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Is there such a thing…?
A study of antiracism education in Finland

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Abstract in English

In this thesis I set out to investigate what antiracism education in Finland is at a conceptual, methodological and practical level. At the conceptual level, this study examines how and why antiracism is theorised and explores the challenges to and possible gains from a potential shift in existing antiracist strategies in Finland. At the practical and methodological levels (using both literature and research data) this study investigates how antiracism education Finland is "done" and how it could be done differently.

This thesis includes a collection of five articles. The first article, "If an apple is a foreign apple you have to wash it very carefully": Youth discourses on racism (2016), is set at the intersection of formal and non-formal education and critically examines the use of "wrong" questions in antiracism discourses. The second article, Antiracism Apps as Actants of Education for Diversities (2015), examines how two mobile phone applications could be used as antiracism educational tools, bearing in mind the potentials and limitations of such technologies. The third article, Educating Children to Survive within a Neo-Racist Framework: Parents' Struggle, (submitted), set in informal/non-formal education, investigates the different strategies employed by mothers of immigrant background children to educate their child or children on how to respond to racial violence. Article four, "Zebra World" – The Promotion of Imperial Stereotypes in a Children's Book (2015), challenges the binary and stereotypical agenda of educational materials regarding how they tell the story of "us" and "them". The last article, Holocaust Education: An Alternative Approach to Antiracism Education? A Study of a Holocaust Textbook Used in 8th Grade in an International School in Finland (2015), examines how, through the notion of intersectionality, educators can use the concepts of racism and neo-racism to teach about the Holocaust and vice versa.

Grounded in an understanding of racism based on postcoloniality and neo-racism, this study investigates racism in Finland using four interrelated lenses: Finnish exceptionalism, coloniality of power, whiteness theory and denial of racism. It unearths the hidden structural hierarchies (re)produced, sustained and recycled by power structures. In addition, this study argues that since antiracism as a word endorses a recognition of the existence of racism, it is important to build and offer antiracism programmes in and out of schools. It calls for antiracism education as a discipline to be given more space in formal education and proposes strategies through which this can be achieved. Furthermore, it proposes that antiracism education must be ready to be self-critical, bearing in mind that there is no one true solution to racism.

Keywords: Antiracism education, non-formal, informal and formal education, Finland, Racism

Tiivistelmä suomeksi

Tässä tutkimuksessa tarkastellaan antirasistista kasvatusta Suomessa käsitteellisellä, menetelmällisellä ja käytäntöjen tasolla. Antirasistisen kasvatuksen käsitteellinen tarkastelu keskittyy siihen, miten antirasismin käsite ymmärretään, miksi se ymmärretään näin sekä millaisia haasteita ja uusia avauksia sisältyy olemassa olevien antirasististen strategioiden mahdolliseen muuttumiseen Suomessa. Antirasistisen kasvatuksen menetelmien ja käytäntöjen osalta tarkastelen sekä tutkimuskirjallisuutta että aineistoa hyödyntäen sitä, miten antirasistista kasvatusta Suomessa tehdään ja kuinka sitä voitaisiin tehdä toisin.

Väitöskirja koostuu viidesta artikkelista. Ensimmäinen artikkeli *"If an apple is a foreign apple you have to wash it very carefully": Youth discourses on racism (painossa)*, joka käsittelee formalin ja non-formaalin kasvatuksen yhtymäkohtaa, kritisoi antirasistisia diskursseja "väärien" kysymysten kysymisestä.Toinen artikkeli *Antiracism Apps as Actants of Education for Diversities (2015),* tarkastelee, kuinka kahta mobiilisovellusta voidaan käyttää antirasistisen kasvatuksen välineinä pitäen samalla mielessä sekä teknologian tuomat mahdollisuudet että sen ajat. Kolmas artikkeli *Educating Children to Survive within a Neo-Racist Framework: Parents' Struggle, (lähetetty arvioitavaksi)*, asettuu informaalin ja non-formaalin kasvatuksen alueelle tarkastellen, millaisia strategioita maahanmuuttajataustaisten lasten äidit käyttävät kasvattaessaan lastaan tai lapsiaan kohtaamaan ja vastaamaanrodullistamiseen perustuvaan väkivaltaan. Neljäs artikkeli *"Zebra World" – The Promotion of Imperial Stereotypes in a Children's Book* (2015) haastaa kasvatusmateriaalien binaarisen ja stereotyyppisen asetelman kysyessään kuinka ne kertovat tarinaa "meistä" ja "heistä". Viimeinen, viides artikkeli *Holocaust Education: An Alternative Approach to Antiracism Education? A Study of a Holocaust Textbook Used in 8th Grade in an International School in Finland (2015)* tarkastelee, kuinka kasvattajat voivat hyödyntää intersektionaalisuuden käsitettä käyttäessään rasismin ja uusrasismin käsitteitä holokaustin ja rasismin välisiä yhteyksiä opettaessaan.

Tämä tutkimus nostaa Suomessa ilmenevän rasismin tarkastelun kohteeksi hyödyntäen neljää toisiinsa kiinnittyvää näkökulmaa, jotka perustuvat postkolonialistisiin ja uusrasismia käsitteleviin teoretisointeihin. Näkökulmat ovat: suomalaisen erinomaisuuden ja erityisyyden kertomus (Finnish exceptionalism), koloniaaliset valtarakenteet (coloniality of power), valkoisuuden teoria (whiteness theory) sekä rasismin kiistäminen (denial of racism). Nämä näkökulmat tuovat esiin näkymättömät rakenteelliset hierarkiat, joita valtarakenteet tuottavat, pitävät yllä sekä muodostavat ja käyttävät yhä uudelleen. Lisäksi tämä tutkimus painottaa, että koska antirasismin käsite perustuu rasismin olemassaolon tunnistamiselle, antirasististen kasvatusmenetelmien rakentaminen ja tarjoaminen

sekä koulussa että sen ulkopuolella on tärkeää. Tutkimus peräänkuuluttaa antirasistisen kasvatuksen näkemistä omana tutkimusalanaan, jolle tulisi olla enemmän tilaa formaalissa kasvatuksessa sekä esittää keinoja tämän toteuttamiseksi. Tutkimus myös ehdottaa, että antirasistisen kasvatuksen sisällä tarvitaan valmiutta itsekriittisyyteen, sillä rasismin ongelmaan ei ole yhtä ainoaa ratkaisua.

Asiasanat: antirasistinen kasvatus, formaali koulutus, informaali koulutus, non-formaali koulutus, Suomi, rasismi

Acknowledgments

This is doctoral research has been a journey. One which has made me, broken me and remade me into a better person. It has given me a voice not just to tell my story to the many people whom I have been blessed to talk to during this journey but to question my beliefs and stereotypes. During this journey a lot of people have supported me in many different ways. This page is not enough to list all their names and their great contributions. However, my heart is always big enough for them.

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Lastly I do wish to pay respect to the memory of two people who are no longer with us but contributed towards this thesis. Mum, I wish you were still with us to share this moment. Thanks for pushing me…even in your absence memories of you still push me towards being the best I can. Regis Machart I wish you were here to read/hear how I have used your advice to strengthen my conviction on the asset in collecting my data in English. You are both missed.

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Prologue

Writing or talking about racism can be one of the most difficult things to do. This process has brought both tears and laughter to my life. The tears have been due to the personal difficulties I have encountered, ranging from a lack of funding for some periods of my studies, to problems related to my weak Finnish language skills and the daily struggles of being black (non-white/non-European) in a "white country" like Finland – growing up I would refer to it as *white man country*. The laughter has been because of the ever so faint light that I see at the end of the tunnel, as well as the wonderful people I have met and the places I have visited because of this work. When I began this journey, I did not fully understand the weight of the burden that it would place on me. It only dawned on me during my PhD that I was conducting this research not to thrive but to struggle, like Sisyphus in Greek mythology, who was condemned for eternity to push a rock up a hill only for it to roll back down again. Here, struggle does not mean losing faith or not being angry, because, for example, my anger helps me make my struggle visible. On the contrary, struggle makes one strong; as every portrait of Sisyphus shows, he is a man hardened by his efforts. Ta-Neishi Coates, in his best seller *Between the World and me* (2015), reminds me that my call to struggle is not because it assures me of victory but because it assures me an insane life. I do not believe my work will rid the world of racism, because it will take more than the words of a "nobody" like me to change the world. I hope, however, that my work will make a difference in the specific context I have researched. I also hope that my work will help relieve some of the burden of racism and that, through it, people will understand that although race is just a human construct, its effect on the daily lives of people of all races, especially non-whites in Finland, is enormous and often incommunicable.

In this study I often appear to be polemical (one of my students described my work as "confrontational") in my discussion of racism in Finland. This may be because I am writing from the position of an outsider, the racialised, the Other, the once invisible now made hyper visible in order to be blamed or punished. Despite how I and people who look like me are positioned in Finland, my struggle is driven by two main desires: first, to understand the world around me and help make it better, second, to repay my debt to a country (Finland) that has given me so much. This is my story wrapped in my emotions and my daily struggles to be me and help others be themselves or whatever they choose to be. My causticity stems from my recognition of Finland's ability to do more to eradicate all forms of racism in the country. Consequently, this thesis is a call to action to all those who find time to read this work.

List of original Publications

This thesis consists of a summary and the following publications

Paper 1.0

Alemanji, A A and Dervin, F. (2016). “If an apple is a foreign apple you have to wash it very carefully”: Youth discourses on racism. Education, Citizenship and Social Justice

Paper 2.0

Alemanji, A A. (in press). Mothers’ of immigrant background children struggle in educating their children to survive acts racial violence. World Series in Education.

Paper 2.1

Alemanji A A. and Dervin, F. (2015). Antiracism apps as actants of education for diversities. World Studies in Education. 16(2) 57-67

Paper 3.0

Layne, H. & Alemanji, A A. (2015).‘‘Zebra world’’: The promotion of imperial stereotypes in a children’s book. *Power and Education*.7 (2) 181-195

Paper 3.1

Alemanji, A A., Johnson Longfor, R. W. & Óskarsdóttir, E. (2015) Holocaust education: An alternative approach to antiracism education? A study of a Holocaust textbook used in 8th grade in an international school in Finland. *Diversities and Interculturality in Textbooks.* ed Hahl, Niemi, Johnson *Longfor* and Dervin Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 125-148.

1 Introduction

I have often introduced myself in the following way: "*hello I am Amin, a researcher at the University of Helsinki working on the issue of antiracism education in Finland.*" I have observed that this is often followed by a quiet exclamation and a smug smile. I often wondered if this was because of who I was or what I was doing or if it was just my accent in English – the only language I can speak and write fluently. In March 2015, a journalist working for YLE news (a Finnish media outlet) helped me understand the reason for my interlocutors' response when she followed hers with the question "*oh is there such a thing* (as antiracism education) in Finland?" This made me understand that in this thesis my first task was to discover what antiracism education in Finland was and, *if it existed*, how it was realised: Where, by whom and for whom? And what are some of its challenges and successes? Put differently, the main purpose of this thesis is to investigate what antiracism education is on a practical and conceptual level in Finland. At the conceptual level, using literature, this study examines how and why antiracism as a concept is theorised and explores the challenges to and possible gains from a potential shift in existing antiracist strategies in Finland. At the practical level (using both literature and research data) this study investigates how antiracism education Finland is "done" and how it could be done differently. This thesis is thus centred on the theme of antiracism. However, it touches on elements of critical constructivism, critical interculturality, and critical race theory.

This project began as an action study aimed at identifying and understanding the challenges of a particular antiracism project in Finnish upper secondary schools. Disappointed by the resistance to change[1] from within the project, a result of the influence of the project's sponsors (The Ministry of Education and Culture and the Finnish National Board of Education), I set out to find gold from my pool of mud – switching my focus towards understanding the broader picture of antiracism in Finland. The result is this thesis, which is based on a compilation of five peer-reviewed articles, three of which I am the first author, one of which I am the second and one of which I am the sole author. These articles cut across different educational categories, covering formal education, informal education and non-formal education. The first paper – Paper 1.0 ("If an apple is a foreign apple you have to wash it very carefully": Youth discourses on racism, 2016) – is set within the

[1] As a researcher (especially one dealing with issues of racism) I am interested in conflict, an interest which is seldom shared by NGOs or programmes depending on external funding for their existence and sustenance.

framework of the aforementioned antiracism education project. This paper offers a critique of the questions used in anti-racism discourse and education. It demonstrates the dangers of asking the "wrong" questions in antiracism education by examining how students responded to a set of questions presented to them in the CONNECT workshop. This paper is pivotal as the inaugural paper for this thesis for several reasons. First, CONNECT (KYTKE) (an antiracism education workshop organised by Walter, an NGO in Finland) is a practical example of antiracism education in Finland, with over fifty thousand participants (students and staff) between 2010 and 2015. Moreover, the paper presents insights into and a brief overview of how antiracism education is realised in Finland

From an understanding of what antiracism education is and how antiracism education is positioned in Finland, I proceed to an examination of the strategies for doing antiracism education in Finland, both in the informal/non-formal[2] sector and within formal education. People chuckle when I say *my research investigates racism in the non-formal, informal and formal education sectors*. One person asked me if there was anything like informal education in Finland, leading me to google "informal education" to confirm that I was not stupid or living on another planet. I understand formal education to be classroom-based, hierarchically structured education provided by trained teachers that runs chronologically from primary school through to university and is bound by fixed institutional principles (a curriculum, written and hidden) (see Alemanji 2010, Maddox 2008, Hoppers 2008). Informal education, on the other hand, is a lifelong learning process whereby each individual acquires knowledge, skills, attitudes and values from daily experiences with or around people (friends, family etc.) and the things of the world (Alemanji 2010). Non-formal education, in turn, refers to any organised educational activity outside a given school programme (Alemanji 2010, Maddox 2008, Hoppers 2008). These programmes can take place within a school setting but are organised (content and style) by individuals or groups that independent of the school (often community groups and non-governmental organisations). Importantly, however, it is often difficult to make a clear distinction between these three educational types because there is often a crossover, especially in terms of informal and non-formal education (McGivney, 1999).

In my studies of CONNECT, when answering the question "where does racism come from?" (one of the questions posed by CONNECT), the participants often said that racism came from the home.

[2]Informal/non-formal education is often intertwined both in my work and in that of others.

This inspired me to attempt to understand the nature of antiracism education out of school – specifically at home. Paper 2.0 (Mothers of immigrant background children struggle in educating their children to survive acts racial violence, *in press*) investigates how parents of immigrant[3] background children in Finland deal with racism and how they educate their children to deal with racial violence. Resisting the urge to push their children to respond to violence (racism) with violence, parents turn to teaching their children to let go, smile and try to ignore all forms of racism. The paper challenges this liberal view of "letting go" as a reaction to racism, proposing, instead, Ahmed's (2012) strategy of balancing a passive approach with an active response (against racist violence) depending on the specific time and space.

Paper 2.1, Antiracism Apps as Actants of Education for Diversities (2015), which is set at the intersection of non-formal and informal education, examines how mobile phone applications could be used as tools for teaching about racism. The paper highlights the successes and challenges of doing antiracism education using such applications. This study argues that with the popularity of smartphones in Finland, antiracism efforts could explore the potential of accessibility (used everywhere and anytime) offered by mobile phones. The paper also cautions that, like other antiracism strategies, the use of technologies as actants of antiracism education is not without its pitfalls.

Furthermore, beyond the non-formal/informal context, antiracism education also has the potential to flourish within formal education. One way of doing this is through educating educators and students to identify, deconstruct and create counter-essentialist discourses, fostering an antiracist climate in and out of school. Paper 3.0, "Zebra World" – The Promotion of Imperial Stereotypes in a Children's Book (2015), highlights the dangers of stereotypical representations of "Others" in children books. As a source of learning, such representations provide children with stereotypical understandings of the "Other" which, if left unquestioned/unchallenged, could have racist consequences.

[3] *Maahanmuuttaja* in Finnish. In Finland, the word immigrant can be considered a new racial category, as it is often used as a synonym for black. Although the definition of an immigrant is someone who has migrated from one country to another, all immigrants are not equal. Moreover, in Finland, for example, immigrants of colour are the primary targets of this identity marker when it used pejoratively.

Paper 3.1, Holocaust Education: An Alternative Approach to Antiracism Education? A Study of a Holocaust Textbook Used in 8th Grade in an International School in Finland (2015), takes this argument further by focusing on how a textbook on Holocaust education could be used as an antiracism education textbook. Using the concept of intersectionality, this study argues that through exploring otherness (the intersecting variable in both racism and the Holocaust) by understanding how it is established and how a single variable cannot stand in isolation to other variables associated with the othered person, educators and students could identify and understand the complex forms of othering that occur in education.

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The diagram below (research design) illustrates how the papers summarised above come together in this thesis.

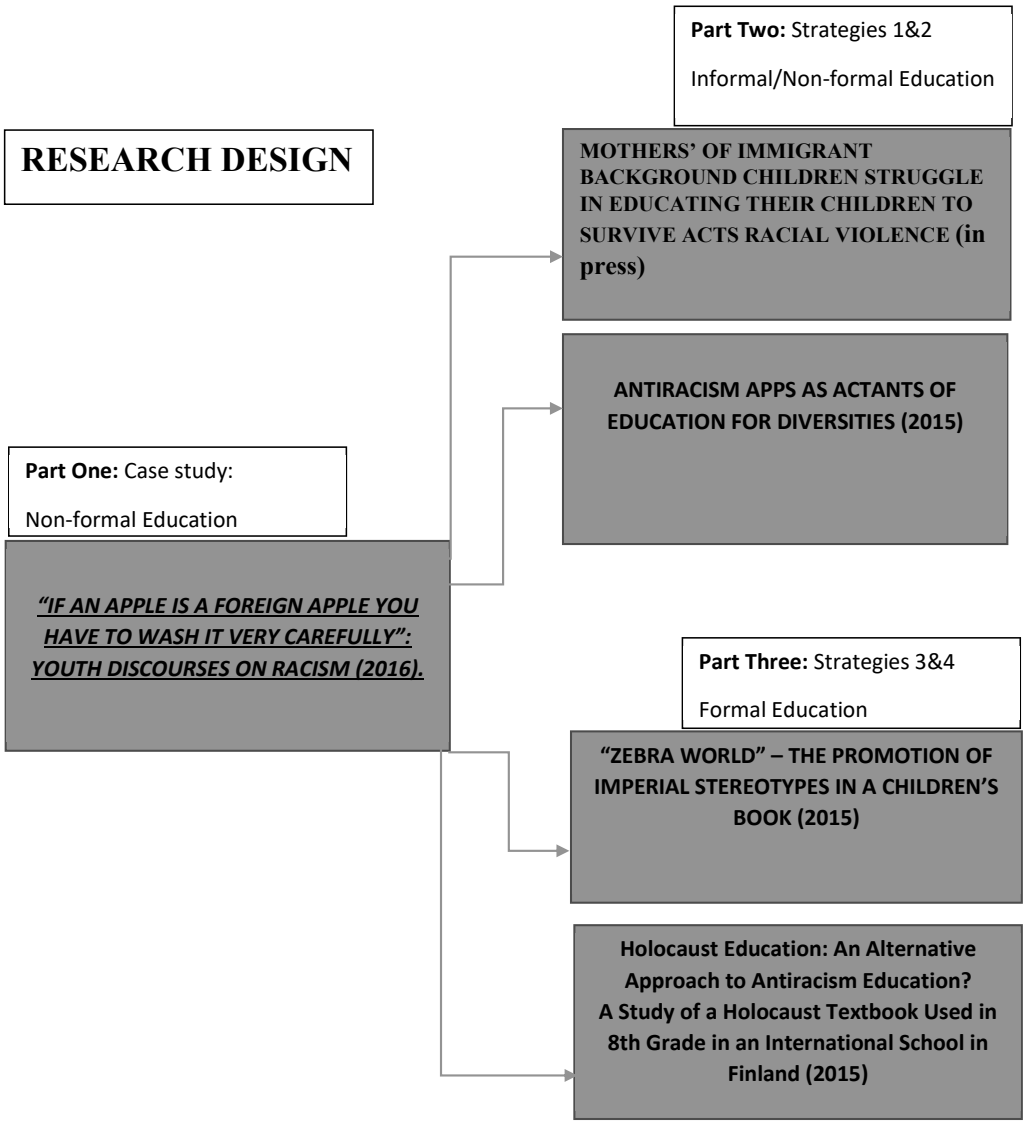

Figure 1: Research Design.

The diagram illustrates the different publications that tie this thesis together, commencing with a case study and moving on to antiracism education strategies in both formal and informal education.

The outline of this summary flows from theory to methodology and results. I commence with conceptual discussions on race and racism, paying attention to two distinct theoretical frameworks – postcoloniality and neo-racism (postraciality). I continue with discussions on antiracism and antiracism education vis-à-vis multicultural education in Finland. From there, I move on to examine the specific issue of racism in Finland using four interconnected theoretical lenses – Finnish exceptionalism, coloniality of power, whiteness theory, and denial of racism. *Methodology* looks into the methodology used in this thesis. The main task of this section is to bring all the thesis papers (articles) together; here I discuss what I have done in each paper and how each paper contributes to the outcome of antiracism education in Finland as well as to this thesis. In the final part, I discuss how antiracism education is realised in Finland and how it could be developed further. The theoretical and empirical arguments in this thesis are drawn from all five papers discussed above.

2 Racism, Race and Antiracism

2.1 Race in racism

Race today is supposed to be a thing of the past. And yet all we do, seemingly, is to talk about it. We talk (about) race when not talking (about) it; and we don't talk (about) it when (we should be) talking (about) it. (Goldberg, 2015, 1)

One evening, my eldest daughter pointed at a black girl on the other side of a shop and exclaimed, "mum, look at the black girl there, she smells". Shocked by such an unexpected outburst, I quizzed my three-year old daughter as to why she thought this random black girl smelled. She told me it was because she was black. This broke my heart because my daughter is herself non-white [4]. My heartbreak came not only from the fact that she had been told all black girls smelled but also because society had started teaching her about racialised hierarchical structures at such a young age; first, by making her believe her race was inferior before making her aware of her race. Despite the challenges and frustrations surrounding the discourses of race and racism, it is clear that the changing nature of the politics of race, new forms of racial ideologies and changing understandings of identity politics in different parts of the world, have caused these discourses to evolve. In academic circles, this has led the debate on race and racism to move from biology, where the understanding of race had been situated from the 1920s to the 1970s, to cultural difference, where it now seems to be located (Back & Solomos, 2009). Goldberg (2015) describes race as something imbedded deep in our subconscious – we talk about it when not talking about it. "Race has to do, it has always had to do, more complexly with the set of views, dispositions, and predilections concerning culture, or more accurately of culture tied to colour, of being to body, of 'blood' to behaviour" (Goldberg, 2006, 349). Race is a socially constructed concept born from the activities of othering based on skin colour, in particular, as well as other social factors like religion, gender and sexuality. These additional factors come into play because the construct of race and racialised identity is not an isolated process created by a single static framework. The constructs of race and racialised identity are the products of history and social classification.

[4] Historically (in America), children born of black and white parents have always occupied a middle place and lack the authority to claim belonging to any distinct race. Condemned by whites as product of an "abominable" union, they were less than whites but higher that blacks in the social hierarchy. In contrast, blacks considered them less than blacks because they were believed to be prone to diseases (see Romano, 2003).

Goldberg (2015) argues that race has always established the line between those who belong and those who do not belong. He continues by claiming that race

> initially defined who was human and who was not, who belonged and who was exploitable, not only who could work but the kind of work they were licensed to do. Race identified whose bodies were alienable, who counted socially and who were disposable, who were fit to live (on) and who could be left or made to die, where and how. (Goldberg 2015, 11)

Although Goldberg writes about the past, such an understanding of racial categorisation remains very true today in most parts of the world, especially in "western" countries, which often fail to match their ideals of equality by rejecting racialised groups or people.

In the sixteenth century, race (as purity of blood – a distinction between nobles and peasants or believers and infidels) did not yet have the meaning it acquired in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (see Mignolo 2002; Grosfoguel 2011; Goldberg 2015). It emerges first as a distinction based on the binary of purity of blood – believers/infidels – then, at beginning in the eighteenth century, and continuing until the present day (2016), race came to represent the dichotomy between the civilized and the uncivilized or barbarians (Mignolo 2002). Goldberg (2015, 11) adds that from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century, racial classification "ordained those of European decent as inherently superior, and those of non-European descent or those regarded less fully European as ranking on a scale of ontological inferiority and objectification". Grosfoguel (2011, 6) adds that such a classification can also be tied to the issue of knowledge hierarchy, which has seen racialised others go from the sixteenth century characterisation of "people without writing" to the eighteenth and nineteenth-century characterisation of "people without history", to the twentieth-century characterisation of "people without development" and more recently, to the early twenty-first-century notion of "people without democracy". It is important to approach such hierarchical binaries from the understanding that they constitute the grounds upon which race as we understand it today is based.

In the light of such understanding, I align myself with the political sociologist and social Alana Lentin when she claims that attempts to understand race should not be geared towards knowing

what race is, because such attempts often work against the conception of race as socially constructed (Lentin, 2015). Rather, as Lentin (2015) argues, priority should be given to understanding *what race does*. In a country like Finland, race offers ideologically dominant or subservient positions to different groups, with the white male at the top of the ladder and the black (non-white/non-European) Muslim man[5] languishing at the bottom. Here, what race does is give the 'white race' power over the 'black race', informed through history and maintained and sustained through structures like the media (van Dijk 2009; Keskinen 2013) and education (Alemanji et al., 2015; Layne & Alemanji 2015), among others. Race "fixes people in place, setting them within the bounds and constrains of pre-conceived notions of nature, possibility, and presumptuous predictability" (Goldberg 2015, 10). It also marks the contours of belonging and not belonging. In doing all this, it places racialised people (non-whites) at the bottom of "all" the ideological ladders in comparison to the racialising (white[6]) groups.

Going forward, Lentin (2015, 1401) highlights the fact that "rejecting race appears common-sense if we (as members of any given society) approach it straightforwardly as a false biological theory". However, because race has never been a purely biological concept, one cannot reject its usage within a social or societal sphere on the grounds of its biological understanding. Thus, on a cultural or societal note, "race works with and in the service of racism" (ibid., 1402), as it plays a fundamental role in the understanding or coloniality upon which history and the current essentialisation of otherness is grounded. Dei and Calliste (2000, 14) propose that "working with the race concept means acknowledging the power of constructing racial differences". This entails rejecting the idea of race as meaningless while problematising and dissociating ourselves with the negativity behind the term (ibid.). Race as a concept has and will always have profound "social, material and political consequences" (ibid. 2000, 14) for all humanity, irrespective of skin colour, gender or sexuality. Thus, race cannot be ignored in debates of discourses of racism in any context. Ignoring the variable of race or replacing it with 'culture' because of the shame, guilt and fear historically connected with term simply lessens our understanding of race and makes the task of reducing racism more difficult.

[5] With the recent terrorist attacks in Europe and the paranoia born of them, some people argue that Muslim men are at the bottom of the racial hierarchy because today being a Muslim man is almost synonymous with being a terrorist. This is not fixed in any way and can be justified and argued differently by different people in different contexts.

[6] In this thesis, white refers to people who by virtue of skin colour or nationality or way of being are able to claim whiteness and be perceived as white. White is a social construct not a biological one.

In Finland, as in most Nordic countries, race is a word that is seldom used. However, its lack of use does not mean that it plays a lesser role in the lives of people who benefit or suffer from their racialised position. Although seldom acknowledged, race plays a role in the daily construction of life in Finland. This is noticeable (most often) to people from minority groups, especially when certain policies and practices deny them access or strip them of their dignity. For example, it is recognised that immigrants face challenges (language, skin colour etc.) in accessing certain top professional positions in Finland. Rastas (2005, 2007) observes that one of the main reasons why race is seldom used in Finnish discourse is because of its ambiguous meaning and the fact that when evoked, it is often strongly attached to racial biology. Tuori (2009, 74) adds that "in the Finnish language a breed of dog or cat or cow is called [a] 'race'". As a result of the historical burden attached to the usage and understanding of race and the ambiguity of the term in Finnish, the word is often omitted from the relevant discourses and policies in Finland. In its place, the words 'culture' (Lentin & Titley, 2011) and 'ethnicity'[7] (Jorenen & Solonen, 2006) are used, as they do not carry the same "burden". "Ethnicity (and culture) has therefore become the concept used to understand differences in Finland" (ibid. 2009, 74). In a similar vein, the word "immigrant" is gaining ground as a racialised category attached to non-white people in Finnish discourse. What race "does" in this case is to make immigrants the target of blame for a whole range of problems in Finland (see Puuronen 2011; Egharevba 2011; Riitaoja 2013). As a result, some Finns, especially extreme-right populists and nationalists, have "launched a war" against immigration (especially asylum seekers), immigrants and multiculturalism (which they believe is a product of immigration).

In sum, I side with Puuronen (2011) and other critics who observe that avoiding the use of race as a central socio-political/economic category in Finland because of the term's biological connotations may lead to the silencing of the racial experiences of the racialised. On the other hand, Tuori (2009) observes that, race often appears in quotation marks in Finnish texts to show that it is a constructed category. In this study, I indeed acknowledge that race is a constructed category; however, I choose not to place it in quotation marks because I believe this would make it anything or everything. It makes it whatever the reader wants to think of it or call it. To me this does not recognise, or

[7] In this thesis I chose not to discuss the term 'ethnicity' as a means of decongesting the literature and understanding racism. This is because ethnicity is a complex, shallow and 'liquid' concept ("binding" people into groups based on variables like religion, nationality, physical appearance, kinship etc.) brought into the discourse of race and culture to further complicate concepts that require simplicity. Like "culture" in inter-culture or multi-culture, ethnicity is just another "white" term that helps to maintain the power structure by confusing the man on the street, whose ultimate goal is to keep things simple.

appreciate the effects of race (ideologically and practically) on the lives of racialised people in Finland and in many other countries.

2.2 Racism (as a concept)

The first time I told my father (a small rural farmer in Fontem, a small village in Cameroon) that I was researching racism/antiracism issues, his reaction was a mixture of shock and disbelief, before he found the courage (overcoming his fear of seeming uninformed) to ask me if it was still a relevant topic for a PhD in the 21st century. Convincing my father that racism, although an "old" concept, still had a profound effect on my life, the lives of my children in Finland and millions of others, was the starting point from which I could help him understand that racism was never "too old" a concept, as it continuously changes form depending on variables like place, time, history, socio-political structures and the economy. As Dei (2006, 16) puts it, "racism implicates each of us in profound ways" regardless of who we are or where we are as humans. My objective in this section is to present a working definition of racism by paying attention to various academic discourses on the issue.

The question of *why we are still stuck with racism after all these years* is becoming hackneyed and overused in the literature and discourses on racism. Lentin and Lentin (2006), drawing on the connection between racism and universalism (borrowing from Etienne Balibar 1991a), highlight that because the power of racism is in its ability to define the frontiers of humanity, who occupies the margins and who occupies the centre,

> the reason why racism has endured past the end of slavery, the Holocaust and into the postcolonial era is that it was able to institute ideas about the purportedly inherent differences between West and East, "civilised" and "primitive", or in other words, between the "raceless" and the "raced". (Lentin & Lentin 2006, 6)

Lentin and Lentin (2006) also argue that the ideas of racism and universalism both reflect and oppose each other, because in the quest to define "a general idea of man", which constitutes the core of universalism, the dominant white male (of European decent) identity is held as the universal norm in opposition to other (non-white, Muslim, female, LGBTQA – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, and Asexual or Ally) identities.

Like most social concepts, the meanings of racism have been fiercely contested in recent decades, and the understanding of the concept continues to undergo significant changes within academia, the socio-political sphere as well as in daily societal discourses. Lentin and Titley (2011), Mills (2007) and Goldberg (2015), for instance, explain that there has been a shift from racism as discrimination on the grounds of biology to racism on the grounds of cultural difference. As a researcher, I believe that my duty is not to complicate complexities; rather, it is to simplify them (see Dervin, Layne & Tremion, 2015). Because racism is a complex concept interwoven into everyday human life and relationships, in this study racism will be defined as the average person would define it, i.e. discrimination based on skin colour. However, understanding and acknowledging the limitations of this definition, I would like to point out that no definition of a concept like racism is holistic or without limitations.

A person's understanding of racism is shaped by several variables, such as life experience and focus (the centre of interest). The more diverse one's life experiences, the more one begins to understand racism from diverse angles with diverse interpretations, all of which represent important pieces of the jigsaw necessary for a "holistic" understanding of the concept. Like the story of the blind men and the elephant in Jain, Buddhist, Sufi and Hindu lore,[8] my understanding of racism is informed by neo-racist theory (Balibar 1991a; Goldberg 2006; 2015), postcolonial theory (Mignolo 2000, 2002, 2009; Grosfoguel 2011) and, somehow, by a street understanding of racism. Above all, my understanding of racism is shaped by the colour of my skin and the realisation of what it means to be black (non-white/non-European) in Finland, a realisation that dawned on me upon my arrival in Finland in 2008. My drive and ultimate commitment come from my fatherly instinct, to be able to protect and teach my Finnish daughters, who have and will be labelled "not Finnish enough" in the country of their birth, where they live and hold passports, because they do not conform to the Finnish norm of blonde hair, blue eyes and white skin. One of my ultimate objective in life, which this study helps me accomplish, is to teach my children who they are (beautiful Finnish children with a Cameroonian heritage), what they are (what they wish and aspire to become) irrespective of what the world around them may tell them they are or try to make of them. In the section that follows, I discuss different theoretical frameworks that have influenced my understanding of racism

[8]A number of blind men came to an elephant. Somebody told them that it was an elephant. In their quest to understand and describe it to each other, they began touching it to attain an understanding of its "true nature". The blind man who touched the elephant's leg described it as a pillar. The one touching its ears described it as husking basket. The one who touched its trunk or its belly talked of it differently, again.

in this study. I commence with postcoloniality because it is the earliest critical methodology I used to develop understanding of myself as a black man coming to consciousness of (racial) social injustices. Neo-racism (racelessness, colour-blindness) and postraciality on the other hand continue to open my eyes to the changing natures of racism.

2.2.1 Postcoloniality

Postcolonial theory largely emerged in the second half of the twentieth century, as countries and people once ruled as colonies struggled for and gained political independence. In their struggle to understand the effects of colonial rule, postcolonial scholars have written and spoken widely on its effect on both the colonised and the colonisers. Tuori (2009, 63) observes that postcoloniality can be understood from two distinct angles: understanding "specific histories and their legacies in the world" and "how racial differences and otherness, as well as centres and peripheries, are created" and sustained. These two strategic perspectives play a vital role in maintaining and reproducing racism. Such postcolonial perspectives of racism are reproduced by social structures and cultural meanings that are bigger than any individual and outlast any historical period (Mignolo 2009). It must be noted that postcoloniality is a very broad area of research with multiple interpretations. My understanding and application of postcoloniality is influenced by critical race theory (e.g. Goldberg 2002, 2006, 2015; Mignolo 2009); thus, this study takes the view that othering in relation to race – the assumption that difference (especially non-white related difference) is inferior, exotic, savage and evil in comparison to the dominant (white) culture – must be challenged.

In *Orientalism*, the ground-breaking book by the postcolonial theorist Edward Said (1978), the author demonstrates how "the West", or the "Occident", (Europe and North America seen in contrast to other civilizations) has defined itself through its portrayal of the East ("Orient") as its polar opposite, where the West's depiction of itself as "civilized" and "advanced" is pitted against the description of its binary opposite, "the East" (Asian and Middle East), as "barbaric", "backwards, but also "erotic". The groundwork laid by critics like Said, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in his *Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (1999) and Homi Bhabha in *Nation and Narration* (1990) has been built upon by several critics striving to make the voices of the oppressed audible in a quest for a racially just world. This divide between "us" and "them" does not exist on a linear basis. Instead, its basis is hierarchical along the lines of

superiority and inferiority established by colonial ideologies and reinforced by continued racialisation.

A good example of how racism can be understood within the framework of postcolonial theory is that racism is a socio-political concept which devalues knowledges beyond Greek, Latin and Christian theology (see Mignolo 2000, 2002) and non-Western people based on an established colonial backdrop where everything/anyone non-western/non-white is considered backward and uncivilized in comparison to everything or anyone western. In this hierarchical social interplay, Goldberg (2002) argues that the 'racially inferior races' established by colonialism are often classified in two ways: either as people who will always remain backward and forever in need of instruction and control from their Western counterparts (racial naturalism) or, as people who are capable of attaining knowledge but only through education from their masters (racial historicism). In sum, the postcolonial understanding of racism stems from the ideologies of colonialism, power and domination of the Other (Balibar 1991b; Mignolo, 2009), which cannot be ignored in one's understanding of racism in everyday life.

2.2.2 From neo-racism (racelessness, colour-blindness) to postraciality

The concept of neo-racism can be considered an advanced chapter in the theorization of postcolonial discourse. Balibar (1991a, 17) reminds us that racism is a socially constructed phenomenon that is historically essential and has long lasting effects on the lives of its victims.

> Racism – a true social phenomenon inscribed through practices (forms of violence – contempt, intolerance, humiliation and exploitation), in discourses and representations which are so many intellectual elaborations of the phantasm of prophylaxis which are articulated around the stigmata of otherness (name, skin colour, religious practices) – thus it organizes affects (e.g. irrational ambivalence) by conferring upon them a stereotyped form as regards both their objects and their subjects.

For Balibar (1991b, 43), the ambivalence of racism is exercised as a heritage of colonialism that is, in reality, "a fluctuation of continued exteriorisation and 'internal exclusion' … the interiorisation of the exterior" and "exteriorization of the interior". In other words, racism is practised in the simultaneous assimilation and rejection of the other. Moreover, Bhabha (1994) asserts that racism is founded on, but at the same time undermined by, the ambivalence of the colonizer, who fears, and

so distinguishes himself from, the colonized Other while simultaneously needing or desiring the Other to be recognized as master or superior. Bhabha terms this paradox "hybridity" (ibid.). The result of this ambivalence is the creation of a mimic man (racial object), who is "almost the same, but not quite" (ibid., 127) (also see Mignolo, 2009). The discursive instability in racial discourses that both Bhabha and Balibar observe offers the possibility for intervention, resistance and the interruption of racial dominance by racialised groups and individuals. Balibar (1991a, 22) argues that neo-racism is a "displacement of the problematic … which naturalises not racial belonging but racial conduct". Within neo-racist discourse, the concept of race is often replaced by the concept of culture (and sometimes community), as culture does not have the same socio-political baggage as race in racism (Lentin & Titley 2011; Dei & Calliste 2000).

Moreover, cultural difference is viewed as something negative that threatens rather than enriches cultures and nations and which should be eliminated either through the expulsion of the Other or his/her assimilation. Neo-racism is an expressive Eurocentric notion of progress and civilization in which the hierarchy of biological (race) is reconstituted in the very type of criteria applied in conceptualising the difference between cultures (Balibar 1991a; Mignolo, 2009). The only aspect of neo-racism that is "new" is the discourses through which racism is articulated. Moreover, Balibar (1991a) as well as Goldberg (2006, 2015) argue that neo-racism is not a novel form of racism, as this is the state in which racism was practised during the European Enlightenment and in anti-Semitism (also see Gillborn 1995).

Culture, which replaces race in discourses of neo-racism, in this instance acts like nature, "locking individuals and groups a priori into a genealogy, into a determination that is immutable and intangible in origin … the idea of hierarchy is reconstituted in the very type of criteria applied in thinking the difference between cultures" (Balibar 1991a, 22–24) (see also colonial difference, Mignolo, 2009). Neo-racism applies the notion of colonial cultural difference to effect cultural hierarchies that achieve the same division of humanity that is achieved by the pseudo-biological concept of race.

Furthermore, neo-racism, in its claim that race is a thing of the past that should be ignored and substituted with culture, aligns itself with the concept of postraciality, which "amounts to a general

social ecology within which race and racism are supposedly outmoded but where, in fact, racist expressions have gone viral" (Goldberg 2015, 106). Postraciality, in denying all forms of racism, discredits all forms of naming and seeing racism. It denies the historical conditions and legacy of racism. Under postraciality, race becomes transparent - invisible. This may explain why though it is often difficult to define the Other (non-whites) by their racial category; it is easy to discriminate against them by what cannot be named. Postraciality has made it very easy for people to claim that we are now living in a post-racial society while at the same time refusing to acknowledge that the very society in which they live had ever been racial (Goldberg, 2015). Just as "post" in postcolonial does not mark the end of the colonial, so too "post" in postraciality does not mark the end of raciality (Goldberg, 2015). Rather, denotes a new incarnation of the phenomenon.

The Nordic countries are struggling to incorporate the concept of postraciality into socio-political discourse because claiming to be *post-racist* means one was formerly racist (see Goldberg, 2015). In a nutshell, neo-racism and postraciality in Europe are grounded on the denial of racism, where there are no racists and racism is considered a thing of the past (Balibar 1991a; Goldberg 2006) and where race is replaced by culture (Lentin & Titley, 2011). Race is considered an unstable and redundant word that only belongs in history books, and even some history books try to avoid it as far as possible (see Goldberg, 2015). In neo-racism, race (colour) is not important; what is important is culture. The emphasis is on how people from different cultures, rather than people from difference races, interact. Culture, as a thing of the present without the same historical implication as race, is given centre stage (Lentin & Titley 2011; Balibar 1991a) without an investigation of its own weaknesses.

In short, as varied as the understanding of racism is, in this thesis my conception of racism is informed by a postcolonial and neo-racist framework wherein racism is not merely prejudice and discrimination against the Other (often non-white) sustained through power established through colonial history and the socio-political order of a given time. As Rasmussen observes, it is not solely "irrational prejudice, a form of socio-political discrimination, or an ideological motive in a political doctrine; rather, it is a form of government that is designed to manage a population" (Rasmussen 2011, 34). In this study, racism refers to discrimination or prejudice based on difference, starting from skin colour and reaching out to other variables like gender, sexuality, religion etc., and exercised through the use of power. Racism is a necessary form of rhetoric used to

devaluate, and justify as dispensable, lives that are portrayed (by hegemonic discourses) as less valuable. Once again, the bottom line of racism is devaluation and not skin colour. Skin colour is just the marker used to devaluate. Thus, when human beings were *commoditised* through slavery, they did not just lose their rights but they lost their *humanity*. Put differently, racism is not about skin colour for the sake of skin colour; it is about the hierarchies and dehumanisation produced by skin colour – what it was, what it is and what it should be.

When literature on racism ignores the role of the state,[9] it is incomplete, as racism does not exist in a vacuum (see Foucault 1997; Goldberg 2002). As Lentin & Lentin observe, "racism both past and present is inextricably linked both to the policy instituted by states and to the political climate engendered by governmental leaders playing the proverbial 'race card'" (2006, 2). All nation-states are raced states (Lentin & Lentin 2006; Goldberg 2002), as they are established to serve and protect their citizens' interest over the interest of others. The borders that define nation states establish the inherent divide between nationals and non-nationals, which in turn sets the tone for citizens to create and maintain the dichotomy between "us" and "them". This established dichotomy, when pitted against the histories and political climate of a given country, breeds racial tension, which in turns facilitates racism. Balibar's (1991a) notion of second-class citizenry, who may have been granted the nationality a given state but lack the full rights maintained for "true" citizens, is an example of racism that can be upheld by the state. Zygmunt Bauman's (1989) metaphor of the gardener who is inclined to weed out the plants he/she did not plant in his garden so that his/her crops can fully benefit from every resource available exemplifies how racism is interwoven into the construct and sustenance of nationhood and nationalism.

2.3 Antiracism (Education)?

Influenced by Paulo Friere, Dei and Calliste (2000) establish an understanding of education as "strategies, processes and structures through which individuals and communities/groups come to know and understand the world and act within it" (Dei & Calliste, 2000, 13). Thus, education is not limited to formal or institutionalised learning processes. In this study, I incorporate this idea of

[9] The idea of the nation state is a colonial and racial process. For example, Cameroon (where I was born) was "discovered" by the Portuguese, who gave the country its name – Rio dos Cameroes (river of prawns), colonised by the Germans and mapped by Europeans in 1884 (Berlin Conference) and liberated from colonial rule by Britain and France. Its history was written by the Europeans, who branded the indigenous population inferior in every way possible. This ideology of inferiority has been passed on through education from generation to generation (including today).

education as a social practice necessary for positive change. Dei (2006) suggests that within an institutionalised setting, formal education should not attempt to ignore the social reality of categories such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation, language, ability and religion. Rather, educators need to work with these categories, borrowing from local examples and personal/real life, to demonstrate how and why these social categories matter in our daily lives.

Antiracism is often understood to pertain to the subversion of racism, as the prefix "anti" suggests a sense of retrogression (Lentin, 2008); i.e. it suggests racism precedes anti-racism. In this thesis I have chosen to use antiracism without the hyphen to underline the fact that antiracism is not merely a reaction to racism; rather, it is proactive (a schema that uproots racism or potential racist agendas). Antiracism holds the institutions (schools, laws, press, political parties, etc.) that are fundamental to "our" self-perception as citizens of a liberal democratic nation up for scrutiny, forcing them to abide by their commitment to the values of equality central in democratic politics (Lentin 2008). I have argued above that nation states are raced states that prioritise protecting and serving their own citizens over others (either foreign or domestic). These nation states also have laws that uphold equality, justice and respect for human rights. It is through these laws that antiracism seeks to maintain social justice.

Antiracism (education) is a pedagogical discourse as well as an academic and political practice (Dei & Calliste, 2000). This means that antiracism occupies a proactive space both within and beyond educational institutions. Within this space, Dei and Calliste (ibid., 13) observe that antiracism is an "action-oriented, educational and political strategy for institutional and systemic change that addresses the issues of racism and the interlocking systems of social oppression (sexism, classism, heterosexism, ableism)". In doing so, antiracist discourse and practice must acknowledge and denaturalise the social categories of skin colour, gender, sexuality, ableism etc. (Dei, 2006), as these categories play a vital role in human interaction and "potential" racialisation. Ignoring these social categories under the guise of sameness (unity, oneness, togetherness or fear of segregation) fails to do justice to racialised victims, who potentially suffer every day because of their otherness. Here, antiracism education aims to break down the process and structures of de-humanisation – thus dismantling the hierarchies produced by human interaction and discourse.

Furthermore, Lentin and Lentin (2006) and Dei (2006) suggest that the lived experiences of those who have faced racism must be recognised in antiracism work. Antiracism cannot be based solely on vague principles that fail to identify or challenge power, privilege and the resultant hierarchies

and stem from notions of tolerance, solidarity and respect for human dignity that rest on human sympathy or empathy alone. Understanding and dismantling historical and social attitudes, and confronting the effects of power (hierarchies) in human relations is one dimension that must be explored. This explains my engagement in such matters and justifies my tone in this thesis, as I am writing from the position and experience of the racialised other in Finland.

Schools[10] (from kindergarten to universities), the press and television, law and justice, employment and trade, art and popular culture continue to be powerful avenues for producing, organising and regulating race knowledge (Dei & Calliste 2000; van Dijk 2000; Alemanji et al., 2015; Lentin & Lentin 2006). Thus, combating such knowledge, at all levels, remains a priority for antiracism. The work can be done both in and out of schools or other institutions.

Rasmussen (2011) reminds us of Foucault's genealogy of racism, which inevitably raises the question of resistance by problematizing the effectiveness of existing anti-racist strategies such as popular education, economic redistribution, or the granting of particular rights to minorities. These antiracism strategies only reproduce new power structures, which in turn recycle racism or introduce new forms of racism. However, these antiracism strategies may appear successful on the surface, as they are often designed to counter such phenomena as prejudice, discrimination, and structural biases. Consequently, antiracism strategies must be constantly open to redesign, in order to address the ever-changing forms and understandings of racism.

2.3.1 With the availability of multiculturalism/interculturalism, why antiracism?

Throughout this PhD process, my supervisor and I have discussed the difference between antiracism and interculturality or education for diversities, which are all promoted in Finland under the banner of multicultural education. Here, I must mention that when I began my PhD I was naturally inclined to follow in the footsteps of my supervisor – a professor of multiculturalism. Nevertheless, in my

[10] Schools are not neutral establishments existing by chance from "good intentions". Schools are institutions where hegemonic ideologies and knowledge are processed, sold and recycled (see Grosfoguel 2011, Apple 2000 2004). Schools serve the purpose of creating citizens who will uphold and maintain the existing power structures. Knowledge production (a goal of education) can also be considered a component of racialisation, as it was used as the foundation for modernity, with man rather than God at its core. Knowledge continues to serve as a racialised tool in the sense that the knowledge of the subaltern remains excluded, omitted, silenced, and/or ignored (Grosfoguel, 2011).

reading of the literature on multiculturalism or interculturalism, I never felt like it captured my needs or spoke to me. Intercultural/multicultural education appeared both superficial, complex and disjointed, as the concept of culture, the root word in "inter-" and "multicultural", was so vague. Put side by side with racism (treated as a component of critical multiculturalism), I could relate more to the idea of racism, as it was something that I experienced all too often as a black man in Finland.

To put it simply, multiculturalism (multicultural education) stems from the civil rights movement (1960s America), while interculturalism (intercultural education) stems from mass immigration in Europe (see Dervin et al., 2015). With their two distinct origins (the US vs. Europe), there is bound to be different interpretations of these two concepts. Dervin states that "some European researchers have even demonised the 'multicultural', asserting that multicultural education celebrates only cultural differences and ignores similarities, individuality, and the importance of relations and interaction – as the 'intercultural' is said to operate" (Dervin et al., 2015, 6). Nevertheless, despite differences of ideology and origin, the terms 'intercultural' and 'multicultural' both concern people (how they come together and operate together) from different cultures and how they interact. Moreover, in Finland, as in many other countries and in academia. both interculturalism and multiculturalism are used interchangeably (Dervin 2010; Dervin et al., 2012; Dervin et al., 2015).

Multiculturalism and interculturalism are somewhat bound up with antiracism because they are all concepts, policies and practices involving human interaction regarding otherness and sameness or diversity. As a result, no discussion of antiracism would be complete without mention of multiculturalism/interculturalism. There are, however, various forms of multiculturalism/interculturalism. On this, Mills (2007, 89) states that

> There is multiculturalism as state policy (itself varying from nation to nation) and multiculturalism as minority activist demand, multiculturalism as applied generally to the political theorisation of society as a whole and multiculturalism as a applied specifically to tertiary education and curriculum reform, multiculturalism as including the politics of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and disability (critical multiculturalism) and multiculturalism excluding at least some of these.

These different interpretations of multiculturalism vary depending on the specific context. In Finland, multiculturalism discourses have centred on the concept of "tolerance" and the need to promote equality, rather than on racism (see Tuori, 2009) and its effect on people's lives. In Finland, multiculturalism is politically geared towards immigrants and the need to "teach" them the

Finnish way of life (see Dervin & Layne, 2013; Dervin et al., 2012; Riitaoja 2013; Holm & Londen, 2010).

The table below presents three arguments from Dei and Calliste (2000)[11] on the differences between multiculturalism and antiracism.

MULTICULTURALISM (education)	ANTIRACISM (education)
Heralds the mosaic, cherishes diversity and plurality and promotes an image of multiple, thriving, mutually respectful and appreciative ethno-cultural communities (Dei & Calliste 2000, 21).	Highlights persistent inequities among communities, focusing on relations of domination and subordination (Thomas 1984; Lee 1985; Walcott 1990; Dei 1996 as cited by (Dei & Calliste 2000, 21).
Perceives prejudice as a violation of democratic rights (Dei & Calliste 2000, 21)	Perceives prejudice as an integral part of the social order (Dei & Calliste 2000, 21)
Presents the mechanism of redress through education-sharing and exchange of ideas (Dei & Calliste 2000, 21).	Views the mechanism of redress through fundamental structural/societal change (Dei & Calliste 2000, 21).

Table 1. Multiculturalism versus Antiracism

In the table above, Dei and Calliste (2000) argue that while multiculturalism deals with the coming together of people from different cultures, antiracism focuses on the power structures involved in this interaction. Critical multiculturalism, however, attempts to combine these concerns, as it questions the power relations involved in multicultural interactions (see Layne & Alemanji, 2015). Nevertheless, Dei and Calliste (2000) also state that within multicultural discourses and debates, prejudice is seen as a violation of democratic rights, in contrast to it being an integral part of the social order, as it is seen in antiracism discourses and debates. Thus, antiracism, which is grounded on the concept of power, does not simply view prejudice as a violation of democratic rights, as it considers that such an approach can restrict discussion of existing prejudices. In contrast, approaching prejudices as an integral part of the social order creates more space for them to be explored and challenged. Moreover, Dei and Calliste (2000) argue that in multiculturalism, education and the exchange of ideas are viewed as the main methods of redress, as opposed to "structural" and societal change. In this respect, antiracism, in contrast, views education with suspicion, given that education and curriculums are the products of a given hegemony (see Apple 2004), which aims to reproduce and protect itself. Although education can play a role, it must be ready to recognise and challenge the power structures which ensure its sustenance.

[11] This is just one interpretation of multiculturalism and antiracism.

However, it should be noted that concepts like multiculturalism and antiracism are context specific rather than universal or fixed. One of the challenges I have faced in this process is justifying why I am using antiracism and not interculturalism or multiculturalism. Dervin et al. (2015, 7) in their frustration with the complexity of the word culture (in inter/multi culturalism, interculturality) argue that the "*interaction, contextualization, the recognition of power relations, simplexity* (the inevitable combination of *the simple* and *the complex*) *intersectionality*" politicality, reflexivity …critical thinking can be triggered by the presence of others and the hyphen between self and other."

Dei and Calliste (2000) argue that although multiculturalism upholds treasured attributes like diversity, tolerance, equality, respect for human rights and human dignity, which are central in socio-political discourse and practices, antiracism takes the concept of multiculturalism further by questioning the very grounds upon which multiculturalism is based. It focuses on how power is created, established and maintained in human relationships and interactions. In this process, race and racism are seen as central to how interactions are established. As a black (non-white/non-European) man in Finland, I wish to understand how race and racism, through power and "established" privileges, shape my everyday life in Finland – a country where I am very conscious of my race (its limitations as well as its expectations) at all times and places. In short, antiracism, as a word, endorses a recognition of the existence of racism – which is a major step towards uprooting it (see Alemanji & Mafi, 2016). Antiracism provides a space for a discourse of racism in a way that existing multiculturalism programmes/discourses do not. Antiracism education or politics are primarily aimed at identifying and eliminating racism by challenging systems, policies, organisational structures, hierarchies and attitudes to change through examining and redistributing power between racialised groups (often minorities like immigrants) and non-racialised majorities (Alemanji & Mafi 2016; Alemanji, in press).

3 Racism in Finland

But . . . Why?

Why do I always conceal the topic of my work when I read anything related to it in a public space (on buses, trains, in the park etc.)? Is it guilt (for criticising the hand that feeds me), shame (resulting from the above-mentioned guilt) or fear (of being hit, as I once was for being black in Finland)? During my stay in Finland, I have had various discussions with people about racism in the country. Such discussions range from racial complaints (from the victims of racial violence), a denial of racism (from people who benefit from racialisation or racial politics) to those people who approve of racist attitudes in Finland. These discussions are never the easiest thing to initiate, regardless of the political/racial side of the interlocutor. Victims of racial violence must constantly seek new strategies to cope with incidents of racial violence, while those who benefit from the politics of racialisation are often uneasy discussing racism. Being black definitely affects such discussions, as my blackness (non-white/non-Europeanness) automatically puts me in the group of victims of racial violence – the Other in Finland. In some situations, my blackness helps me get through to the victims of racism. On the other hand, it is a disadvantage when I talk to those who benefit from the politics of racialisation. Overall, talking about racism in Finland is not a popular activity. In contrast, during my travels outside Finland, people often ask me if there is any racism in Finland, as if there were any country free of it. To understand the concept of racism and its consequences in any given society, a multidisciplinary approach is needed (Goldberg & Solomos 2002; Rasmussen 2011). In this study, this approach will entail examining the concept through four theoretical frameworks. These frameworks were carefully chosen on the basis of my many years of research in this field. This entails analysing racism in Finland using the frameworks of Finnish exceptionalism, coloniality of power, whiteness theory and denial of racism.

3.1 Finnish exceptionalism

What does it matter what she thinks, she's not even a Finn

If you don't like Finland, you can go back to your trees

(This is an example of Finnish exceptionalism evident in discourses discussed in Alemanji in press)

According to Coates, "a society almost necessarily begins every success story with a chapter that most advantages itself" (Coates 2015, 96), and Finland is no exception. Finland is a nation that prides itself on being the best of the best at many things, from education (although not anymore according to the Programme for International Student Assessment results, PISA), to gender equality, and human rights (see, for example, Sahlberg, 2015). This idea of being the best frames Finland as exceptional or superior to other nations, which are necessarily inferior. This self-perception is exported abroad, where Finns are portrayed as 'good global citizens', conflict resolvers and rational subjects. Exceptionalism therefore involves ideas of moral superiority and it is applied for strategic purposes like selective amnesia to avoid ethical judgements related to responsibilities towards those who are not included in the national (Nordic/European) "us" (Rastas, 2012). Finnish exceptionalism does not stand alone: it is part of Nordic exceptionalism, which involves the Nordic countries uncritically constructing ideal identities of themselves and selling/exporting them as the epitome of some universal dream come true. Moreover, Nordic exceptionalism is reified and institutionalised as a brand in contemporary notions of internationalisation/globalisation (Loftsdottir & Jensen, 2012).

The increase in immigration to Finland that has occurred from the 1990s[12] until the present day has seen the notion of "homogeneity" threatened by an influx of people from all over the world who do not possess and do not have the ability to possess the quality of superiority or exceptionalism ingrained in Finnishness. The arrival of immigrants in Finland "infected" the "purity" of Finnishness (which is often assumed to be pure and indivisible), and challenged the idea of Finnish exceptionalism. The notion of Finnish exceptionalism is very slow to accommodate changes to its existing framework because it is constructed on the idea of being the best, where the best cannot get any better. This echoes the observations Rastas (2012) in her discussion of Finnish exceptionalism, where she states that the discourse of exceptionalism is used to ignore the existence of non-white people and sustain their continued exclusion from the Finnish 'us'. The fact that people with immigrant backgrounds are seen as "not native enough" or as second-class citizens has already been noted and discussed in many European countries, such as France and England (see Balibar 1991b; Goldberg, 2006). Coates (2015), Goldberg (2015) and Mignolo (2009) observe that within an exceptionalist framework, the Other is always punished for his/her imperfection, something that is always checked and double checked by the dominant group. The imperfection of the Other is used

[12] Immigration of the Other in Finland did not begin in the 1990s. There are traces of non-white immigration to Finland as early as the 1970s. However, the 1990s are when large numbers of non-white immigrants (Somalis) started coming to Finland.

to establish and maintain the hierarchies that put the dominant group at the top and the Other at the bottom. Coates (2015, 105) reminds us that "*a mountain is not a mountain if there is nothing below*", and in Finland it is the Other as a result of his/her imperfection that is below – the valley necessary for the mountain (the dominant group) to be a mountain.

Exceptionalism acts as a barrier to efforts to address issues of racism for both the racialising and the racialised. This is because through the notion of exceptionalism, the racialised are condemned to second-class citizenship. It is exceptionalism that accounts for how the rest of the world is depicted in comparison to Finland in the Finnish media (Puuronen, 2011, Keskinen, 2013), and school textbooks (see Layne & Alemanji, 2015) etc. For example, in comparison to Finland, Africa is very often portrayed as backward, inferior, famine stricken, disease stricken or a jungle where people live among animals like lions, elephants and giraffes. Finland, on the other hand, is often directly presented as a country of law and order, beauty and reason (see Layne & Alemanji, 2015). For example, in a study of the resistance on Finnish social media to the banning of the Golliwog logo of a brand of liquorice – which is condemned as representational complicity with colonialism and racism – Ross (2009) sheds more light on Finnish exceptionalism as "selective amnesia". In the discourse of resistance to the ban, what was represented as Finnish and 'traditional' about the image, and thus worthy of protection, was the exclusion of non-whites, and participation in Europe's colonial past, which was represented as part of Finnish national heritage. Thus, while the idea of exceptionalism sets Finland apart from the rest of Europe as a place where race and colonialism are alien, this study shows (see Alemanji in press; Alemanji & Mafi 2016) how some sections of Finnish society actually claim colonial knowledge and representations as part of Finnish heritage. In sum, racial victimisation of the Other in the Finnish media (Ross, 2009), schools (Rastas 2009; Layne & Dervin 2014) and institutions more generally (Puuronen, 2011) highlights the predicament of immigrant families (part of the focus of this study) in Finland.

There are many strands of Nordic/Finnish exceptionalism that produce and sustain racism in Finland, but I give particular focus to two. The first is the idea of Finland's peripheral status in relation to broader European colonialism and its racial, imperial and neo-colonial consequences. The second is that the roots of the Finnish/Nordic self-image are intrinsically different from those of the rest of Europe, which has led to many tragic consequences, but which, ironically, has also set the Nordic countries on a civilising mission of their own to export their self-perception of being 'good global citizens', conflict resolvers and rational subjects.

3.2 Coloniality of power

If you don't like Finland, you can go back to your trees[13]
(This is an example of Finnish exceptionalism evident in discourses discussed in Alemanji in press)

Our understanding of contemporary racism cannot be complete without acknowledging the silenced history "of the formation and transformation of the colonial matrix of power" (Mignolo, 2009 125) in which contemporary racism is embedded. The colonial matrix of power (structural power derived and sustained by colonial control or its effect) divides the world into two distinct groups – the colonisers and the colonised, wherein the latter (by physical appearance and way of life) is considered not only to be different but also inferior to the former (see Mills, 2007). Such notions, which "justified" the colonisation movement and its actions, are still relevant in today's socio-political interactions. One reason for this is that "one of the enduring legacies of colonialism was its ability to universalize Western (Anglo-European) particularism" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013, 39) and non-recognition of the other (Mills 1997, 2007). Andreotti (2013) argues that coloniality continues to systemically define what and whose knowledge, morals and aesthetics have value and whose do not – thus acting as the vehicle for modernity's imperial project. In so doing, anything or anyone that was non-European "inherited" a second-class position. The idea of coloniality of power is centred on and nurtured by the concept of white supremacy, as white supremacy justifies coloniality (of knowledge and space).

In answering the question of what coloniality is, Maldonado-Torres (2007, 243) makes the following clear distinction between coloniality and colonialism:

> Coloniality is different from colonialism. Colonialism denotes a political and economic relation in which the sovereignty of a nation or a people rests on the power of another nation, which makes such nation an empire. Coloniality, instead, refers to long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture, labour,

[13] This exception fits both the theme of exceptionalism and coloniality This example is indicative of the fact that the boundaries between these concepts (exceptionalism, coloniality, whiteness and denial) are very blurred.

> intersubjective relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations. Thus coloniality survives colonialism. It is maintained alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of people, in aspirations of self, and so many other aspects of our modern experience. In a way, as modern subjects we breathe coloniality all the time and every day.

Based on this distinction, Finland, and other countries that may not have taken part in colonising any other country, benefit from the idea of colonisation. This is because Finland, like other European countries, benefits from the power structures established by colonisation with regard to socio-political relationships with previously colonised people. With reference to Grosfoguel (2007), Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) argues that coloniality of power is central to today's power structures, which position the Other, Africans and their descendants in particular, as people of absolute deficiency – deficiencies of civilisation, development, human rights, history, development etc. Such deficiency is often inferred by comparison to European ideologies in text, talk and images in Finland.

In Finland the idea of coloniality has been discussed as colonial complicity (Vuorela, 2009), and although much has been written on how Finland did not participate in the colonisation of Africa America and Asia, there have also been studies which argue that Finland's relationship with its minorities can be likened to that of colonisation (see Tuori 2009; Vuorela 2009). Vuorela (2009) and Urponen (2010) refer to the fact that Finland's relationship with the Saami can be considered internal colonisation, evident in the way Finland has attempted to modernise them through education and welfare as well as by physically displacing them to the north of the country from their earlier settlements in the south. Moreover, Saami history is not still incorporated into the history of Finland as taught in Finnish schools (Tuori, 2009). The same can also be said of the Roma and immigrants, with multiculturalism constantly geared towards teaching the Other (mostly immigrants) how to do things the "Finnish" way (see Riitaoja, 2013). This idea of Finnish colonial complicity breeds racism in Finland at both a macro and micro level. At a macro level, it can influence discourse and policies in which Finland is placed in a superior position vis-a-vis anything non-Finnish. This can be considered one form of Finnish exceptionalism. In Finland a good example of macro-level colonial complicity is how Africa is depicted in the Finnish media or school textbooks – as a country with poor and sick people (Layne & Alemanji, 2015). The exclusion of

minorities from Finland can be considered one form of colonial complicity because these minorities do not fit into the idea of Finnishness.

3.3 Whiteness theory

"There are no black Finns."

(An example of Finnish exceptionalism evident in discourses discussed in Alemanji in press)

Growing up as a young "Christian" boy in Cameroon, I was taught to believe that Jesus and God were white. The white priests who brought Christianity to us made us believe that whiteness was next to Godliness, as they all always dressed in white and used white to represent purity. Out of church, many young boys in Cameroon grew up watching action movies like "Rambo" and "Commando", where a white lead actor (whom in Cameroon we simply called the "actor", as if he was the only actor in the movie) would be dropped into a non-white country to rescue some white colleagues. To achieve his objective, which he often did, he outsmarts all the non-whites, who were never on a par with him. Although I only fully recognized what it meant to be black (non-white/non-European) when I arrived in Finland in 2008, I had long been taught that white or being white is the epitome of perfection. Such an ideology is built and embedded into the current world structure that shapes modern day realities. It is forged through historical processes and established power structures rather than random action, and it is secured through series of actions (see Leonardo 2004) and discourse (see van Dijk, 2015). Rastas (2004, 102) notes that

> In Finland, people perceived as African occupy the lowest position in the hierarchies of the non-white category. In this hierarchy children with an African background seem to face racism in its crudest variety, and more starkly than other non-white people located differently in the racializing hierarchy.

Africanness is associated with non-whiteness (blackness), a direct opposite of what whiteness represents. Whiteness in this case represents an invisible norm against which everything else is defined and judged (Allen, 2004).

Whiteness is central in the racialisation of identities. Bonilla-Silva (2006) argues that the history of racial classification and systematic racial stratification is a history of white supremacy that awards

systematic privileges to Europeans ("whites") over non-Europeans ("non-whites"). The ideology was transported and made global with the spread of European civilisation through colonisation and now globalisation. Whiteness does not only refer to skin colour but embodies the philosophy and "culture" of the "West", which is constructed consciously or unconsciously as dominant and as opposed to all other ideologies and cultures (Mignolo 2009; Leonardo 2004). Whiteness is therefore systemic and, based on earlier discussions of neo-racism, it (whiteness) is implicit, historical and embedded in ways of knowing and being. Whiteness is history, that history which recedes from view and acts as a continuity between will and habit (Ahmed, 2012). It is from this perspective that race and racism in most parts of the world continue to be reproduced and upheld.

In Finland, a dominant white society with a small number of non-whites compared to neighbouring Sweden, to be white is often considered the norm and an intrinsic part of Finnish identity (see Rastas 2007; Layne & Alemanji 2015). However, there is a need for more discussion on the concept of whiteness and what it means to be white in Finland or around the world. On several occasions when I have asked the students I am lecturing to indicate by a show of hands if they are white, less than 30% of my dominantly white class have raised their hands. Although the students have a right to choose not to participate in this exercise, what surprises me is the shock on their faces when confronted with such a direct question about their being white, especially from a black (non-white/non-European) lecturer. This is because most of the white Finns I have met see themselves as racially neutral. That is, they do not fit into a particular racial category, as if such categories were reserved only for non-whites. Rastas (2007) demonstrates that it is very common for the idea of whiteness to be used as a synonym for Finnishness in Finland, as the notion of Finnishness centres around white skin, blonde hair, and blue eyes. This image is strongly visible in Finnish textbooks (see Layne & Alemanji, 2015) as well as in the Finnish media (see Alemanji, in press; Ross 2009; Keskinen 2013).

Moreover, it must be noted that whiteness is not all about skin colour, it is a social construction which can be (re)invented and analysed (Kincheloe, 1999); it is a privileged power position that can be attained by some people. Whiteness goes beyond colour to include variables like gender, religion, sexuality and ability, as it focuses on normalising certain aspects of these variables over others e.g. male over female, Christianity over Islam, heterosexuality over homosexuality. Nevertheless, deeper investigation of these variables and their connections to whiteness exposes huge contradictions, as whiteness is not a stable concept at all places or times. One way to help

elucidate this contradiction is to understand what whiteness does: it essentialises elements marked as "white" as different and superior to those marked as "non-white" (Leonardo, 2004). In Finland, for example, while immigrants of colour are often evoked to mark the negativity of this new racial category, white immigrants are often used as success stories to sell a picture of an open and welcoming Finland (to the outside world) and the dream of Finland as a country with equal opportunities for all. An American colleague once told me that his racial experiences in Finland often occur before he opens his mouth. Once he does, his Americanness – the 'whiteness' evident, for instance, from his accent – elevates him to a higher position than that previously assigned to him on the basis of his black skin. Consequently, in Finland the category of immigrant is not fixed, and not all immigrants or people with black skin occupy the same levels in the hierarchical order of being. Above all, whiteness is something that can be evoked by people of all skin colours. Some do so by adopting a white skin: a "Western" name, a European passport, an American accent etc.

One of the strongest groups advocating whiteness as a criterion for Finnishness is the political party known as The Finns (popularly referred to in Finland by its Finnish name *Perussuomalaiset*, PS, and previously known as The True Finns in English), which has enjoyed considerable popularity in recent years. This conservative nationalist party, founded in 1995, gained enormous popular support in the April 2011 parliament election, which saw them move from 5 seats in the Finnish Parliament to 39 seats, winning 19.9% of the vote and making them Finland's third largest party. In 2015, after winning 17.7% of vote, The Finns were included in the present government coalition. The party is known for its anti-immigration policies, and its parliamentarians and party members have continually demonstrated extreme "racist" tendencies through their comments in both the (social) media and other outlets. Immigrants, especially non-whites and Muslims, are an important target of their racist attacks. These attacks are often met by vehement opposition from the Finnish general public, but this does not seem to have silenced the racist discourse arising from the party, as racist attacks on immigrants – non-whites and Muslims – continue to occur with regularity in Finland.

3.4 Denial of racism

I am a Christian and by definition I cannot be a racist

He has not said that he is a racist so I cannot say he is

I am not racist; I have a black friend

(This is an example of Finnish exceptionalism evident in discourses discussed in Alemanji in press)

Research on racism today has shown that racism continues to change in form from the violent and aggressive rejection of the Other to various forms of subtle rejection (see Lentin 2015; Goldberg 2015). At the heart of this rejection, is rejection of the very act of racism referred to as denial of racism. In defining denial, van Dijk states that it "presupposes a real or potential accusation, reproach or suspicion of others about one's present or past actions or attitudes, and asserts that such attacks against ones moral integrity are not warranted" (van Dijk 1992, 180). This can be used in two ways, for defence or for positive self-presentation (ibid.). As a defence strategy, appeals to lack of intent or reverse racism are forms of racism denial that are central to this thesis, as they are common place in racism discourses in Finland (see Rastas 2009; Puuronen 2011).

Goldberg (2015) argues that in denial (dismissal) of racism, historically disposed victims of racism are charged as the present perpetrators of racism, while dismissing as inconsequential and trivial their experiences of racism. In this strategy, poor judgement, ill fortune and lack of effort from the historical victims of racism are often cited as the problem. In turn, van Dijk (1993) defines "reverse racism" as a tactic employed by members of the dominant group to turn charges of racism around, arguing instead that it is they who are victims of racism. However, for true reverse racism to occur, the oppressed group needs to possess both prejudice and power (ibid., 1993). Since this is hardly the case in Finland, discourses or claims of "reverse racism" are simply strategies of denial. The denial of racism is very much linked to national politics of racism and anti-racism (Nelson, 2013). As a result, in a progressive society like Finland (see Sahlberg, 2015), where freedom, human rights, democracy and the rule of law are believed to be supreme, there should be no room for racism, as racism goes against the principles upon which the country is built. As a result, most people who share racist opinions and act accordingly, would vigorously deny possessing any racist tendencies because racism is often legally condemned in most societies of the world (see Petrova, 2000). Out of fear of the possible legal or societal consequences of their "racist" actions, those with racist tendencies are highly invested in refuting and denying any claim of racism on their part. Moreover, van Dijk (1992, 181) observes that

> Denials of racism have a *socio-political function*. Denials challenge the very legitimacy of anti-racist analysis, and thus are part of the politics of ethnic management: as long as a problem is being denied in the first place, the critics are ridiculed, marginalised or delegitimated: denials debilitate resistance. As long as racism is denied, there is no need for official measures against it, for stricter laws, regulations or institutions to combat discrimination.

When racialised victims cannot name their experiences of racism, as racism does not exist, the scope for local anti-racism activities becomes very limited, as it prevents antiracism efforts from flourishing or persisting. Efforts against denial divert the focus from acts of racism to denial and denial of denial (see Goldberg, 2015). Denial of denial, what Goldberg refers to as (part of) postraciality, refers to the repudiation of the denial of racism, where racism is denied and such denial is rejected.

For example, at an institutional level, racelessness, or racism without race or colour-blindness, is another form of denial of racism (Balibar 1991a, Lentin & Lentin 2006, Goldberg 2015). Such institutional discourse results in political and research discourses on "post-racism" (Lentin & Titley 2011; Goldberg 2015), where racism is considered a thing of the past. Although this line of discourse is much more glaring in the US, it is also evident in Finland. For instance, Rastas (2009) argues that one major strategy used to deny racism in Finland is claim lack of intent. Often racist remarks are passed off as humour (see Due, 2011). However, in such cases, the racialising person ignores the effects of what is said to be a mere joke. Nevertheless, racist humour is not humour alone. In these forms of denial of racism, racism is considered to consist of rare and exceptional acts that occur among fringe people (see van Dijk 2000; Rastas 2009; Goldberg 2015). Goldberg (2015) also cites the animalisation of racial victims as another form of humour used against non-white/non-European subjects. For example, blacks are portrayed as monkeys, baboons who are only good for eating bananas. These various discourses of denial hamper antiracist efforts and reproduce even more subtle instances of denial, which, in turn, reproduce and sustain racism in everyday life. This gives credence to Goldberg's (2006) thesis that one pathway for the denial of racism is neutral descriptions of racism and the concomitant lack of evaluation of norms in both analytical and pedagogical work on racism.

Racism in Finland is often wrapped up in denial (exemplified by Timo Soini's[14] assertion that "I'm a Catholic Christian and by definition I cannot be a racist", in response to claims of there being racist elements within in The Finns party) and an unwillingness and inability to commence discussions on the issue. The definitions or understandings of racism in Finland tend to be narrow, referring only to open, intentional acts of racism (Rasta 2009; Puuronen 2011). In racism without race or racelessness racism, the target group of racism is not explicitly identified; instead, racial signification piggybacks on the history of the target group as shaped by the modern/colonial world. In racism without race, "the category of immigration (functions) as a substitute for the notion of race" (Balibar 1991a, 20). Immigration as a signifier of race refers to a form of racism commensurate with the era of decolonisation. It mainly arises from the reversal of population movements between the old colonies and the old metropolises and the West in general, resulting in the division of humanity within a single political space. Its dominant theme is not biological heredity but the insurmountability of cultural differences, which Balibar (1991a 21) describes as "differentialist racism".

In sum, I argue that Finnish exceptionalism, coloniality of power, whiteness theory and denial of racism complement each other, as indicated in the diagram below

[14] Timo Soini is currently the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Finnish Deputy Prime Minister and the leader of The Finns party - *Perussuomalaiset*, (a nationalist oriented Finnish political party). This statement was made in an interview on Hard Talk (an in-depth, half-hour, one-on-one interview programme produced by the British Broadcasting Corporation) on 23/02/2013.

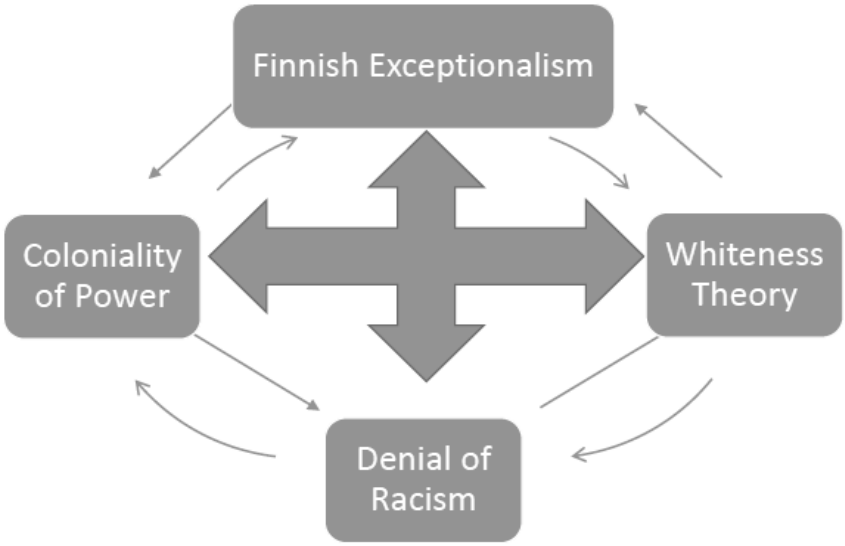

Figure 2. *The inter-relatedness of Finnish exceptionalism, whiteness, theory, denial of racism and coloniality of power.*

As illustrated in figure 2 above, coloniality of power, Finnish exceptionalism, whiteness theory and denial work hand in hand. All of them work for each other, supplementing and grounding each other to produce the specific character of racism in Finland. Exceptionalism creates and sustains the idea that one category (white – whiteness) is superior, on the basis of which coloniality of power is grounded or justified and racism is also denied.

At the beginning of this chapter, I mentioned that during my travels outside Finland I am was often asked if Finland was a racist country. At one of my lectures, a student once remarked that racism in Finland was not that bad because people are not killed or hit. They are merely insulted and only by people who are drunk or who do not really mean what they say." However, she argued, we must understand that Finland is 'in its infancy' with regard to immigration (especially with regard to people of colour – non-whites). If Finland is still 'in its infancy' in terms of migration (born in the 1990s), when will it grow up? Surely, a child born in the 1990s is an adult today and adulthood comes with maturity and responsibilities. Racism in Finland does not involve lynching, as it did in America in the 18th century through to the 1960s, a South African style apartheid system of governance or the Holocaust. However, although there have been no equivalents to the Ferguson

shooting,[15] in Finland, the mental and psychological "shooting" (of the racialised) that occurs every day is often as bad. While Finland promises so much (e.g. good social welfare, a sanctuary for refuges, religious freedom, freedom of expression and justice and equality etc.) it often allows racism to stand between some groups, who have invested a lot in this belief, and their ability to enjoy these promises.

[15]On August 9th 2014, an unarmed black teenager, Michael Brown, was fatally shot by Darren Wilson, 28, a white police officer in Ferguson, Missouri, USA. This led to unrest as the general public split along racial lines to support either Brown or Wilson. The unrest that followed this shooting and the subsequent acquittal of the police officer sparked vigorous debates in the United States about the relationship between law enforcement officers and African Americans, the militarization of the police, and the Use of Force Doctrine in Missouri and the across the whole country.

4 Methodology

This is a qualitative study in that it investigates human relations and the societal relationships that influence them. Thus, this study focuses on both understanding present human relations and making recommendations for future human relations and interaction. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) suggest that qualitative research examines things or phenomena in their natural settings in an attempt to make sense of them or understand them through the meaning that people give to them at any given time. In a study like this, emphasis is placed on the quality and originality of the data (*qualitas*), rather than on quantity (*quantita*) (see Erickson, 1998). van Dijk (2005) highlights the fact that qualitative research approaches the world as a unique feature of human interaction in which individual discourses reflect group ideologies. Thus, understanding the ideologies of a group requires understanding various discourses – how and why they are constructed in the way they are in a given society.

In the articles composing this study, I have employed critical discourse analysis as an essential qualitative method for understanding human interaction regarding racism. Critical discourse analysis investigates "the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context to understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality" (van Dijk 2001, 11). In this study I employ Fairclough and Wodak's (1997) six tenets of critical discourse analysis as listed in van Dijk (2001):

1. CDA addresses social problems – racism,

2. Power relations are discursive – influenced and manifested via power play,

3. Discourse constitutes society and culture – a social construct,

4. Discourse does ideological work – privilege,

5. Discourse is historical – influenced by history written from the perspective of the powerful,

6. Discourse is a form of social action – interrogate social realities and educate against all forms of racism.

Under these tenets, racism is identified as a societal problem in which power and privilege shape how discourses are used in people's daily interactions. These discourses, shaped by historical positioning, reflect the realities of society (socio-political), which go beyond discourse into practices. Nevertheless, I also recognise the ability of discourses to produce positive actions.

Table 2: Methodological breakdown of the research by article.

Articles	Research Participants	Method of data collection	Analysis
1 "IF AN APPLE IS A FOREIGN APPLE YOU HAVE TO WASH IT VERY CAREFULLY": YOUTH DISCOURSES ON RACISM. (2016)	24 students from an elementary school, independent from the city school system in Turku, Finland. grades 7-9 (13-16 years old)	Group discussion in an antiracism workshop 4 groups: 3 groups of boys, 1 group of girls Combined 56 min (22 + 14 + 16 + 4) The students themselves served as moderators. Questions: *Do you think racism is a bad thing? Why/not?* *Are Finns racist?* *Are foreigners racist?* *How does a person become racist?* *What should be done to fight against racism / discrimination?* *Has racism / any act of discrimination caused any harm to the students or anyone they know?*	Discourses and counter discourse arising from the students reaction to the questions presented to them in the CONNECT workshop Critical discourse analysis (CDA) (van Dijk 2001, 2005)
2.0 MOTHERS' OF IMMIGRANT BACKGROUND CHILDREN STRUGGLE IN EDUCATING THEIR CHILDREN TO SURVIVE ACTS OF RACIAL VIOLENCE (in press)	Mothers of Immigrant Background Children 17 Parents	2 Focus Groups (2 NGOs) FG1 7 parents (46min) FG2 11 parents (54min) 10 selected rants (see original paper.)	Analyses parents' reactions to selected rants – how parents would react to such rants and how they would educate their children to react. (Informal education) Critical Discourse analysis (van Dijk

			2001, 2005)
2.1 ANTIRACISM APPS AS ACTANTS OF EDUCATION FOR DIVERSITIES (2015)	Students 7 (1 female 6 males) students, 17-18 years old.	Focus group 18min 2 antiracism apps	Analyses students' (as application users) reaction to two antiracism mobile applications. Here the successes and challenges of such learning are highlighted. CDA (van Dijk 2001, 2005)
3.0 HOLOCAUST EDUCATION: AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO ANTIRACISM EDUCATION? A STUDY OF A HOLOCAUST TEXTBOOK USED IN 8TH GRADE IN AN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL IN FINLAND (2015)	Students and Teacher 9 (12–14 years old) student participants 1 social studies teacher	2 focus group (1hour) interviews with a social studies teacher. (30mins) 1 Holocaust textbook	Analyses student discourse on how a textbook on Holocaust education could be used to teach antiracism in schools. CDA (van Dijk 2001, 2005)
3.1 "ZEBRA WORLD" – THE PROMOTION OF IMPERIAL STEREOTYPES IN A CHILDREN'S BOOK (2015)	5 student Teachers (3 females, 2 males)	focus group (45mins) Photo Elicitation 1 children book	Analyses student teachers discourse on a selected children's book. Emphasis on the knowledge created through the pictures used in the text. CDA (van Dijk 2001, 2005) Critical event narratives.

4.1 Research participants

The total number of research participants in this thesis (from all the different articles) was 63: 40 students (between 12 and 18 years old), 5 student teachers, 1 teacher, and 17 parents with children from an immigrant background.

The data used in this study were generated using multiple sources of inquiry that motivated, guided or pushed the research participants into generating the discourses that form the empirical jigsaw of this study. The sources made available to the research participants for comment or discussion include questions from the CONNECT workshop, a textbook on Holocaust education, a children's book, 10 selected rants from the Finnish media (social media included) and everyday life, as well as two mobile phone applications on racism.

The data for this study were not collected in Finnish, one of the official languages of Finland, because of my weak Finnish language skills. This meant that I had to select my sources for data collection carefully in a way that played to my strength, i.e. English, without compromising the strength of the data. During the data collection process, a small number of participants nevertheless demonstrated difficulties in expressing themselves in English. In such cases, other research participants helped as interpreters and mediators. As a result, however, participants with a language barrier expressed themselves less than participants who did not have such a limitation. This may have affected the discourse generated during the focus groups.

However, 95% of my data was collected in English. This was also because in Finland my otherness makes it difficult for people to communicate with me in Finnish. My otherness informs them that I am different or non-Finnish and thus Finnish language skills are not always expected of me. For example, if I walk into a supermarket, the cashier will never speak to me in Finnish.

Moreover, although language acted as a limitation with regard to my choice of research participants, it also had its advantages in that it gave a voice to those who would normally be ignored in research because of language. It is common for researchers in Finland to target Finnish-speaking groups, since understanding Finnish is considered a norm in most cases, especially in education. In this regard, collecting data in English helps give a voice to the voiceless in Finland (see Parents of Children with an Immigrant Background).

The research participants in this study come from within formal education (students and teachers) and beyond (parents). From within formal education through a non-formal educational link (CONNECT), this study reached students and staff from all over Finland. CONNECT workshop

observations took place in Turku, Lahti and Helsinki. In addition, Participants in this study were both Finns (Walter Staff) and Non-Finns (some of the parents of children with an immigrant background). The research was carried out in different schools in Finland (international schools and local Finnish schools).

4.2 Data collection tools

Focus groups and interviews were the two data collection tools used in this thesis because compared to other data collection tools, interviews and focus group discussions are more personal and allow research participants to respond to questions or discussions in an open-ended manner. While interviews can be used to explore the views, experiences, beliefs and motivations of individual participants, focus groups, on the other hand, can be used to explore group dynamics to generate diverse approaches or perspectives on a given subject matter.

According to Wilkinson, a focus group interview "involves more than one participant per data collection session" (Wilkinson, 2004, 271). It also often involves members of a common group, as focus groups are group discussions which are arranged to examine a specific set of topics (Kitzinger 2005). This was the primary data collection tool used in this study.

With regard to interviews, Kvale (1996, 1) defines them as "…attempts to understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples' experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations". They are verbal conversations between two people with the objective of collecting relevant information for the purpose of research.

4.3 Summary of the papers

4.3.1 Part One: **A brief overview of the state of antiracism education in Finland**

This section consists of one paper which critiques questions used in antiracism education. The paper calls for such questions to be continuously updated in order for them to remain relevant to the changing nature of racism.

Framework: Antiracism pedagogy, non-formal education

4.3.1.1 Paper 1.0

"If an apple is a foreign apple you have to wash it very carefully": Youth discourses on racism (2016).

The paper examines an education practice in a Finnish project called CONNECT, run by the NGO Walter. The CONNECT workshop, launched in 2010, has reached over 40,000 students around Finland. Funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Finnish National Board of Education, CONNECT is an example of how NGOs are championing the fight against racism through antiracism workshops in schools in Finland. The themes of Finnishness and Racism are the two central issues explored in the CONNECT workshop. The workshop (from which the data were collected for this study) was held in a combined primary and lower secondary school, independent from the city school system. The school had 900 students, 25% of whom spoke a first language other than the school language – Finnish. The participants in this study were male and female students were from grades 7-9 (13-16 years old). The study data are based on a discussion of a set of questions featured in the main PowerPoint presentation used in the CONNECT workshop.

The paper calls for a reassessment of the questions used in anti-racism discourse or education, as they do not necessarily lead to constructive racism discourses. It also calls for the teachers posing such questions to monitor closely how students interpret and discuss the topic of racism in class.
In this paper I argue that it is important to abandon the 'accusatory' and comparative tone underlined in questions like *Are Finns racist? Are foreigners racist?* Presenting these questions side-by-side either intentionally or unintentionally leads to students answering with a comparative mind-set. Since students may identify themselves as belonging to both, one or neither of these categories (foreigner or national), they may interpret the questions as follows:

Are Finns racist?	A Finnish student	Am I racist? Are we racist?
	A foreign student	Are they racist?

Are Foreigners racist?	A Finnish student	Are they racist?
	A foreign student	Am I racist? Are we racist?

Reactions or responses to these questions can vary from anger, defence of self against other, denial of racism and/or strong far-right, nationalistic feelings. Further analysis reveals how students construct an understanding of racism vis-à-vis the issues of nationality, family, self and others. The findings suggest that students' understanding of racism is often limited to individual acts of racism rather than an understanding of racism as a system of oppression. From a similar perspective, the idea of the self (students and those they know) as never racist in relation to the Other is also criticised in this paper.

My role in the paper involved contacting the NGO, attending the workshops and collecting and transcribing the data. The written subtitles (in original article) are as follows: *Problematizing racism and anti-racism, Case study: The effects of an anti-racism workshop in Finland, Problematizing questions in the discourses of anti-racism education, the construction of racism during the workshop, ethnocentric and unstable views on the Other. Introduction, Nonchalant attitudes towards racism, and the conclusion* were co-authored. (see original paper).

4.3.2 Part Two

This section is situated within informal, non-formal and formal education. With regard to informal education, I turn to parents of children with immigrant backgrounds to understand their struggle with racism and how they would educate their children to react to racial violence. Their helplessness and struggles, as racialised victims defined as the Other, greatly affects their antiracism educational vision. Moreover, this section covers students' reaction to two mobile applications on racism. As users of these apps, the students discuss them as potential antiracist educational tools, describe their challenges and recommend how these apps and other apps on racism could be improved as tools for antiracism education both in and out of schools. This paper is situated in both non-formal and formal education because antiracism mobile applications can be used as a learning aid both in and out of schools.

Framework: Neo-racism, technologies and antiracism education,

4.3.2.1 Paper 2.0.

Mothers' of immigrant background children struggle in educating their children to survive acts of racial violence (2016)

This paper examines the difficulties of addressing systemic racism, subjugation and mis/under/nonrepresentation from the point of view of racialised victims. In two focus groups with mothers of children with an immigrant background in Finland, we (the authors of this paper) use selected local racist rants as a starting point to provoke parents to discuss how they would react to such racial violence and how they will educate their children to respond and react to it. Using critical discourse analysis (CDA), the paper shows paradoxically positioned mothers who, although powerless and helpless in regard to the racism, harbour a strong hope for a better future. The parents call for their children to struggle on and not to lose their self-esteem in the face of racism, either at school or out of school.

At a more theoretical level the paper examines the normalisation of racism in Finland. This is carried out by examining major discourses that deny the presence of racism while simultaneously re-inscribing its practices. The paper observes that the definitions or understandings of racism in Finland tend to be narrow, referring only to open, intentional acts of racism (Rasta, 2009; Puuronen, 2011), and notes that immigrants of colour stand out as one of the most racialised groups in Finland, as they do not fit into the notion of Finnishness. Grounded on the concept of "racism without race", structural racism goes unchecked because "there are no racists and there is no race"; therefore, there is no racism (Goldberg, 2006, 2015). Consequently, Rastas (2009) argues that in Finland the politics of racelessness stigmatise victims of racial violence who attempt to complain or name their experiences of racism, since racism is seldom considered a problem worthy of note.

This paper argues that the problem of racism fails to receive sufficient attention because its very existence is rejected and Finns are unwilling to discuss it because of notions of Finnish/Nordic exceptionalism. The parents in the study showed determination to resist racial violence; however, in some cases their strategies demonstrated powerlessness and frustration. On one hand, they want to bolster the self-esteem of their children as a mechanism to empower them to resist racial violence.

On the other hand, they express the need to protect their children from racial violence. In trying to avoid this Otherness, parents sometimes act to maximise the distance between themselves and the stereotyped image that Finns hold of them by appearing or attempting to appear the right kind of immigrant, one who does not cause trouble or disturb and disrupt the imagined Finnish ideal.
The paper highlights the fact that although these parents demonstrate helplessness in their attempts to educate their children on racial issues, it should be recognised that they are actively involved in antiracism education, since antiracism education does not only occur within the confines of a defined educational institution. However, it is vital that an understanding of racism as an intricate web of structural power and privilege replaces the postracial notion that racism in Finland is no more than individual "slips of the tongue".
As to my role in the paper, I responsible for every aspect of it, from data collection to writing.

4.3.2.2 Paper 2.1.

Antiracism Apps as Actants of Education for Diversities (2015)

In a society like Finland, where around four out of five teens own a smartphone and regularly use many mobile phone applications, mobile devices have the potential to play an important role in education. In this article I explore how two mobile phone applications could be used as antiracist educational tools, while bearing in mind the and limitations of such technologies. The empirical section of the paper highlight how students construct their understanding of racism as users of these two apps and examines students' discourses on the successes and challenges of the selected apps as actants of antiracism learning.

The research participants in this case study consist of seven grade 11 students in one international school in Helsinki, Finland. These students were introduced to the apps and asked to explore them, discuss their functionality, pros and cons and how they could be improved as educational tools. The apps used for this study were *Test: Are You A Racist? and Everyday Racism.*

Test: Are you a racist? – a free app which approaches racism as a phenomenon coded in denial and uses a test or gauge to help users discover whether or not they have hidden or unconscious racist tendencies in the form of stereotypes and prejudices.

Everyday Racism – a free immersive game played out over seven days, giving users an insight into the racial issues many face in Australia. Users can choose one of four minority characters provided

by the app and immerse themselves in the world of racial violence experienced by the selected minority characters.

This article argues that there is a need for new approaches to antiracism learning that employ apps as actants of antiracism. Here, one of the key arguments is that smartphones provide users with the ability to connect with different people, learn and have fun anytime, anywhere. Bringing the variable of "anytime and anywhere" into antiracism learning could make a massive difference. The paper also highlights the fact that these apps offer their users the opportunity to think and talk about racism. Thinking and talking about racism helps break the taboo or stigma attached to discourses on or about racism. Another important feature of the paper is that it asks how such apps could be used in schools, as they are not tied to any particular education programme. It also recognises the possibility of app developers combining these two apps while pointing out that future antiracism apps should provide more options for their users to explore diverse approaches to the problems or questions of racism.

My role in the paper involved identifying and selecting the two apps used for this study, arranging and moderating the focus group as well as transcribing of the data. The written subtitles (in original article) are as follows: *About the apps, understanding racism and/or learning to be interculturally competent, methodology and data analysis.* (see original paper).

4.3.3 Part Three

The first paper in this section criticises the essentialist paradigms evident in books that are used for "multicultural" learning. The paper concerns the case study of a Finnish children's book popularly regarded as a "good" tool for multicultural learning. In this section I also examine how an existing textbook on the Holocaust could be used as a textbook on racism in schools. The focus of this section is antiracism education within the sector of formal education, as the children's book is used in day-cares centres across Finland, while the textbook on the Holocaust was in used in one International school in Finland.

Framework: Critical multiculturalism, intersectionality, Whiteness versus Africaness

4.3.3.1 Paper 3.0.

"Zebra world" – The promotion of imperial stereotypes in a children's book (2015)

Learning materials have become significant determinants of a quality learning environment for young children. This study presents an example of such learning material in the Finnish context – a children's book entitled "*Bibi muuttaa Suomeen*" (transl. *Bibi moves to Finland*, 2005) by K. Kallio and M. Lindholm. This book has been praised in the media for its laudable intention of familiarising Finnish children with immigration and cultural diversity. It is used in kindergartens as multicultural learning material, and it is also part of the reading diploma initiative in communal libraries in Finland. In the study, a group of student teachers were given the book in class and were instructed to focus on the story they could deduce from the pictures in the book. The data from the focus group were transcribed and analysed with the help of critical discourse analysis and the critical incident approach. The results show that despite the book's good intentions to educate children about immigration and show African (or non-white) people in a positive "light", the book upholds the social structure of Finnish society as white, modern and superior to the "Others" in Africa. It is important that teachers and teacher educators are able to challenge such representations of the world and immigration in children's books and other learning materials.

The central argument of this paper focuses on understanding 1) the diverse structures for the binaries of "us" and "them", 2) the construction of whiteness and normality and 3) the trap of "good will", and "good intentions" for children in complex postmodern societies.

Finnish exceptionalism is central in the sub-study of the children book, as it serves to justify the representation of "Finnishness" versus "Africaness" used by the authors. Discussed from the perspective of both the future teachers and the authors of the book, the paper calls for learning material which aims to teach either diversity, through characters that do not convey existing stereotypes, or at least criticality towards existing stereotypes. Moreover, this study shows that a more critical stance on intercultural education is needed in education and teacher education on 1) how we (as educators) construct binary opposites and images, as well as how we (as educators) teach children about "others" (in this study civilized Finland vs. tribal Africa), 2) how race, and racism can and should be discussed as well as how whiteness can be recognised (as it is taken for granted by many students and teachers). Put differently, this paper highlights the fact that without a

critical lens there is a danger of this type of children's literature supporting the belief that if you are black (non-white/non-European) you cannot be Finnish. Critics (e.g. van Dijk 1992; Griffin and Braidotti, 2002, Mignolo, 2009) have argued that such binary opposites and dualism reproduce the racialisation of the Other, who is constantly measured against "culturally correct" Western structures and expectations.

My role in the paper involved planning the focus group and working on the pictures of the children's book under investigation. The written subtitles (in original article) are as follows: *Binary opposites between Africa and Finland, photo elicitation and sections of the analysis*. (see original paper).

4.3.3.2 Paper 3.1.

Holocaust Education: An Alternative Approach to Antiracism Education? A Study of a Holocaust Textbook Used in 8th Grade in an International School in Finland (2015)

This paper continues the themes of the previous papers by investigating new methodologies for doing antiracism in Finland. The paper highlights the ideological relationship between racism – as a systematic concept of oppression based on power and the abuse of power – and the Holocaust: a historic moment of human history when, using racially developed frameworks, grave acts of injustice were committed by the Nazis against the Jewish, Sinti, and Roma people and others whom they considered subhuman, inferior or dangerous. The paper sides with previous research in secondary schools that has argued that Holocaust education can contribute to and develop pupils' awareness of human rights issues, genocide, stereotyping and racism. The paper examines how the notion of intersectionality (Ahmed 2000; Crenshaw 1994; Mirza 2015) can help educators use the concepts of racism and neo-racism (Balibar & Wallerstein 1991; Goldberg 2002) to teach about the Holocaust and vice versa. In this study, intersectionality is employed as a conceptual tool that combines different human variables like skin colour, gender, class and religion by identifying what they have in common as racialised variables. Intersectionality demonstrates that discrimination is never limited to a single racialised variable (see Mirza, 2015). The paper argues that the Holocaust and other acts of genocide are born out of othering and the need to protect a certain socio-political hierarchical order. Such otherness is often constructed along racial lines, while the inhuman acts

that follow are enhanced through propaganda that calls for a single racial identity by eliminating others.

The research participants in this study were Grade 8 students in two focus groups and their teacher. These participants discussed a textbook on the Holocaust (*The Holocaust: A lesson for Humanity* a 72-page textbook published in South Africa in 2004 by The New African Books in connection with the Cape Town Holocaust Centre) that they were using at the time of the study and considered how and why the textbook could be a valuable resource for antiracism education from the perspective of intersectionality. A thematic approach to discourses as proposed in the discourse analytical methods of Gee (2013) and van Dijk (2012) is employed in the analysis of the data. The paper argues that in the absence of an exemplary textbook on racism, using an existing textbook on Holocaust education could be a good starting point.

My role in the paper involved contacting the school and initiating the research process with the teacher, planning and moderating the teacher interview and the focus group with the students, and transcription of the data The written subtitles (in original article) are as follows: *Holocaust education in the Finnish context, Antiracism Education in Finland, Intersecting Racism, Holocaust Education" (empirical section) and examples of what the students focused on in the textbook (empirical section).* The section entitled *Case Study, Stimulating Features of the Textbook – Teacher and Student Perspectives and the conclusion* were co-authored (see original paper).

These five papers, which form the basis of my PhD, are the result of long and profound reflection. As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, I began my PhD by looking at how antiracism is done in Finland. While doing this, I came across the CONNECT project, spoke to its coordinators and gained permission to research the project. CONNECT allowed me to access to an existing antiracism project in Finnish schools, which enabled me to research how antiracism is done in Finland. The first paper demonstrates how antiracism is realised in Finland and explores some of the challenges.

The understanding that researching the successes and challenges of antiracism education in Finland from just one angle was insufficient (from the perspective of the CONNECT project) led me to the

idea of racial knowledge production and reproduction in text and talk (van Dijk 1992, 1997). Around the same time, my oldest daughter began demonstrating some sense of colour awareness and racial stereotyping. Realising that her racial awareness was not being learned from us, her parents, I set out to discover how the world around her was contributing to her understanding of race and racism. I choose to examine how one of the things that fascinated her – a children's book – and how it influenced her understanding of race and racism and her position as a girl of mixed race, coloured or brown. During this process I tried to understand how different racialised people are positioned or taught to children using children books and what could be done to improve the existing racial profiling and stereotypes present in the children book under investigation. Most importantly, I was intrigued to know how student teachers would interpret and use such a book in their class. Finally, this paper revealed an example of a children's book that sold the idea of black inferiority and white supremacy. The most important point was what could be learn from this book – the need to be critical of the binary positions and stereotypes present in certain literature.

Understanding how written text can racialise knowledge reproduction, I went further to ask whether, as antiracism was not part of the formal educational curriculum in Finland, an existing textbook from another subject area could be used to teach about racism in schools. Having worked as a substitute teacher at some international schools in the Helsinki metropolitan region, I had observed that one teacher was trying to do just this using a textbook on the Holocaust. Paper 3.2 thus aims to understand how antiracism can be taught using textbooks meant for another subject area and to encourage other teachers to follow the example described in the study.

These three projects made me realise that schools were not the only places where people could learn racial habits. This made me consider how antiracism could be taught in or out of school without the constraints of a traditional classroom setting. Observing the 21st century craze for mobile phones and mobile applications, with an app for everything, I ventured into research on antiracism apps. Here, the goal was to understand the successes and challenges of mobile phone apps as a vital tool of antiracism.

Finally, as a parent burdened with challenge of teaching my children about issues of race and racism, I wanted to understand and learn from other parents about how to educate children out of

school on issues of race and racism and, most importantly, how to react or not react to incidences of racial violence. Such education has a profound effect on children's self-esteem and identity vis-à-vis the popular stereotypes society uses for different racial groups.

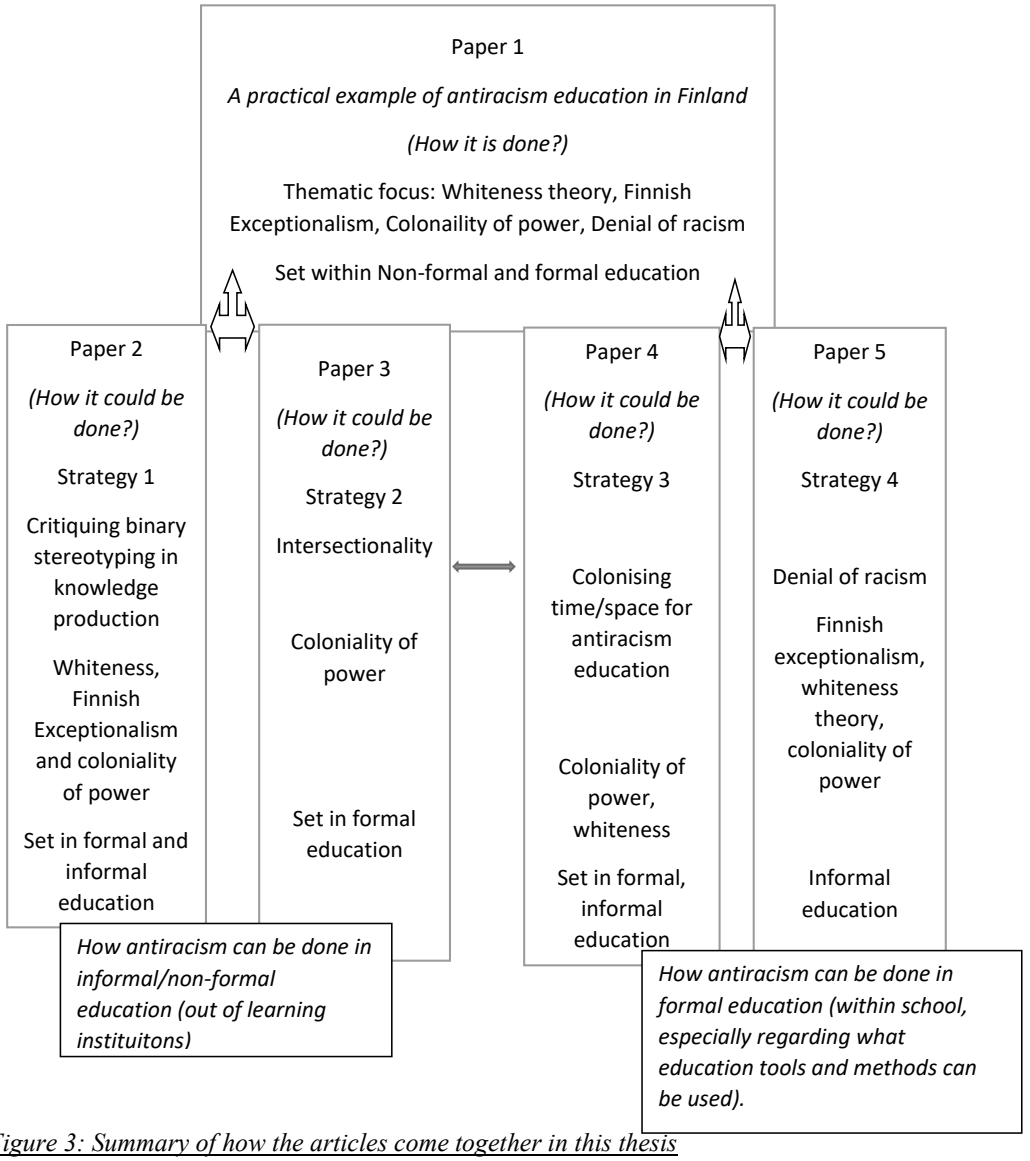

Figure 3: Summary of how the articles come together in this thesis

In terms of how these five papers relate to each other, the first paper shows the existing state of antiracism in Finland. It criticises the processes involved and calls for the introduction of alternative thinking in antiracism education. The second and third paper both set out to illustrate different strategies for providing antiracism education in a formal educational setting, whereas papers four and five focus on antiracism education in an informal setting. These different methodologies come together to show how antiracism can best be achieved in Finland. No sector of education can or should be ignored with regard to antiracism education in Finland, as each one has a role to play that may not be fully captured in others.

5 Antiracism Education in Finland

The following section will attempt to answer the question of whether there is such a thing as antiracism education in Finland, the question posed to me by the journalist cited in the introduction of this thesis. In addition, it will investigate existing antiracism practices in Finland and consider how antiracism education in Finland can be developed further.

Antiracism discourse and practice differ from one country to another according to the history and political situation of the country in question. In Finland, there are several antiracist laws, and antiracist provisions are also included in the Finnish Constitution) (see Liukkunnen, 2008). For example, Section 6 of the Finnish Constitution states that:

> No one shall, without an acceptable reason, be treated differently from other persons on the ground of sex, age, origin, language, religion, conviction, opinion, health, disability or other reason that concerns his or her person.

However, these laws fail to influence the everyday lives of people in Finland, as they do not provide clear pathways for the implementation of their provisions in day-to-day life. In other words, such legislation is powerless to address issues relating to the changing nature of racism in Finland. Because the law fails to define the measures for combatting racism, antiracism practices in Finland are extremely diverse, addressing different kinds of racisms through different (sometimes conflicting) approaches. It seems that because racism is often believed to be everything and anything, antiracism is treated in the same manner. However, this approach takes away the seriousness behind the issue of racism and antiracism by making it "an issue of polemicism par excellence" (Lentin 2004, 188). In Finland, as in many other European countries, different antiracism practices can be located in different areas of life: in education, politics, and the media, etc. In education, for example, the conceptualisation and practices of antiracism education are extremely diverse, varying according to the approach used, the audience and the desired outcomes. These different types of antiracism may not necessarily be compatible, because experiences of racism and the very nature of racism itself are manifold. For example, my experiences of racism as a black (non-white/non-European) man in Finland are not the same as my friend's experiences of racism as a white Finnish mother of mixed children (children born of white and black parents). Neither are our experiences of racism similar to those of another friend who is a gay white

European. Such diversity regarding the nature and experiences of racism has led to different sub-classifications of racialised experiences and their antagonists. In Finland, for example, much has been discussed and written about immigration and anti-immigration, Somalis and anti-Somalis, Muslims and anti-Muslims, blacks and anti-blacks, LGBTQA and anti-LGBTQA, Russians and anti-Russians (see Puuronen 2011; Egharevba 2011; Tuori 2009; Alemanji et al., 2015).

Finland is presently experiencing very challenging times regarding racism. The 2015 migrant crises in Europe have precipitated a rise in popular "racist" and "antiracist" discourse and discussions in the press and social media about why Finland should or should not receive Syrian refugees and how should these refugees be accommodated. The debates on immigration and racism in Finland are very closely linked, as in Finland immigrants (especially those who look physically different – non-whites) are very often viewed as the obstacle to a "homogenous", "perfect" society (see Puuronen 2011; Rastas 2005; Alemanji in press). In the idea of "us" and "them" established in such an ideological framework, the "us" views the nation-state as a non-conflicting, unified cultural community (see Goldberg, 2015) under threat from "culturally" backward immigrants. This is one of the critical points of intervention that is often targeted by antiracism projects and discourse.

5.1 Practical Examples of antiracism education in Finland

In this section I briefly present the work of three NGOs in Finland that are actively involved in antiracism education. These different NGOs represent core examples of antiracism educational practices. The first two are discussed briefly, while the third is examined in depth, as it is the NGO I followed during this study.

5.1.1 The Peace Union of Finland

The Peace Union of Finland (*Rauhanliitto* in Finnish), is an umbrella NGO made up of over ten Finnish peace organisations. In 1998 the Peace Union and the Peace Education Institute launched the Peace School, a workshop-based peace work project, which, through advocating world peace, promotes respect for human rights and human dignity. Through a call for peace, the Peace School incorporates the issue of racism into school discourses. Besides organising workshops for students, the Peace School offers antiracism lectures and teaching/learning materials to schools in different cities in Finland (the capital, Helsinki, and other cities such as Turku, Tampere and Vaasa). In 2014,

for example, the Peace School was visited by 45 classes, reaching 980 students. Finnish, Swedish and English are used as the languages of instruction.

5.1.2 The Finnish Red Cross

The Finnish Red Cross is another NGO actively involved in antiracism work in Finnish schools. Through a programme called Against Racism (*Ei Rasismille* in Finnish), the Finnish Red Cross unites dozens of organisations and tens of thousands of members (activists) to campaign for an anti-racist Finland. Racist/hate speech and essentialised discussions of immigration, refugees and cultural differences represent the prominent themes targeted by this programme. The programme is administered at different schools to students of different age groups, and teaching materials are also offered to teachers.

5.1.3 CONNECT: A case study of an antiracism education project in Finland

The Walter workshop on Intercultural Interaction through Interpersonal Activity, referred to as KYTKE (*Kulttuurien välinen vuorovaikutus yhteisen tekemisen kautta* in Finnish), will be used to provide insights into the theoretical issues raised by antiracism education. Walter, a Finnish NGO founded in 2006, is committed to promoting "multiculturalism" among the Finnish youth. In 2015, Walter had two active projects: KYTKE (also refer to as CONNECT) and the Urban Children and Youth (UB) project. CONNECT, sponsored by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture and the Finnish Board of Education, is centred on (but not limited to) a one-hour workshop provided by Walter to different upper secondary school students in Finland (grades 7–9). The workshop provides a platform for students and teachers to discuss issues of racism, identity (Finnishness) and diversity. Besides these workshops, CONNECT provides *peer support*, in which project workers provide support and guidance to students and their parents through face-to-face meetings, *a support line* (three days a week or daily live chat on their website) that provides a listener, support or advice to callers on issues related to racism, discrimination or bullying, *mediation*, in cases where students or teachers face conflicts related to multiculturality, *parents' evenings*, where a similar workshop to that held with the students is held for the parents, and *a material package*, containing exercises and information for teachers on organising classes dealing with discrimination and multiculturality.

The workshops are run by Finns (often former professional athletes and sports celebrities) of diverse ethnic backgrounds. A background in or experience of teaching is not a requirement for becoming a member of the CONNECT staff. The workshops are designed for about 100 students at a time. During the workshops, the presenters (CONNECT staff) discuss the concepts of nationality (Finnishness), multiculturality, identity, discrimination and racism. The students work in small groups to discuss these issues in depth. CONNECT workshops have been run since 2010, and during that time an estimated 40,000 or more students and teachers have participated. The workshops have been held in over 135 schools in Finland, most of which are situated in the southern part of the country. Schools contact the NGO if they see the need to have such a workshop. The general feedback on the NGOs website indicates that students and teachers find these workshops very educational.

5.1.4 Description of a typical CONNECT session

For each CONNECT workshop session, there are a minimum of three to four Walter staff. The workshops are designed to flow from a prepared Walter PowerPoint presentation shown to all the workshop participants. This PowerPoint presentation, designed by the Walter staff, has gone through the necessary checks by the leaders of CONNECT – Walter to ensure that it is in line with the project's aims and targets. It commences with an introduction during which the Walter staff talk about their multicultural background and their work or studies in relation to the idea of appreciating diversity. The introduction is followed by a brief discussion about the values of Walter: respect (for self and others), caring (for self and others) understanding (of self and others) and taking responsibility (for self and others). These values represent the core ideals of Walter. The discussion then moves on to *defining racism,* where the UN International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination definition is explored as a working definition.

The workshop then proceeds to the theme of the foreigner, during which the CONNECT staff briefly define the term and ask participants how many foreigners reside in Finland. The participants are presented with 7 different figures and are asked to choose which number they think represents the number of foreigners. After a brief discussion, the participants are then presented with the latest information on how many "foreigners" reside in Finland based on the current Statistic Finland figures. The discussion then proceeds to a list of different nationalities residing in Finland: Somalis, Estonians, Russians, Swedes, Chinese and others. The participants are asked to suggest which group is the largest in Finland. After the participants indicate with a show of hands what they think is the

largest group of foreign residents in Finland, they are informed that Estonians constitute the highest number of foreigners. Unlike other groups, such as Somalis, it is hard to distinguish Estonians as foreigners. This is because, as Abdallah-Pretceille (in Dervin, 2007) observes, it is so much easier to notice differences than spot similarities – skin colour leading to a simulacrum of sameness.

In groups of 4–6, the students are then given paper and pens. Next, the CONNECT staff present the following slide, which lists variables such as *language, place of birth, mother tongue, name, place of residence, physical appearance, citizenship* and *religion.* The students are asked to choose and place in descending order the three most important variables that make a person Finnish and why. At this juncture, the CONNECT staff go to the different groups and discuss the topic with the students. In these different groups, the CONNECT staff listen to the students while encouraging them through critical questions to move beyond a simple understanding of the concepts under scrutiny.

The participants in their various groups then proceed a discussion of one of the following questions:

Do you think racism is a bad thing? Why or why not? Has racism harmed anyone you know? What does racism do? Are Finns racists? Are foreigners racists? Where does racism come from? Are there any racist groups or people you know? If so, who?

The participants of this group discussion share their views on their respective questions with the rest of the class at the end. Finally, they are presented with a many different types of Finnish people in an attempt to make them understand the diversity of their country. At the end of the workshop, the participants are encouraged to follow Walter activities on Facebook, and as the session comes to a close, some students fill in feedback forms provided by the Walter staff.

5.1.5 Challenges of the existing structures of antiracism education

One of the major challenges to existing forms of antiracism education like CONNECT is that these educational schemes rely on external funding. Such external funding does not come without constraints, as the funders often influence certain aspects of the educational scheme (see Alemanji & Mafi, 2016). Moreover, since these NGOs rely on external funding to run their antiracism projects, they exist in a perpetual state of limbo, where they are never certain whether they will be

granted a funding extension. Furthermore, there is very little room for creativity or innovation when implementing the project, as it is often intended to run on the predesigned pathway proposed during the its funding application.

A further challenge is that antiracism in Finland is treated as an aside. It does not occupy the central position held by multiculturalism. This is because the EU, of which Finland is a member, emphasises the promotion of culture, and thus multiculturalism and interculturalism are preferred to racism and antiracism (see Lentin & Titley 2011; Lentin 2004). The absence of comprehensive antiracism education in schools weakens antiracism discourse and practice in Finland. Rastas (2009) has highlighted the fact that both students and teachers in Finnish schools have difficulties identifying and dealing with issues of racism, which is also one of the reasons for the lack of education and training in this area. As a result, existing antiracism education schemes do not have the necessary support to achieve better outcomes. More evidence of this is provided by the space antiracism occupies in Finland. Its position as a minor project or area of scholarship (where only one hour per year is allocated to it, as in the case of CONNECT) means that antiracism education is not taken seriously by the educational authorities (the Ministry of Education and Culture and universities), which in turn influences the participants in these projects. Moreover, as a marginalised academic discipline, very little is done to train staff and create specific antiracism education programmes.

5.2 Practical recommendations for antiracism

For antiracism education in Finland to succeed, it cannot be limited to formal educational institutions, as racism exists beyond these institutions. Everyone in Finland must recognise and invest in rejecting all forms of racism wherever they occur. In doing so, antiracism becomes a thing *for all* not just *for a selected few*.

Antiracism practitioners must begin by identifying which in turn influences the participants in these projects the most appropriate kind of antiracism, taking into consideration historical and present social realities. In doing this, practitioners must identify what forms of racism their programmes are targeting. This is because programmes that are designed to target structural racism (systematic

discrimination of the Other), for example, may use very different, or even conflicting, strategies to programmes designed to target specific individualised cases of racism (e.g. racial insults).

5.2.1 Rethinking how race (as a concept) is discussed and taught in Finland.

Coming to Finland in 2008 introduced me to new realities, one of them being an understanding of the meaning of being black (non-white/non-European). Back in Cameroon, I learnt about different races and that I belonged to the "black" race. However, I never learnt what it *meant* to be black. I now know that this was not due to my own stupidity. My experiences have taught me that education focuses more on teaching what race is than on what race does (see Lentin, 2015). Consequently, the debate and discourse remains at a superficial level, where the emphasis is on arguing about and debating what nature of race. These debates yield little fruit but much frustration. Teaching about what race does would be a great start towards understanding race and racism today.

Teaching what race does (see Lentin, 2015) would help to move the understanding of race and racism from an individual to a structural level. This is important because discussions on racism must transcend the individual. In the course of this research, I have talked about race and racism with different people. During this process I have come to observe that in Finland, in particular, discussions on racism often end up being individualised. People usually put themselves at the centre of racism talk, especially when the interlocutor comes from a different racial group. One of the reasons for this is that (arguably) being considered or labelled "racist" is one of the worst identity markers that can be bestowed upon a person. Thus, the individuals, associations or groups involved in antiracism work in Finland must inform participants about the dangers of individualising the interpretation of racism in discourses of racism.

5.3 Antiracism strategies for formal education

During my studies, I have investigated various National Core curricula in Finland to understand if racism is covered. My findings revealed neither racism nor antiracism were popular words. They appear in just two national curriculums: The National Core Curriculum for Integration Training for Adult Migrants 2012 and the National Core Curriculum for preparatory Education for General

Upper Secondary Education 2014. Consequently, it seems that racism is not a central concept in the Finnish education approach, as the term is absent from most of the National Core curricula. However, why do the terms racism and antiracism appear in some curricula but not in others, and how are they used? In the National Core Curricula of General Education from Preschool to Upper Secondary School, racism is systematically ignored. This is believed to be inconsistent with the educational focus in those areas. When it appears in the National Core Curriculum for Integration Training for Adult Migrants, it is treated as a cultural dynamic in which only racism aimed at ethnic groups is highlighted. In this light, there is an underlying understanding that racism stems from cultural interaction, as if without such interaction racism would not exist and would not be relevant. It is clear that it appears in the National Core Curriculum for Integration Training for Adult Migrants in a way that suggests adult migrants must learn that their 'migrantness' represents otherness (ethnic), which nurtures and sustains racism. When the word racism appears in the National Core Curriculum for Preparatory Education for General Upper Secondary Education 2014, it appears as an empty signifier. It is insufficient to state that racism is not tolerated. *How is it not tolerated? Why is it not tolerated? and what can or should be done about it?* These questions are simply not addressed. It is understandable to argue that a curriculum cannot address all such issues; however, if an issue is deemed central enough then a deeper exploration is warranted.

Because of the underlying acknowledgement of the existence of racism in Finland and the minimal efforts to reject it evident in the above-mentioned curricula, I suggest that Finland requires a policy shift from multiculturalism to antiracism and its integration into school curricula at all levels. As mentioned earlier, as a word antiracism is indicative of the existence of racism and the need to purge it from society. One way this could be achieved is by requiring schools at all levels to have a compulsory antiracism education strategy in their school plan and report on their implementation of that strategy in their Annual School Reports. Such strategies should cover both teaching and learning in and out of the classroom, and they should be developed to confront race-based generalisations, stereotypes, bias, prejudice and discrimination. The development of such strategies as well and their resultant effects if implemented successfully will represent a major breakthrough in antiracism education in Finland.

In addition, compulsory courses on antiracism could be introduced in universities around Finland, especially for student teachers. During such courses, students would have the chance to discuss the

topic and seek ways to uproot it from society. For example, student teachers could be encouraged and taught to deconstruct existing literature (textbooks, children's book, news etc.) from an antiracism perspective (see Layne & Alemanji, 2015). A practical approach would be to offer student teachers an opportunity to use their knowledge of existing "multicultural" books to create or design antiracism education material like a textbook or children's book. This process will equip student teachers with the necessary tools and know-how to fight against racism in schools.

Moreover, in the absence of existing textbooks on antiracism education in Finland, teachers in could use the concept of intersectionality to teach racism when teaching history classes. This can be done when teaching about slavery, the slave trade, colonisation and the Holocaust (see Alemanji et al., 2015).

Furthermore, the expectations of antiracism education also need revising. I often tell people that when I go to class to teach about antiracism, I do not really go to teach people how not to be racist. I go to talk to my students and colleagues about racism. "Teaching" about racism has much more of an undertone of power and reflects a hierarchical structure that I am keen to avoid. Talking about or discussing racism is more inclusive and participatory. Inclusiveness and participation are essential if antiracism education it to achieve any significant results.

Moreover, in teaching antiracism student teachers could introduce multiple definitions of racism in a bid to problematise the effects of power and history in the formation and sustenance of racialisation in Finland. Teachers can then use intersectionality (see Crenshaw, 1994; Mirza 2015) to tie together other forms of discrimination and othering, which students can use to develop their understanding of racism. In doing this, there must be an emphasis on the concept of power, privilege and history as essential variables for understanding racism. This will require, for example, answering difficult questions as to who has power and why, why some people were colonised or believed to be less than valuable than others and how this knowledge is continuously influencing the occurrence of racialisation in Finland. Based on such understanding, the idea of culture and the state as non-conflictual and harmonious can then be criticised using examples of how racialised Finns (for example the Roma and non-white Finns) are marginalised. Such a discourse can provoke guilt and shame among some white students (caused by the burden of whiteness; see Helms 1992)

and anger among others (students from minority groups). This should not discourage teachers from persevering however. Teachers must understand that antiracism work is about "insurgency and unsettlement – unsettling the political economy of racial sovereignty and superiority (Goldberg 2015, 166)". This cannot be achieved without conflict. With this in mind, teachers must understand that antiracism education involves a mixture of exploration, interrogation, self-reflection, understanding and learning about history and institutional racism; this will necessitate some confrontation and a lot of support.

A small digression to the story of an African student's experience or knowledge of Finland prior to his arrival will convey a deep message to teachers in Finland and perhaps all over the world. In the novel *Messages from Finland* by Sesay, (1996, 22-23) as cited in Dervin (2015), this student observed that

> *I still recall one of the books we used for Geography entitled, 'Regions and peoples of the world' by Charles McIntyre. It was through this book that I first learnt about Scandinavia and of Finland. By then I could have been somewhere between 12 or 14 years old. During that time, when we learnt about these regions, little mention was made about the fact that these places were industrialised and well-advanced, in fact, apart from a few explanations such as the advanced techniques of protecting or measuring the weather, it never crossed my mind that people here were educated and they live in good houses. If this place was really so cold, with so harsh winters, then, the immediate reasoning was that life must be primitive indeed. This is true, because our geography teachers had always focused more or less on explaining about the climatic conditions up here. They wasted no time talking about whether there was electricity or ski-doos or whether even aeroplanes dared to come here. On coming to Finland, it became evident that this rather detached form of education I had received about the 'Tundra Regions' was virtually similar to the kind given to Finnish kids about Africa, whereby their teachers only concentrated in telling them about the hazards of famine, the primitive countryside, and pervading misery and lack. For ages I have been baffled by an inexplicable tendency as to why school teachers in each of our societies tend to be more attuned to teaching kids about the harsh characteristics of each society while the good points in each were actually ignored or stashed away.*

I believe the most important message here is that as teachers we are called upon to paint a better

picture of the Other (foreign or domestic) and foster the understanding that our world remains very diverse and such diversities only become hierarchised when juxtaposed with socio-political, historical and economical structures. The story of the Other can never be reduced to a single story of limitation. It is and always should be told as a story of a struggle engulfed in peace and war, wealth and lack, love and hate, hope and despair. How we tell this story today influences how the story will be told tomorrow.

5.4 Antiracism strategies beyond formal education

I have argued with many people about the right time to start educating children about issues of racism, and the answer to this question varies. In Finland, however, while most of the white Finns I have spoken to believe it is unnecessary to introduce children to issues of racism when they are young, non-white parents do not have this luxury, as they are forced to have such discussions sooner rather than later. I was obliged to broach the subject with my oldest daughter when she was just 3 years old, following the shop incident (see the Race in Racism section). This is because her identity had been called to question. When she is out with her mother, people often ask her mother where she got her from or tell her that it was very kind of her to help these beautiful poor children. Such insensitivity informs children that they do not belong and must have a problem. As a parent of a child who is considered an Other, one cannot continuously postpone discussions about racial identity. Research from Northern Ireland (Connolly 1998; Connolly, Smith & Kelly 2002) has shown that children notice and are influenced by racial difference from as early as three years old. Taking this into consideration, children of all races deserve "proper" antiracism education from their parents at home. This makes it easier for them to understand difference and diversities outside the home.

In addition, parents' involvement in antiracism education should not end at home. They should be involved in schools' antiracism plans, as parents play a crucial role not only in nurturing their children but also in educating them (see Alemanji, in press). Through such schemes, schools can benefit from parents' knowledge and experience of the "racialised". Having such voices in any compulsory antiracism education strategy would benefit the cause of antiracism education a great deal.

Furthermore, both education practitioners and students can explore the opportunities that lie in the development of new technologies by finding ways to use these technologies as tools for antiracism education in Finland (see Alemanji & Dervin, 2015). Students and teachers could be encouraged to develop new antiracism educational programmes, games and applications that could be used in and out of schools.

6 Final Remarks

I have noticed so much resistance to talk about racism in Finland, and there is even more resistance when the topic is raised by a non-white. This is because the dominant group in Finland (whites) still interprets and analyses the discourse on racism using a personal or individualised approach. Consequently, any claims of racism in Finland are often interpreted as an accusation (directly or indirectly) of individual racism, and this hampers discussion of the issue. I write about *racism in Finland*; however, it would be dangerous for me to make generalisations about the entire country based on limited data. For that one would need to talk to every person in Finland, which is impossible. Thus, this study should be read as a case study that proposes different strategies for possible development.

Many people have told me that I cannot conduct research in Finland because I do not understand Finnish. *How can you research education in Finland when you do not understand the language and have not gone through the Finnish education system?* I feel like telling them that the history of Africa and the countries that make up that continent was written by Europeans who knew nothing or very little of its peoples' indigenous languages and ways of life. However, out of politeness, I always say that it is difficult but not impossible. I end up arguing that my research does not claim to tell the whole story of racism and antiracism in Finland, as I approach the study of racism and antiracism education in Finland from the perspective of an outsider. Consequently, my research participants interact and talk to me in English, as an outsider. The discourses that form the basis of this study were also given to me as an outsider, and I use these discourses to tell my participants'

stories from an outsider's perspective. If a white Finn had carried out this research,[16] the results may have been very different, because he/she would have approached the problem as an insider and the participants would have told him/her the things they thought pertained to insiders. These two perspectives ("insider" and "outsider") are very important for understanding any given societal problem.

Moreover, due to the sensitive nature of the topic, the participants in this study reacted in two distinct ways. One group was reluctant to talk about racism because of the discomfort it caused them. Such discomfort resulted from their being either seriously affected by racism or being afraid that their views would be rejected or downplayed by the others in the group. Another group (the majority) was very vocal. This group saw themselves as agents of change and thus talking about racism and seeking solutions to it gave them the chance to be proactive in the fight against racism. Members of this group had also been affected by racism in one way or another.

I have written this thesis in a very "loud" voice. This is the one way I know to educate educators and policymakers in Finland on how to improve the racialisation that is slowly becoming a social norm in Finnish discourses of the Other. This study is my way of repaying Finland for the opportunities it has offered me (for example the opportunity to study for free at the Master's and PhD levels). This thesis also allows me to contribute towards making Finland a better place. By reading this study, educators in Finland will learn about the dangers of turning a blind eye to racialisation in schools. I am hopeful that my work will make its way into the hearts and minds of its readers and cause them to treat others fairly and help them understand and question the dynamics of power that award privilege to some and not to others. Most importantly, as a father, I hope my work will influence the teachers who will come to teach my children in Finland. My daughters have inspired me to this point of my research, and I cannot end this story without sharing what I have learnt from them: antiracism activism requires patience, a willingness to forgive and the playfulness to dare, again and again. Antiracism (education) is a struggle and more research is needed to further develop this area of scholarship in Finland.

[16] Here, I use "white Finn" in full recognition that such a category may be essentialising. However, I use it to highlight the fact that there are different perspectives on or interpretations of any given phenomenon, each of which are important in their own right in establishing a full understanding of the phenomenon.

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