Marginalised Young People and Misrecognition

A Case Study From Residential Care with Unaccompanied Refugee Minors in Finland

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The study

"Okay, so I am a refugee but I am, I'm not, I'm ordinary, I'm like, just like a Finnish boy..."

Hamasa, 16
Receiving recognition is “not just a courtesy [but] a vital human need”.

Taylor 1994, 26

People are in a constant struggle for the recognition of others. These struggles originate in the experiences of misrecognition.

(Honneth 1995)

Marginalized young people’s needs for recognition are often poorly understood, particularly in the context of institutional care.

Recognition = gaining “acknowledgement that contributes to one’s self”

Misrecognition = being acknowledged in a way that “does not jibe with one’s own image of oneself”

(Bingham 2001, 3)

See e.g. Warming 2015; Lausten & Fredriksen 2016; Thrana 2016; Paulsen and Thomas 2017; Sirriyeh & Ni Raghallaigh 2018; Häkli et al. 2018
Misrecognition

I want to go to hospital with Rashid. He’s my friend, he needs me, I can help him!

NO, you can’t go, it’s really none of your business. Just get away from the ambulance, please.

They think I don’t know anything. But I’ve seen sick people before! I’ve helped them...

You can’t help him anyway....

Besides, you need to clean your room and do your homework!
"He is my friend and I want to go with him!"

"He is sick, I can help him..."

Get off the ambulance!

"I don't understand... I don't speak Finnish..."

The man says I can go! I'm going!
Rejection/misrecognition of resistance

Why are you angry??

Because Behnam didn’t do what I told him to!

Acknowledgement/recognition of resistance

Thank you, Behnam. You are a good friend to me.

Behnam is a good friend.

Yes he is.


