens many doors regardless of whether we accept the fact that societal structures grant dominance to certain groups of people. Individual actions may alleviate these problems, but they do not solve them. Solving these problems requires a redesign of societal structures, which in turn necessitates seeing the monumental but invisible scale and influence of institutions and systems (McIntosh 1988). The same goes for the inequality and racism faced by the Sámi people on both the structural and the individual level.

Disapproval is not enough to change the situation. Decolonization is a process that takes place in various ways and on many levels, from dismantling inequitable and discriminatory societal structures to the decolonization of the mind. Rebuilding and reclamation are also forms of decolonization. Decolonization does not mean a return to the time prior to colonialism, since that is not possible. Rather, it means becoming aware of and acknowledging colonial power relations both on an institutional and individual level, and most importantly, considering ways and taking action to decolonize them. Yet, a certain degree of creative revitalization is one of the key forms of decolonization for Indigenous peoples, including in areas of societal structures and social systems. The decolonization cannot, however, be placed solely on the shoulders of Indigenous peoples. It is a job that belongs to everyone, to which various reconciliation processes so clearly attest. It is everyone's responsibility to recognize both their individual power and the workings of institutional power, and to participate in dismantling inequitable systems, attitudes, viewpoints and values together.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined questions of whiteness and colonialism in Finland vis-à-vis the Sámi people. With the chapter, I have sought to participate in current discussions—public and academic—pertaining to the character of colonialism in Finland and argued that there are some misconceptions that stand in the way of our analysis and understanding. With regard to the Sámi, these include views according to which colonialism is a thing of the past, the colonization of Sápmi is somehow separate from "official" colonialism and that the best way to understand it is "internal colonialism." I have demonstrated

how global colonial processes correspond to those in Sápmi and the Sámi have undergone colonization and territorial dispossession comparable to overseas colonies and other Indigenous peoples. This chapter has also argued that the conceptual framework of internal colonialism is inaccurate and misleading in analyzing the predicament of the Sámi people. Instead, we need to perceive and examine colonialism in Sápmi through an analytic of settler colonialism which underscores the ways in which colonialism is an ongoing structure of dispossession in society, seeking to displace Indigenous peoples and remove access to their lands. Part of this ongoing structure is embedded in more or less taken-for-granted frameworks of knowledge production and the ways in which key concepts and theories produce and reproduce colonial hierarchies, biases and exclusions. I have concluded the chapter with a discussion on structural injustice and a forward-looking conception of responsibility developed by Young, which she calls the social connection model. This form of responsibility holds everyone participating in or benefiting from the structures of injustice accountable and having an obligation to "do something" about the unjust structures in society. There are obviously countless approaches of taking responsibility. One of the ways is examining one's privilege, which begins with the recognition and acknowledgment of its existence in one's life. The chapter closes with a look at the list of white privilege by McIntosh and highlighting of statements that demonstrate the substance of inequality and racism that Sámi may experience in everyday social settings. Importantly, while individual action may mitigate these problems, taking responsibility for structural injustice is a collective effort.

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Notes

[1] In international law, all peoples have the right to self-determination. Since the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007, international law recognizes this right belonging to Indigenous peoples as well.

[2] On the Sámi problem of the Finnish state, see Lehtola 2016 and Pääkkönen 2008.

[3] The concept of "race" is used as a social phenomenon and construction, not a biological fact.

[4] A recent example of extreme racism, a song inciting the slaughter of Sámi, was uploaded on Soundcloud by someone in Sweden calling themselves Anti-Sámi Front (Marakatt 2020).

[5] These points are present and debated, for example, in an excellent recent discussion on colonialism and Finland by four Finnish scholars in Yle radio program Kulttuuriykkönen on July 31, 2020, titled "Saamelaiset, Ambomaa ja suomalainen kolonialismi – onko Suomi menettämässä viattomuutensa?" prompted by the racial reckoning following the killing of George Floyd by a police officer in the United States in May 2020. By using the radio program as a starting point for this chapter is not so much to criticize it—because of the depth and scope of the discussion, I made it required listening for my students—as it is to engage in and continue the most recent scholarly debate about colonialism in Finland, which I think is critically important especially at this time of the beginning of the reconciliation process (see Kuokkanen 2020b).

[6] Most prominently, the recent authoritative, award-winning monograph on colonialism in the Finnish language by Kujala (2019) focuses solely on classic colonialism and does not discuss the colonization of Indigenous peoples.

[7] The earliest written documentation of the taxation of the Sámi goes back to the 9th century. At different times, different groups such as chiefs from Hålogaland (on the present-day Norwegian coast) and Birkals from Sweden-Finland either plundered, traded with and levied taxes on highly valued furs in Sámi siidas. In the period of the 1250s to the 1450s, Sámi siidas were also frequently raided by troops known as čuđit from Russia and Carelia, who were particularly feared for their violence.

[8] By placing the term "religion" in quotation marks I want to draw attention to the fact that what is commonly referred to as Sámi religion, mythology or spirituality is in fact an inseparable part of a relational worldview in which the land is a physical and spiritual entity of which humans are one part. The Sámi *noaidi* communicated with the spirit and natural worlds also with the help of the *goavddis*, a drum depicting the Sámi cosmos on its surface. The Sámi cosmos consists of a complex, multi-layered order of different realms and spheres inhabited by humans, animals, ancestors, spirits, deities and guardians, all of whom traditionally have had specific roles and functions in the Sámi cosmic order. As *noaidis* were among the most important members of the community, they were the first ones to be exterminated among the Sámi by church and state representatives (see Kuokkanen 2007).

[9] On the Sámi boarding school experiences in Finland, see Kuokkanen 2003 and Rasmus 2006.

[10] This is based on my own and my colleagues' experiences as university teachers of undergraduate courses in a range of universities. In my own experience from Finland and Canada, students regularly either express surprise of or criticism toward the lack of critical education about the history of their disciplines in social sciences and humanities.

[11] Indigenous Studies emerged as a distinct field first in the United States in the early 1970s (see Champagne and Stauss 2002).
[12] For analyses of power relations among stakeholders, see Banerjee 2000, Parsons 2008 and Rockloff and Lockie 2006.
[13] Notable exceptions include Kuokkanen 2017, Magga 2018 and Ranta and Kanninen 2019.
[14] As an example of this see, for example, Omi and Winant 1994.
[15] Fanon (1967) was first to examine the constitutive element of gender in the colonial conquest, identifying the strategy of targeting women as a central means in the consolidation of colonial control (see also McClintock 1995 and Smith 2005).

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CHAPTER 12

Imperial Complicity

Finns and Tatars in the Political Hierarchy of Races

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Abstract

Finnish and Tatar intellectuals shared a position of subordination and relative privilege in the Russian Empire from the early 19th century onward. They did not simply accept or reject Western racial knowledge production, which was increasingly used to justify colonialism and imperialism toward the end of the 19th century; they appropriated it and created a localized version of racial hierarchy, subverting derogatory racial stereotypes to sources of vitality. Within that framework, the heritage of a another empire that had managed to menace the white West, the Mongol Empire, had an undeniable attraction to Finns and Tatars, who shared the experience of middle-men minorities providing experts and services to a multi-national empire, while aspiring for empires and colonies of their own.

Keywords: race, racism, stereotypes, whiteness, empire, civilization, nationalism, imperialism, colonialism, national identity, Finns, Tatars, Turks, Outside Turks, Turanism, Turkism, Panturkism, Mongol Empire, Genghis Khan

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Introduction

The starting points of my chapter build on questions raised by Suvi Keskinen on the role of and relationship between colonialism and imperialism. In the discussion on Nordic "colonial complicity" in overseas colonialism, Keskinen (2019: 164) has noted that Finland belongs to those countries "at the margins of Europe" that occupy ambiguous positions in relation to Europeanness. However, the crucial period of the formation of the Finnish nation-state, almost a century of constitutional autonomy as a Grand Duchy directly under the Russian monarch, has often been overlooked in the current discourse on colonial complicity (Keskinen 2019: 167 n. 1).

I use a comparative, genealogical approach to show how two "nationalities" in the Russian Empire, both irrevocably shaped by imperialism handled these contradictory legacies in the early 20th century. Finns and Tatars share not only a controversial relationship with 19th-century empire-building, but also a complicated racial identity, the product of contemporary linguistic, anthropological and geopolitical ideas. In the early 20th century, this heritage was used to justify attempts at political cooperation, as well as fantasies of future alliances for geopolitical power in Eurasia.

As noted by Keskinen (2019: 178), a multi-level spatial model is necessary in the historical study of colonialism and imperialism. Attention must also be paid to temporal perspectives. Finland as a nation-state cannot be projected anachronistically backwards in time; instead, tracing the genealogy of ideas can show how the nation was ideologically constructed through colonizing and imperialist practices. Our idea of "Finnishness" today is unthinkable without these processes. Modern Tatar national consciousness also emerged in the Empire. Intellectuals and politicians identified and identifying as Tatars or Turks in the Russian Empire used historical and racial arguments, partly derived from the works of European authors, to prove that their peoples constituted potentially state-bearing nations. Finnish intellectuals, too, internalized and utilized hierarchical models of race. Controversially, a generation of scholars in the first half of the 19th century had established a theory of interrelatedness between the Finns and the Turks, the Mongols and the Tungus-speaking peoples—the so-called Altaic or Turanian peoples. This genealogy became a political problem in the late 19th century.

The primary sources used in this chapter consist of newspapers, pamphlets and other printed materials published in Finland and abroad in the late 19th century until the mid-1940s. A wide variety of secondary literature is also used to cover the Tatar diaspora's republic of letters during this period, from Helsinki, Berlin and Ankara to Harbin and Tokyo, in contrast with the relatively provincial reach of the contemporary Finnish debate on nation and race.

This chapter is divided into four sections. In the first section, a brief historical background surveys the ideas behind the racial stereotypes that

influenced Finnish and Tatar nationalism. The second section focuses on the fear of a decline in Western civilization in the early 20th century, which coincided with a re-evaluation of previously maligned "noble savages," including Genghis Khan and the Mongol conquests. The third section delves into the problem of racialized phenotypes. The fourth section analyzes two tropes in early-20th-century journalism and popular fiction: a conspiracy of oppressed nations against Russia, and the "coming race war," a product of racial Darwinism.

Struggling with the racial hierarchies established by Western European scholars, both Finnish and Tatar intellectuals set out to prove that their peoples were state-bearing nations, despite Western racial prejudices. Ideas about race connected to the fear of what I call the racial stigma among Turkic and Finnish intellectuals. The intention was not to refute hierarchies, but to promote a hierarchy with the in-group as leaders among the nations of color, and worthy partners of white nations. In this context, the relationship to the "Mongol race," whether it was imagined to be historical, linguist or racial, presented a dilemma for both Finns and Tatars. Although the Mongols were considered to belong to an inferior and obsolete civilization, their historical empire provided an exception to the rule of white European invincibility.

This chapter explores and contextualizes works of fact and fiction that nevertheless embraced a connection—real or imagined—between the Finnish-speaking Finns on the one hand, and the Turkic- and Mongolic-speaking peoples on the other. Both Finnish and Tatar intellectuals handled the crises of the early 20th century by imagining the Mongols as warlike ancestors. The chronology of this chapter stretches from the late 19th century's imperial lull, through the interwar era of nation-states and young republics like Finland and Turkey searching for a unifying ideology in race lore and ending with the catastrophe of the Second World War.

Studies on racial discourse in the Republic of Turkey have shown the special role that Tatar emigrant intellectuals from the Russian Empire played in its formation (Ergin 2017: 72). Previous research on race and Finnishness has focused on racial categories, especially Asian ones, as something imposed on the Finns from outside (Isaksson 2001: 20). Pekka Isaksson and Jouko Jokisalo have considered the "Mongolian theory" of Finnish origins to have "rescued" Finnish anthropology from racism, because it caused Finns to view physical anthropology and racial theories with skepticism. This claim rests on a narrow definition of racism as active persecution, which Isaksson and Jokisalo also recognize: "with a few exceptions, Finns usually did not refute the claim that the Mongols were inferior but strove to liberate themselves from the Mongol reputation" (Isaksson, Jokisalo and Abdulkarim 2018: 215–16).

Attempts of subordinated groups claiming more dominant positions within colonial hierarchies have sometimes been described as "the pyramid of petty tyrants" (Keskinen 2019: 176). Instead of outright refuting notions of white supremacy, many sought to prove that they fulfilled Western criteria of

civilization and culture. The reason was political. As Murat Ergin (2008) has shown in his studies on race and Turkishness, colonialist empires used race to defend their right to rule over people of color, while the right of white minorities to assert national independence became increasingly accepted after the First World War and the break-up of multi-national empires in Europe.

A few clarifying words on ethnonyms are in order. This chapter features many examples of individuals (re)defining themselves as Tatars, Turks and Muslims, and creating networks to promote multiple, complementary identities. I hope that I have been able to contextualize each instance to show how national, ethnic and racial identities are historically contingent and situational.

Historical Background: The Racial Stigma and Enduring Stereotypes

In the early 19th century, Finnish scholars were searching for a place for their newly autonomous nation among the world's great civilizations. Linguist and explorer Matthias Alexander Castrén (1813–1852) located the ancient birthplace of the Finno-Ugric, "Samoyedic,"[1] Turkic and Mongolic peoples in the Altai mountains. Similarities between Finno-Ugric, Turkic (including Tatar) and Mongolian languages had inspired philologists to theorize about their interrelations since the 18th century (Kemiläinen 1998: 65–66). Based on these discoveries, Castrén conducted field studies to confirm the theory that these agglutinative languages all belonged to the same "Altaic" group and to elevate the marginalized "Finnish tribe" to global significance through the connection to this great family. Castrén was certainly aware of Western prejudices against the "despised Mongols." He saw the difference between the Caucasian and the Mongolian races as a gradient, where the Finns and the Turks took an intermediate position (Isaksson 2001: 200).

In mid-19th-century Finland, linguists, philologists, and ethnographers dominated research on human prehistory, and Castrén's theories were initially well received (Isaksson and Jokisalo 2018: 209–10). In 1871, even a popular song was published, beginning with the words: *Aasiast' on alku tälle kansalle* ("The origin of this people is in Asia")[2] (Vilkuna 1970: 20). Castrén was posthumously dubbed the "father" of Pan-Turanism—an ideology advocating a common political goal for these nations. His scholarship was invaluable in the political knowledge production of the Finnish-language national movement, but it had to be handled with care.

Finns and Tatars soon found that their ranking in Western racial hierarchies was determined by the fact that their nations were not politically sovereign. However, they were not easily classified as "savages." In their autonomous Grand Duchy, the Finns enjoyed the protection of their own constitution in the Russian Empire. Tatars, while lacking such political freedoms, maintained a level of education that enabled them to take on a leadership role among the Empire's

Muslims as interpreters, religious and cultural specialists, and businessmen. As noted by historian Danielle Ross, Tatars became "a distinctive colonizing force within the larger Russian expansion" (Ross 2020: 2). Beginning with the 1773 edict of "Tolerance of All Faiths" by Catherine the Great, Muslim life was revived in the Empire. The *'ulamā* (the religious educators and interpreters of sharia law) were integrated into the imperial system with the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly as a central state-controlled administrative organ (Bekkin 2020b; Frank 1998: 33–34). Tatars and other Turkic peoples, such as Bashkirs with their traditions of military service, could reach relatively important positions in the imperial administration.

Finnish officials, scholars and soldiers also served in the political, administrative, military and scientific expansion of Russia's Empire from Siberia and Alaska to the Caucasus and the Balkans. While the Finn Gustaf Mannerheim explored Russian and Chinese Turkestan on behalf of the Russian General Staff in 1906–1908, the Bashkir Ravil Syrtlanov was sent to study the political loyalties of the Mongol and Turkic peoples in the area (Marshall 2006: 84–85). As Danielle Ross (2020: 2) maintains, "the construction of the Russian empire … was made possible only through the participation of imperial subjects of many ethnicities and confessions, and these subjects felt a degree of ownership over the empire." Castrén, too, had conducted his research in the east on behalf of the Imperial Saint Petersburg Academy of Sciences (Salminen 2016: 287). The predicament of both Tatar and Finnish intellectuals in the service of the Empire was strikingly similar:

> At the same time, they were colonizers engaged in the establishment of settler communities, the creation of powerful transregional and international commercial firms that enabled them to employ and exploit members of other ethnic groups, and the compilation of orientalist knowledge. Through these activities, they imagined a geographic space that belonged to them. Within that space, they articulated a hierarchy of peoples with themselves at the top. (Ross 2020: 6)

During the 19th century, a shift in race and civilization theory alienated Finns from the potentially empowering sense of kinship with Turkic and Mongolic peoples. Although the Grand Duchy of Finland possessed the main attributes of a state, the racially determinist justification of colonialism endangered its potential for independence. Western scholars judged the "Mongolian race" to be evolutionarily stagnated. If Finnish-speakers were classified as a non-white race, they would be destined to live under Russian imperialism and Swedish paternalism. In the 1870s and 1880s, the originally linguistic "Turanian theory" was gradually taken over by the discipline of physical anthropology. Finnish scholars, too, began to collect biometric information on the population of Finland, in particular the Indigenous Sámi, to solve the "Mongolian question" (Isaksson, Jokisalo and Abdulkarim 2018: 212–13).

Unlike the Finns, whose past remained obscure, Turkic Muslims in the Russian Empire were haunted by the loss of a golden age (Tuna 2015: 149). A Tatar author wrote to his friend in 1901: "I was born either a little too early or a little too late. I am now neither a European nor an Asian" (Ross 2012: 348). The glory of Asia was buried in the past, and the young intellectuals were in a hurry to catch up with Europe. This frustration followed decades of already fervent activity. The language schools and the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly had provided institutions that supported political identity formation (Ibrahim 2004: 60–61). The dominant role of Tatars in the Spiritual Assembly worried Russian authorities to such an extent that the Kazakhs were removed from its jurisdiction in the 1860s (Bekkin 2020b: 100, 108 n. 146).

Russian officials used the term "Tatar" for Muslims speaking Turkic languages in the Volga region, the Urals and Siberia, but also Crimea and the south Caucasus. However, the term carried troubling connotations. As a historical term, it was loosely applied to the pagan Mongols, which made many Muslims resent it (Ross 2020: 131–32). However, numerous oral histories and traditional chronicles in Central Asia described Genghis Khan as a Muslim ruler and culture hero. Although the Muslim peoples of the Volga-Ural region had been violently incorporated into the Mongol Empire, the Mongols' religious tolerance had facilitated the spread of Islam in Central Asia (Frank 1998: 17). Muslim chronicles and literary epics included the Mongols among the descendants of "Turk, son of Yafet, son of Noah," and combined shamanist folklore and Islamic tradition to depict Genghis Khan as "the progenitor of the tribal political and social order" (Biran 2007: 126–27).

Historian and theologian Shihabutdin Merjani (1818–1889) recognized the unifying potential in the exonym "Tatar" precisely because it had been coined during the Golden Horde and the Kazan Khanate, states ruled by Muslim khans claiming descent from Genghis Khan (Frank 1998: 158–69). Merjani taught at the Russian-Tatar Teachers' School in Kazan, founded in 1876 to train teachers to the Muslim population. Despite its assimilationist objective, the school produced nationally conscious graduates, such as statesman Sadri Maksudi (Arsal)[3] (1880–1957), Pan-Turkist publicist ʿAyaz İshakî (1878–1954) and revolutionary Mirsaid Sultangaliyev (1880–1940) (Rorlich 1986: 139, 301). As a historian, Merjani encouraged his compatriots to identify as "Tatar." Without the term, the enemies of their faith and nation would just find other terms of abuse. Echoing the sentiment behind a famous Finnish nationalist slogan ("Swedes we are not, Russians we shall not become; let us then be Finns"; see Marjanen 2020), Merjani stated: "You are not Arab or Tajik or Nogay; you are still less Chinese or Russian or French or Prussian or German. If you are not Tatars, then who are you?" (Ross 2020: 131).

Ironically, this development in national consciousness was spurred by the fact that Russian authorities had become increasingly suspicious of the Muslim intellectual networks that the Empire itself had created and supported (Ross

2020: 2). Between the Russian and Ottoman Empires shuttled radicals, such as the intrepid Yusuf Akçura, who had been involved in pre-revolutionary politics in both empires. Most importantly, Jadidism, a movement in Islamic education, emerged in the 1880s. Starting with a "new method" (*usul-i jadid*) of teaching the Arabic script used to write the native tongue, it grew into a movement of progressive reform within Islam in Central Asia (Khalid 1999: 89–93). The Jadidists embraced Turk and Tatar identity and promoted the debate on Genghis Khan and his legacy (Gündoğdu 2020). In 1913, a Kazan Tatar author counted both Genghis Khan and Suyumbika, last queen regent of the Kazan Khanate, among his forebears (Ross 2012: 367).

Both Tatars and Finns had achieved a position of "manageable" and relatively privileged minorities in the Empire, but those privileges could be taken away. Russian ethnographers and anthropologists often evaluated subject nations according to their perceived potential for assimilation (Geraci 2009: 174–76; Issiyeva 2021: 66–67). The Tatar ethnographer 'Ainuddin Akhmarov attacked such ideas concerning the Mishärs, a sub-group of the Volga Tatars. Russian anthropologists claimed that the Mishärs, as a "'Tatarized" Finno-Ugric people, distinguished themselves favorably from other Tatars by their appearance, health and temperament. Akhmarov denied any significant Finnic influence in Mishär culture. They were a nomadic Turkic people that had possibly arrived at the Volga even later than other Tatars (Geraci 2009: 179–80). The Finno-Ugricization of the Mishär Tatars may have been connected to Imperial Russian perceptions of Finns as easier to assimilate than Turkic Muslims. In the mid-19th century, a movement of Finnish linguistic nationalism challenged the dominant position of Swedish as an administrative and elite language in Finland. Russian support of this movement was motivated by the belief that Finnish, as a more "primitive" language than Swedish, would be easier to replace with Russian (Polvinen 1984: 171–72).

Despite Castrén's sympathetic ideas about Ural-Altaic kinship, fears of Tatar expansionism caused concern in Finland, too. With the establishment of railway connections between Russia and Finland in the 1870s, Tatar merchants connected the Grand Duchy to their transnational trading network (Wassholm 2020: 14). Although these merchants were Mishär Tatars from the Middle Volga region, theories about the Mishärs' Finno-Ugric origin did not influence Finnish public opinion in their favor. Foreign traders were generally viewed with suspicion in the newspapers that tended to reflect the political opinions of local business and authorities (Wassholm and Sundelin 2018: 13). Tatar traders became targets of racist "Yellow Peril" caricatures and accusations of collaboration with the Russian authorities (Elmgren 2020).

The racial stigma and its consequences for a nation's political rank influenced Finnish views on minorities and each other. Finnish-speakers considered it gravely insulting to be called Tatar by Swedish-speakers, especially in front of foreigners (Elmgren 2020: 28). Classifying minorities like the Sámi, Finnish

anthropologists used the same theories about racial hierarchies that they contested when foreign anthropologists ranked Finns unfavorably (Isaksson 2001: 20). In this, Finnish scholars and intellectuals were not very different from their Russian colleagues. Russians subscribing to their Empire's civilizing mission could agree with the writer Fyodor Dostoyevsky: "In Europe, we are Tatars, but in Asia we, too, are Europeans" (Kappeler 2013: 208). The imperial and colonial project could elevate the state-bearing nation to a higher racial rank, at least symbolically.

Latecomer nations that lacked an empire of their own could perhaps only hope to profit from cataclysms that threatened already existing empires. In the late 19th century, visions of future wars increasingly took the form of a "race war," amplified by real-life events such as the rise of Japan as a military power, the defeat of Italy in Abyssinia and the Boxer Rebellion in China (Isaksson, Jokisalo and Abdulkarim 2018: 244). After the First Sino-Japanese War in 1892–1894, Finnish independence activist Konni Zilliacus (senior) predicted that Japan would soon make use of the slogan "Asia for the Asians" to further its own interests (Zilliacus 1896: 53). Asia, previously thought to be a dying civilization, was now imagined as a volcano ready to erupt. The Russo-Japanese war in 1904–1905 confirmed this belief. The Japanese victory became a turning point in the perception of Japan among Turkic nations (Dündar 2017: 199). According to Yusuf Akçura, a Turkey led by nationalists could emulate Japan's model of leadership (Worringer 2014: 189).

The effect of the Russo-Japanese War on the Russian Empire was twofold: first, the suffering of the common soldiers in the Russian army created a shared resentment among all imperial subjects, fueling revolutionary movements. Second, Japan became a role model to subject nationalities (Friederich 1998: 94). Muslims discussed rumors that the Japanese were about to accept Islam, including the Emperor Meiji himself (Dündar 2017: 206; Togan 2012: 37). An enterprising religious scholar, 'Abdürresit Ibrahim, took advantage of the political climate by participating in the foundation of a political organ, the All-Muslim Union, in 1905 (Meyer 2014: 84–85). Traveling to Japan, Ibrahim enthusiastically argued that Islam would open the way for Japan into Asia–all the way to the Urals (Georgeon 1991: 57; Ibrahim 2004: 172). Ibrahim reported that Japanese luminaries welcomed their "older brothers, the Tatars, descendants of Genghis Khan," or expressed their admiration for Tamerlan (Ibrahim 2004: 134, 140). He reciprocated with statements of solidarity, for example in the foreign affairs journal *Gaikōjihō* in 1909:

> … Asians are disgusted by the Europeans. … I am sure that bringing about the union of Asian peoples to stand up to Europe is our legitimate means of self-defense. We Tatars do not hesitate to respect Japan as our senior, and we hope to send our youth to study in Japan. (Komatsu 2017: 147)

Like Ibrahim, Finnish activist Zilliacus became a Japanese asset. During the Russo-Japanese War, Zilliacus was supplied with money by the Japanese agent

Motojiro Akashi to finance revolutionary movements against the Russian Empire (Akashi 1998). Unlike Ibrahim, Zilliacus did not claim any blood relationship between his nation and the Japanese. As a Swedish-speaking Finn, he probably felt little reason to do so. A new generation of Finnish linguists like Gustaf John Ramstedt (1873–1950) denied the existence of a Ural-Altaic language family altogether (Ramstedt 1919: 41–42). Because of the conflation of race and language, this result was thought to disprove any racial affinity between Finns on the one hand and Turks and Mongols on the other. However, Ramstedt was an unprejudiced supporter of Asian independence movements. In 1912, his services were requested by a committee from Mongolia that had arrived in St. Petersburg to negotiate Russian support for their national independence movement (Halén 1998: 168–69). Through Ramstedt's work, modern Mongolians became aware of a shared genealogy connecting Mongolian and Turkic peoples (King 2019: 86).

Ramstedt also established personal relationships with Tatar nationalists like statesman Sadri Maksudi (Ramstedt 2011). Exiled in 1918, Maksudi was welcomed in Finland by Ramstedt and other allies, although the attitude toward non-Finno-Ugric refugees was generally indifferent or hostile (Leitzinger 2018: 90). In a reception with high-profile politicians and intellectuals, Maksudi held a speech where he praised the Finnish national epic, the *Kalevala*, as an achievement of the entire "Ural-Altaic" race (Halén 1998: 205; Raevuori 2011: 164). Finland continued to serve as an escape route and a meeting place for Turkic emigrants until the Second World War (Bekkin 2020a; Zaripov and Belyaev 2020). Scholars and politicians in exile, such as Akçura, Maksudi and the playwright ʻAyaz Ishaki, regularly communicated with the Muslims in Finland (Baibulat 2004: 84). Bashkir revolutionary Zeki Velidi (Togan) also cultivated contacts with Finnish Tatars (Togan 2012: 113, 446–47, 461–62, 469–71).

Imperial Longings and the Reluctant Heirs of Genghis Khan

Before the 1860s, Muslims in the Volga-Ural region identified as Muslim first, although local identities and language played an important role. The exonym Tatar was adopted with the rise of cultural and political nationalism partly for historical reasons, partly "for reasons of convenience" (Frank 1998: 5). The modern Tatar identity can thus be defined as a product of Empire—the contemporary Russian Empire, and the production of historical consciousness about other empires in the past that had belonged to real or imagined ancestors.

As among the early Pan-Turkists, many of the intellectuals participating in the creation of a new historiography for the Republic of Turkey were Volga Turk emigrants. Sadri Maksudi (1930) addressed the question whether Turkic peoples were capable of civilization to prove that Turks were a state-building race "despite their Asianness." This question was actualized by the threat of the Western colonial powers seeking to divide the Ottoman Empire among

themselves and Greece in 1918–1922. Nevertheless, Turkish historians needed a dialogue with Western historians to affirm the state-bearing character of the Turkish nation. Some placed the Turks in the "Alpine" sub-group of the white race and searched for their roots among populations in the ancient Near East, recognized as the cradle of civilization also by Western scholars (Erdman 2017: 213). Emigrants from Russia promoted an alternative historical view of a state-building Turkish civilization that included the Central Asian Turks (Khalid 1999: 198).

In the folk traditions of the Volga Turks, Genghis Khan was a legitimizing culture hero. Pan-Turanists integrated Genghis Khan in a grand narrative about Turkic statecraft with the help of Western authors, such as the swashbuckling tales of French novelist and popular historian Léon Cahun (Berkes 1998: 315–16; Ergin 2017: 72–74). Some Anatolian Turkish nationalists found Cahun's characterization of the ancient Turks as "noble savages" problematic (Aziz Basan 2010: 5–7). The older Ottoman view of the Mongol Empire had been hostile or ambivalent. Young Ottomans initially rejected "an ideology based on the Turk—who was believed to be either a peasant, or a *Kızılbaş* (heretic), or a heathen Mongol, or a despised Tartar [sic]" (Berkes 1998: 317). Ottoman prejudices against Tatar appearance and accent were challenged by the nationalist and feminist author Halide Edip Adıvar, who depicted young Tatar women as ideal, modern Turks (Güven 2020).

Emigrants from the Russian Empire tended to argue on behalf of an Asian-oriented definition of Turkishness. Tatars and Bashkirs found common ground in the claim that Genghis Khan was a Turk (Togan 2012: 463–64). Yusuf Akçura introduced Cahun's positive view on Genghis Khan in his Pan-Turkist journal *Türk Yurdu* in the 1910s. He explained that Genghis Khan had wanted to unite all the "Turanian nations," including the Mongols, the Turks and the Tatars (Dumont 1974: 325). Even though Genghis Khan was sparingly used as a symbol of Tatar nationalism, it is interesting to note that the Muslim Committee of the Kazan garrison, during the short-lived Tatar-led Idel-Ural republic, published a nationalist, anti-Bolshevik newspaper under the title *Ciñiz balasy*, "Genghis' children," in 1918 (Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay 1964: 190).

The opinion on Genghis Khan's heritage seemed to vary greatly according to the writer's target audience. In 1933, nationalist author and politician 'Ayaz Ishaki promoted Tatar separatism in the Volga-Ural region to a Western readership. Ishaki argued that while the Mongols were not Turks as such, their empire was built on Turkic traditions of statesmanship and with Turkic nations as its military and administrative backbone. He stated that the "'Turkish race" ought not to be confounded with "the Yellow Race," which the Turkic nations resembled only distantly (Ishaki 1933: 5). In 1941, Zeki Velidi Togan argued in the pamphlet *Moğollar, Çingiz ve Türkler* that Western scholars had mistakenly conflated the historical Mongols, the Turks' brother nation, with the completely unrelated Chinese and Japanese (Erdman 2017: 216, 223; Togan 1941: 1–5).

Although internationally recognized as an expert in his field, Togan became marginalized in Turkish academia in the 1930s. In 1944, Togan was accused of Turanism, racism and conspiracy against the state, and was imprisoned for more than a year (Bergdolt 1981: 13–14). There was a pragmatic reason for the official rejection of the Central Asian orientation in Turkey. The Turkish government wanted to assure the Soviet Union that it did not nourish irredentist ambitions (Erdman 2017: 181).

Meanwhile, in the newly independent Republic of Finland, Genghis Khan, Mongols and Tatars were generally associated with the negative qualities of Oriental despotism. However, while Finnish-speakers protested the use of the term Tatar as an insult, they could self-ironically refer to Finns as Tatars, Mongols, Turanians or Asians. Some aspects of the "noble savage" stereotype could be reinterpreted paradiastolically (from the rhetorical technique *paradiastole*, "re-describing the vices as virtues"; Skinner 2007). In the early 20th century, "barbarian" characteristics of the Finns began to be idealized as signs of strength and purity in contrast to decadent Western civilization, especially the Swedish-speaking population (Elmgren 2016). Nationalist author Kyösti Wilkuna wrote in his diary during the Libyan war 1911–1912:

> Up, Mongols! If only, Genghis, you would return once more and drown in blood the European lackey civilization, and like an alpine gust sweep away this generation sick of mental diarrhea, ruled by hysterical women and spiritually fed by market advertisements. Come, and I will rush to meet you like a Mongol; when I hear the snort of your steeds and the jangle of their bits, I will meet you and join your ranks. (Railo 1930: 272–73, my translation)

Stereotypes of warlike barbarians were a tempting cure for the emasculating decadence of fin-de-siècle Western civilization. In Russia, poet Vladimir Solovyov ambiguously conjured a frightening, yet seductive "Pan-Mongolism" in 1895, inspiring Alexander Blok's "The Scythians" (1918) and other "exotisms of the Self" (Schimmelpenninck van der Oye 2010: 215–22). Hierarchies were not easily overthrown by rhetoric. Without emotional or knowledge-based investment in imagined origins, the use of the paradiastole became a superficial show of self- or autoexotism (Savigliano 1995) or "self-racism" (Apo 1999). This paradiastolic reading of racial stereotypes remained a subversive, ironic strain in the public discourse in Finland.

Racial Anxieties in the Eye of the Beholder

The troubled birth of Finnish national independence in the turmoil of civil war and the Finnish Whites' fateful alliance with the Central Powers in 1918

actualized the need to prove the Finns' racial right to sovereignty. Ramstedt, already engaged on behalf of the Tatar cause, attempted to solve the Finnish racial problem. Earlier, Ramstedt (1915) had stated that the Finno-Ugric peoples were by their appearance altogether more blond and white-skinned than the "motley crew" of the European nations. On the other hand, Ramstedt refuted the theory of permanent racial hierarchies and cited the Japanese as proof of the Asian race's potential. If Finns could keep their independence, they would also soon contribute to human culture. Then—but only then—the question of racial origins would be moot (Ramstedt 1919: 40–44).

According to Ramstedt, Finns ought to be called—based on their actual phenotype—"the world's whitest race." The phrase gained a life of its own in popular newspapers (*Länsi-Uusimaa* 1925; "Kustaanpoika" 1931; "Vanha Matti" 1934; "Rip" 1964). The need to prove Finnish whiteness to the West could be compared with the defense of national independence. Insinuations of non-white racial origins were considered insults to Finnish sovereignty. Such claims also endangered Finns living in countries that practiced racial segregation, such as the United States. The spread of "false testimony" of race was thought to cause "willful damage" (Salamooni 1933: 4). The racial stigma directed the discourse on race in Turkey, too. To teacher and historian Afet İnan, counting the Turks among the "Yellow Races" was nothing but "slander" (Erdman 2017: 194, 211). She defined Turkish racial characteristics with an emphasis on purity and whiteness, while still placing the Turks' ancient origins in Central Asia (Ergin 2017: 133).

As biometric studies on race collected greater amounts of data, it became increasingly difficult to pinpoint which should be interpreted as significant. Since many of the phenotypic features associated with the "Yellow Race" appeared among other populations, the so-called Mongol eyelid or epicanthic fold became focus of scientific interest and poetic fancy. What Ramstedt (1919: 42) had described as "eyelids half shut in a strange fashion," was a cluster of elusive traits, sometimes only present in the eye of the beholder. Finnish nationalists in the interwar era wanted to prove that Finns were not only white, but free of the stigma of the epicanthic fold. A photo of beauty queen Ester Toivonen, winner of the title Miss Europe in 1934, accompanied the headline "We are not Mongols" in a popular pictorial magazine. The author insisted on the most important piece of evidence: "We are not slant-eyed, and we have no folds in our eyelids" (H. J. V. 1934: 22).

In the era of modern mass communications, sports competitions and beauty contests became arenas for global promotion of the image of a racially acceptable Finn or Turk. When Keriman Halis won the Miss Universe beauty pageant in 1932, President Atatürk declared confidently: "… historically the Turkish race is the most beautiful race in the world" (Ergin 2017: 121). In Finland, the tone was more defensive. The whiteness of the "world's whitest race" was not self-evident. Finns had to "graphically demonstrate, until our scientists can produce binding proof, that we are a people with many good qualities"

(H. J. V. 1934: 22). Those who did not conform to the ideal had to be hidden away. The Finnish ambassador to Washington requested that official promotional material produced for the Summer Olympics in Los Angeles 1932 leave out photographs of Finnish wrestlers, who might look too "Mongolian" to a white American audience (Lähteenkorva and Pekkarinen 2004: 220–25).

Physical evidence was unreliable. The archaeologist and Social Democrat politician Julius Ailio argued that facial features, skin color and hair structure were "lesser external characteristics" in modern anthropology. Instead, anthropological anatomy studied "the build of the skeleton and the differences of the inner organs" (Ailio 1921). A researcher who had conducted biometric studies on the Sámi people for a decade had to concede that the more data one had collected, the less one could say with certainty about racial classifications (Isaksson, Jokisalo and Abdulkarim 2018: 306). Professor of anatomy, Väinö Lassila, became a dedicated anti-racist while conducting scientific measurements that Ailio considered to be the state of the art in racial anthropology (Schoultz 2021). "Comparative anthropology has proven the astonishing uniformity in the mentality of all peoples, and anatomical research reveals a profound unity in the physique of all human groups," Lassila wrote (1936: 54). However, it has been observed that the sheer impossibility of disproving the various claims and shifting definitions produced by racial anthropologists made the discipline paradoxically resilient against scientific criticism before the Second World War (Isaksson, Jokisalo Abdulkarim 2018: 313).

The threat of a coming world war encouraged speculations of possible alliances transgressing racial boundaries. The Japanophile Pan-Turkists had already heralded this change. As historian Renée Worringer has noted, "despite temptation to identify with the 'superior' races because of their own elite status … they did not sympathize with the rampant paranoia of 'Yellow Peril' emerging in Europe about Japan" (Worringer 2014: 135). Around the world, the Turkish victory in the War of Independence in 1923 was celebrated or condemned similarly to Japan's in 1905 as an "Asian" victory over Europe.[4] In the end, the mutually accepted definition of a civilization's right to self-determination was pure military power. This pragmatic key would open the lock on the Finnish "Asian complex."

The Conspiracy of Nations and the Coming Race War

This section focuses on two tropes prevalent in Finnish and Tatar narratives on the future of their nations. The first trope, "the conspiracy of nations," was based on what I will call "arithmetic pragmatism"—the calculation that the minority nations of the Russian Empire or Soviet Russia together would outnumber the "Great Russians." Therefore, they would be able to unite and successfully defeat Russia, which would be divided into national republics. The vision depended on a simplified assumption—often based on imagined racial

difference—about the interests and motivations of different groups making up the population of Soviet Russia. Even so, a possible conspiracy of nations was advocated deep into the 1930s by Finns and Finnish Turks (the then-preferred ethnonym among Tatars in Finland).

The "conspiracy of nations" trope stood in a complicated relationship to the second trope, the "coming race war," a commonplace trope in political journalism and popular fiction in the early 20th century. The racial Darwinist idea of a necessary struggle for survival between the races had been used to justify colonialist expansion until the early 20th century (Isaksson, Jokisalo and Abdulkarim 2018: 244–45). The idea of a global race war, fueled by the horrors of the First World War, replaced the hitherto prevalent notion of the extinction of the "weaker races" under white domination (Barder 2021). Many authors assumed that an uprising against the white race would begin in Asia, and some Finns welcomed the rise of Japan as an antidote to Soviet power in the East. One columnist adapted an episode in *Kalevala*, the Finnish national epic, in which a small man rises out of the sea to cut down a great oak that obscures the sun and the moon: "A small, yellow, patient, deliberative [man], with sinews of steel and iron heels" could perhaps awaken the "camel drivers and drinkers of mare's milk" of the steppes (Johannes 1932). Who would be the middle-man of this new empire in Asia? Not coincidentally, some of the driving forces behind this trend were Tatars:

> As is known, the Turks of Russia fled to other countries after the Bolshevik revolution. Some of them, about 2,000 souls, moved to Japan … The Muslims of Japan have enthusiastically produced propaganda against the Bolsheviks, with the hope of liberating Russia from Soviet power. (*Aamulehti* 1938)

In the spring of 1938, a festival for the Muslim nations was held in the Japanese capital to celebrate the opening of the Tokyo Mosque. The event was covered in Finnish newspapers, which also speculated in the spread of Islam in Japan (*Uusi Suomi* 1938; *Uudenmaan Sanomat* 1938; *Jääkäri* 1938). The martial and disciplined mentality of Islam supposedly appealed to the Japanese (Matias 1938). Indeed, the Japanese government displayed its political support of the event with a celebration for the international guests, including a military show. Reportedly, some "Turkish inhabitants of Finland" also attended the festival (*Aamulehti* 1938).

To understand the appeal of race war narratives in Finland, we must consider the post-independence understanding of Finland's former position in the Russian Empire as an effect of the so-called Russification policies that threatened the Grand Duchy's constitutional autonomy from 1899 onward. The Finnish national movement was initially reactive, aiming to preserve autonomy. However, some activists embraced a total break with the empire and found

inspiration in recovered and reinterpreted documents from the past. One of these documents was a letter from the explorer M. A. Castrén, dated October 1, 1844. In this letter, uncharacteristically for his time, but timely enough for readers at the turn of the 20th century, Castrén envisioned future national independence for Finland. This goal would be achieved by piggybacking on a greater uprising:

> The Russian will eventually collide with the Turks, who are supported by the Kyrgyz, the Tatars, and the whole of Caucasia. Poland is merely waiting for a chance to take up arms. Then we too shall shout woe over the Muscovite from Finland's bogs. But, until then, I think we ought to save our breath … (my translation; Castrén 1994: 622)

First published in fragments in the original Swedish by explorer and independence activist Kai Donner (1919), and later in its entirety (Schauman 1923), Castrén's letter was often paraphrased and abbreviated in Finnish translations to focus on the militant message in the years after independence. Castrén's vision was not a war between races as such, but implied an understanding between oppressed nations with a common enemy. By imagining themselves benefiting from the initiative of Turks, readers of Castrén's letter could imagine the Turkish nations as more than "the sick man of Europe," or nomadic savages—they could imagine them as leaders and freedom fighters.

Hopes for such an alliance were rekindled when the Finnish Civil War ended in May 1918. The Finno-Ugrian Society, a learned society dedicated to the study of Uralic and Altaic languages, awarded honorary membership to an unexpected individual: Mehmet Talaat Pasha, Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire. He was chosen due to his role as a leader of the Turanist movement that strove to unite the whole Ural-Altaic "tribe." Although the Society usually distanced itself from Turanism, political expedience prevailed (Salminen 2008: 101). Philologist Jalo Kalima (1918b) enthusiastically described a "Turanian chain" strangling Russia, with Finland as its "last link." The Central Powers alliance died with the Entente victory in November 1918, but the image of an "iron chain" survived for the duration of the Russian Civil War (*Uuden Suomen Iltalehti* 1919; *Liitto* 1919; Jaakkola 1920). In the nationalist and interventionist journal *Suunta*, an anonymous Tatar source, reportedly involved in the Tatar national movement, outlined an unusually ambitious geopolitical plan: "Mongolia, too, will be involved in the solution of the [Tatar] question, for the Tatar plans include the inclusion of its Tatar regions into the whole tribe" (*Suunta* 1919: 103–04).

Seeking regular diplomatic relations to stabilize its geopolitical position in the interwar era, few Finnish politicians utilized the rhetoric of Turanism in a "tribal" or racial sense. A rare example, a 1924 letter from President Lauri Kristian Relander to President Mustafa Kemal in its Turkish translation

referred to the common origin of Finland and Turkey with the term *ırk*, race (Küçük 2011: 33). This word seems to have been introduced into late Ottoman Turkish by Tatar emigrants (Bazin 1985; Hanioğlu 2001: 67; Turhan 1995: 282). Considering the opinions of contemporary Finnish scholar-diplomats, the letter's phrasing should perhaps be taken with a grain of salt. Diplomats recommended that whether the Turanian theory was true or not, Finns ought to play along with it, if it was advantageous to them (Kalima 1918a; 1918b; Salminen 2008: 101).

There was good reason to be cautious about adventurous foreign alliances after the ill-fated attempt to install a German prince on the Finnish throne in the fall of 1918. Germany's defeat had been a shock to many Finnish Whites, who felt deep gratitude for the German intervention against the Socialist uprising in the Finnish Civil War. Many believed that the fate of Finland would remain connected to German civilization in the future. Hence, models for adventure and heroism in the coming struggle between races were borrowed from German speculative fiction. In the German author Hans Dominik's novels, Europe's white nations often battled an Asian-led enemy in a global war (Hermand 2003: 50; Maltarich 2005: 313). Dominik's 1923 novel *Die Spur des Dschingis Khan* ("The Track of Genghis Khan") featured European engineers cultivating the lands beyond the Urals with cutting-edge inventions. Asians and Africans attack, but German technology prevails. "The dream of a world ruled by the Mongols is forever buried under snow and ice," according to the publisher's advertising copy (*Kajaani* 1924).

Dominik's reputation as an "engineer-writer" made him attractive to a Finnish readership with military interests. Civil war veteran and popular author Aarno Karimo picked up some of Dominik's themes in his novel *Kohtalon kolmas hetki* ("Third Moment of Destiny"; serialized in 1926–27, first complete edition in 1927, second edition in 1935). Set during a war of annihilation between Finland and a restored Russian Empire, the novel subverted genre conventions with an unexpected *deus ex machina*: A Tatar warlord, descendant of Genghis Khan, leading millions of Mongols in panzers. Tatars also rescue the novel's damsel in distress, a feat that usually belongs to the hero. Nevertheless, the superior technological innovations of Finnish engineers play a decisive role in the defeat of Russia. As in Dominik's novels, Karimo's hero's success "is not merely the triumph of an individual," but represents "that of the society and race," with the aid of "the prized scientific and technological resources" of his country (Fischer 1984: 218–19).

The differences between Dominik's and Karimo's novels stem from the Finnish national context and its imperial preconditions. The figure of the Russian Emperor, a crypto-Jew and an antisemitic caricature, is used to prove that Russians are inherently destined to be ruled by others. However, the novel depicts Asians in a positive light. Karimo's Finnish hero discovers an anti-Russian conspiracy of the Empire's minority nations under Tatar-Mongol

leadership. Calculating that the minorities together outnumber the Russians, the underdogs combine their forces (Karimo 1935: 197–200). In the final chapter, the Finnish heroes are pondering what the future will bring:

> Hundreds of millions have awakened in Asia, and they know now that Europe is but a peninsula on the Asian continent. They want to follow the footsteps of Genghis Khan and other world conquerors. There will be a struggle for power between the white and the yellow race … The European nations have already exhausted their spiritual and physical capital. Will they endure the coming giant struggle, or will their dusk arrive … (Karimo 1935: 377–78, my abridged translation)

A sequel, tellingly titled *Between Two Fires*, set in the year 1990 and culminating in a war between Europe and Asia, was never published (*Hakkapeliitta* 1927a; 1927b). However, a scene in the published novel hints at the "key role" that Finland would have played in the sequel. The Tatars present the Finnish hero with a talisman, the golden wheel of Genghis Khan, which "will open the way anywhere" in the Tatar Empire. This might allude to a *paiza*, a type of passport used in the Mongol Empire and familiar in the West through the works of Léon Cahun and Marco Polo (Cahun 1888: 332; Polo 2016: 51, 56–57).

Karimo may have found inspiration in the adventures of his brother-in-arms, Georg Elfvengren, a former officer in the Imperial Russian Army, who had fought in Crimea in the early phase of the Russian Civil War (Karimo 1928: 155–60; Pyykkönen 2004). Elfvengren claimed that he had successfully led the Crimean Tatars against the Bolshevik onslaught, until he returned to Finland to join the Finnish Whites in the spring of 1918. In the popular imagination, Elfvengren as "Khan" of the Crimean Tatars joined the ranks of earlier imperial adventurers, such as the mercenary E. W. G. Becker, known as "Becker-Bey" in the Balkans and Maximilian August Myhrberg, aka "Murad Bey," a volunteer on the Polish side in the November uprising 1830–1831 (Aro 1939: 15).

As the self-proclaimed "youngest white nation," Finns reserved their nation the mercenary's privilege to switch sides and ally with rising Asia, invariably led by Japan. Journalist Risto Vuorjoki (1936), from a family of right-wing independence activists, argued that the Finno-Ugric nations would become "the last representative of the power of the white race," which would build civilization along with the Japanese. "From the perspective of the white race," the Finns had "a tragic but noble task." The reward would be worthwhile: Greater Finland would become a geographical and a historical fact. Like in Castrén's vision, Finland would successfully piggyback on a civilizational catastrophe and avoid the fate of the senior members of the white race. Beyond that, it would be rewarded with an empire of its own. Vuorjoki envisioned a leading position for Finns in the hierarchy. Apart from the admired Japanese, "perhaps

even the Kyrgyz and the Tatars" would reach the rank of a civilization, but only in a distant future (Vuorjoki 1936: 9).

Chiming in with Karimo's speculative fiction and Vuorjoki's geopolitical visions, young nationalist poets in the 1930s dreamed about a future dominated by youthful, aggressive masculinity. Eastern fantasies provided an escape from the melancholy of the aging, effete West, represented by the victors and the neutrals in the First World War. Similarly, Imperial German political rhetoric had positioned German "barbarism" as a positive source of vitality and power vis-à-vis "decadent" French civilization (Jeismann 1992). The Romantic "fellow tribesmen" motif enabled German nationalists to identify with Native Americans and appropriate some of their imagined "unspoiled" affinity to nature (Usbeck 2015: 39). For some Finns, the Sámi people played this role. However, they lacked the warlike qualities of the fantasy Finno-Ugrians, imagined as a warrior tribe from the Ural Mountains. Matti Kuusi, who would later become a respected folklorist, conjured the spirits of Genghis Khan and Attila:

> Come, flurry from Asia's steppes, come: the fells are still standing! Break the border of the sick country of the Old, o hailstorm and lightning! Open the gates of Attila again, forge the road of Genghis Khan, End tottering Europe's curse, bring the dreams of the Ugrians to victory! (Kuusi 1935: 93, my translation)

Praising Kuusi's visions of "the boundless steppes of the East," the poet Paavo Hynynen complained about Finnish poetry focusing on past and peaceful glories, while "in the flurries of Asia, the Japanese is gazing toward the West, rifle in hand" (Hynynen 1935; 1938). The metaphysical catastrophe of global race war required action. As defined by Maldonado-Torres (2016: 22), a "metaphysical catastrophe refers to transmutation of the human, from an intersubjectively constituted node of love and understanding, to an agent of perpetual or endless war." In a worldview based on the inevitability of catastrophe, identifying with the Other as a warlike barbarian became an opportunity, rather than a threat. In the poem "Apollo of the Urals," Hynynen imagined a "will-strong race" rising against Europe:

> O, bards! Genghis Khan has pulled his battle-axe. Over the dusky continent, the riders of Asia are storming. It is time for the desert to sing songs of might, For a frosty will to emerge from the drifts to the stars! (Hynynen 1935: 11, my translation)

Paavo Hynynen was killed in battle during the offensive phase of the Continuation War in the summer of 1941. In the words of a fellow poet, he fulfilled his "severe ideal" as a soldier of a "strong, rising race" (Kajava 1943: 148).

It is doubtful whether the apocalyptic visions of Hynynen's and Kuusi's poems were appealing to Tatar emigrants, who had already experienced the traumatic loss of their native land. Among the younger generation that had been raised in Finland, some participated in public discourse on racial geopolitics. They were often engaged in business, religious and political activities, and intellectual pursuits at the same time, serving their community as "middle-men" in multiple public arenas. Their identification extended beyond the local or national level of the minority community, and their international adventures were not limited to speculative fiction. They located themselves in a transnational community of Turks, linking together such faraway places as Tokyo, Harbin, Istanbul, Warsaw and Berlin. Metaphorically speaking, they already possessed the golden talisman that seemed to open the doors to a vast, albeit fragile and ephemeral, empire.

In the early 1930s, a significant number of Tatars in Finland were increasingly preferring the ethnonym Turk in public discourse, but they continued to pay respects to their native lands along the Middle Volga. In 1930, 'Ayaz Ishaki visited Finland to promote the common cause of all non-Russian nations on Soviet territory. In an interview, Ishaki explained that the Soviet census of 1926 underestimated the amount of non-Russian nationalities (Russians 52 percent, others 48 percent). In many regions, such as Turkestan and Idel-Ural, Russians were an "insignificant minority." Ishaki's exercise in arithmetic was optimistic. All the "Turko-Tatar" nations together constituted approximately 30 million people, and the Finno-Ugrians a similar number. From the Volga to the Altai, the struggle against "red imperialism" was supported by the Paris-based Prometheus Society, Ishaki promised (*Uusi Suomi* 1933: 16).

A Finnish branch of the Prometheus Society was soon established with businessman and author Ibrahim Arifulla as a founding member. In his writings, Arifulla revised the negative image of the Golden Horde and its successor state, the Kazan Khanate. In the anti-Bolshevik discourse, the legacy of these states' rule—the "Tatar yoke"—was often used to explain the supposed "Oriental despotism" of the Russian state and the submissive character of the Russian people. The "Tatar yoke" was a product of 19th-century Russian historiography, recycled by anti-Russian Western propaganda (Bilz-Leonhardt 2008). In contrast, Arifulla (1933a: 10–12; 1933c: 15) described the heir to the Golden Horde, the Kazan Khanate, as an advanced civilization that had been ruthlessly crushed by Ivan the Terrible in 1552. According to Arifulla, the Golden Horde had treated its "alien nationalities" more liberally than "some modern great powers in their colonial politics," and it provided fundamental education in statesmanship to its subjects, including the Russians (1933a: 10–12).

Neither Ibrahim Arifulla nor his brother Sadri Arifullen (1936) mentioned biological kinship between Finns and Turks in their articles and interviews for a Finnish audience. However, they emphasized the historical, social and political connections between Finno-Ugric and Turkic peoples: "For centuries,

we have had the same oppressor: Russia. It has bound us together with warm ties of brotherhood, for both nations, the Finns and the Turks, love freedom" (Arifullen 1936). Rather than reclaiming past glories, Ibrahim Arifulla (1933b: 43) wanted to prove that the potential state of the Tatars was materially and spiritually advanced enough to decide its own fate: "Idel-Ural is second only to Japan …" Arifulla claimed to have discovered a real-life "conspiracy of nations," eerily similar to Aarno Karimo's fictional one: After the foundation of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Tatarstan in 1920, a secret organization of "Turkish Nationalist Communists" gained positions of power in "almost all of the Turkish republics." Their goal had been to build a Turko-Tatar republic "on the ruins of the Union of Soviet Republics." This secret organization negotiated with Ukrainians, Georgians, Belarusians and Armenians to create a united front. In 1929, the conspiracy was revealed and liquidated, but Arifulla (1933b: 43) remained hopeful that rebellion was brewing in Tatarstan.

Indeed, in 1929, Finnish newspapers had publicized Soviet trials against activists promoting "Turanian supremacy" (*Uusi Suomi* 1929). According to the Soviet press, Tatar Bolshevik leader Mirsaid Sultangaliev had claimed that the Turks and the Mongols had mastered the concept of dialectic materialism—as Sultangaliev phrased it, "energetic materialism"—hundreds of years before the Western proletariat (Bennigsen and Wimbusch 1979: 49). He was accused of conspiring with a variety of bourgeois nationalists against Soviet power, although he had organized openly in separatist associations during the revolution, according to the accepted policy at the time (Shnirelman 1996: 17). A crucial detail in the charges seems to have been true: In 1923, Sultangaliev had tried to establish secret contacts with Bashkir, Persian, Crimean and Turkish Communists. In one of the letters discovered by the GPU, Sultangaliev had suggested contacting the Bashkir nationalist Zeki Velidi (Togan), who was thought to be well connected among anti-Bolshevik rebels in Central Asia (Baker 2014: 603).

Sultangaliev, like Maqsudi and Ishaki, wanted to prove that Eastern nations were autonomous historical subjects, just as the Western nations. However, Sultangaliev's goal was internationalist. He identified the driving force of world revolution in the colonized nations in the East, not the Western industrial proletariat that remained complicit in imperialism and colonialism (Baker 2014: 605–06). After the purge of Sultangaliev and other National Communists in 1928–1929, Tatar historians in the Soviet Union had to avoid glorification of the Golden Horde (Bennigsen and Wimbush 1979: 89–92; Shnirelman 1996: 7). In Soviet historiography, the integration of Tatar lands into the Russian Empire appeared a historical necessity, although Tsarist policies against Muslim populations were denounced as "cruel colonialist policy" (Halikov 2011: 87).

The Prometheus Club that provided a prestigious platform for the ideas of Ibrahim Arifulla had been maintained with financial support from the Polish state. When Germany occupied Poland, activities had to cease (Copeaux 1993: 29). A new opportunity to improve the public profile of Tatars or Finnish Turks

came in 1941, when Finland joined Germany's Barbarossa offensive to regain territories lost in the Winter War (1939–1940). Tampere businessman and publisher Zinetullah Ahsen (Böre) had a letter to the editor published in the largest newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat*, two months into the offensive. The purpose of his piece was to promote the agency of Turkic nations. They were not passive victims of the Bolsheviks, who had split them with promises of national autonomy. Together with Greater Germany and Greater Finland, a Greater Turkey would guarantee peace in Europe (Ahsän [sic] 1941). Soon, Finnish opinion pieces echoed the ideas of Ahsen and Arifulla (*Asemies* 1941; Timo 1941), and historian Kaarlo Iivari Karttunen (1941) described Tatars fighting side by side with the Finnish tribes against an "Asiatic" Moscow, "heir to the Mongols."

With his letter, Ahsen tried to promote goodwill for the Tatars and the Turks in the event of a German victory, and to protect them against stereotypical associations with Russia and the East. The idea of a common destiny also helped legitimize the presence of Tatars in Finland at a time when citizenship applications were dependent on often arbitrary character evaluations by local authorities (Leitzinger 2006: 212, 215–18). This came at the expense of a connection to Asia that Tatars have often been loath to miss.

Both Finns and Tatars approached the "racial stigma" of their respective nations with delicacy. Both wanted to clarify a historical legacy that defied attempts to force it into oppressive and determinist racial hierarchies formulated by scholars and scientists in a plethora of disciplines since the late 18th century. But Tatars had less motivation to abandon their connection to the Mongols. The acceptance of the ethnonym "Tatar" is perhaps the strongest piece of evidence. After all, it connected the Volga Turks to one of the greatest empires in world history, an empire that had put the fear of God into proud Europeans and left them in atavistic terror of the East.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored imperial middle-men and fellow travelers, Finns and Tatars, mainly from the perspective of experts and scholars—but also popular authors and political activists—who aimed to influence the positions of their nations within and against Empire. While all had to relate to what the dominant global ideology—colonialism—treated as an objectively verifiable racial and civilizational hierarchy, their ambitions went beyond accepting their collective place. Despite the racial stigma, the Mongol Empire proved to be a tempting past to claim. In creative hands, the notion of dynamic nomad warriors destroying a decadent civilization could provide comfort in times of crisis. Old Europe seemed to be running out of time, but the noble steppe savage kick-started a new cycle of progress. Identification with potential relatives was conditioned by pragmatic calculations and immediate needs in the present.

Besides personal sympathies, mutual generosity was prompted by "arithmetic pragmatism." The numbers of non-Russian minorities in Soviet Russia were calculated to be higher in sum than the number of the majority nationality. Finnish supporters of Tatar independence returned to this argument in the hope that the minorities could unite their forces in an uprising of apocalyptic dimensions. Authors of the interwar era imagined a future alliance between Finns, Turks and Mongols against the common enemy, often including the Japanese and other Asian nations as an "iron chain" surrounding Russia. This sympathy rarely translated into beliefs of racial affinity.

Arguably, it was the Tatars' warlike reputation that made them acceptable as allies to the Finns, just as the myth of Genghis Khan was too powerful to be discarded by Turkic intellectuals. In both cases, one can speculate how the mediating power of German geopolitics, romanticism and national identity, as well as the uniting power of a common enemy, Russia, and the rise of Japan as a military power, served to make the racial stigma less of a taint and more of a badge of honor.

Between discourses on white-dominated racial hierarchies on the one hand and culturally pessimist predictions of the "decline of the West" on the other, an auto-exotic identification with warrior tribes opened a way out from the quandary. This explains the attraction of Genghis Khan's legitimizing lineage. An alliance with Asians against the West became an attractive fantasy for some Finnish nationalists, especially those with military experience and knowledge about the multi-national army of the Russian Empire. For Tatar intellectuals, stereotypes had to be tamed with historical narratives that did justice to the Islamic history of their native region. The brothers Ibrahim Arifulla and Sadri Arifullen's interventions in Finnish public discourse had a multiple didactic purpose: to educate the Finnish public about the plight of their community, to disconnect it from negative associations with Russia and to connect it to modern Turkey, while holding on to the legacy of the ancient states that legitimized the claim to an independent state. In times of crisis, the warlike narratives could be utilized to show allegiance to the cause of the host state, or to propose a cooperative project that would re-center the national project of the Volga Turks themselves.

The imperial experience provides a sometimes-hidden ideological framework for both Finns and Tatars in their aspiration for future empires of their own—a Greater Finland, a united Central Asian Turkestan or a Greater Turkey. The race narratives in this study are never only stories about the past—they are projections of fears and hopes onto an apocalyptic future that might open windows of opportunities, just as the two world wars did.

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Notes

[1] Obsolete term for the Enets-Nenets, the Nganasan and the Selkup peoples.
[2] The melody can be accessed in the collection Suomen Kansan eSävelmät (the Finnish electronic folk song database): https://jyx.jyu.fi/handle/123456789/30616
[3] Emigrants settling in Turkey followed the surname law of 1934 and adopted new surnames. I include the post-1934 surname in brackets when referring to events before 1934.
[4] In India, the Turkish victory was celebrated as "an Asian victory over Europeans" (Heptulla 1991: 71).

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Afterword

Re-Narrating Finnish Histories and Searching for the Politics of Hope

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When we published the book *Complying with Colonialism: Gender, Race and Ethnicity in the Nordic Region* (Keskinen et al. 2009) over a decade ago, it directly sparked the interest of several Nordic and Central European scholars working with postcolonial and critical race perspectives. The response in Finland was less pronounced, despite the fact that a large part of the contributors came from Finland and the book was reviewed by Finnish scientific journals in gender studies and sociology, among others. In the book, we argued that the Nordic countries are characterized by "colonial complicity"—a concept developed to address the multiple entanglements in the colonial project by countries that had few or no overseas colonies during the heyday of European colonialism. It refers to the ways in which the economic, political, cultural and knowledge-production processes, developed in and through European colonialism, produced a world-system, in which Europe became equalized with civilized, culturally superior and economically developed nations. Even those parts of Europe not considered to constitute its political and cultural core, nor being the prime motors of the cross-Atlantic "triangular trade," still benefited in many ways from their location in Europe and (what later became named as)

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the "Western world." Race and racial thinking was an elementary part of this world-system and the power relations it was built on.

The concept "colonial complicity" addressed and sought to articulate the different positions that European countries took in relation to the colonial project. In addition to colonial powers such as Spain, Britain and France, the analytical gaze needed to be directed toward how other parts of Europe participated in and benefited from colonialism and the trade of colonial goods, enslaved people and so forth. We were interested in outlining the differences and the center-marginality relations within Europe, while examining the broad implications of colonialism and racial thinking. Writing from a decolonial perspective, Manuela Boatcă, Sergio Costa and Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez (2010) point out that a shift in the understanding of the "Occident" took place during the colonial era. The South European countries (Spain, Portugal) that started the over 400-year period of European colonialism gradually lost their leading role to their European rivals. As a result, the North-Western parts of Europe became the center that defined prevailing notions of modernity, Europeanness and progress—not only in relation to overseas colonies, but also to other regions within Europe. In this process, Southern and Eastern Europeans came to be perceived as less modern and less white than the new "heart of Europe," centering countries like England, France and Germany.

The Nordic countries were located in varying positions along this European center-margin division. While not exactly belonging to the "heart of Europe," Denmark and Sweden were able to lay claims on modernity in economic, political and cultural terms, and participated in the race to establish colonies both overseas and in the Arctic (Höglund and Andersson 2019; Loftsdóttir and Jensen 2012; Naum and Nordin 2014). In racial taxonomies, the majority populations in these countries, as in Norway, were categorized to the superior Nordic race (Broberg and Tydén 2003; Hübinette 2017). While parts of the Nordic region and its populations thus could easily lay claims to modernity and white Europeanness, others were deemed as peripheral and less white or non-white. The latter group consisted of racialized minorities and Indigenous People within and across the Nordic kingdoms (Keskinen, Skaptadóttir and Toivanen 2019a). Even Finnish history, especially in the pre-independence and interwar periods, witnesses an ambiguous inside/outside position in relation to Europeanness and whiteness (Keskinen 2014; 2019). Those questioning the Europeanness/whiteness of the Finns were predominantly located in the other European nations and the United States, while the Finnish self-definition, as promoted by politicians and developed in scientific endeavors, largely sought to prove belongingness to white Europe (Isaksson 2001; Kemiläinen 1985).

In today's Finland, this historical ambiguity in relation to whiteness is not very well known—rather, addressing the thought of the "Mongolian descent" of the Finns is often treated as a humorous anecdote or a relic of the past that is difficult to understand. That whiteness today seems such a self-evident and taken-for-granted characteristic of Finnishness should not make us blind to the

histories that produced Finnish whiteness. The seductiveness of being included in hegemonic notions of Eurocentric modernity (Vuorela 2009) appealed especially to nations at the margins of it and making distinctions toward geographical areas and people perceived to be non-white was a central way of claiming belongingness to Europe (Urponen 2010). Even recent studies of belongingness among youth of migrant background show that the boundaries of Finnishness are rigid and difficult to cross for groups ethnicized and racialized as "others" (Haikkola 2012; Toivanen 2014). Many contributions in this book further elaborate on the relationship between whiteness and Finnishness, as well as their exclusionary effects, showing the relevance of such analytical perspectives to the study of the past and the present.

Finnish Settler Colonialism and Coloniality

The demand to address questions of colonization and its different layers in the Finnish context has also come from Sámi researchers, activists and artists. Such an analysis does not make use of solely, and sometimes not at all, theories of whiteness; instead, it often draws on Indigenous studies and decolonial perspectives. Many Sámi researchers find inspiration in the concept of "settler colonialism" (Kuokkanen 2020; Veracini 2010; Wolfe 2006), which has been developed to address the logic of elimination and the practices characteristic to the colonization of Indigenous lands. Settler-colonial logic of elimination can take different shapes, ranging from genocide to cultural elimination, linguisticide, expulsion of Indigenous populations and replacement of Indigenous institutions with those of the settlers. The settler-colonial logic builds on removal in the effort of gaining access to land; thus, "territoriality is settler colonialism's specific, irreducible element" (Wolfe 2006: 388). While operating on a territorial and eliminatory logic, settler colonialism has often been built on racial grammar and racial hierarchies that have legitimized its extractive politics and land appropriation. Settler colonialism also seeks to naturalize its dominance and existence, reducing space for Indigenous cultures and practices, and presenting its power as benevolent, inevitable or belonging to the past (Kuokkanen 2020). In understandings based on the concept of "settler colonialism," the colonization of Sápmi and the eliminatory logic are ongoing processes and structures. This perspective examines both the historical background and current structures of Nordic societies. Among others, the fishing agreement on the Deatnu River and the plans of building the Arctic Railway from Northern Finland to the coast of Norway are examples of the continued extractive politics of settler states.

The Sámi researcher Veli-Pekka Lehtola (2015) has presented a connected, yet somewhat different, analytical perspective. He uses the concept "persuasive colonialism" to refer to the Finnish colonization of the Sápmi, which has historically taken different forms than the Norwegian or Swedish colonial politics.

The Norwegian assimilation policy (Norwegianization) was coded in legislation and policy measures, whereas the Swedish policy toward the Sámi was based on the essentializing *Lapp skall vara Lapp* (the Sámi should remain Sámi) ideology and a school system that created a separate, less comprehensible educational structure for Sámi children. The Finnish state, on the other hand, did not announce an assimilatory policy or develop parallel structures based on ethnicity, but used its authority and dominance to "dictate in a colonial and fatherly manner what was good for the Sámi" (ibid. 29). The homogenizing ideology of the newly established nation-state was achieved by ignoring and repressing histories, practices and ways of living that did not suit the hegemonic national narrative (Keskinen, Skaptadóttir and Toivanen 2019b). The developing welfare state, with its universalistic discourse, replaced Sámi institutions, culture and language through the installation of its institutions, norms and knowledge production as dominant in the Sámi areas.

In this book, many contributions refer to the concept of "coloniality," developed in decolonial research in Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa. Coloniality is a useful concept in many ways, since it connects colonial/racial histories to the present operations of power, knowledge and subjectivity. In the theorization of Aníbal Quijano (2000), the emphasis was on coloniality of power or what can also be discussed as the "colonial matrix of power." Quijano examined the birth of a new global power—colonial/modern Eurocentered capitalism—that was built on race as the principle of classifying the peoples of the world, and the control of labor, resources and products. Modernity and rationality were presented as exclusively European characteristics, while the colonized peoples were perceived as inferior and in lack of (relevant) knowledge. Even today, we witness the prevailing global dominance of Eurocentric theoretical models, methodology and academic institutions. Maria Lugones (2010) has argued for the need to understand how the modern, colonial gender system was imposed on the colonized subjects, while masking this in notions of "civilizing missions" and Christianity. She proposes an agenda for decolonizing gender, referring to "a critique of racialized, colonial, and capitalist heterosexualist gender oppression as a lived transformation of the social" (ibid. 746). Her approach can be seen as one of the decolonial strands that theorize the intersubjective elements of coloniality.

Coloniality as a concept articulates the connections between past and present colonial/racial relations more firmly than postcolonial perspectives, which tend to address colonial legacies and may end up presenting racial hierarchies as a residue of bygone times. Coloniality also places the Indigenous perspective at the center of the analysis of colonial and racial relations, which highlights its relevance for the analysis of the Nordic countries (Tlostanova, Thapar-Björkert and Knobblock 2019). Nevertheless, the fact that coloniality is a broad and encompassing term may also provide challenges for empirical and context-specific analysis. It may not be so easy to distinguish the specific forms that race, racism and whiteness take in the Nordic/Finnish context, with such a

broad and temporally far-reaching concept. The research field examining the varying ways in which Indigenous peoples, migrants and racialized minorities are treated by the state, businesses or majoritized white populations may be best equipped when addressing postcolonial and decolonial perspectives, as well as critical race and whiteness studies as a rich set of theoretical traditions from which individual researchers can draw upon depending on their analytical focus.

"Crisis of White Hegemony" and Politics of Hopeful Solidarity

The editors outline three central themes for this volume—Finnishness, Whiteness and Coloniality. I would like to end with a discussion that, in my view, connects these three themes together, while arguing for the need of social change and the politics of hope. The Finnish society has for some time been in a state that I have called the "crisis of white hegemony" (Keskinen 2018). The connection between whiteness and national identity so carefully built since the independence and especially in the welfare state period after the Second World War, resulting in a firm location within European whiteness, has again been questioned. This time not by race scientists, who would locate Finns among the non-white races as in the 19th and early 20th centuries, but by the presence of new groups racialized as non-white who have found a home in Finland. The perception of Finnishness as whiteness was disturbed even earlier, through the presence of the Roma, Sámi, Jewish and Tatar communities that never did fit into the narrow definitions of Finnish whiteness. But the migration from the 1990s, with increasing (albeit in European comparison low) numbers of migrants from former European colonies, has disturbed the "white hegemony," building on the consent, common sense and taken-for-granted notions by white Finns, even more severely. This became evident in the aftermath of the 2015 asylum migration, when extreme right groups mobilized in the streets and on social media. The crisis atmosphere was also reflected in the moral panic with which the newly arrived migrants were met by the media and leading politicians of the period. Since the middle of the first decade of the 2000s, white nationalism has mobilized increasingly in politics and the digital space (Keskinen 2011; 2013). The aim of white nationalism is to implement a shift from racial hegemony to racial domination, characterized by coercion, explicit racial hierarchies and expulsion of those perceived as "others."

The risks connected to white nationalism and racial dominance agendas are serious and threaten both those defined as racial "others" and the political opponents of white nationalism (understood as "traitors" of the nation/race; see Keskinen 2011). However, the "crisis of white hegemony" need not be a state to mourn (cf. Hübinette and Lundström 2014) or have entirely negative consequences. Those who view the connection between Finnishness and whiteness as a violent model, causing pain for those not included in its narrow

definitions of belonging and reproducing colonial/racial structures, can find that the instability of and the disturbance to the taken-for-granted (white) consensus create a moment for social change. When questioning practices that uphold the intertwinement of Finnishness and whiteness, state and business actions against Sámi land rights, the conflation of racism and immigration policies, labor market hierarchies and other violent aspects of the current social order, we are opening spaces for a "politics of hopeful solidarity" (see also Keskinen, Skaptadóttir and Toivanen 2019b). This means alliances that work to develop alternatives to both "white hegemony" and "white domination," recognizing the colonial/racial past and present power relations, but seeking ways to move beyond them. Such actions and alliances are by necessity changing, contradictory and disharmonious, but enable a "politics of hopeful solidarity" that is not only aimed for today, but also for the future.

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Finnishness, Whiteness and Coloniality reflects the shifting experiences and framings of Finnishness and its relation to race and coloniality. Through different understandings and analyses, its multidisciplinary contributions question and problematise what may seem self-evident aspects of Finnish life and Finnishness, unravelling the cultural myth of a normative Finnish (white) ethnicity.

The book illuminates how Indigenous, racialized and other minoritized communities have participated in defining notions of Finnishness, how historical and recent processes of migration have challenged the traditional conceptualisations of the nation-state and its population, and how imperial relationships have contributed to a complex set of discourses on Finnish compliance and identity.

In this book, scholars from cultural studies, history, sociology, linguistics, genetics, among others, take a first step in opening up a complex set of realities that define Finland's changing role in the world and as a home to diverse populations.

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