Immigration, Multiculturalism and Biopolitical Projects on 'Difference': Negotiating Intersecting Social Divisions From Positions of Privilege and Disadvantage

NJMR NORDIC JOURNAL OF MIGRATION RESEARCH

RESEARCH

HUP HELSINKI UNIVERSITY PRESS

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ABSTRACT

Informed by Foucault's concept of biopolitics, in this study we examine how lived experiences of privilege and disadvantage may be at play in respondents' negotiations of Finnish discourses on immigration, multiculturalism and 'difference'. The main research material was produced by Finnish citizens whose practices around sociability and gender/sex have been formally marked as 'abnormal' by welfare state and health care institutions: Asperger's diagnosed persons and persons with transgender life experiences. We analyse the research material – which was elicited using vignettes – using tools from critical discourse analysis that we implement through an intersectional lens. In their negotiations of the vignettes, participants partly identify with conflicting views. On the one hand, they approach discourses and practices on and around 'difference', immigration and multiculturalism through homogenising and subjugating categorisations, viewpoints and assumptions. On the other hand, they also question some of them, leaving potential openings for social transformation.

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KEYWORDS:

Intersectionality; Critical discourse analysis; Biopolitics; Representation; Psychopathologization

TO CITE THIS ARTICLE:

Menard, R and Törrönen, J. 2023. Immigration, Multiculturalism and Biopolitical Projects on 'Difference': Negotiating Intersecting Social Divisions From Positions of Privilege and Disadvantage. *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*, 13(1): 6, pp. 1–23. DOI: https://doi.org/10.33134/njmr.513

INTRODUCTION

Finland has consistently ranked as the world's happiest country, a ranking that in large part has been attributed to welfare state policies and the presumed existence of equality. Yet Finland's elite positioning in happiness and equality coincides with – among other contradictions – rates of intimate partner violence twice that of the European average, high suicide rates and the rise to power of the populist far-right political party, the 'Basic' or 'True Finns' (*Perussuomalaiset*). In some ways then, there are significant disjoints in hegemonic Finnish national identities and symbolism based on principles of equality and the welfare state, in particular, and how these nationalisms play out in everyday practices inside the nation. Whiteness, for example, is so intricately linked with Finnishness that Finnish citizens of colour are effectively and consistently pushed to its constitutive outside (Krivonos 2018; Leinonen 2012; Rastas 2005), as well as to the outside of the hegemonic value of equality discourses associated with Finnishness (Venäläinen & Menard 2022). Normative discourses and discursive practices around 'diversity' or 'multiculturalism' and particular discourses on 'equality' are in disharmonious relations (e.g. Conversi 2008; Keskinen 2012), which are felt in lived experiences of Finnish citizens and residents of colour.

Our aim in this paper is to analyse and interpret how historically, materially and socially embedded Finnish discourses on immigration, multiculturalism and diversity or 'difference' are taken up and negotiated by Finnish citizens whose everyday practices have been managed and controlled through psychiatric and state structures. The main research material was produced by Finnish citizens whose practices around sociability and gender/sex have been formally marked and produced as 'abnormal' by welfare state and health care institutions, for example through clinical interventions and psychiatric diagnoses. Participants in this study are Asperger's diagnosed persons and persons with transgender experiences. In this paper, we approach 'Asperger's' and 'transgender' as socially constructed identity categories that are products of historical and biopolitical state practices aimed at sociocultural homogenisation.

In our analyses, we consider the ways in which lived experiences of privilege based in categories of Finnish citizenship on one hand, and experiences of disadvantage based on abnormalisation and psychopathologisation on the other, may intersect and be at play in participants' negotiations of the discourses that we focus on in this paper. In our analyses we use tools from critical discourse analysis (e.g. Fairclough 2003) that we implement through an intersectional framework (e.g. Yuval-Davis 2006). An intersectional perspective directs our focus to the ways in which participants' meaning-making around immigration, multiculturalism and 'difference' may both reflect and (re)produce intersecting privileges and disadvantages that become relevant to them in particular discursive contexts. Foucault's concept of biopolitics informs our analysis to the extent that we take these lived and discursively maintained intersections as being at least partially produced and managed by the state through racialised governance (e.g. immigration policies), and Finnish welfare state healthcare practices around gender and sociability that we presume are relevant to our participants' everyday lives. Our focus and aims in this paper are important in considering the potentialities for solidarity between differently subjugated and minoritized groups as openings for social transformation and change.

We elicited the research material using two vignettes, allowing respondents to actively negotiate shifting categories, perspectives and assumptions as regards particular conversational topics (Törrönen 2018). The vignettes deal with political discussions

that are topical in Finland, such as social inclusion and exclusion, migration and multiculturalism and equality and 'difference'. One of these vignettes is built from power dominant positions of entitlement to Finnish resources and Finnishness, while the other criticises normalisation processes and cultural assimilation, citing these aspects as creating inequalities and social exclusion. We analyse how our respondents interpret these vignettes in terms of social divisions, and through such interpretations build their own meanings and interpersonal positionings in relation to them. We conduct our analyses with sensitivity to intersections between discourses on immigration and multiculturalism in the vignettes on one hand, and the respondents' positionings of privilege and disadvantage discussed above on the other.

We proceed by first contextualising the research. We focus on how dominant conceptualisations of Finnishness and multiculturalism have developed in correspondence with homogenising and biopolitical projects that are relevant to the social positions and life experiences of our participants, as well as to migrants in Finland. After outlining the theoretical and methodological backdrops from intersectional theory and critical discourse analysis that we use in this paper, we examine the vignettes and respondents' readings and uses of them in their text productions. Our discussion and conclusion focus on the societal implications of our interpretations, particularly in relation to how long standing biopolitical projects may be implicated in the respondents' texts, and if our interpretations illuminate any openings for social change.

BACKGROUND AND APPROACH

HOMOGENISING PROJECTS AND MULTI-CULTURE IN THE FINNISH NATIONAL CONTEXT

In nation-building efforts after Finnish independence and the Civil War of 1918, ethnic, sociocultural and linguistic differences were seen as threatening the potential for popular unification and suppressed (Häkli 1999; Hietala 2005: 196; Paasi 1992). This national project worked in helping to produce both a linguistic nationalism as well as a myth of Finland as culturally homogenous (e.g. Häkkinen & Tervonen 2004; Hult & Pietikainen 2014).

During the same period, the popularisation of eugenic thought in Europe and the United States was also influential in Finland (Hietala 2005; Rajas 2014: 133–135). For example, a state-funded eugenics educational campaign was implemented starting in the 1920s, where there was an emphasis on how hereditary factors impact the development of both the individual and the entire population (Hietala 2005). The influence of eugenics in Finland culminated in 1934 with the passing of the sterilisation act, with only 14 out of 200 Finnish Parliament members voting against it. Official targets of sterilisation were the 'mentally ill', 'degenerates', 'sex offenders', 'criminals', 'alcoholics', 'idiots' and other people deemed a burden to Finnish society. Unofficially, the targeting of groups was also based upon racialised, gendered, ableist and classist categorisations (Mattila 1999).

In addition, eugenic thought and practices were active during the development and implementation of Finnish nation-building projects. Primary among these projects was the development of the welfare state, which was conceptualised and built with intentions to reduce social class distinctions, raise the standard of living and improve the health of 'the populous' (Esping-Andersen 1990). Yet while welfare state

provisions based on concepts of universal distributions of rights and resources were becoming increasingly formalised in law, eugenic thought was being enacted through alliances between civil servants and state actors, including those involved in planning and building the welfare state (Hietala 2005).

Eugenic thought also influenced ideas about immigration. For example, while serving as Interior Minister in 1938, longstanding and contemporarily glorified President Urho Kekkonen advised that Eastern-European Jews be denied entry at the border due to their supposed 'standard of civilisation'. Similar exclusionary policies were also attempted with the first Somali refugees in Finland in the 1990s, which eventually gave way to restrictive asylum policies (Rajas 2014).

MIGRATING INTO 'THE LAND OF EQUALITY'

Coinciding with an increase in the numbers of non-White immigrants in Finland starting from the 1980s, multiculturalism became an increasingly important topic of discussion. By the 90s, the Finnish political climate was characterised by a polemic between welfare state values of equality, universalism and solidarity on one hand, and difference and racial, ethnic and cultural diversity on the other. This polemic has been built and maintained in a variety of ways. For instance, the assumption of welfare society that all people are essentially similar is taken as incompatible with multicultural ideals that differences between people should be recognised and taken into account (Puuronen 2004). Equality has also been positioned as threatened by affirmative action policies that migrants purportedly unfairly 'benefit from' (Keskinen 2016). Discourses on immigration, multiculturalism and diversity occupy discursively contentious spaces that are in tension with those of the Finnish welfare model.

Importantly, popular understandings of Finland as 'previously homogenous' have become entangled with public knowledge of increasing immigration rates, while the two phenomena are understood as interdependent (Tuori 2007). This perceived interdependence contributes to race being built as *the* significant 'difference' in the Finnish nation. Thus a dominant way of 'doing diversity' in Finland is by positioning immigrants as 'bringing' multiculturalism, diversity or 'difference' – as well as inequality – into the nation (Menard, 2016b). When taken as positive, multiculturalism is argued as valuable for 'Finns' in learning tolerance, for 'bringing colour' into the nation or diversifying the gene-pool, and for contributing to the ageing workforce. The way that social categories of equality, universalism, diversity and difference intersect here is such that migrants' value is produced as instrumental. When taken as negative, migrants may be positioned as lacking and in need of 'repair' and of being educated in Finnishness and, in particular, Finnish gender equality, which is understood as an already accomplished project (e.g. Tuori 2007). At worst immigrants are seen as being incapable of such repair, and thus in need of exclusion (Venäläinen & Menard 2022). Thus while gender equality in Finland is often seen as a successful, indigenous national project that is universally distributed, multiculturalism is perceived as 'coming from the outside' and external to Finnishness and Finnish equality (Holli et al. 2005; Tuori 2007).

ONGOING MANAGEMENT OF THE 'UNFIT'

In the paper, we understand the building and maintenance of the Finnish welfare state as intimately entwined with biopolitics. According to Foucault (2003: 245), 'Biopolitics deals with the population, with the population as a political problem, as a problem that is at once scientific and political, as a biological problem and as power's

DOI: 10.33134/njmr.513

problem'. In dealing with this problem, modern states have developed biopolitical projects that aim at constructing the nation as a homogenous populace. The function of these practices is to compartmentalise the population into the fit and the unfit, according to whatever biologically construed classification (e.g. race, sex/gender, sexuality, ability etc.) may be deployed. Institutionalised managements of life and death – enacted via law enforcement, prison systems and health/illness institutions for example target these different categories of people in different ways. These materialisations of biopower extend beyond the practices of state actors, and into their bodily targets. State actors thus implement normalisation processes in ways that have material effects, altering bodies and bodily practices along biopolitical lines.

A biopolitical framework is relevant to this study in three primary ways. Firstly, biopolitics is useful for understanding some of the ways in which bodies marked through race and immigration discourses and practices have come to matter in modern nation-states. A vast amount of work has been done on the biopolitics of immigration and 'race', probably not least because 'race' and racism were focal in Foucault's development of his theory of biopolitics. Racism fulfils the function of allowing for an imaginary of a homogeneous population, thus also making possible an imagined disruption of it by 'non-natives' (Lemke 2011: 41–42). Where such homogeneity is considered beneficial for a 'healthy welfare state' – as we have argued has historically been the case in Finland – a boundary between 'good' and 'bad' members of the population is created that is managed along lines of race, immigration and citizenship through which the attributes of normal and abnormal are articulated. Moreover, from the 90s onwards, the number of immigrants has increased in the Nordic welfare states (Hervik 2019), thus opening biopolitical practices to new kinds of challenges and controversies and thereby increasing the importance of the biopolitical approach.

Secondly, biopolitical theory is relevant to our study in that participants include persons diagnosed with 'Asperger's syndrome'. Asperger's has been described as a genetically based developmental disorder affecting social interaction that is located on the 'less severe' end of a spectrum of autism diagnostic classifications. The name comes from Hans Asperger, an Austrian physician working in the Nazi era who identified Asperger's in children that he was observing in his clinics. Although Asperger has been celebrated for 'protecting' these children, he legitimised forced sterilisations, used harsh diagnostic language (e.g. 'autistic psychopaths'), and cooperated with the child euthanasia programme – sending children deemed 'uneducable' and 'unemployable' to killing facilities (Czech 2018).

Kanner (1943) pathologised autism as an inborn psychiatric disorder of affective contact exacerbated by cold mothering. The shift away from the 'refrigerator mother' theory did not begin until over 20 years later (see Nadesan 2005). Persons marked as autistic are nevertheless still constructed as being in their own world and selfish, as having underdeveloped minds and selves (e.g. Hobson 1993), and lower levels of empathy (e.g. Baron-Cohen 1985). There is, however, some resistance to essentialised and hegemonic understandings of Asperger's and autism. In critical autism studies for example assumptions as regards a non-autistic 'norm' are questioned (Nadesan 2005; O'Dell et al. 2016). Neurodiversity activists have challenged autism as a deficit, pathology or negative embodiment (Ortega 2013), approaching 'autistic ways of being' as comprehensible interaction styles (Murray 2008).

In Finland, an individual perceived as possibly being autistic may undergo extensive diagnostic assessments through the public healthcare system in order to gain access

DOI: 10.33134/njmr.513

to state-subsidised specialised education, healthcare or psychotherapy. In this study, we understand autism and Asperger's as socially and discursively produced identity categories that are necessarily imbued with situated meanings that are framed by specific historical, social and cultural contexts (e.g. Goodley 2018; O'Dell et al. 2016). We also take these social constructions as having real, material effects on the everyday lives of those who have been labelled as such.

Thirdly, a biopolitical framework is relevant in that study participants also include transgender persons. The pathologisation of transgender embodiments can be traced at least to the related pathologisation of transvestitism, which was included as a diagnosis in the first DSM in 1952 in the sexual deviation section that homosexuality also appeared in. The continued psychopathologisation of sexual and gender non-normativity has gone through a multiple revisions and sub-categorisations. 'Transsexualism' and 'gender identity disorder in childhood' diagnoses in the 1980 DSM III were created as distinct from transvestitism due to a lack of associated sexual pleasure that was claimed to accompany transvestitism. Transgender diagnoses nevertheless still work on maintaining the conceptual links between male effeminacy and sexual perversion that were previously held together through pathologisations of homosexuality (Tosh 2014).

In Finland, a transsexual diagnosis is required in order to update gendered aspects of Finnish legal documents such as a person's first name, social security number and gender marker, as well as to access transgender related healthcare. Transpersons seeking documentation changes or trans-related healthcare are also required to pass a 'real-life test' that lasts 12 months (living in their 'new gender/sex' in everyday life), as well as 'commit' themselves to their 'new sex' via sterilisation or infertility. Repo (2019: 98–99) argues that although it is tempting to link the 2003 trans-sterilisation laws in Finland to the nation's eugenic past, that the laws are more of a shift towards normalisation projects on life related to nuclear family life and kinship.

Social subsidisation of trans-related health care in Finland are thus arguably at least in part biopolitical projects: They are attempts at aligning trans-bodies into the gender binary and cisnormative nuclear family model, making them more 'hidden' and unnoticeable. These biopolitical practices aim to manage gender non-conforming and fluid embodiments, while also sustaining the reification of what is taken as normal and healthy gender expression (Spade 2006). Eugenic practices such as the trans-sterilisation laws that govern access to body-modifying medical treatments and appropriate legal documentation are an explicit example of operations of biopower on trans-bodies (e.g., Lowik 2018).

INTERSECTIONALITY

In this study, our aims and research questions are guided by intersectional theory. We ask how participants – who occupy both privileged and disadvantaged social positions – negotiate the intersectional performances in the vignettes by accepting, transforming or challenging them, as well as how they construct their own positions in the process.

Intersectional theory was formulated by Black feminists' discontent with the lack of acknowledgement and dialogue in mainstream feminism of the multiple social divisions that intersect in Black women's everyday lives. Among the primary insights and contributions of intersectional theory is the idea that privileges and oppressions based upon socially pervasive categorisations such as race, gender, sexuality, ability and

DOI: 10.33134/njmr.513

class intersect in specific experiences and identifications that are irreducibly different. Intersecting categories of subjugation are theorised as variable as well as mutually constitutive, rather than simply additive (e.g. Yuval-Davis 2006). Entwinements of social divisions are both historically specific and continuous, both independent and interdependent (Buitelaar 2006; Collins & Bilge 2016; Gunnarsson 2017). Power is approached as being carried through hierarchical matrices within which individuals stand in varying relations that are derived from the multiple, intersecting systems of disadvantage and privilege that frame each of our lives – although necessarily in very different ways (Collins 2000: 273–275; Collins & Bilge 2016). Thus the ways in which particular social divisions are or become relevant for particular individuals in specific situations should be an ongoing empirical question (Hancock 2007: 251).

In our analysis, we work with the idea that social divisions operate in multiple dimensions, and therefore ought to be approached empirically at different levels of analysis. Yuval-Davis (2007: 198) separates four levels of intersectional analysis that correspond to four ontological dimensions in which social divisions operate (see also Anthias & Yuval-Davis 1983). Social divisions are articulated through *organizations* and formalised structures such as laws, institutions and families, reproduced through *representations* in images, texts and ideologies, and experienced *interpersonally* and *subjectively* through social relations and subjectivities. Subjectivity is thus understood here as embedded in social relations, rather than 'inside' individuals (e.g. Brah & Phoenix 2004). Although organisational, representational, interpersonal and subjective dimensions can be distinguished analytically, these ontological dimensions are presumed inseparable in everyday discursive and social practices. The inequalities operating in each ontological dimension can be either material or symbolic, or both material and symbolic (Anthias 2001: 381).

METHODS AND DATA

By following Yuval-Davis' (2007) separation of four levels of reality, at the level of representation, we analyse how social divisions are enacted as categories and boundaries between 'me/us' and 'not-me/not-us'. Our focus here is on how migrants, diversity and difference are classified, evaluated and imbued with meaning, and included and excluded within the boundaries of 'us' (Törrönen 2001, 2014; Yuval-Davis 2010). Concerning the level of subjectivity, we pay attention to the viewpoints through which boundaries between 'us' and 'them' are related to particular subject positions and social values. Because viewpoints are potentially dynamic and shifting according to topical and spatiotemporal context, this type of analysis allows us to interpret what kinds of cultural identities and social values the respondents identify with through their shifting or stable identifications with certain viewpoints. An analysis of viewpoints also allows us to trace how the identifications with particular values and identities are updated and maintained, contested and potentially disrupted (Menard 2016a; Törrönen 2014).

At the interpersonal level, our focus is on assumptions our respondents rely on in their texts while describing and characterising social divisions and relations. The analysis of assumptions specifies the nature of the ideological work which the respondents participate in their text productions (see Fairclough 2003: 55). Fairclough identifies three types of assumptions that are important in terms of ideological work: Value assumptions, existential assumptions and propositional assumptions. Value assumptions are about what is good or desirable, existential assumptions imply what

DOI: 10.33134/njmr.513

exists and propositional assumptions indicate what is, can be or will be the case (ibid.). The assumptions our respondents' texts build on show what they consider as legitimising 'common ground' for the social divisions which they consider important to have and maintain in the society that they live in.

In the discussion section, we consider our analyses of representation, subjective experience and interpersonal relations at the level of organisations in an interpretation of how traces of historical, biopolitical projects are evidenced in respondents' texts. This includes a discussion of how respondents' situatedness on one hand as 'abnormal' in terms of institutionally implemented pathologisations related to sociability and/or gender/sex, and on the other as unmarked in terms Finnishness and the category of Whiteness that is implicated therein, may have factored into their negotiations of the vignettes.

The responses that we analyse in this paper were produced by 19 Finnish citizens with transgender experiences and/or Asperger's diagnoses (Asperger diagnosed participants, n = 8; participants with transgender experiences, n = 10; Asperger diagnosed participants with transgender experiences, n = 1). These participants also participated in a previous study by the first author (see Menard 2016a, 2016b, 2018), and were recruited in collaboration with local autism and transgender support organisations as well as through online forum discussions. They self-selected based upon participant outreach materials, in which the research was specified as recruiting either Asperger-diagnosed persons or persons with transgender experiences. Participants were not required to submit documentation pertaining to their citizenship, gender-identity or diagnostic status. Although we recognise that other social categories such as age, education and place of residence (e.g. urban/countryside) are also likely relevant to greater and lesser extents in participants' text productions, we chose to not collect this information as our interest is in how the biopolitical projects most relevant to their social positioning around sociability and gender come into play in their interactions with the vignettes. In the recruitment materials, the study was framed as one dealing with how Finnish citizens conceptualize Finnish society, and themselves and others in society.

Because these respondents have been explicitly marked by the state through diagnostic criteria and related health care and state practices as being psychologically and socially 'abnormal' in terms of gender and/or sociability, we argue that their answers provide unique material for exploring how persons who are positioned as somehow 'incompetent' or 'deficient' may negotiate discourses on immigration and multiculturalism. Some of the privileged positionings of the respondents are also particularly relevant to our research questions – most notably that they are Finnish citizens. We assume that hegemonic categories implicated in Finnishness, particularly that of Whiteness, are also inevitably at play when participants are negotiating the texts that we analyse in this study. Finnishness and Whiteness are 'unmarked' categories in Finland such that they typically go unnoticed and are the standard against which all other nationalised and racialised categories are compared (see e.g. Keskinen, Skaptadóttir & Toivanen 2019; Krivonos 2018; Loftsdóttir & Jensen 2012). An analysis of how our participants negotiate intersecting social divisions in the vignettes may be insightful for understanding possibilities for solidarity and social change.

The respondents' texts were elicited by using vignettes, which is a method that allows respondents to actively participate in and deal with various orientations, perspectives and voices as regards the research topic (Törrönen 2018). By embodying

different voices, perspectives and orientations, the vignettes put the interviewees in a dialogical and discursive relation with various realities and experiences. The first author composed two separate vignettes from opposing positions, the contents and stances of which were derived from empirical results from a previous study (see Menard 2016b). The vignettes were framed and presented to respondents as opinion pieces, written by undisclosed authors. Vignette 1 is built from power dominant positions and entitlement to Finnish resources and Finnishness whereas Vignette 2 criticises normalisation processes and cultural assimilation, citing these aspects as creating inequalities and social exclusion. The English translations of the vignettes are presented in Appendix I. In this article, we have narrowed our analyses to the passages in the vignettes that directly discuss immigrants, diversity and 'difference'.

The first author and a research assistant met research respondents in University buildings located in various geographic regions in Finland for the data collection sessions. Respondents were informed that their responses were voluntary and would be handled confidentially, and that they would not be identifiable in any published articles or reports. Respondents' personal information was securely stored during the course of the study, and destroyed upon its completion. No identifying information was available in the analyses or writing up of the results. Respondents read and interacted with written vignettes individually, responding to them in written form. This specific choice about how to use the vignettes to solicit the data collection was based primarily upon informal feedback from potential respondents with Asperger's diagnosis, as some of them felt that writing their responses would be more comfortable than discussing vignettes verbally with a researcher. The choices were also however based upon successful implementation of this data collection method in previous research by the second author (see Törrönen 2001). Giving respondents time and space to complete the task in written form allows for reflection that may be less available in verbal interviews.

After giving informed consent and being briefed on the research process, each of the vignettes were presented to study respondents one at a time in two consecutive study tasks. The vignettes were alternated in terms of the order in which they were presented. Respondents were given an hour for responding to each vignette (2 hours total), with a 15 to 30-minute break in between. They were asked to read the vignette and then (1) highlight in green those statements they agreed with, highlight in red those they disagreed with, and highlight in yellow those they doubted or were unsure about, (2) number every statement that they highlighted, and (3) explain in writing why they agree, disagree with or are unsure about each highlighted and numbered statement. Responses to the vignettes ranged from between 555 words and 1618 words, with 873 being the average total amount of words written by each respondent.

ANALYSIS

We start our analysis by first examining how our respondents negotiate the categories, viewpoints and assumptions of vignette 1, after which we do a corresponding analysis to the reception of vignette 2.

NEGOTIATING VIGNETTE 1: THE COMMON GOOD IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

Table 1 shows our analysis of the vignette 1 that we used to elicit participant responses at representational, subjective and interpersonal levels. At the level of representation,

	REPRESENTATION		SUBJECTIVITY	INTERPERSONAL
UTTERANCE	***US***	***NOT-US***	***VIEWPOINTS***	***ASSUMPTIONS (EA, PA, VA)****
(U1) In Finland, minorities have been invested in too much at the expense of ordinary working people.	Ordinary working people	Minorities	Finland	Minorities are not ordinary working people (**PA**); ordinariness, working (**VA**)
(U2) A society tailored to the needs of minorities is not egalitarian, as it raises a small group of people above the majority.	[egalitarian]†, majority	Not-egalitarian, minorities, small groups	[egalitarian]† society	Investing in minorities is tailoring society to minorities' needs [& not-egalitarian] (**PA**); egalitarianism [same for everyone] (**VA**)
(U3) It is clear that the weak and sick should be cared for, but in a diverse society the state cannot answer to the needs of every small group.	State	Small groups	Diverse society	Diverse society (**EA**); every small group has [unique]† needs (**PA**)
(U4) The same also applies to immigrants. Difference is enriching as long as they are not given different benefits at the expense of the majority.	Majority, [sameness]	Immigrants, difference	[egalitarian society], [universalism]	Immigrants are different (**PA**); [same for everyone] (**VA**)
(U5) Society should require reciprocity from immigrants, such that the costs of their integration comes from their own taxes	[contributors]	Immigrants, [dependents]	Society	Immigrants do not reciprocate (**PA**), integration has costs (**PA**), reciprocity means immigrants pay for own integration (**PA**)
(U6) The customs of immigrants should not be prioritised over those of the native population.	Native population	Immigrants	[society]	Immigrants' and natives' customs are different (**PA**); customs of native population (**VA**)
(U7) Everything flows as long as immigrants integrate into Finnish traditions and customs.	Finnish, traditions, customs	[unintegrated/ unassimilated] immigrants	[Finnish society]	Integration/[assimilation] (**VA**); Finnish traditions and customs (**VA**)
(U8) Finland's own social problems must be solved before we can take care of others'.	Finland, [agents]	[not-Finland], [dependents]	We	Finland's social problems are separate from others' (**PA**)

Table 1 Us/them classifications, viewpoints and assumptions in Vignette 1.

† [brackets] denote implicated us/them representations, viewpoints, or assumptions that do not appear directly in the vignettes, but that in our interpretation are implicated.

* **EA** = Existential assumption; **PA** = Propositional assumption; **VA** = Value assumption.

classifications intersect to build 'us' identities as egalitarian minded, ordinary and working Finnish citizens. By classifying immigrants in relation to 'difference' (U4), immigrants are discursively pulled into a network of us/them distinctions that work through divisions between ordinariness/difference, same/not-same benefits for everybody, egalitarian/not-egalitarian and working/not-working.

These categories unfold through power-dominant viewpoints such as 'Finland' and 'society' that culminate in soliciting the reader into a subjugating 'we' viewpoint (U8). Assumptions work in attempts at reducing differences. For example, starting with U2, egalitarianism is conceptualised as something in which everybody has access to 'the same' resources and benefits. This way of doing equality works on updating and normalising inequalities to the extent that there is little room for the recognition of material and power differences, and the different needs that are

	REPRESENTATION		SUBJECTIVITY	INTERPERSONAL
UTTERANCE	*US*	*NOT-US*	*VIEWPOINTS*	*ASSUMPTIONS (EA, PA, VA)**
(U9) There are not enough resources for the integration of immigrants and problems accumulate easily in the Finnish climate that shuns difference.	Immigrants	[homogenising]† Finnish climate, exclusion	Difference	Integrating immigrants (**VA**); Finnish climate shuns difference (**PA**)
(U10) Society is becoming more intolerant all the time and fear of difference has increased in relation to, for example, skin colour, religion and sexual orientation, to name a few.	[tolerant]; ethnic, religious and sexual minorities	Society, intolerant	Difference	Society used to be less intolerant (**PA**); tolerance (**VA**); acceptance of difference (**VA**)
(U11) All of this creates inequalities and active people are also starting to retreat.	[equality]	Inequalities	Active people	Equality (**VA**); staying active (**VA**)
(U12) No one has the strength to cope indefinitely and marginalisation is complete.	[people at risk of marginal-isation]		[people with limited strength]	Coping (**VA**)
(U13) The welfare state should take care of people, provide them with basic services and safety nets.	Welfare state	[competition state]	People	Social services (**VA**)
(U14) Everyone has the right to security and services, regardless of their life situation.	Universal rights to security and services	Distinctions in security and services based on life situation	Everyone	Rights to security and services (**VA**); people have different life situations (**PA**)
(U15) In contemporary Finland, services do not reach those who are most in need of help.	[reformed Finland]	Contemporary Finland	Those most in need of help	Services that reach those most in need of help (**VA**)
(U16) A strong state, which supports without blame, is in everyone's interest, because each of us may need its help in different stages of life.	Strong [welfare] state, each of us	[individualism]	Everyone	State support (**VA**); there are different stages of life (**PA**)
(U17) However, in recent decades the welfare state has deteriorated alarmingly.	Welfare state	[competition state]	Recent decades	Stable welfare state (**VA**)
(U18) It should be strengthened, but also reformed to meet difference and the needs of different people.	Strengthened/ reformed welfare state	[sameness, same needs]	Difference, different people	People are different and have different needs (**PA**)

Table 2 Us/them classifications, viewpoints and assumptions in Vignette 2.

† [brackets] denote implicated us/them representations, viewpoints or assumptions that do not appear directly in the vignettes, but that in our interpretation are implicated.

* **EA** = Existential assumption; **PA** = Propositional assumption; **VA** = Value assumption

implicated in such unequal position(ing)s. Assumptions thus work with us/them distinctions and viewpoints in this vignette through repeated rhetorical moves of constructing, accentuating and normalising (power) differences. Together, in vignette 1 classifications, viewpoints and assumptions intersect in performing exclusion and domination of minoritized groups and immigrants whose power is discursively deflated, while 'us' categories and viewpoints are built as privileged and entitled to 'Finnishness' and resources.

How did our respondents negotiate vignette 1 and its classifications, viewpoints and assumptions? In terms of its overall argument, the respondents expressed suspicion. They were generally unconvinced by the meaning-making and positionings unfolding in Vignette 1 (N red = 43; N yellow = 33; N green = 18). The clearest disagreements were with utterances "In Finland, minorities have been invested in too much" (N red =

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15; N yellow = 2; N green = 0), "Everything flows as long as immigrants integrate into Finnish traditions and customs" (N red = 10; N yellow = 6; N green = 1) and "Finland's own social problems must be solved before we can take care of others'" (N red = 11; N yellow = 4; N green = 1). Although these tallies may give some indication of respondents' basic stance to the utterances, of greater relevance is the ways in which respondents interact with and (re)negotiate the intersectional performances in vignette 1.

Let us take a look at *Text 1*, below, which was narrated by a respondent with transgender experiences. The text demonstrates a recurring way that both trans- and Asperger-classified respondents contest the tightly-bordered 'us' classifications set out in Vignette 1 by rejecting the propositional assumption in the vignette that minorities are not working people (U1), and by re-presenting minorities as working and effortful contributors.

Text 1

> Many times it is forgotten that also minority people work and pay taxes and cannot be separated from such a group of people that would consist of "ordinary, working people". Supporting minorities speaks only about that the need to support is because of society's attitudes to minority representatives. A society tailored for the needs of minorities is done for everybody's needs and in a genuinely equal society there is no need for special support for small groups of people. [...] Immigrants are in a similar situation as other minorities, and they also would not need exemptions in a truly equal society. Differently valuing immigrants is particularly seen in that the work that they do is not valued and they are not thought of as tax payers working alongside other working people. (R15)

The respondent works on deflecting divisions set out in the vignette between ordinary working people on one hand, and minorities and immigrants on the other. This is accomplished by reformulating boundaries around 'us' in broad and loose terms, inclusive of minorities, working people, taxpayers, immigrants and everybody. 'Society' is represented as an exclusionary 'them' force of subjugation of minoritized and marginalised individuals. Additionally in *Text 1*, classifications of minorities and immigrants intersect with those of inequality that are articulated through viewpoints of disadvantage. In challenging the intersections in Vignette 1, respondents recurrently frame their responses through viewpoints that shift between those of the disadvantaged on one hand, and those of 'everybody' on the other. These shifts in viewpoint in *Text 1* can be interpreted as working to problematise power differences between minoritized people, immigrants and everybody.

While respondents largely contested the assumption that minorities and ordinary working people are mutually exclusive categories, *Text 1* above and *Text 2* below demonstrate their simultaneous lack of resistance to the assumptions in Vignette 1 that implicate special services as being not-egalitarian (U2). Rather than questioning the idea that positive discrimination implicates inequality, both responses work through propositional assumptions that inequalities and discrimination are why special support and different benefits (i.e. 'unequal treatment') for immigrants – in particular – are needed. The narrator of the following *Text 2* is a transwoman.

Text 2

> Do minorities not belong to ordinary, working people? Many minorities have the need for equality rather than positive special treatment

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> [discrimination]. Positive special treatment again often contributes not only to for example cultural diversity, but also to the author's called-for employment. [...] many immigrants' special support is necessary just for social integration, for preventing social exclusion and for promoting employment. (R10)

Produced through viewpoints of minorities, the narrator of *Text 2* classifies 'equality' *against* positive discrimination, which, in turn, is networked with classifications of cultural diversity, integration and inclusion and employment. An interesting pattern in the data is that at the level of representation, 'us' classifications of effort and rights to equality intersect and, at the level of subjectivity, are performed through viewpoints of disadvantage. At the same time, positive discrimination was given meaning in relation to inequality, and attached to migrant bodies. Thus while respondents do a lot of work on incorporating the disadvantaged inside the boundaries of 'us', they often simultaneously implicitly identify with viewpoints of privilege in accepting positive discrimination as not-egalitarian and linked to migrant bodies.

Moreover, texts produced through viewpoints of disadvantage did not always incorporate immigrants into 'us' classifications. The following *Text 3* is produced by a respondent with both an Asperger's diagnosis and transgender experiences, and is an example of how subjectivity may evolve and narrow with shifts in the topic of discussion.

> Text 3
>
> Finnish society has not really been "tailored" to the needs of minorities more than it has been "tailored" to the needs of the majority by guaranteeing them socially supported hetero marriage (for gays and lesbians only a registered partnership), a school system and labour market etc. that favours the neurologically typical (people who don't have Asperger or any other autism spectrum syndrome). [...] Immigration is in all nation states in their [own] way part of the basic reality, some now just want to be Finns, Swedes, etc. Let's give them that chance. About traditions still to some degree, in my opinion this has been misunderstood: in schools [people] are being hyper appropriate and avoid singing suvivirsi because it could be "offensive to some of our ethnic minorities and immigrants". I think it would be better to take the aforementioned minorities fairly along in singing suvivirsi and in other beloved traditions of us Finns, as far as they now want to participate in Finnish society. Instead of hyper appropriateness we should invest in real racist-related problems, such as racist violence. In Sweden the situation is that Finnish speaking employees are not allowed to speak their language in some workplaces. This kind of prohibition of disclosure of one's own culture would be more important to maintain in Finland (as we don't have much of this yet) than hyper appropriateness. (R3)

The first part of text is produced through a viewpoint of situated knowledge of disadvantages involved in non-conformance to hegemonic representations of heteronormative sexuality and neurological typicality. 'Them' representations of the majority are built in rejection of the assumption in Vignette 1 that investing in minoritized persons amounts to tailoring society to their needs.

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The second part of the text is built largely in alignment with the homogenising viewpoints and assumptions in Vignette 1. This is done through building subjectivity in relation to 'us Finns' (U1) and intersecting privileges of citizenship, and value assumptions related to assimilation and dominant, traditional Finnish culture and language (U7). Notable is the viewpoint of privilege that the respondent takes up, as having the power to 'give immigrants a chance' to become Finnish. Additionally, 'us' representations are geared towards constructing a Nordic identity that is given meaning in relation to a traditional hymn (*suvivirsi*) that is sung at the end of the year in primary and secondary schools. Making reference to the hymn is significant. It has been appropriated as a tool in the right-wing populist political campaign of the (True) Finns for asserting the importance of cultural traditions in national(ist) identities (Ylä-Anttila 2017).

Additionally, although the respondent advocates 'taking along' ethnic minorities and immigrants in Finnish traditions, there is a lack of engagement with ethnic minorities' and immigrants' viewpoints. Privileged standpoints of citizenship and of *being able to* avoid disclosing one's own culture – which in the Finnish context implicates Whiteness – work in framing negotiations of, and claims to, Finnishness. Thus in contrast to *Text 1* in particular, this excerpt demonstrates how unmarked categories of Finnish citizenship, Finnish language and Whiteness can intersect with, and in many ways work on absolving, categories of disadvantage in rhetorical strategies of belonging. This interpretation resonates with work that has demonstrated how Finnishness is given meaning in relation to Whiteness, while immigrants are racialised as non-White and thus excluded from Finnishness (e.g. Leinonen 2012).

NEGOTIATING VIGNETTE 2: SOCIETY SHOULD TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR EVERYONE

Vignette 2 unfolds rather differently, shifting between viewpoints of 'difference', 'active people' and 'those most in need of help'. These viewpoints frame representations of 'us' as tolerant, immigrants and minorities, people at risk of marginalisation, the welfare state and those that value equality. Classifications and viewpoints intersect and work with the assumptions in the vignette, hailing the reader into storylines of effortful minorities, inclusion of 'difference' and equality. Table 2 shows our analysis of Vignette 2 at representational, subjective and interpersonal levels.

How do respondents interact with these storylines? Overall, they had some doubts yet relatively few disagreements with the utterances of Vignette 2 (N red = 7; N yellow = 28; N green = 56). The disagreements with this vignette were primarily in relation to the idea that intolerance and fear of 'different kinds of differences' are increasing (U10). The following excerpt was written by a transwoman, and demonstrates how this was accomplished by her assimilating minoritized viewpoints in the vignette into that of the 'mainstream'.

> Text 4
>
> Society has not become more intolerant, on the contrary tolerance has increased and increases further [continues to increase]. A clear example of this is transpeople as a gender [or sexual] minority or belonging to different varieties of sexual minorities. The diversity of transpeople was not yet recognized even in the 1990s. A man dressing as a woman or a biological man wanting to live as a woman was something to be ashamed of – even sick. For example transvestitism was removed from the classification of

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> diseases in 2011. Now legislation pertaining to a same-sex partnership is being renewed. Also, different ethnic minorities are the mainstream particularly among children and young people. And through growing friendships ethnic difference fades out such that [we] are just in the end unique and diverse. There will no longer be others as we are diversified. (R17)

By producing the text through viewpoints of both society and transpeople, and in alignment with the value assumption of tolerance in Vignette 2, the narrator of *Text 4* works on framing her argument through increasingly diverse 'us' representations. Ethnic minorities are subsumed into categories of people benefitting from how 'our tolerance' has led to a mainstreaming and fading of ethnic differences. Thus we can again see that this passage works through intersections with Whiteness, on discursively equalising (i.e. homogenising) individuals occupying potentially differently valued social positions and the material inequalities associated with them. This existential assumption of 'sameness in difference' works on claiming minoritized experiences of power relations as universal and equivalent (cf. Ahmed 2000: 173). The assumption also conceals relations of domination that operate not only between power dominant and subjugated standpoints, but also *between* (differently) subjugated standpoints.

The following *Text 5* was written by a respondent with an Asperger diagnosis. It is interesting in the sense that rather than taking up the viewpoints of 'difference' that vignette 2 is built through, the respondent identified with the privileged viewpoint of 'young Helsinkians' who presumably are not immigrants. Through this identification, the respondent rhetorically distinguishes metropolitan people from other Finns as being 'more tolerant'.

> Text 5
>
> In my opinion at least young people are more tolerant of immigrants and various races of people and perhaps also in the Helsinki region we are more tolerant than rest of the country, but it's still true that we Finns are a bit like these "Mohican people" on the periphery of Europe, whose national identity between the east and west hasn't still properly developed yet, and we are also in other ways a bit separated like this from the international atmosphere of tolerance. (R4)

However, the respondent then implies that in Finland, tolerant metropolitan people are also somewhat intolerant. By reasoning that Finland's geographical position between the east and west has slowed down the development of its national identity, the respondent categorises 'Finnish backwardness' as 'understandable'. *Texts 4* and *5* together demonstrate how minoritisations and differences are dealt with among respondents in ways that legitimise relations of domination.

The last excerpt, *Text 6*, is from a self-classified transboy. It is exceptional in the sense that its narrator identifies and problematises viewpoints of privilege that can discursively contribute to relations of domination and material inequalities.

> Text 6
>
> I don't know if society has become more intolerant. It maybe had not been before so tolerant here either, it just becomes more visible as different groups become more visible/bigger or get for themselves a few rights. I'm also not sure if it is a question of fear – partly for sure, but not just fear of difference but fear generated by fear of questioning the primacy of [one's] own lifestyle. And anger. (R11)

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Similar to Text 1, representations of society are given meaning in relation to a somewhat stable notion of intolerance. Notable is that rather than classifying society in relation to an intolerant 'them', the respondent does not dissociate his unfolding identity from that of society but at the same time problematizes privilege. By self-reflexively taking up a position of privilege, the respondent not only rejects the assumption that ideological social values of tolerance benevolently regulate relations between Finnish citizens and immigrants. He also calls into question an ideological Finnish social value that arguably governs interpersonal relations – that of 'equal sociability'. In brief, this social value works primarily through negative evaluations of those who are interpreted as 'placing themselves above others'. Examples of such rhetorically downgraded non-normative sociabilities may be related to, for example wearing distinctive fashion (Törrönen & Maunu 2005) or engaging in political activism (Menard 2016b). In effect, this social value works on maintaining inegalitarian social relations through ongoing discursively disseminated obligations to conform to normative Finnish cultural practices.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Our analyses demonstrate and specify some of the ways in which respondents' negotiations of the vignettes are related to biopolitical issues of national belongingness, racialisation, gender/sex and sociability. Notably, their ways of interacting with the vignettes are arguably linked to their life experiences and to the normative discourses around equality and 'difference', gender and sociability. At the level of representation, a clear pattern in the data is that both Asperger- and transgender-categorised respondents consistently refused the oppositional classification of 'ordinary working people' and 'minorities'. They do a lot of discursive work on building minoritized subjectivities through viewpoints of effortful, contributing members of Finnish society. In the interpersonal dimension, respondents thus overwhelmingly contest the propositional assumption that minoritized people are not working people. At the same time, they simultaneously and recurrently accept the assumption in vignette 1 that 'investing in' minoritized people and immigrants is not egalitarian.

This intersection of effort and equality is in line with previous research (e.g. Gedalof 2013; Menard 2016b) that shows how ideological equality and neoliberal discourses on individual choice and opportunity are tightly entwined, often resulting in a failure to account for differences in starting points and needs. Our results also come near to Keskinen's (2016) work on welfare exclusionism, where social services are reserved for an (ethno)nationalised sense of 'us' that is nevertheless justified through reference to societal wellbeing. Thus at the organisational level of analysis, our respondents' negotiations of vignette 1 are framed by intersecting neoliberal and welfare model structures, where social values of individual effort and homogeneity are entangled and work together in managing our respondents' subjectivities at the expense of immigrants'.

In their interpretations of vignette 2, although they were largely in agreement with the utterances there, at the interpersonal level the respondents nevertheless overall contested the assumption of increasing intolerance. Noteworthy is that one of the ways they accomplished this was through a reluctance to identify with the viewpoints of difference that vignette 2 is produced through. Representations of 'us/immigrants' were reformulated as 'us/diverse', discursively equalising power differences based on

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racialisations and Whiteness between the subjugated standpoints of immigrants and those of the respondents. Finally, respondents also often built their own subjectivities through the viewpoints of privilege available to them, doing work in elevating their own positions above immigrants'.

Respondents' negotiations of vignette 2 therefore also show some of the ways in which Finnish citizens who have been positioned into specific subjugated standpoints through historical biopolitical projects are nevertheless still able to take up power dominant, subjugating discourses. At the organisational level of analysis, discourses on immigration and multiculturalism are seemingly readily available for respondents' use in strategic discursive work on belonging, particularly in relation to intersecting unmarked categories of Finnish language and Whiteness. Here, respondents also worked on building themselves into belonging by narrating their texts through viewpoints of privilege, for example by discursively suggesting or implicating ways in which immigrants may be better able to 'do Finnishness', with the power dominating category of Whiteness implicated therein. At the same time, the category of 'immigrant' (as opposed to 'expat') was reserved for bodies of colour (see also Leinonen 2012), and thus denied access to Finnishness.

Thus in their negotiations of the vignettes, the respondents partly identify with conflicting views. On the one hand, some of the participants approach discourses and practices on and around 'difference', immigration and multiculturalism through homogenising categories, viewpoints and assumptions. On the other hand they also question some of them. This questioning suggests that the participants in this study are clearing at least some discursive space for differences that may not directly contribute to disadvantage in their everyday experiences – that is those related to race and migration. Some of our respondents demonstrated knowledge of and disalignment with homogenising projects from standpoints of both situated knowledge and engagement with the subjugated standpoints of others. This is significant in that it suggests openings for solidarity that may be based upon, although always situationally specific, lived experiences of subjugated identity constructions. Such lived experiences, and the situated knowledges produced as part of them, seem to have at least some degree of potential for facilitating productions of transformational accounts of reality (Haraway 1988: 584).

Future studies could further explore at how practices and texts produced from, for example queer, gender non-conforming, non-White or disabled social positionings may be refracting biopolitical programmes that work on characterising and defining Finnishness. For example in their research with African diaspora communities in Finland, Rastas and Seye (2016) found that African musicians are active agents in Finnish identity politics and are able to renegotiate Africanness as part of a new Finnishness. Another obvious area for future research would be to examine what kinds of new formulations biopolitically motivated practices are taken in relation to issues of diversity, immigration and 'multiculturalism' in an era of intersecting materialities of climate change and COVID-19. In this paper, we have argued that the historical trajectory of eugenic and diagnostic practices have been biopolitical projects and entangled with those of equality and the development and implementation of the welfare model. Future studies could examine, with what kinds of social divisions new forms of biopolitical practices concerning immigration, ethnicity and gender are justifying, and how their enactment metaphorically continues or opposes eugenic practices.

DOI: 10.33134/njmr.513

APPENDIX I

VIGNETTE 1

The common good is everyone's responsibility

The discussion on social exclusion has revealed that there are people living in Finland who take social support for granted. They believe that by increasing social support, social exclusion can be reduced. In reality, excessive support systems prevent people from taking responsibility for themselves and their close ones.

An example of this is unemployment benefits. We have created a system in which the unemployed can refuse work and the waiting period to apply for social assistance creates an incentive trap. At the same time the tradition of work and the concept of the common good are disappearing from Finland. We have brought up a generation of young people that have no concept of how wellbeing is built.

In Finland, minorities have been invested in too much at the expense of ordinary working people. A society tailored to the needs of minorities is not egalitarian, as it raises a small group of people above the majority. It is clear that the weak and sick should be cared for, but in a diverse society the state cannot answer to the needs of every small group.

The same also applies to immigrants. Difference is enriching as long as they are not given exemptions at the expense of the majority. Society should require reciprocity from immigrants, such that the costs of their integration come from their own taxes. The customs of immigrants should not be prioritised over those of the native population. Everything flows as long as immigrants integrate into Finnish traditions and customs. Finland's own social problems must be solved before we can take care of others'.

The Finnish welfare state was founded upon the idea of equality and common responsibilities. Full equality will never be reached, but in Finland class differences have been minimised. Reasonable economic differences encourage people to try and sustain economic growth. In Finland there is equal primary school, which guarantees equal opportunities for all. Later life is affected above all by entrepreneurship, abilities and goals. Everyone has the freedom to choose the most appropriate options and the obligation to take responsibility for their choices. By emphasising these things social exclusion can be combatted.

VIGNETTE 2

Society should take responsibility for everyone

A lot can be accomplished with everyday acts. Presence and listening can be revolutionary things particularly for children who are at risk for social exclusion. Everyday things do not however bring food to the table, support in studies, facilitate the search for work or protect against violence.

Adults need safety nets, so that they can be good parents to their children. Families need social services that respond to their emergencies. Children and young people need schools where teachers have time to be present and different learners' needs are taken into account. The current school system takes into account only one type of learner. These things are easy to agree with, but in practice youth that are different than others continue to be encouraged to 'normalise', rather than their individual qualities strengthened.

In addition to children, others need special social support. Social and health services does not face the diverse needs of the population, but offers the same to everybody. Those needing mental health rehabilitation have been pushed to out-patient queues and men in particular have fallen outside of the scope of services. There are not enough resources for the integration of immigrants and problems accumulate easily in the Finnish climate that shuns difference. Society is becoming more intolerant all the time and the fear of difference has increased in relation to, for example, skin colour, religion and sexual orientation, to name a few. All of this creates inequalities and active people are also starting to retreat. No one has the strength to cope indefinitely and marginalization is complete.

The welfare state should take care of people, provide them with basic services and safety nets. Everyone has the right to security and services, regardless of their life situation. In contemporary Finland, services do not reach those who are most in need of help. A strong state, which supports without blame, is in everyone's interest, because each of us may need its help in different stages of life. However, in recent decades the welfare state has deteriorated alarmingly. It should be strengthened, but also reformed to meet difference and the needs of different people.

FUNDING INFORMATION

This research has been supported by the Kone Foundation (Koneen Säätiö), a Finnish Doctoral Program in Social Sciences (SOVAKO) and the Doctoral Program in Social Sciences at the University of Helsinki.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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TO CITE THIS ARTICLE:
Menard, R and Törrönen, J. 2023. Immigration, Multiculturalism and Biopolitical Projects on 'Difference': Negotiating Intersecting Social Divisions From Positions of Privilege and Disadvantage. *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*, 13(1): 6, pp. 1–23. DOI: https://doi.org/10.33134/njmr.513

Submitted: 14 September 2021
Accepted: 07 November 2022
Published: 30 March 2023

Nordic Journal of Migration Research is a peer-reviewed open access journal published by Helsinki University Press.

HUP HELSINKI UNIVERSITY PRESS
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VERTAISARVIOITU KOLLEGIALT GRANSKAD PEER-REVIEWED www.tsv.fi/tunnus