



WHOSE HISTORY?

A report on the state and challenges of diverse historical research, teaching and dialogue in Finland

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HISTORIANS
WITHOUT
BORDERS

WHOSE HISTORY?

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FOREWORD: COULD MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY BE STRENGTHENED BY A MORE INCLUSIVE VIEW ON THE PAST?

According to a report published spring 2017, many Russian-speaking youth living in Finland feel like outsiders in Finnish society.¹ Most of these youth are Finnish citizens feeling disconnected from the history of Finland, which to them concerns the history of Finnish- and Swedish-speaking residents.

The results of the study are hardly surprising. The presentation of the past provided by Finnish primary, secondary and university education tends to leave little room for narratives on the backgrounds of differing groups as part of Finnish society. Some of these groups – such as the Sámi – are indigenous people, whereas some – like the Tatars and the Roma – migrated to Finland at different historical stages and managed to preserve their identities.

Unlike the Finnish historical minorities, minority groups created in Finland by the boat refugees of Vietnam in the late 1970s and refugees from Somalia from 1990s onward do not share the experience and milestones of the foundation of the Republic of Finland, such as the Civil and Winter War. The events central to the historical self-images of these groups are wholly different. The question is, therefore, are these narratives part of contemporary Finland? What is the relevant narrative like for second and third generation ‘new Finns’?

The role of the colonial past and post-colonial present is central to the history education in Finnish secondary and higher education. However, the current situation is problematic due to the colonial and post-colonial being presented as part of general history, with which Finland seems to share only few points of contact. This results in an exclusive presentation of the past – with us (speakers of Finnish and Swedish) sharing a so-called common history and those, who do not. The backgrounds of students are multicultural already, but this is not yet reflected in the Finnish historical narrative.

A functional and dynamic society requires a new historical narrative; one that is all-inclusive and a sum of all contemporary narratives. This is double the challenge for the history departments of universities. How is history presented in courses and seminars on the history of Finland, are minorities represented among history majors and what kind of interpretation of Finnish history is being taught to the teachers of tomorrow?

Information concerning the teaching of history at Finnish history departments was gathered for this report. The survey was conducted during spring 2018, and our goal was to determine how questions of colonialism are taught in the history departments of Finnish universities. We aimed to pay special attention to how broadly the themes of colonialism

¹ Varjonen, Sirkku; Zamiatin, Aleksandr; Rinas, Marina (2017): Russians in Finland here and now. Statistics, surveys, organisation field. Cultura Foundation, Helsinki 2017. <https://culturas.fi/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Venajankieliset-suomessa-ENG.pdf>

are included in degree requirements and mandatory credits, and whether colonialism is addressed as part of Finnish history or as a separate progression.

This report was produced by the colonialism workgroup of Historians without Borders in Finland, the members of which include Holger Weiss, Teivo Teivainen, Rinna Kullaa, Juhani Koponen, Raita Merivirta, Leila Koivunen, Patrik Hettula, Lauri Uusitalo, Emma Hakala, Iina Hakola and Jenni Laakso. HWB board member Sirkka Ahonen also participated in the writing of this report. In addition, this report was commented on by Mona Eid of Ruskeat Tytöt ('Brown Girls'), Yusuf M. Mubarak of the Finland-Somalia Association, Leif Hagert of the Young Roma Council and the Cultura Foundation. The report was edited by HWB board member Emma Hakala, workgroup secretary Iina Hakola, and HWB Secretary General Jenni Laakso.

Holger Weiss

Head of workgroup

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1. INTRODUCTION TO SURVEY AND RESULTS

The survey was conducted during spring 2018, and answers were received from every history department in Finland. The number of answers was fourteen in total. The survey questionnaire and a catalogue of the responding departments and subjects are added as an appendix to this report.

The questions included in the survey were open form and answered with widely varying degrees of amplitude and fidelity. Some of the respondents only commented on their own teaching, whereas some reported on the studies offered within the entire department or subject. The respondents were free to answer some questions and leave others unanswered. Although the survey may not provide a fully complete picture of the teaching of colonialism in Finland, it does provide grounds for consideration on the importance placed on colonialism in the degree requirements of history departments.

1.1. Colonialism-Themed Courses and Literature

What courses on colonialism and interrelated topics have been organized during the last ten years?

Are the courses part of degree requirements or are they optional?

How popular were the courses? Can you give an estimate of the number of participants?

What colonialism-themed study modules or books are part of course literature?

How many students attend these courses each year?

The respondents reported a total of 44 courses, most of which were optional. According to the answers, around a third of Finnish history departments do not require exploring the themes of colonialism as part of mandatory courses and degree requirements. However, the respondents rated the optional courses as popular among students. Among other topics, the courses covered international relations as well as global history, imperialism and African history. None of the answers mentioned any courses directly related to Finland's relation to colonialism.

According to the answers, course literature also covered colonialism predominantly as part of global rather than Finnish history. Colonialism is addressed e.g. in books covering global history, imperialism or orientalism. The answers mentioned one book addressing colonialism as part of Finnish history: *Sámi Finns – Encounters in 1896–1953 (Saamelaiset suomalaiset. Kohtaamisia 1896-1953)* by Veli-Pekka Lehtola.

1.2. The History of Minorities

How does teaching acknowledge the history of others than speakers of Finnish and Swedish?

During the last ten years, which courses specifically addressed the history of minorities?

Are the courses part of degree requirements or are they optional? How popular are the courses?

Can you give an estimate of the number of participants?

Most of the participants reported that the history of minorities is covered as part of other courses. A respondent teaching general history reported often using Finnish minorities, such as the Sámi and the Roma, as a point of reference to the minorities in other countries. According to one answer, *“minorities are addressed in several different courses, some are more systematic and others more limited concerning the topic”*.

One answer states that *“there is no course focusing specifically on the history of minorities – not yet”*. According to the answers, there are very few courses addressing the history of minorities on a topical level. One respondent reported that courses on Finnish minorities have been organized regularly since the beginning of the millennium until 2013. The courses have addressed topics such as minorities as a part of local history, the birth of minorities and the Roma people.

One respondent states that *“the - - history of minorities is covered in an optional set of book exams, and there have been series of lectures on the topic. The teaching also addresses minorities in mandatory subject studies.”* Two respondents reported that the Sámi were strongly represented as part of modules: *“Sámi history is very present - - e.g. in the modules Arctic history and Northern history. Modules on the history and gender history of ethnic relations too address the history of minorities. In addition, the range of mutual courses by the research unit of history, culture and communication provide courses focused particularly on studies of the Sámi and other minorities in the Northern regions.”* Some responded that minorities are also addressed as part of e.g. Latin American, Islamic and Byzantine history. One respondent answered that *“- - teaching did not include these”*.

1.3. Colonialism-Themed Theses and Research Projects

What colonialism-themed Master’s theses and doctoral dissertations have been completed in your department during the last ten years?

What colonialism-related research projects have been conducted in your department during the last ten years?

In the course of 2010–2019, at least 14 colonialism-themed dissertations are completed in Finnish universities with five addressing the Finland’s relation to colonialism, whereas 33 colonialism-themed Master’s theses have been completed during the last five years with approximately one in five addressing Finland and colonialism.

One respondent commented that *“in the subject of Finnish history, colonialism has not been a central theme to theses or research projects even though its topicality is certainly recognized”*. According to one respondent, around twenty theses related to colonialism have been completed in their department during the last five years. Another respondent reported that approximately two such theses were completed each year. However, they did not list these theses in the survey.

The respondents mentioned both ongoing and past research projects. Some of the projects were more than a decade old. However, currently there are several ongoing colonialism-themed research projects in Finnish universities.

In the subject of general history at the University of Turku, a research group is developing a research idea on how Finland and Finns related to colonialism and imperialism in the 19th and 20th centuries. Among other things, the group has organized meetings and study circles and is currently seeking funding for the project. Marja Jalava from the University of Turku has also been part of projects around Finnish historiography addressing the manifestation of colonialism in Finnish historiography of early 20th century.

In the history department of the University of Oulu, Ritva Kylli and Matti Embuske, among others, have studied topics related to encounters and land use between the Sámi and Finns. The University of Eastern Finland has an ongoing project *Oral histories, places of memories and local identities in the Caprivi Region, Namibia*, which focuses on the colonial period of 1890–1990. The research is a collaboration between the University of Eastern Finland and the University of Namibia. A respondent from the University of Tampere mentions the study *From Empire to Independence: The Interplay of global, national and local in Helsinki and Dublin 1900-1940* by Marjaana Niemi.

The consortium Multilayered Borders of Global Security (GLASE) operates under the subject of political history at the University of Helsinki. A subproject of the consortium, comprised of researchers in the subject, focuses on the post-colonial viewpoint and the central questions related to global movement. Risto Marjomaa from the history department at the University of Helsinki also helms a colonialism-related project in network history. In early 2000's at the University of Helsinki, the department of economic and social history hosted a project on the history of ethnicity and poverty in Finland and currently have an ongoing study by Laura Ekholm on entrepreneurs in the ready-to-wear clothing industry in Finland and Sweden in the 20th century.

Åbo Akademi has several ongoing research projects related to colonialism. These include e.g. *"Dealing with Difference": Peddlers, Consumers and Trading Encounters in Finland, 1840–1940* and *History of Society: Re-thinking Finland 1400–2000*, both concerned with the history of Finland. Also mentioned was the research project *Colonial Famine Relief, Development Policies and Climate: towards an Environmental History of Northern Ghana* by Åbo Akademi. Moreover, the unit Global History Laboratory operates under Åbo Akademi and helms several colonialism-related research projects on e.g. the history of slave trade and slavery.

1.4. The Increasing Need for Addressing Colonialism

Does your department see the need for addressing colonialism more? Have students or other parties expressed such requests?

Many stated that colonialism was increasingly addressed in recent years as the educational content has been reformed. According to one respondent, *"we have regarded the theme as essential and increased related teaching along the years"*. Another respondent states that courses related to colonialism and decolonization have been added particularly in studies on the history of international relations. The answers give the impression that

interest in the themes of colonialism has generally increased, but it also seems that colonialism is still rarely taught as part of the history of Finland.

According to the answers, the teaching of colonialism has also been increased while reforming degree structures. Political as well as economic and social history have been studied at the University of Helsinki since 2017 as part of the Social Change programme, which also includes development studies and anthropology. The new multidisciplinary courses provide better presentation on the themes of colonialism and ethnic minorities than before. According to one respondent, *"this allows for all students of political history as well as economic and social history to be also provided with teaching on colonialism and minorities by teachers of development studies and anthropology"*.

According to one respondent, teaching was increased by student request, whereas another respondent states that students request addressing the topic *"from time to time, as they do other areas of history as well"*. Based on the answers, the provided colonialism-related teaching is influenced by the research interests of the teaching staff in each subject. According to the experience of one respondent, their subject has long addressed the themes of colonialism, but they are looking to update and clarify the questions placed around the topic.

At the same time, many regard that themes around the topic are currently addressed comprehensively and that students are very interested in the topic. One respondent states that it would be tough to fit any more teaching on colonialism in the curriculum.

1.5. Finland and Global History

Do you have ideas on how themes of global history could be better integrated in the historical narrative of Finland?

Many noted that Finland has long been addressed as part of the world in both teaching and research. According to one respondent, they have *"always addressed Finland as part of the world, which serves as a point of reference for almost any topic the world around. After all, we too have our own colonial heritage."*

On the other hand, over half of the respondents mentioned there is room for improvement concerning the topic. Many see international collaboration across borders as the best way to connect global history to the Finnish historical narrative. According to one respondent, cross-border meetings and mutual research projects as well as collaborative teaching between different universities and scientific fields would promote addressing the themes of global and Finnish histories. The answers also state Finns should increase dialogue with other European researchers on how to study national history in global context.

One respondent questioned the framework of the survey by stating they *" - - must challenge the authors of the survey to reflect on what they mean by 'the historical narrative of Finland'. In my view, the history of Finland ought to be studied as part of the global past, and methodological nationalism should be questioned overall. - - Is it not important*

to consider how historians can study the history of Finland as part of global history as well as global themes and research questions?"

Three answers mention that the history of minorities should be addressed more: *"National minorities, such as the Sámi, should be addressed more in Finnish history education while also considering the historical treatment and the status of the Sámi people with respect to global issues and world history as a whole."* According to one respondent, the voice of minorities should be better accommodated in teaching. This would require e.g. including different books in the degree requirements.

One responder calls for the questioning of *"actively using history in order to construct such an agent for 'us' as to exclude the growing and diversifying group of people, who have arrived to Finland and become Finns from wholly different backgrounds and traditions"*. The answers also acknowledge the importance of studying the role of Finland and Finns as part of the phenomena of colonialism and imperialism as well as connecting the history of Finland more broadly to the relations between European countries and colonies through diverse research topics.

2. COLONIALISM IN FINNISH HISTORICAL DISCOURSE

Although the historiography of colonialism has been critically examined for decades, international discourse still brings up new viewpoints. In recent years, the themes of colonialism and especially unresolved disputes have been increasingly addressed in public discourse as well. For example, some have called for the removal of certain monuments and works of art based on them celebrating the heritage of colonialism and thus offending the memory of its victims.

Commendable academic research on the history of colonialism is conducted in Finland as well. As the previously presented survey demonstrates, the subject is also taught in Finnish universities but with varying degrees of quantity and amplitude. However, it is mainly regarded as an issue separate from the national history of Finland. In public discourse, the manifestation of the theme of colonialism is limited, and the idea of the significance of colonialism in contemporary Finland or particularly of Finland as a colonial power is still foreign.

However, the history of colonialism also impacts countries and regions, which did not directly participate in the colonial system. International connections, such as trade routes, already reached Finland during the colonial era and brought along dependence on prevailing political power relations. These historical factors left their mark and are increasingly impacting both global politics as well as the contemporary Finnish society.

As a country politically and economically integrated with the West, Finland has also benefitted from the heritage and mechanisms of colonialism. Therefore, the responsibility for addressing colonialism cannot be passed on entirely to other countries. However, these dependencies and questions of responsibility can be

difficult to fathom, should colonialism be presented both in Finnish school and university education as a principally foreign course of development, let alone not addressing the issue altogether.

Moreover, Finland has its own colonial past. The integration attempts and inhuman treatment directed towards the Sámi have gradually entered public discourse only recently, and the issue still calls for further research. However, the discrimination and oppression of native peoples is a typical example of the use of colonial power, although this definition is very seldom applied in Finland to themes concerning the Sámi people. According to the survey, university education varies in addressing Sámi history: some extensive courses are available locally, but generally speaking the subject has not found its place as part of the Finnish historical narrative.

On a broader scope, similar colonial characteristics are associated with the historiography of Finnish minorities. For example, the Roma people of Finland too have faced not only discrimination and segregation but also forced integration into the majority culture. However, these dark times in history rarely make it from research into the general historical knowledge. The history of different immigrant groups has not received significant attention in research either, even though immigration is neither a new nor a temporary phenomenon by any means. The history of multicultural Finland is thus brushed aside in a manner reminiscent of colonial attitudes in an even broader sense.

It is crucial to dismantle colonial and minority-excluding attitudes in both school and university education. In the near future, history classrooms will be increasingly attended by youth, whose roots reside outside Finland. It is, therefore, now more appropriate than ever to interlace the eras of Swedish and Russian rule as well as the Civil and Winter Wars with narratives from others than those of the resident population as well. It would be problematic not to acknowledge the diversification of historical narratives in teaching from primary schools to universities.

The importance of teaching global history also increases as Finland becomes ever more international. The research field of global history aims to describe historical interpretations and phenomena in a worldly and comparative fashion. It avoids restricting to national histories but also gives them new and important meaning within a broader perspective. On the other hand, global history is comprised of local histories recounting the past and present meanings attached to phenomena such as colonialism in various national and regional contexts, for example what significance has the history of Finland specifically had on the rest of the world. Teaching such a broad understanding of history across national borders ought to be essential already in schools, because it helps understand global phenomena and their root causes.

Though the survey was focused on university education, it is equally important to teach the history of colonialism and minorities in primary and secondary education. The school system has to improve in order to provide students with even better capabilities of functioning in an open and diverse society. It is crucial to pay mind to this issue now, as the subject of history may actually be facing reduction in hours taught.

Finland has room for a more diverse historical narrative. The status of minorities should also be addressed in official circumstances, even if it cannot be currently painted in an honourable or just light. We must also be able to question one-dimensional and exclusive views on what it means to be Finnish. As the world is becoming ever more globalized, it is even less reasonable to present Finland as historiographically separate from the rest of the world.

3. HISTORIOGRAPHY AND TEACHING FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF FINNISH MINORITIES

For this report, we gathered comments in order to provide background and to expand on the results of the survey with practical experiences on e.g. how exclusion and racification affect the historical views and the social status of minorities. The views brought up in the comments were various and compatible in many respects, supporting the analysis of this report on the current state of history education and the need for new approaches.

3.1. History and the Formation of Self-Identity

The interviewees agreed in their comments on history being a factor in the formation of national and cultural identity. This is why invisibility is a central problem from the perspective of racified minorities, states Mona Eid of **Ruskeat tytöt** (“Brown Girls”). Racified Finns cannot find representation from either the present or the past. If you are invisible, you have neither representation nor voice. According to Eid, the experience of the racified is one without history, and many experiences feel isolated though there has long been minorities in Finland and in plenty for that matter. The feeling of loneliness and disparity is amplified by the lack of data on racified Finns.

School education is currently not alleviating the situation. Vice-Chair of the **Young Roma Council** Leif Hagert states that history classes at primary schools may not address the Roma people besides in passing while addressing the other victims of the Holocaust during the Second World War. The Roma have been part of Finnish society for centuries, but in official historical narrative they remain invisible.

The same applies to other minorities. Eid describes how schoolbooks fail to mention e.g. one of the first African–Finns Rosa Emilia Clay or the significance of the sciences of the Islamic world on European culture. Students belonging to minorities and racified groups have to seek their own narrative outside school. This is exemplified by Eid: she began to reflect on her own roots after secondary school and ended up studying Arabic and Islamic culture as well as religious studies in order to support forming her own identity. Only afterwards did she begin to pursue her actual interests in another field of study.

According to the **Cultura Foundation** concerned with Finnish–Russian culture, youth belonging to the Russian-speaking minority feel easily isolated in the face of their group, school or even society altogether as Russia and Russians are addressed in class. The foundation states this is due to the Russian-speaking Finnish

youth identifying more with the historical narrative of Russia. Powerful myths related to Russian history are passed on to the youth by parents and grandparents, and the dismantling and unwrapping of these myths with the youth proves difficult. These youth find it contradictory and unfair how history education in Finland addresses issues related to Russia, since they have no ability to critically assess their own view of history. Understanding this phenomenon is crucial to teachers in higher primary and secondary school education in order for them to better acknowledge these sore points.

On the other hand, Yusuf M. Mubarak of the **Finland–Somalia Association** stresses how some youth have no opportunity of learning about history at home or from relatives, and whose own motivation may not reach the point of partaking in separate studies on their cultural background like Eid did. Therefore, youth with immigrant backgrounds are easily left entirely without the important information they would need to form an overall picture of their own background. Mubarak finds the lack of history education more inclusive to different backgrounds astounding, considering the diversity in groups of students in some schools in particular. The surrounding reality can thus be in outright conflict with the contents of the teaching. The standardizing national history also excludes others than immigrants. Therefore, diverse historical narratives should not be taught as isolated instances either but rather be presented as part of Finnish identity more clearly than before.

3.2. Historical Awareness as Part of Integration

Multicultural history education helps encounter and understand different cultures. According to Mubarak, it can thus be seen even as crucial in promoting the integration of youth with immigrant backgrounds into society. However, he also emphasizes that a diverse awareness of history also benefits the openness and internationalization of Finnish society. According to Mubarak, two-way integration holds key importance: history provides both native Finns and those with immigrant backgrounds with capabilities of understanding each other and respecting different customs and traditions.

The Cultura Foundation points out that history teachers would do well to create dialogue between different historical narratives. According to their experience, however, it requires high-level competence from teachers to build dialogue around the politics of history in a subtle way without the youth feeling disparate or excluded. Teachers play an important role in whether youth are integrated as part of society or left outside.

However, the interviewees suggest that history teaching could currently do much better in promoting integration one way or another. This is partly due to the lack of minority perspective as previously mentioned. According to Hagert, history education is currently more about repeating a white historical narrative, according to which there is only one homogenous way of being Finnish. Consequently, this upholds traditional power structures enabling the discrimination and exclusion of minorities.

All interviewees were also wondered why of the age-old Finnish minorities – such as the Sámi, the Roma, the Jews and the Tatars – were absent in the teaching of history. According to Eid, this is reflected in attitudes towards all minorities as immigration is still regarded as a recent phenomenon and the historical diversity of Finland is discarded. For example, Islamophobia is still rather common, and the average Finn is likely unaware of Muslim Tatars having permanently resided in Finland already for over a century and that these Muslims having also participated in wars on the side of Finland.

This exclusion results in marginalization and the experience that narratives or history related to one's own identity are unimportant, when it is actually a question of the restricted narrative defining what it is to be Finnish. Another consequence is that those who are racified may end up building their identity on the basis of something else than the narrow definition of Finns.

Minorities are left with little room for even seeking their place in Finnish history. Hagert counts how there are also surprising ways in the Roma community for finding points of contact with Finnish history. Mannerheim holds special significance for many Finnish Roma as a great man, who is said to have promoted the rights of the Roma people and pre-empted Hitler's demands for extraditing the Roma into Nazi Germany. Verifying these narratives through records would prove difficult, but they have reached an almost mythical status within the community. This exemplifies how uncertainty around one's own history leaves room for narratives relying on good faith. However, this can also be regarded as an attempt at forging connections with the history of resident Finns by taking part in the admiration of an archetypical national hero of history.

Eid, too, regards the equality of Finnish society as a myth, and one that should be critically examined. How are minorities accounted for in decision-making? Who gets to decide what it means to be Finnish? Who have been excluded from the definition for Finns at different times? What about the treatment of those excluded?

3.3. The Importance of History in Promoting Social Participation and Discourse

Mubarak states that at its best, history is a valuable asset in promoting understanding between different people and cultures. Without historical knowledge, it is also difficult to form a complete view on how society functions. However, this would require for history to be taught diversely while including differing viewpoints. Diverse history education benefits everyone, both minorities and the majority population.

According to Eid, Finnish historical discourse suffers precisely from often presenting the rest of the world in a manner charged with values. For example, the effects of colonialism on the history, society and sections of the population of colonized countries are often discarded when addressing colonialism. The consequences of forcing European values onto local communities are ignored.

One-dimensional history education may alienate rather than encourage social participation. According to Hagert, history classes still keep painting a view of a common history based on rather uniform and inherently

Finnish grounds. This may easily lead to excluding some students from both history and, at worst, from the broader social discourse as well.

Feelings of exclusion also do very little to inspire long-term interest in studying history. Hagert reckons that the Roma youth, for example, could strive more towards historical studies or other social subjects in the humanities at university level, if they experienced already in school that their own history and shared matters concerning themselves are relevant as well.

According to the Cultura Foundation, Russian-speaking Finnish youth are unable to reflect upon themselves as part of a longer temporal continuum in Finland, because the history of Russian-speakers of Finland is rarely taught. Finnish–Russian individuals could be highlighted more in history education. The same applies to statistics, facts and examples of the diverse spectrum of different types of Finns from different stages in history. The goal should be in bringing diverse historical perspective into teaching as well as in creating constructive and compassing dialogue around different views on history.

If the majority population holds monopoly over historical research and the surrounding discourse, Eid foresees this resulting in an ever-whiter historical narrative forgetting all about minorities. This would leave historiography by the majority as the only one relevant and majority voices the only ones heard. This begs the question whether the Finnish worldview is being built for the majority population as if they were its only designers?

Eid adds that the historiography of Finland relies heavily on its uniqueness. Finnish obstinacy or ‘sisu’, the persistence of a small nation under the yoke of major powers and Finnish neutrality between the East and the West are recurring impressions on Finland. Currently in the same vein are ovations for the lack of corruption in Finland or Finnish success in the PISA surveys. These praises are rarely accompanied by critical considerations of room for improvement.

3.4. Addressing Historical Injustices

Globally, the discourse around colonialism is often affiliated with the idea of atonement for past wrongs or apology. These processes are never easy, but simply beginning the dialogue may aid in recognizing and acknowledging the unheard voices of history. However, serious discussion around this topic has hardly even begun to take place in Finland.

According to Eid, we have done very little to address the linguistic and educational discrimination experienced by the Sámi, for example. We are equally unable to acknowledge the traumas caused by the strict identity politics of the nation state to these age-old minorities. The implication of the Finnish State in bypassing Sámi affairs calls for further investigation – how it has taken place before and is still on-going. On the other hand, the role of Finland as a colonial agent is not critically examined either: for example, Christian missionary work

in the Sub-Saharan Africa has taken extremely racist overtones, and many may not even know about the presence of Finns in the Belgian Congo.

According to Hagert, there are also events in the history of the Roma people in Finland still waiting to be dealt with or at least acknowledged in public discourse. For example, neither forced custody nor forced linguistic and cultural assimilation are not part of the general knowledge of the majority population, but these are inescapable background obstacles between many Roma and the society. From this perspective, especially hurtful are allegations on the lack of education or assimilation into society concerning the Roma people.

4. OUR SUGGESTIONS ON THE TEACHING OF COLONIALISM AND MINORITY HISTORY

Based on the survey and comments by minority representatives, improving the status of teaching on colonialism and minority history calls for further action. Preparedness in addressing and comprehending the topic requires improvements in universities and teacher training as well as in primary and secondary schools. The workgroup behind this report proposes the following further courses of action:

- **The history of Finland needs to be connected more explicitly as part of world history in all levels of education.** Moreover, the historical status of Finland should be examined with regard to perspectives other than its national narrative. The teaching should also be capable of addressing Finland's relation to colonialism and colonization.
- **The mandatory teaching of history and social studies in primary and secondary should be increased rather than reduced in quantity.** This present report too demonstrates the vital role of historical awareness in the development of social understanding, which will only increase in importance as the world is becoming more globalized. It is evident that diversifying history education cannot be achieved with reduced hours.
- **The teaching of history should create dialogue between different historical narratives.** Conjoining different historical narratives promotes social interaction and tolerance. The diversity of school classes should be an asset in promoting intercultural dialogue.
- **New educational materials are needed to provide sources of identification for students with immigrant backgrounds as well.** The history of Finland should be presented also as part of global history rather than unilaterally as a single separate narrative.
- **Teacher training and the production of education materials need to make better use of the results of recent research.** Input from up-to-date historical interpretations should be introduced sooner in education than is the case now. Developing education materials should be promoted as part of research projects, for example.

- **Phenomenon-based teaching capitalizing on multiple subjects could be increasingly applied to colonial and minority history.** Colonialism, for example, is a multi-dimensional phenomenon, and its effects can be examined using exploratory methods of education in subjects such as history, social and cultural studies as well as geography, for example.
- **The relationship between education in history and social studies or social sciences must be developed so that the subjects support one another more explicitly.** The role of historical awareness in understanding social discourse requires more contributions.
- **Research funding should be increased especially for fundamental research on the significance of colonialism in Finland and the history of Finnish minorities.** The field is already producing ambitious research in Finland, the application of which requires perseverance and networking dependent, in turn, on sufficient resources.
- **International connections and discourse on the history of colonialism and minorities must be promoted.** Both research and education abroad provide numerous good examples and practices. These could be adapted for Finland as well.
- **Based on this report, there is call for further reporting on addressing colonial and minority history in the training of history teachers as well as the status of minorities in the training of social studies teachers.** The teachers of history and social studies play a key role in promoting diverse historical awareness and participatory social discourse. They also form a direct link between research and education. Therefore, it is important to understand how their role is currently utilized and how it could be improved upon. Further reports could be implemented by the Finnish National Agency for Education, for example.

5. APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: UNITS AND DEPARTMENTS RESPONDING TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE

University of Helsinki

Faculty of Arts

Department of History, Culture and Arts Studies
History

Faculty of Social Sciences

Political history
Economic and Social History

University of Turku

Faculty of Humanities

Department of History, Culture and Arts Studies
Finnish history
Cultural history
General history

Faculty of Social Sciences

Department of Philosophy, Contemporary History and Political Science
Political history

University of Tampere

School of Social Sciences and Humanity

History

University of Jyväskylä

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Department of History and Ethnology
General History
Finnish History
History

University of Eastern Finland

Department of Geographical and Historical Studies
History

University of Oulu

Faculty of Humanities

Programme of History, Culture and Communication Studies
History
History of Science and Ideas

Åbo Akademi University

Faculty of Humanities, Psychology and Theology

General History
Nordic History

APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Colonialism-themed courses

What courses on colonialism and interrelated topics have been organized during the last ten years?

Are the courses part of degree requirements or are they optional?

How popular were the courses? Can you give an estimate of the number of participants?

2. Colonialism-themed literature

What colonialism-themed study modules or books are part of course literature?

How many students attend these courses each year?

3. The history of minorities

How does teaching acknowledge the history of others than speakers of Finnish and Swedish?

During the last ten years, which courses specifically addressed the history of minorities?

Are the courses part of degree requirements or are they optional? How popular are the courses?

Can you give an estimate of the number of participants?

4. Colonialism-themed theses

What colonialism-themed Master's theses and doctoral dissertations have been completed in your department during the last ten years?

5. What colonialism-related research projects have been conducted in your department during the last ten years?

6. Does your department see the need for addressing colonialism more? Have students or other parties expressed such requests?

7. Do you have ideas on how themes of global history could be better integrated in the historical narrative of Finland?



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