

YOUNG PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCES OF RACISM IN COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL AND UPPER SECONDARY LEVEL EDUCATION

- Contributor
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- Young people's experiences of bullying, discrimination and racism were studied through two surveys and two rounds of interviews as part of the TRANSIT research project funded by the Academy of Finland.
- The results presented here have previously been published in the following publications:
 - Zacheus, Kalalahti, Varjo et al. (2017). Yläkouluikäisten syrjinnän, kiusaamisen ja rasismien kokemukset. *Terra* 129:1, pp. 3–15.
 - Zacheus, Kalalahti, Varjo et al. (2019). Discrimination, harassment and racism in Finnish lower secondary schools. *Nordic Journal of Migration Research* 9:1, pp. 81–98.
 - Jahnukainen, Kalalahti & Kivirauma (Eds.)(2019). *Oma paikka haussa. Maahanmuuttotataustaiset nuoret ja koulutus*. Helsinki: Gaudeamus.

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- The first survey (n=447) and interviews (n=113) were gathered in spring 2015 at the end of comprehensive school in Turku and Helsinki (pupils from 8 schools altogether) and the second survey (n=294) and interviews (n=34) in 2017–2018 during the upper secondary level with those participants of the 2015 study who agreed to a new survey and interview.
- In this context, a young person with an immigrant background refers to a person of whose parents at least one was born abroad.

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- Particularly young people with an immigrant background whose appearance clearly differs from the majority population had experienced many forms of discrimination and racism, such as name-calling because of their skin colour.
- Over 90 percent of the majority population young people agreed with the statement that they feel they are Finnish, but less than 50 percent of young people with an immigrant background felt this way.
- Young people with an immigrant background (24%) more often than the majority population (12%) agreed with wanting to be like other students in their schools.
- Over half (51%) of the majority population young people agreed with the statement that there is a lot of discrimination in Finland, whereas under half (46%) of other respondents felt this way.

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- Irrespective of the immigrant background, about a quarter of young people said that they had experienced discrimination or bullying in school.
- Young people with an immigrant background had been bullied or discriminated against in their leisure time slightly more often than young people of the majority population but there was no difference between the groups in the discrimination experienced in school.
- Among those with a first generation immigrant background, experiences of bullying and discrimination were, on average, more common than among second generation immigrants.
- Even though the mechanisms of bullying were often similar for both the majority population and those with an immigrant background, the experiences of discrimination and racism differed greatly depending on whether they were seen from the point of view of young people in the majority population or those with an immigrant background. Actions that someone in the majority population did not consider racist at all may have felt very racist from the viewpoint of someone with an immigrant background.

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- Young people's experiences of bullying and discrimination in Turku and in the Helsinki metropolitan area decreased in the 2.5 years between the spring of the ninth grade and the third year of the upper secondary level. This was the case in both educational institutions and leisure time, for both those with an immigrant background and those in the majority population, for girls and boys, for young people of both first and second generation immigrant background.
- However, young people's view that there is a lot of discrimination in Finland still remained relatively high (about half of them felt this way).

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- Conclusions and recommendations
 - Compulsory multicultural education for decision-makers, public officials, administrative staff, teachers, counsellors and journalists must be increased.
 - All educational institutions on all levels of education need a compulsory study module on multiculturalism.
 - When organizing discussions or other events about racism, experts should be invited to speak in them, and inviting people who speak about the matter a lot but know little should be avoided.
 - More campaigning against racism with the help of public figures is needed.