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Rethinking Integration : Challenging Oppressive Practices and Pointing to Ways Forward

Karimi, Zeinab; Ennser-Kananen, Johanna; Sadatizarrini (Rahaa), Sepideh; Petäjäniemi, Maria; Khalimzoda, Ilkhom ...

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Rethinking Integration

Challenging Oppressive Practices and Pointing to Ways Forward

ZEINAB KARIMI, JOHANNA ENNSER-KANANEN, SEPIDEH SADATIZARRINI (RAHAA), MARIA PETÄJÄNIEMI, ILKHOM KHALIMZODA & AMEERA MASOUD (EDS.)

MIGRATION INSTITUTE OF FINLAND

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MIGRATION INSTITUTE
OF FINLAND

2023

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Zeinab Karimi, **Johanna Ennser-Kananen**,
Sepideh Sadatizarrini (Rahaa), **Maria Petäjäniemi**,
Ilkhom Khalimzoda, and **Ameera Masoud**

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Ceyda Berk-Söderblom is a Helsinki- and Lund-based arts manager, curator, festival programmer and entrepreneur specialising in change management with 20+ years of experience in the arts. She is the founder of MiklagårdArts, and a facilitator of transcultural artistic interventions. Ceyda is a public advocate for equity, diversity, and inclusion, focusing on policies, practices, norms, and institutions. Originally trained as a journalist, she also studied communication, critical thinking, business administration, and leadership in the arts. Ceyda has an M.A. in arts management, majoring in cultural diversity and social inclusion. She is a Senior Project Manager and Researcher at Trans Europe Halles and is leading an international consortium for cultural transformation.

Diana Soria Hernández (FI-MX) is a visual artist focused on counteracting hegemonic structures through her art practice and human scale, mainly through performance art, live installations, ceramics and drawing. She studied her BA in Fine Arts at ENPEG La Esmeralda in Mexico

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Ioana Țîștea recently finalized her PhD thesis at the Faculty of Education and Culture, Tampere University, titled Creolizing the Onto-Epistemologies and Methodologies of Nordic Migration Research: Entangled Knowledges, Migratisations, and Reflexivities. Her research stems from her lived experiences as an Eastern European (EE) migrant in Finland and contributes to new ways of inter-relating minor-to-minor knowledges from EE, BPoC (Black people and people of colour), and Romani perspectives in a Nordic context. At the same time, the research addresses tensions, social inequalities, racialized hierarchies, and colonial legacies shaping such dialogues, with the aims of challenging the workings of coloniality in both knowledge production and migration lived experiences in the Nordics, as well as imagining and practicing possible alternatives with unforeseeable results.

Majid Imani is a doctoral researcher in social anthropology at Tampere University with a MA degree in communication study- journalism. In his master studies he was working on Media management and political crises, and he is specialized in social media and online ethnography. In his Ph.D. studies, he is researching social media and the political and social transformation of the Iranian society. Majid uses multiple methods for his research, including online ethnography as well as ethnographic fieldwork. His interests include social media, ethnography, everyday life, intersectionality, identity politics, and memory politics.

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Potatoes for Recipes (2014)

2 hours performance-installation
Participatory action in Kalasatama, Helsinki, Finland
Photo credits Jakob Johannsen

In Kalasatama (south Helsinki) I exchanged potatoes bought from local producers, for recipes. Sounding a bell I walk through the streets beside a car that shows colourful posters announcing in different languages the exchange: I exchange potatoes for recipes. After the exchange I would park the car and invite the passersby to sit and listen to the migration history of potatoes. The collected recipes throughout two days of performance pretended to prove how it was possible for potatoes to adapt and integrate to Finland and Europe to a degree that not everyone can remember their South American origins and they have even become one of the basic European ingredients.

Johanna Ennser-Kananen, Zeinab Karimi,
Maria Petäjäniemi, Sepideh Sadatizarrini (Rahaa),
Ameera Masoud & Ilkhom Khalimzoda

1. Introduction: Thinking Integration Otherwise

1.1. Why This Book?

How do we celebrate the twentieth birthday of the ETMU, the Society for the Study of Ethnic Relations and International Migration (Etnisten suhteiden ja kansainvälisen muuttoliikkeen tutkimuksen seura)? When ETMU board members first started thinking about this in 2020, the answer "with a book" was almost immediate. While the idea seemed conventional at times, we agreed that a book was an appropriate format: It was something with the potential to last, something stable and material, something concrete and tangible. Maybe a book would give us pause. Maybe something stable and solid would carve out the time and space to stop, look around, and reorient ourselves and our work in an ever-changing, fast-paced (academic) life.

A book about what? An ETMU member survey was designed, brains were stormed, ideas were discussed, and finally, we decided that "integration" was a topic contested and complicated enough for us to get our fingers burned. We heard from the board and ETMU members who had

experienced and witnessed the effects of so-called "integration" policies and discourses, either firsthand, in their families' or friends' circles, or in their research or other working life, or in all of these. In other words, "integration" practices (including discourses and policies) were hurting many of us. The experiences that came to the fore in conversations were not outliers but rather evidence of systemic injustices. When we delved into the literature on integration, it quickly became clear that scholars had been expressing their sentiments using academic frameworks and language.

In this introduction, we discuss the concept of "integration" at a general level and outline the meanings and functions integration discourses have assumed in both Nordic and Finnish contexts.

1.2. Critical Review of Integration as Conceptual Tool and Discourse

The concept of integration gained attention at the beginning of the twenty-first century, when assimilation theory (the idea that immigrants should adapt their values, culture, and behaviors to those of mainstream society) became contested (Kivisto 2001). Bucken-Knapp, Omanovic and Spehar (2020, 5) offer insights into the concept and its use in Sweden and beyond. They define integration as "a process intended to enable the migrant to achieve an equal footing with the 'native' population in terms of functioning in the society". To counter dominant discourses that expect migrants to assimilate to the (perceived) host society's culture, researchers have argued for a more nuanced, bidirectional, and multidimensional understanding of integration (e.g., as a two-way process: Favell 2001). While Bucken-Knapp, Omanovic and Spehar (2020, 6) stick with the term despite its ambiguity, they ask the important question "Integration into what?". Although they do not engage in a profound deconstruction of the notion of a "target/host society," they point out that integration can have different goals and directions. For instance, participating in the labor market does not necessarily lead to political or social integration, although these facets interact and need to be considered in integration assessments. The authors advocate for an understanding of integration that does justice to the complex, dynamic, and longitudinal nature of the process.

Moving away from assimilation discourses, integration was found to be a better approach to understanding the social processes involved in migration and resettlement. However, integration remained a rather vague concept with a variety of definitions (Garcés-Mascareñas & Penninx 2016). For instance, Blanca Garcés-Mascareñas and Rinus Penninx (2016, 14) understand integration as "the process of becoming an accepted part of society." Heckmann (2006, 18) offers specific ideas of what this might entail in their understanding of integration as "a generations lasting process of inclusion and acceptance of migrants in the core institutions, relations and statuses of the receiving society." The EU, in one of its earliest definitions, introduced integration as "a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of the Member States" (Council of the European Union 2004, 19). This definition (i.e., a two-way process), which continues to be presented in policy documents and discourses at both EU and national levels (Schneider & Crul 2010), is a step forward from assimilation discourses and policies; however, several aspects of "integration" remain problematic.

Following his work in Denmark, Rytter (2018) portrays integration as a particularly unclear concept widely used across academic disciplines and in non-academic contexts with a variety of meanings and implications:

> *Integration* may refer to anything from *social integration* in certain neighbourhoods or educational institutions to *economic integration* understood as participation in the labour market; *political integration* seen as participation in general elections and local associations; and *cultural integration* measured by the extent to which immigrants and refugees have maintained traditions, identity or notions of belonging connected with their first homeland. (681)

Despite "well-intended" definitions of integration built on two-way inclusivity, processes, and discourses by and large maintain a regime that stratifies and segregates. Instead of analyzing the structural contexts in which integration is supposed to happen, integration remains a one-way process (Klarenbeek 2021). A major shift is needed in how "integration" is conceived of and how it is entangled with other systems of oppression (see Klarenbeek 2019). In other words, a critical focus, which has begun

to gain traction in Finland, needs to be developed. As scholars of integration and migration, we resound the calls of others (e.g., Klarenbeek 2021; Schinkel 2013; Schinkel 2017) to problematize and challenge the concept and create a space for rethinking integration (see Masoud forthcoming), which is the core objective of this book.

As we rethink integration, we, in line with Lentin (2014), point to the particular urgency to address racism, white supremacy, and the historical silence associated with them. One of the main limitations of integration as an analytical tool is its failure to address intersectional inequalities (Anthias 2013; Korteweg 2017). This limitation shifts the focus from discrimination to cultural differences. By homogenizing migrant groups, it fosters a distinction between "migrants" and "non-migrants". The language of integration defines "migrants" outside the discourse of belonging to society, while in fact they are part of society at the given time and space and are affected by its overlapping hierarchies (Korteweg 2017). The concept fosters an endless process of becoming part of society, a never-ending labor (Karimi 2023; Schinkel 2018). It misses the point that individuals are engaged in various and overlapping social structures such as those of gender and class. Traditional understandings of integration tend to overlook the intersectionality of inequalities and bypass the source of struggles and its temporal and local context (Anthias 2013).

As another shortcoming, integration is deeply affected by a methodological nationalism that serves neo-colonial, nationalist processes (Favell 2019, 2022; Garcés-Mascareñas & Penninx 2016; Schinkel 2018; Dahinden 2016). In integration frameworks, cultural boundaries are defined along national boundaries that problematically reproduce the discourse of "us" against "them." The problematic view on "cultural differences" expects the existence of a homogenous, static national culture and the idea that certain qualities can be attributed to certain national groups (e.g., Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov 2005; Hall 1989). The language of racism uses such culturalized labels and categorizes people as though they inherently belong to different "cultures." The culturalization of integration discourse frames some bodies as inherently unfit and incompatible with western nation values (Müller-Uri & Opratko 2016; Karimi & Ghazi Tabatabaei 2023). When claiming a distinct national identity, a cultural picture is drawn that will support the particularity of that culture (e.g., Sadatizarrini 2016; Henriksson & Boynik 2007; Bright et al. 1995). Cultural nationaliza-

tion and using art as a tool to generate and strengthen a national identity are common practices, so that generally accepted symbols and cultural customs are defined as creating a distinct national identity (Shin & Hutzel 2022). For instance, Finnish literature and visual arts have played a significant role in representing a unifying image of a nation and concealing the differences and diversity within it. It seems that Finnishness is a particular cultural position that, according to Muukkonen (2007), is increasingly threatened by the transitional environment caused by immigration, and cultural diversity. Indeed, such rhetoric relies on a curious combination of both cultural vulnerability and self-sufficiency and on a dystopian projection of fear of the foreign.

Recent scholarship concludes that integration discourses produce hierarchy and boundaries in a society by fostering the culturalization of social relations (Anthias 2013; Korteweg 2017): culture is viewed as a static property and not as a process practiced and understood non-coherently in a given population (Anthias 2013). Thus, the socio-historical pattern of group-making and its inherent power dynamics are left unproblematized. As Korteweg (2017) notes, "immigrant integration" as a discursive practice creates a racialized order through presenting "migrants" as Others who impose economic and socio-political problem on society. In this discourse, two-way integration is either forgotten or used merely rhetorically (Anthias 2013).

A traditional understanding of integration is the notion of the host society as cohesive, homogeneous, and overall positive (i.e., worthy of "integrating into"). In their edited volume *Undoing Homogeneity in the Nordic Region,* Keskinen, Unnur and Toivanen (2019) deconstruct the notion. They do so by foregrounding the histories and presentations of minoritized populations in Nordic regions, discussing how constructions of cultural and national homogeneity have interacted with the racialization of "others" as non-white, and, relatedly, by critically investigating the participation of Nordic countries in colonial activities and discourses. Importantly, constructions of homogeneity have been deliberate and violent, including land theft, restriction of movement, and cultural/linguistic erasure and assimilation policies. In Nordic regions, the welfare state imaginary plays a particularly important role in the construction of unity and deservingness, in which migration studies has participated by adopting a nation-state paradigm that identifies migration as a problem and

integration as a requirement for migrant "others." To combat continued colonial thinking and othering, Keskinen et al. (2019, 1) call for "politics of solidarity" to "replace ideas around homogeneity/sameness and reformulate notions of social justice to include migrants and racialized minorities that are today increasingly portrayed as the 'undeserving Others'".

While integration is supposed to be a two-way process, scholarly and public attention typically focus on the level of integration among "migrants" (Klarenbeek 2021). As an example, contact with members of other ethnic groups is a main criterion for measuring the level of integration among so-called "migrants." A lack or low level of intra-co-ethnic contact is assumed to be related to a lack of willingness to integrate into mainstream society (Schinkel 2018). Another area for measuring integration is minorities' participation in the labor market. Instead of addressing the right to work and the right to skills recognition, dominant thinking around integration erases existing expertise (e.g., Ennser-Kananen & Ruohotie-Lyhty 2023) and represents minorities as taking advantage of the welfare state and rejecting Finland's civic society and labor market (Menke & Rumpel 2022). Previous studies in Finland and in other European countries have shown that integration programs function as engines to either limit the employability of racialized minorities, especially women, or direct them into the least attractive sectors (which are deeply gendered) (Farris 2017; Masoud, Holm & Brunila 2021). Through this mechanism, gender inequality becomes the property of non-western *cultures* and un(der)employment among racialized groups is justified through the failure of racialized individuals in integrating into the "imagined society," and these groups are othered and depicted as destabilizing social cohesion (Schinkel 2018).

Schinkel (2018) defines integration as a social hygiene device presenting a "purified" image of "society" with clear cultural boundaries. It defines "migrants" as racialized Others who cannot fit into epistemic understandings of Us as members of an imagined society. Thus, the white population's integration is not relevant, as the population is considered to make up a fixed "society" tied to the nation state. As a result of neoliberal processes, integration becomes the responsibility of individuals (Schinkel & Van Houdt 2010; Schinkel 2011).

Perceiving a society as a homogenic unity puts "migrants" in a position of being in need of integration. As a result, society is viewed through

binaries, including liberal/illiberal and integrated/in need of integration. The resulting boundary separates Us, the "good citizens," from Them, who need to prove their ability and willingness to "integrate" (Korteweg 2017; Petäjäniemi, Lanas & Kaukko 2021). This categorization is complicated with different axes of social identities, such as "origin" or national identity, gender, religion, and class and sustains a racial social hierarchy (Karimi 2023). The discursive practices of integration function as a tool for further marginalization and labeling racialized groups. While the successful passing of integration and gaining permanent residency is understood as a sign of "successful integration," the *bodies* remain as unfit to ontological understanding of Us. This not only excludes the first generation of migrants but also labels their children and grandchildren as "migrants" who are not "real" citizens of the nation state (Karimi 2023; Korteweg 2017). Thus, even the next generations are not viewed as part of the imagined society but as *in the process of arriving* (Boersma & Schinkel 2018, 309).

Ultimately, the "technology of order and governance" is based on racist constructs that ignore the deep entanglement of racial structures in western modernity (Lentin 2016, 384). The connection between here and there, western and non-western is entangled with a colonial lens that has been constructed and reshaped in recent centuries. This lens reinforces the idea that non-western cultures are inherently "uncivilized" and contain non-gender-equal ideologies (Karimi & Ghazi Tabatabaei 2023). As Joppke (2007, 16) points out, in "[c]ontemporary civic integration [...] illiberal means are put to the service of liberal goals."

1.3. Integration Studies in Nordic and Finnish Contexts

As elsewhere, research on integration in the Nordic context has been shaped by larger societal dynamics and developments, for instance by discourses around protection of the welfare state and societal cohesion. Despite recent critiques of this notion (Keskinen 2016), Nordic countries still tend to be perceived as model welfare states. The concept of "Nordic exceptionalism" positions Nordics as pioneers of inclusive policies, social cohesion, quality education, and gender equality, to name a few qualities. For instance, Bucken-Knapp, Omanovic and Spehar (2020) describe changes in integration policies in Sweden since the 1990s, which

moved toward more restrictive and assimilative measures. These include "stricter requirements for obtaining a resident permit and/or citizenship, the introduction of more stringent rules for family reunification, bans on veils and hijabs at schools", as well as mandatory integration plans or programs. Overall, they note a "shift from rights-based to obligation-based" integration, one that includes policies of migration control (i.e., the exclusion of unwanted migrants) (Omanovic & Spehar 2020, 7.). They point out that this shift in integration policies is driven by a nationalistic ideology of serving and "protecting" the host society, though the implementation of such policies may vary locally and deviate from the larger ideological discourse. Such integration policies are also evident in other Nordic countries (e.g., Hiitola, Karimi & Leinonen 2023; Widfeldt 2018).

An ample body of research has evaluated the interaction between migration movements, migrants' employment situations, and other so-called integration indicators (e.g., Heikkilä & Peltonen 2002; Kemppainen et al. 2020; Kunwar 2020; Sarvimäki 2017) and national or international policies (e.g., Jakobsen, Korpi & Lorenzen 2019; Saukkonen 2017; Valenta & Bunar 2010). While these studies certainly contribute to improving policymaking for the benefit of migrants and refugees, the large part of this work uncritically uses the concept of integration without consideration of its socio-historical implications (see Leinonen 2015). One step toward rethinking integration could be a refocus on integration experiences through the voices of those at the center of the processes and discourses: refugees and other migrants. An example of such work is Bucken-Knapp, Omanovic and Spehar's (2020) study with 90 refugees from Syria and Bosnia-Herzegovina in Sweden, which documents their narratives and experiences in a large time span (1990–2020). Bucken-Knapp, Omanović and Spehar (2020) paint a relatively nuanced picture of refugee integration, documenting its "successes" (such as integration into work life) as well as its obstacles (e.g., racism, stigmatization, and isolation, lack of language support, and ineffective educational evaluation). The authors also highlight the agency of refugees, for instance their "sticktoitiveness" (resourcefulness, stamina) (91; see also Ingvars 2021). A similar study (Bucken-Knapp, Omanovic & Spehar 2018) based on interviews with 60 Syrian refugees in Sweden found that even if measures intended to promote "integration," such as language pro-

grams, are put in place, the effects are not always as desired and may even be detrimental to inclusion, for instance when existing knowledges are erased or dismissed (see also Masoud et al. 2020; Kärkkäinen 2017).

Research that centers refugees' and other migrants' experiences has also been conducted in Finland. In their study on integration and language courses for stay-at-home migrant mothers and their young children, Intke-Hernandez and Holm (2015) found that the course instructors acted as "cultural instructors." They instructed the mothers on Finnish values and child-rearing habits and on Finnish concepts about what is good for children. According to the authors, the ethnocentric deficit model, where mothers stay only in the knowledge-receiver position, does not lead to real communication. At times, however, the mothers did not accept being the objects of the Finnish, middle-class model offered by the instructors and instead actively brought forth their own cultural perspectives and practices. Studies like this reveal that discourses of "culture" can fall short of recognizing complexities and epistemic resources in both local and migrant groups and provide fodder for deficit views on cultural difference (Kärkkäinen 2017). Related work has uncovered the epistemic resources, particularly dark and resistant knowledges, of migrants and/or refugees in educational contexts (e.g., Ennser-Kananen 2021; under review).

Another strand of scholarly work has examined integration training contexts and found that immigrants become trapped in the process of "exclusionary inclusion and inclusionary exclusion" (Masoud, Holm & Brunila 2019). As long as immigrants are in integration training, they are considered included despite the exclusion, for instance when they participate in educational programs that do not suit their previous experiences (Masoud et al. 2019). Employment is considered a key indicator of successful integration, which encourages behaviors that identify immigrants as "integrateable subjects" (Masoud et al. 2019). Therefore, integration training traps individuals in a constant need to become employable, regardless of whether the respective field matches their abilities, education, and preferences (Masoud, Kurki & Brunila 2020). Ultimately, the dynamics of neoliberal, racialized economy require individual immigrants to develop resilience to survive; the system is not altered to, for example, address systemic racism.

Kurki, Masoud, Niemi, and Brunila (2018, 242) discuss how integration training for immigrants is affected by marketization and the demands of the global economy:

> market-oriented discursive practices hide the realities of integration behind the figures, economic efficiency, and the market-oriented terminology where teachers become transformed into teaching consultants as pedagogy becomes re-made as the delivery of correct knowledge, and immigrants become transformed into consumers and clients responsible for their own success or failure.

The authors conclude that the idea of "integration as business" is paradoxical; when integration is adjusted with predetermined objectives, it may no longer benefit immigrants. Kurki, Brunila and Lahelma (2019) suggest that as a result of labor market policy and economic needs, as well as through gendering and racializing practices in education, migrants are considered ideal care workers. Guiding migrants toward the care sector is justified by the idea of how it serves both Finland and migrants (as they get employed) and by gendered and racialized stereotypes of caring cultures (Kurki et al. 2019; Jokinen & Jakonen 2011). Kurki (2018) termed this process "immigrantization" – the making of immigrant subjectivity through integration policies and education practices. It is the constitution of people with various backgrounds as one, as migrants. Pushing migrants into care work is a way in which systemic racism and sexism manifest in integration policy (Kurki et al. 2019).

Rytter (2018) points to the flexible and fleeting nature of integration as a problem because it facilitates the possibility of remaining a carrot on the stick: a moving target that migrants are expected to work toward and will be evaluated by but that remains unattainable. In addition, they understand integration as invoking imaginaries of unitary, (to-be) bounded nation states that migrant "others" need to become part of, as well as dystopian ideas of disintegration and chaos. Integration is, Rytter notes, also a racialized concept that serves the othering of individuals and groups such as "Muslim immigrants and refugees from Africa, the Middle East and South Asia" (Rytter 2018, 685). Specific to the Danish context, but certainly applicable to Finland, Rytter outlines three nationalist imaginaries

that popular integration discourses promote: (a) negative welfare reciprocity (i.e., the idea that migrants receive unearned welfare benefits because they did not pay their share of taxes), (b) a host–guest relationship with an adaptable and grateful migrant in the guest role, and (c) Danes as indigenous people united by kinship and the only rightful owners of Danishness. Rytter closes with a call to critically explore the concept of "integration" and its usage as well as its ideological underpinnings and to, instead of using integration, "develop a new language in order to enable a more inclusive analysis" (Rytter 2018, 690).

In Finland, racism and how it impacts integration policies, practices, and lived experiences is not recognized as a main barrier to equal opportunities and "successful" integration as described in policies (Masoud et al. 2023; Petäjäniemi 2022). Researchers have also pointed out the need to address integration and migration from viewpoints and approaches of racialization and postcolonialism (Keskinen & Andreassen 2017; Kurki 2019). An essential element remains drastically missing in the Finnish context, namely an effective anti-racist approach that shifts the responsibility away from the racialized refugee and immigrant (Masoud et al. 2023).

1.4. ETMU's Invitation to Rethink Integration

As outlined above, important work has critiqued problematic understandings of "integration" and its underpinnings, such as: the myth of society as a static whole, the implication of integration being an individual responsibility, the notion of integration as a status that can be accomplished to different degrees (i.e., one can be "more" or "less" integrated), the fact that racialization serves as the basis for identifying and categorizing those in need of integration, and the tacit understanding that whiteness releases people from the duty of integrating (Schinkel 2018). These underpinnings hark back to colonial discourses that serve to uphold a Eurocentric world order.

As a scientific organization that hopes to contribute to social change, the ETMU has a role in challenging such colonial imaginaries and their manifestations. Part of unsettling these discourses and practices is rejecting their claim to universality and creating a space for rethinking them and imagining alternatives: What if, as Schinkel (2018) suggests, social

sciences – and indeed all science – refused to cater to the colonial archive and instead started dismantling the technologies that identify, pathologize, and control those who "don't fit?" What if we understood our social environment as regulating access to a variety of capitals? What if, as an academic community, we critically and routinely interrogated discourses of "society," "community," or "culture" in light of how they produce or maintain difference? What if we acknowledged the harm "integration" has caused, not as an "accident" but as an ideology doing the work it was designed to do? What if we had a space to grapple with these questions, and what if the ETMU book was providing such a space?

With the goal of honoring experiences, activism, art, and scholarly work that stand against "integration," we assembled a team and put out an invitation. In our call, we argued:

> [I]nstead of focusing on migrant "integration" as a process that perceives a particular group as "other" and lays out the requirements for fitting in, "integration" should be about critically examining societal structures that exacerbate racism, inequality, and exclusion. (Call for abstract submissions, February 2022)

Looking at the chapters we have gathered, we think that our book does that. We hope that you, dear reader, can sense our sincere intention to make a positive contribution to rethinking integration. We invite you to pause with us and to reconsider some of the ideas, concepts, and discourses related to integration that we sometimes use so nonchalantly. As our title suggests, we invite you to challenge oppressive "integration" practices with us, and think about ways forward that create and sustain more just and safer ways of living together. We hope that this way of celebrating and honoring the ETMU and its historical and contemporary community will be meaningful to you. Happy birthday, ETMU!

1.5. Content of the Book

As we grapple with complex questions around discourses and policies of "integration" that shape our professional and personal lives, we are grateful for the contributions to this book that have helped us learn and think

about these complexities in new ways. Artists and cultural workers also contributed to this book by examining "integration" in Finnish society with a critical lens, suggesting different modes of coexistence and steps forward.

Diana Soria Hernández's compelling performances completed in the span of eight years (2014–2022) challenge Finnish national symbolism and ideas of the homogeneity of the nation by bringing up her own position as a de-indigenized artist relocated in Finland. Her outsider position as an immigrant artist enables her to investigate and observe behaviors in society. In public performances, she addresses this issue. She challenges the sense of otherness and not belonging by reusing objects of nationalist identity and by responding to them. Her provocative performances address as well as question the violent and often invisibilized process of assimilation and integration in Finland. The artist goes beyond by reuniting with her own roots and customs as an act of everyday resistance offering a way forward. Her art contribution is distributed throughout the book.

The chapter by Anastasia Asikainen draws on fieldwork and observations of elderly Russian-speaking migrants in the Helsinki area. Her findings resonate with the multiplicity and complexity of the process of sociocultural integration and call for rethinking integration beyond fixed indicators and letting elderly migrants (in this case) discover what it means for themselves.

The chapter by Zeinab Karimi navigates the life trajectories of two women in relation to social connection and trust. Her analysis shows the limitations of the integration approach in addressing structural struggles, such as racism, faced by these women. The empirical analysis reveals the importance of de-migrantizing integration discourses and shifting the focus to structural inequalities.

Zahra Edalati and Majid Imani's chapter shows how exclusion and othering are dominant features in the everyday integration experiences of non-white women in Finland. The authors conceptualize the experiences around ordinary whiteness and everyday racism, question taken-for-granted assumptions of "equality" in Finnish society, and criticize the homogenized picture of women from Muslim countries.

Ceyda Berk-Söderblom's chapter critically highlights what art can do. Based on her extensive experience and knowledge in the field, she inves-

tigates the obstacles that prevent artists and cultural workers with foreign backgrounds from being included in the Finnish art scene. She goes beyond by offering solutions for how to tackle these obstacles. Berk-Söderblom, too, claims that "to resist" is an act against any kind of forced integration and assimilation as such.

Alyssa Marie Kvalvaag's chapter focuses on how public discourses on integration are shaped by the media. Her analysis reveals that the normalization of migration-related differences is used in integration discourses, which consequently contributes to racialization and the production of a white national imaginary.

Ioana Țîștea's chapter makes a compelling argument for moving toward creolizing research with Roma on the basis of subaltern counterhistories. The author brings together her own positionality and complicity as a non-Roma Romanian migrant woman with historical and present colonial imaginaries that undergird processes of Finnish nation- and identity-building. In showing Roma women's resistance to processes of erasure and assimilation, she problematizes a concept of "integration" that requires compliance with Finnish mainstream ways of being and offers the notion of creolization as a fruitful way forward.

Ali Akbar Mehta explores how the governance of human mobility might be one of the most important political problems confronting us in the 21st century and the role of art and cultural institutions that exacerbate it. He argues that state-led art and cultural institutions actively support and work toward a political desire for cultural homogeneity maintaining and normalizing the otherness not only of asylum seekers and immigrants but also of citizens. His argument is backed up by a thorough investigation of several cases in Finnish art and cultural museums as well as the Finnish National Pavilion at the Venice Biennale.

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Wanna be Tuohi (2018)

Photo performance
Photo credits Jakob Johannsen

My first approach to tuohi (birch bark) was driven by a fascination to the material and its repetitive appearance in the landscape. To my surprise the use of this material became confrontational as a teacher warned me of using this element as Finns considered it as something like a national symbol, exclusive to Finnish identity and therefore to which I had no right of use. A secondary argument for discouraging me was that this material was related to craft rather than fine arts.

After these interactions, tuohi became more interesting, a way of resistance and provocation. I used it in different ways to relate to Finnishness.

Anastasia Asikainen

2. Playing with Integration: Understanding the Lived Experiences of Older Migrants

Abstract

This chapter proposes taking play seriously by approaching it as an integral part of the lived experiences of sociocultural integration of older migrants. By employing qualitative modes of enquiry, as an empirical case I use a voluntary-organised meeting place for older Russian-speaking migrants. The meeting place is a site where "integration" is interpreted in contradictory ways by different actors, however, as I argue, also performed, and used in meaning-making in a playful manner by the attendees. I argue that it is important to recognize that the discourse of integration, what it entails or should look like as a mundane practice, is interpreted, and practised by the older Russian-speaking migrants in playful ways. Ignoring these playful ways of making sense of "integration" could render the older migrants' ways of finding belonging in Finland invisible. The data consist of a field diary collected by participant observations (over the course of one year 2018–2019), interviews with the attendees, interviews with the organisers and volunteers, and documents produced at the meeting place. The primary data utilised for this chapter is a video recording and field notes from a Christmas celebration organised by the

meeting place in 2018, where the attendees perform and interpret different aspects of Finnish culture.

KEYWORDS: play, sociocultural integration, older migrants, voluntary activities, lived experiences

2.1. Introduction

> A certain play factor was extremely active throughout the cultural process, and ... it produced many fundamental forms of social life. ... Ritual grew up in sacred play; poetry was born in play and nourished on play; music and dancing were pure play. ... We have to conclude, therefore, that civilization, in its earliest phases, played. [Civilization] does not come from play like a babe detaching itself from the womb: it arises in as play, and never leaves it. (Huizinga 1955, 173)

Play is a fundamental experience throughout life (Woodyer 2012), and in this chapter, I explore whether older migrants' lived experiences of "integration" might incorporate an inherently playful element. Exploring integration's playful dimensions does not imply that settling in a new country is easy. By considering whether integration can include a playful element, I aim to highlight the multiplicity of migrants' personal lived experiences in making sense of their positions in a new home country. I suggest that for all migrants, this process involves taking a stance regarding omnipresent and ambivalent expectations for them to "integrate." Following Woodyer (2012), I consider play to be a performative act that can help migrants make sense of their positions in Finnish society vis-à-vis the social pressure to "integrate." Considering the ludic dimensions of integration, I highlight a potentially playful side of integration that offers the possibility of exploring what integration is or could be by approaching it as a performative meaning-making act. In this chapter, I suggest that *ludicity* is an inherent trait of sociocultural integration that potentially influences all aspects of migrants' lived experiences.

For migrants, integration has become an omnipresent discourse (Cederberg 2014) that involves boundaries and hierarchies (Anthias 2013). Heated academic debate surrounds the concept of integration,

what it entails, what it should entail, and how it should be approached in research. Some researchers have suggested discarding the term "integration" altogether (e.g., Rytter 2019), and some have sought ways to rethink its purposes (Grzymala-Kazlowska & Phillimore 2018). I align myself with the latter approach and suggest that we do not stop using the term altogether but instead take a critical stance to observe its uses and abuses. Integration is used in policymaking and research, as well as in everyday language in different and contradictory ways. In Finnish official policies, integration (*kotouttaminen*, or more appropriately *kotoutuminen*) is used as a yardstick for measuring whether different policies regarding migrants are implemented effectively according to quantitative indicators (Integration Indicators Database 2022). In everyday contexts, integration can be a discourse of power that locally born people use to discriminate against migrants (Sotkasiira 2018). Recent literature has identified two main strands of critique regarding integration: how it can be used to oppress migrants (Sotkasiira 2018; Rytter 2019) and how migrants' individual experiences can be reduced to official indicators (Kyeremeh et al. 2021).

I studied older Russian-speaking migrants who had migrated to Finland later in their lives and whose capacity to "integrate" (whatever that means for Russian speakers in Finland) based on quantitative indicators (mainly fluency in the Finnish language and successful employment) was hindered by their older age at the time of migration (Kemppainen et al. 2020). Attempts to achieve integration in contexts of inequality are deeply challenging (Lewis, Diamond & Forman 2015), and Russian-speaking migrants face prejudice in Finnish society (Puuronen 2011). In this chapter, I draw insights from my previous research (Asikainen 2021; Asikainen 2023) on the role of voluntarily organized meeting places in the everyday lives of older migrants. I conducted fieldwork in such a meeting place in 2018–2019 and studied mundane practices that an othered category of migrants used to establish their personal feelings of belonging under the specific political projects of belonging, ''integration'' being one example of such a project. I argue that, especially for migrants who find it difficult to integrate according to the quantitative measures of work, language, and participation in Finnish society, lived experiences of integration require personalized ways of "doing integration." This process involves making sense of expectations and developing one's

own meanings of them by engaging in what Kuurne and Vieno (2022, 281) called "belonging work," which can involve, for example, dancing to Finnish songs or learning useful phrases in Finnish. Finnish "culture" can be something to familiarize oneself with and approach as a source of meaning by participating in society beyond interactions with mainstream Finns. Importantly, it can be something to play around with as something new that makes sense and becomes meaningful (Asikainen 2023). Therefore, I suggest taking play seriously by considering its meaning as an integral part of sociocultural integration. In the next section, I further explore why it makes theoretical sense to discuss integration and play as integrated concepts.

2.2. "Integration" – All Work and No Play? Ludic Dimensions of Sociocultural Integration

Integration can be roughly conceptualized in three ways: as a policy objective, a theoretical construct, and a lived experience for migrants. Normatively, integration can be traced back to ideals of assimilation and multiculturalism, which both involve the political–legal and sociocultural spheres (Erdal 2013, 984, 987). I focus on sociocultural integration, which centers on the lived experiences of migrants. Sociocultural integration is traditionally measured by host-country identification, host-country language proficiency, and interethnic social contacts (Ersanilli & Koopmans 2010). Herein, I focus on the individual experiences of people who have migrated and suggest that play is potentially an inherent part of their activities for making sense of sociocultural integration.

In Western countries, play is conceived as the opposite of seriousness, morality, and productive work (Woodyer 2012). Unproductive activities, such as play, are demonized in capitalist societies (Tanis 2012), and ideas of "becoming integrated" are often driven by a neoliberal perspective that claims you must work to earn your place in society. In this vein, seeing integration as something playful appears paradoxical. It is often the hardworking migrant (in paid work only) who is seen as belonging to the nation-state. Can a playful migrant be acknowledged as someone who is achieving sociocultural "integration"? Could playing, like work, be an activity through which the recognized aspects of sociocultural integration – host-country identification, interethnic social contacts, and

host-language proficiency – gain meaning as lived experiences for older migrants?

Studies analyzing playfulness as an individual quality in adults have shown strong links between playfulness and physical and psychosocial well-being (Proyer 2013). Moreover, links between playfulness and creativity have been identified (Tegano 1990), and playfulness is associated with lower levels of stress in individuals (Magnuson & Barnett 2013). I approach playfulness not only as an individual characteristic but as an embodied activity within a specific social context. Playful exchanges can be made meaningful by migrants playing around with different interpreted elements of Finnish culture and potentially connecting them in creative ways to their own cultures. These playful exchanges help them make sense of what sociocultural integration is or could be for them as a lived experience and, in the process, generate positive memories. Like Sullivan (2000), I explore whether playfulness can act as a mediator in the process of making sense of integration as a personal lived experience. However, the term integration is associated with conceptual baggage. Multiple academic attempts have been made to revise the terminology of integration, such as Pötzsch (2020) suggesting using *critical social inclusion* as an alternative to integration to turn the gaze toward the non-migrant population. What is integration for nonmigrant people? Muro (2016, 518, 527) used the term *symbolic integration* to highlight patterns of interactions in diverse settings that are characterized as enjoyable and voluntary but deemed superficial and superfluous by those in dominant positions. These brief examples illustrate that the term "integration" should not be used uncritically, and researchers should consider the power structures it embodies. All the aforementioned theorizations of integration highlight that the lived experiences of integration are worth paying attention to when seeking to grasp how problematic the term "integration" can be. Integration is ultimately about who belongs and who does not, and what that belonging entails for whom. Adding ludic nuances to the understanding of sociocultural integration is important for enhancing the dialogue on how activities connected to integration (including instrumental goals, such as learning the Finnish language) can be lived playfully. In the next section, I briefly present the case of Russian-speaking migrants in Finland and their participation in voluntary activities.

2.3. Russian-Speaking Older Migrants' Integration and Voluntary Activities

Russian speakers in Finland are a heterogeneous category of migrants representing different nationalities and cultural backgrounds and practicing different religions (Leitzinger 2016). Historically, Finnish national identity is partly built on "not being Russian," and Russian speakers face discrimination and othering in Finland (Puuronen 2011). The older migrants in this study mostly migrated in later life, which can be extremely stressful (Berry 2006) but also a way of defining one's agency (Lulle 2021). In a recent survey of older Russian-speaking migrants, 65% reported that they struggled to make ends meet, and this was especially true for people over the age of 64. The survey also reported that they experienced their strongest sense of togetherness with other Russians, rather than with Finns or other migrants (Kemppainen et al. 2020). The reasons for migration also vary, which researchers should take account of (Torres 2001). Most of the participants in this study migrated in later life (age 50+) due to returnee status, family reasons, or employment. Participation in voluntary activities can have positive effects on migrants' sense of social embeddedness (Palmberger 2017), assist in bridging gaps in accessing social services (Cook 2010), and help individuals deal with loneliness (Cela & Fokkema 2017). However, the places that host such activities can be contested sites where integration is interpreted in contradictory ways by different actors, such as attendees, organizers, and steering groups (Asikainen 2023).

The voluntary sector in Finland has traditionally been strong but is increasingly involved in public service collaboration, which can potentially make voluntary organizations extensions of official integration policies (Pirkkalainen, Abdirizak & Aaltio 2018, 24, 31). Although different voluntary organizations define what integration policy goals mean for them from their own standpoints and contexts (Pyykkönen 2007), it is ultimately the state, through its funding bodies and policies, and mainstream society (not migrants themselves), that has the power to determine what kind of integration is acceptable (ibid.).

2.4. Research Site, Data, and Methods

The fieldwork for this study was conducted at a meeting place in Helsinki, where Russian speakers aged 65 years and above can meet five days a week and participate in various activities. For voluntary organizations aiming to promote health and well-being, the largest funder in Finland is the Funding Centre for Social Welfare and Health Organizations (STEA), which distributed 385 million euros for various activities in 2020. STEA is a state-aid authority operating in connection with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health that ensures "effective NGO activities move towards the set goals, achieve the desired change and demonstrate how the target group has benefited from the activities" (STEA 2023). The meeting place that was the empirical focus of this chapter also received funding from STEA during the fieldwork. The policy-driven goals of migrant integration creep into the voluntary sector through various funding systems, the interpretations of these systems, and the mundane realities that influence the lived experiences of "integration" for older migrants. The meeting place operated in the Russian language, and the attendees were all migrants. They could participate in choral singing, arts and crafts, excursions, Finnish and English language courses, and light exercises, and they received assistance with technology and/or accessing various healthcare and social services. Attendees could also simply drink tea and chat with other attendees without taking part in specific activities. At the time of the fieldwork (2018–2019), the place had been active for 4 years and had around 200 visitors, with 30–60 people visiting daily. I conducted participant observations over the course of one year (2018–2019), during which I kept a field diary and conducted interviews with attendees and organizers. During the fieldwork, I visited the club several times a week and participated in nearly all the activities it provided. I sang, danced, and painted with the attendees, and I offered a helping hand to those who needed assistance with anything, from applying for pensions to booking a doctor's appointment. Since I was frequently there, I felt that the organizers and attendees accepted my presence and were able to spend their days as usual. I was always greeted warmly when entering the place, and the organizers used my name in diminutive form to signal familiarity. Although I am Finnish with no Russian background, I have spent time in

Russia and speak the Russian language. Furthermore, my first name is common in Russia, and I had discussions with multiple attendees about my background.

For this chapter, I focus mainly on the data I collected at the annual Christmas celebration, which was an important event at the meeting place. Once a year, the meeting place showcased all of its different clubs in a celebration for the attendees' friends, families, and different stakeholders. I filmed the whole celebration and, for the analysis, watched the recording many times. When I was watching and filming, and when I was following the rehearsals in preparation for the celebration, I noted the celebration's importance to attendees and organizers. This was visible in how much time they spent practicing and the efforts they put into organizing and rehearsing. They also seemed to have fun during the practicing: joking, laughing, dancing close to each other, and holding hands. Inspired by Geertz's (2008) method of providing a thick description, I describe two different performances in detail in the analysis section to illustrate the intersections of playfulness and sociocultural integration as lived experiences performed by attendees.

2.5. Sociocultural Integration as a Performative and Playful Meaning-Making Process

Drawing on Butler (1990), Fortier (1999) noted that cultural practices are often naturalized as typical expressions of ethnic identity. This common approach suggests that different cultural practices are the *result* of these different ethnic identities. However, Fortier (1999) suggested that it is more useful to approach them as performances through which the culture is *produced*. I approach the playful performances of sociocultural integration in this sense – as practices through which older Russian-speaking migrants make sense of their positions and play around with cultural stereotypes. I found two aspects of playful performances of sociocultural integration especially interesting to explore further – the Finnish language club, which portrayed interpretations of a typical "Finnish family," and the musical performances, where the attendees sang songs in Finnish and danced to Finnish songs. In the following sections, I provide thick descriptions of these performances and reflect on them vis-à-vis various aspects of sociocultural integration, mainly

host-country identification, host-language proficiency, and interethnic social contacts. I approach these as performative meaning-making processes, which I first present in terms of role-play and, second, as singing and dancing to Finnish songs.

Role-Play

Learning the host country's language is a central aspect of sociocultural integration. Playfulness in classrooms has been shown to facilitate the learning process (Tanis 2012); therefore, playing and having a playful disposition can have a positive effect on the learning of foreign languages. However, the language club brought onstage not only the Finnish words they had learned but also their interpretations and performances of Finnish culture. The attendees had created different characters for themselves that represented members of what they interpreted as a "typical Finnish family."

The group of Finnish language students came onstage. A group of 14 people formed a semicircle and started to sing the well-known Finnish song *Anna mulle tähtitaivas* [Give me a starry sky] by Katri Helena, with lyrics as follows:

> *Anna mulle tähtitaivas, anna valo pimeään*
> *Anna mulle aamurusko, anna usko elämään*
> *Anna mulle rohkeutta, että jaksan huomiseen*
> *Anna edes vähän, rakkautta tähän*
> *Yksinäiseen sydämeen.*
>
> *[Give me a starry sky, give me light in the dark*
> *Give me dawn, give me faith in life*
> *Give me courage, so that I can continue until tomorrow*
> *Give at least a little love to this*
> *lonely heart.]*

As they sang, they performed a choreography along with the song to enact the lyrics by, for example, raising their hands as a sign of courage or holding their hands on their hearts to signal love. They sang certain parts louder and with more movement, such as:

> *anna edes vähän rakkautta tähän yksinäiseen sydämeen* [give just a little love to this lonely heart] and *anna mulle rohkeutta että jaksan huomiseen* [give me courage to continue until tomorrow].

When the choir stopped singing, an attendee came onstage and said in Finnish, "My name is Anna. I have a large family, which is a typical Finnish family." Her real name was not Anna, but this started a performance in which the attendees portrayed different members of what they interpreted as a "typical Finnish family." Another attendee walked onstage, and Anna introduced her: "This is my dear mother. She's pregnant." The audience laughed at the sight of an older woman with a fake pregnancy belly. Anna continued, "This is my father, this is my active and sporty big brother, and my happy little sister. These are my mother's parents, my grandmother, and grandfather, and this is our cat." As she introduced her fictional family members, they came onstage, one by one. When the whole Finnish family was seated in front of the choir, the choir sang *Anna mulle tähtitaivas* a second time.

Anna continued in Finnish, "This is my family. Last month, our family expanded." The mother of the family then said, "I am Kaisa. I am the head of this family. Last month, I gave birth to my daughter." She held a doll out to show to the audience. Anna continued, "My father." The father of the family stated, "I am Kari, and happy because our fourth child has been born. Thank you very much, my dear." He addressed these last words to Kaisa. The older brother stated, "I am Jussi; I play sports and like contemporary music." Then the little sister said, "I am Aino. I am a happy and cute little girl." Then the grandfather explained, "I am Matti. I am wise." When he spoke this line, he stroked his long white fake beard, and the audience laughed. The grandmother stated, "I am Kirsi. I pray for my grandchildren." Then the cat said, "I am the cat, Mia. I'm playful." After the family was introduced, the choir sang *Anna mulle tähtitaivas* again.

When the song ended, the mother explained that it had been a month since she had given birth to her daughter, but she continued with her favorite hobby, gardening. The father said, "As you know, I am Kari, happy Kari. We have our fourth child, and I am successful in my work. I'm working as a doctor in a hospital." Kari wore a stethoscope around his neck to illustrate his profession as a doctor. The big bother continued, "I started

a youth jazz band at the university." The little sister stated, "I do not want to play with my dolls anymore; I like games on my phone. I also like our cat, dog, and grandmother." The grandfather stated, "I like to go fishing and read Finnish history." The grandmother said, "My hobbies are reading and knitting." Anna then introduced another row of people who had come onstage behind the family: "Here is my aunt," and the aunt said, "My name is Liisa. I am a secretary. I have two allotments and a son." Another character stated, "I am Cousin Heidi. I practice yoga," and another cousin, Leila, said, "I dream of traveling around the world." The final character stated, "I am Uncle Pekka. I like to go to the sauna." Following the introductions, the choir, together with all the members of the fictional family, sang *Anna mulle tähtitaivas* one last time. (All quotations taken from the video recording of the 2018 Christmas celebration.)

A playful disposition can enable people to face difficulties and distance themselves from conventions (Guitard, Ferland & Dutil 2005); therefore, could a playful disposition be useful for making sense of the demands of integration? When Anna initially stated that her family was a typical Finnish family, she made it clear that this was the attendees' interpretation of a Finnish family. When performing the "typical Finnish family," the attendees not only interpreted the family but also performed "living" the life of the family and brought their interpretations to life onstage. Woodyer (2012, 313) talked about the "critical and ethical potential of play … as a form of coming to consciousness and a way to be otherwise." The performance was not a one-off event, as the participants had practiced the performance over the course of one year at the meeting place. Therefore, the Christmas celebration was the pinnacle of their interpretations of these Finnish family members. They brought their own bodies onstage, through which they enacted and temporarily became members of this "typical Finnish family." The performance was relatively short, but the build-up to the performance, such as planning and practicing, took a long time. After the performance, the attendees retained (largely positive) memories of what it was like to role-play being "Finnish." These ways of making the (interpreted) Finnish culture more playful and accessible in different ways seemed to reflect the attendees' experiences of finding their place in Finnish society. Could this potentially link to all aspects of sociocultural integration – host-country identification, host-language proficiency, and interethnic social contacts? When the attendees took on

different roles within the family, they portrayed the members as good, active people with respectable professions. They may have interpreted these as typical aspects of Finnish culture – having a good profession, being a doctor, going to university, teaching jazz music, and doing yoga. Alternatively, they may have created a way to perform alternative roles for themselves as members of Finnish society. There are some overlaps between stereotypes of the Finnish and Russian cultures, such as going to the sauna and appreciating nature through gardening. The role of the family was portrayed as a central issue. The attendees were happy to present newborn members to the family. The grandmother stated that she "prayed for her grandchildren," and the small child said how much she loved her grandmother.

Another way to conceptualize the performance is as something that the organizers perceived as important to present to the funders to display the "integration" of the attendees. Carlsson, Pijpers, and Van Melik (2020, 14) found in their research that in multicultural day care venues, there was pressure to display older migrants' integration into Dutch society. What they called multicultural day care venues were similar in terms of activities to the meeting place; however, they were municipally organized forms of preventative care for older migrants who lived at home. This aspect is important to consider because another perspective on the activities is that they potentially embodied power relations. However, I suggest that migrants' lived experiences of playful performances potentially allowed them to make sense of their positions as older migrated people in Finland and provided a space to explore how to "be otherwise". In the next section, I will focus on the different roles music can play in sociocultural integration. I will further analyze how music was used in the Christmas celebration and in the activities leading up to it as a way to make connections between Finnish- and Russian-speaking cultures and bring them together in playful ways.

Singing and Dancing to Finnish Songs

Music can be a source of social agency (DeNora 2000, 152–153), and in the meeting place, it was a way of introducing elements of (or stereotypical assumptions about) Finnish culture into the Russian-language space to create interesting hybrids between the two. Every day during my

fieldwork, I heard music coming from different rooms. Many of the exercise classes were conducted with music in the background, the attendees joined choir practices and sang in Finnish, and the Finnish language classes also sometimes incorporated music in a playful manner. Therefore, music was a central element that was present in the meeting place daily:

> The class exercise has music playing in the background. The song is a classic Finnish schlager in the Finnish language, which, to me, instrument-wise, sounds like a Russian or Slavic song due to its melancholic tone and use of instruments like the accordion. The organizer has created a choreography that mimics the lyrics. For example, when singing about a painter, the group made big strokes in the air with imaginary paintbrushes, or when singing about a bricklayer, stacked imaginary bricks, or when singing about a drunk, took sips from imaginary bottles. (Field diary 2018)

These seemingly small exercises accompanying a Finnish song, which soundwise evoked familiar feelings, could elucidate how migrants make connections to Finland in their everyday lives.

I will now move on to describe the group's dance performance during the Christmas celebration to further illustrate the importance of music for playful meaning-making practices. The organizer came onstage and told the audience that they chose a Russian song in the Finnish language because this song would be familiar to both Finnish and Russian audiences. The dancers came onstage wearing traditional Russian costumes. They were all women, but half of them dressed as men, and they danced in man–woman pairs. The dancers who danced as women had flowing skirts and flowery scarves over their shoulders, and the women dancing as men wore traditional Russian button-up shirts, scarves, belts, and hats. The song *Huopikkaat* ("Valenki" in Russian) was played loudly, and the attendees flicked their skirts and scarves and twirled in circles. In Finnish, the song is about a girl who wants to go to meet her lover, but her mother hides her winter boots (huopikkaat) to stop her from leaving. The choreography was excellent, and the attendees practiced it for a year at the meeting place. The audience clapped along to

the song, and they seemed to know it well. The audience comprised attendees' friends and relatives – people of different ages, and possibly attendees' children and grandchildren. Most members of the audience spoke Russian. (Taken from a video recording of the Christmas celebration, 2018.)

Fortier (1999, 48) claimed that for Italians in the UK, rituals performed in a church cultivated a sense of belonging. She noted that going to the church temporarily solved the ontological problem of belonging to Italian Catholic culture in the UK. In the case of the older Russian-speaking migrants, I suggest that taking part in these performative acts not only temporarily helped them make sense of their positions but also created new hybrids in which "Russian" and "Finnish" culture were not fixed but porous and bled into each other. Such performances can be fun ways of creating memories in which the old and the new come together and start to make sense.

2.6. Discussion

The celebration and the practices leading up to it created playful hybrids between stereotypes of Finnish and Russian cultures through theatre and music. Woodyer (2012, 322) noted that playing has transformative potential as an "area ripe for ruptures, sparks, and moments of invention." The lived and embodied performances the attendees brought onstage regarding what a typical Finnish family looked like for them allowed them to invent temporary roles for themselves within an interpreted Finnish family. I suggest that the inherently playful aspects of sociocultural integration are worth considering when discussing lived experiences of integration, especially for categories of migrants who are not seen as fully "integrated," such as older migrants, who still have to make sense of what integration means or could mean for them. An opportunity to play around with integration can provide a safe space for exploring and acting out different aspects and interpretations of Finnish society. It can be a way to make certain aspects of culture humorous, and performing these interpretations collaboratively can be an empowering experience. As mentioned, sociocultural integration is traditionally measured by indicators of host-country identification, host-country language proficiency, and interethnic social contacts (Ersanilli & Koopmans 2010). I ask whether these indicators

could have a ludic dimension that is enmeshed in the lived experiences of sociocultural integration.

By suggesting that sociocultural integration has an inherently ludic dimension, I do not mean to downplay the discrimination older Russian speakers face in their everyday lives or the importance of integration services as means for migrants to access relevant services. I argue that it is important in the sociocultural sphere to recognize that the discourse of integration should be mobilized and modified by Russian-speaking migrants themselves. Ignoring these playful ways of making sense of integration could render older migrants' ways of finding belonging in Finland invisible. Moreover, these lived experiences can provide a greater understanding of, for example, why someone would answer a survey question by saying that they feel a sense of belonging to Finland. However, the term "integration" embodies power relations. When people define what it means from the top down, creative ways of "doing integration" can be shrugged off as insignificant. Therefore, careful attention should be paid to exactly what is being talked about when speaking about the "integration of migrants." There is a serious continuing need to understand nuanced lived experiences under the omnipresent imperative to "integrate."

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Tuohi (2014)

4 hours performance
Mother's Tongue Performance Art Festival
Universum Teatteri, Helsinki, Finland
Photo credit Ignacio Perez Perez

I collected and brought in the theatre a stack of birch wood branches and peeled the bark off with some help from the audience. The bark pieces were nailed on a wooden pellet on the floor and, when all was done, I covered the pellet with a roll of white paper. Then I took a piece of charcoal and rubbed it over the surface of the paper. With this frottage technique I reproduced the pattern in a lower quality than the original but related enough to it. I glued it back on the naked logs, and when this was done, I said out loud *Tuohi*. The only word I owned in Finnish as a mother tongue, for I did not know a translation of it in Spanish.

Zeinab Karimi

3. "I Never Felt I Was a Member of the Society": Trust and Social Connections Experienced by Racialized Women

Abstract

This chapter reflects on the stories of two women who came to Finland decades ago from Iran and Ethiopia. Their arrival was on different visas: one was a refugee and the other a student. I analyzed their life trajectories after arriving in Finland to understand their experiences of social connections and trust. The results showed that despite their different positionalities when entering the country, both women faced similar obstacles to being regarded as trustworthy members of Finnish society and were thus unable to build strong social connections in Finland. This chapter illustrates that trust is an ambivalent construct, especially for minorities who experience uncertainty about their connections to a social structure that does not guarantee equality and agency.

KEYWORDS: integration, social connection, trust, racialization, ambivalence

3.1. Introduction

Integration policies are framed as processes by which migrants become acceptable members of their host society (Penninx & Garcés-Mascareñas 2016), and they are claimed to promote social justice and prevent social exclusion (Finnish National Board of Education (FNBE) 2012, 10). According to this claim, the supposed outcome of integration is social cohesion and trust between migrants and other communities and welfare institutions. Although some studies have critically analyzed Finnish integration programs (e.g., Pötzsch 2020; Masoud, Holm & Brunila 2021), knowledge about what integration entails after years of resettlement is limited. This chapter addresses this research gap by employing the concept of trust to examine the social connections and positionalities of the two women, who moved to Finland decades ago.

Ager and Strang (2008) argued that one of the main domains of integration relates to social connections, which reflect the ways in which one belongs to a society. Taking a closer look at social connections will allow us to better understand what integration entails in terms of belonging. Social connections are formulized in three domains: social bonds (between co-ethnic community members and family members), social bridges (between minorities and other individuals and communities in the host society), and social links (between migrants and the structure of the state and its services) (Putnam 1993; Woolcock 1998; Ager & Strang 2008).

The concept of trust can help us develop a better understanding of social connections. Trust as a multidimensional phenomenon refers to "a positive feeling about or evaluation of the intentions or behavior of another" (Brugger et al. 2013, 11), and it is conceptualized as "a discursively created emotion and practice which is based on the relations between the 'trustor' and the 'trustee'" (Lyytinen 2017a, 490). Trust is a relational and reflective process that is continually negotiated and undergoes growth, loss, and changes (Möllering 2006). The negotiation does not happen in a vacuum between isolated actors. Instead, it takes place on a contextual and historical basis, whereby others may participate in the formation of trust between trustees and trustors (Möllering 2006).

Research has shown that friendliness in everyday encounters (e.g., in one's neighborhood) signifies the existence of social bridges that make

one feel secure and "at home" (Ager & Strang 2008). Social bridges reflect the formation of trust in everyday encounters. While a high level of generalized trust between citizens is assumed to be common in Finland (Pirkkalainen, Näre & Lyytinen 2022), studies have revealed that migrants are viewed with suspicion (Berg & Peltola 2015; Hiitola & Peltola 2018). Considering the negative discourse surrounding migrants in the Finnish context (Prokkola 2018), we know little about the formation of trust between minorities and other individuals (social bridges).

Studies on migration have revealed the complex dynamics of trust-building among co-ethnic community members (social bonds) (Rainbird 2012; Lenette 2015; Lyytinen 2017b). In the Finnish context, studies on family and co-ethnic relationships have not focused on trust. However, one study on Iranian–Finnish families emphasized that membership in a co-ethnic community undergoes transformation due to social and political influences (Karimi 2020a). It also showed that the challenges of building social connections may lead to heavy reliance on and pressure to protect family members (Karimi 2019; Karimi 2020b).

In migration studies, institutional trust has mainly been examined in relation to health-care systems (e.g., Feldmann et al. 2007; O'Donnell, et al. 2008; Majumder et al. 2015) and immigration institutions (e.g., Linell & Keselman 2011; Griffiths 2012). In Finland, people seem to have high levels of trust in their social institutions (The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 2021). Despite the lack of trust-focused analyses, the social links between migrants and welfare institutions have been the subject of some studies. Haghseresht (2003) investigated Iranian asylum seekers' experiences of Finnish health-care institutions, and the results showed that their past and present experiences of health institutions and their expectations of them played a significant role in forming their views on Finnish health-care institutions. Another study revealed that migrant parents in Finland are perceived as questionable by others in welfare institutions, such as maternity health centers, day care centers, and schools (Turtiainen & Hiitola 2018). These experiences can be barriers to building institutional trust. With regard to migration-related institutions, Pirkkalainen and colleagues (2022) showed that pro-asylum activists gradually lose their trust in asylum-related institutions, which leads them to question common perceptions about Finland as an equal country.

Overall, trust is a complex and dynamic process connected to repeated past and present experiences (Luhmann 2018). Trust at different levels is not merely related to personal experiences; it is also connected to equality, fairness, hope, autonomy, and agency as the central components of the trust-building process (Goodall 2010). Thus, the social setting has a significant effect on the dynamics of trust in individuals' experiences. One of the main structural barriers to social connections is racism (Bonick 2021; Evangelist 2022). Racism is a structure that places bodies within a hierarchical social system (Emerson et al. 2015). The social construction of racism is tied to an epistemic understanding of whiteness, which makes a distinction between "us" and "them" (Mills 2017; Hoegaerts et al. 2022). It is justified by references to religious and cultural attributes, all of which are written on the body (Omi & Winant 2014). Therefore, whiteness refers to a racial identity that is socially constructed (Feagin 2010).

Earlier scholars argued that Finnishness is strongly tied to whiteness (Leinonen 2012; Hoegaerts et al. 2022; Keskinen 2022), meaning that those categorized as non-white are not considered trustworthy citizens (Berg & Peltola 2015; Karimi 2023). Therefore, trust should not be viewed as a personal achievement. Rather, it requires an evaluation of the social structure that may or may not provide opportunities for those who struggle to be viewed as deserving citizens. By acknowledging the importance of social structure and reliance on the concept of trust, I aimed to understand how social connections are formed/unformed in the lives of the research participants in Finland.

3.2. Data and Methods

The data for this chapter were drawn from a larger data bank that I collected for a project on lived citizenship. Studies have claimed that the duration of residency is an important factor in so-called "migrants integration" (Farahat 2009; Kearns & Whitley 2015). Hence, I chose the cases of Shima and Sara because of their long-term residence in Finland. Shima moved from Iran to Finland as a refugee over 30 years ago. Sara left Ethiopia and came to Finland 16 years ago as a student to pursue higher education. Their non-European backgrounds and the different types of visas on which they arrived provided reliable grounds for my comparative analysis of their life trajectories.

I spoke Persian with Shima and English with Sara. Both were able to speak confidently in these languages. For the purpose of this study, I interviewed the women twice using an in-depth interview technique (Berry 2002). I asked them to tell their stories from the point of arrival in Finland, and I asked them further questions as the interviews progressed. I approached the interviews as an unpredictable and nonlinear process. I also was prepared to disclose some personal information to balance the power dynamics, build trust, and lessen the formality of the interview situation (Kvale & Brinkmann 2008; Perera 2020; Kostovicova & Knott 2022). I stayed in touch with Shima and Sara and met with them several times. During these meetings, we freely chatted about different topics and daily life, and I later made observational notes on the aspects I found relevant to my research (Dwyer & Buckle 2009). However, the data were drawn mostly from the interviews I conducted with these women.

The interview atmosphere was emotional at times when the participants narrated their challenges. I did not know these women before my fieldwork, and I met them through personal contacts. Thus, the mediators were key to building the initial trust between myself and the participants. However, building trust is not enough to overcome the division between a researcher and a research subject about whom the researcher comes to be knowledgeable (Ahmed 2000, 65). Being a researcher with personal migration experience partially filled this gap, placing me in an ambiguous relationship with the participants (see also Ryan 2015): being identified as non-white made it easier for my participants to talk about their experiences, but being a researcher simultaneously placed me in an outsider position in their eyes.

To analyze the data, I paid close attention to the narratives that describe Shima's and Sara's relationships with the larger social setting of the Finnish context. I interpreted the content of their narratives by focusing on the meaning derived from the linearity of their stories (Riessman 2008; Bamberg 2012). Moving back and forth between the data and theory, I pinpointed experiences related to social connections (social bonds, social bridges, and social links) throughout their stories. Throughout this process, the concept of trust was useful for understanding the complexity of their experiences.

While writing this chapter, I asked myself what the academy deserves or does not deserve to know about Shima's and Sara's life stories and how

much of their stories I should disclose (Simpson 2007; Tuck & Yang 2014). As Audra Simpson (2007, 78) suggested, I asked myself, "What am I revealing and why?" and "Who benefits from this and why?" Reflecting on women's experiences of social connections could encourage academics to rethink common assumptions about integration. Shima and Sara stated that they decided to participate in my research because they wanted to voice their struggles, find a way to make an impact, and open up conversations. Thus, their narration of their stories constituted a form of resistance (Tuck & Yang 2014). To safeguard the informants' identities, I not only anonymized their names, but also consciously elected not to disclose parts of their stories (Finnish National Board on Research Integrity (TENK) 2012; All European Academies (ALLEA) 2017). By asking the participants to read this chapter before publication, I was able to minimize possible sources of harm from the participants' perspective concerning the information I shared (Kostovicova & Knott 2022).

3.3. Shima's Story

Shima was born in Iran and came to Finland in the 1990s as a refugee when she was in her twenties. Reflecting on her first memories of coming to Finland, Shima described her life as lonely and difficult since she was unable to communicate in either Finnish or English. Her greatest motivation to learn these languages was to communicate with people and make friends. Previous scholarship has shown that the refugee journey is an extremely emotional experience that affects refugees' well-being, trust, and belonging (Munt 2012; Lyytinen 2017a). Despite her difficult asylum journey, Shima was determined to change her situation and build a good life in Finland. Soon after her arrival, she participated in an integration program during which she started to learn the Finnish language. During her first work practice in a private hair salon, Shima was, traumatically, accused of stealing, and the manager demanded that she leave the workplace immediately. Because she was confused and unable to defend herself due to the language barrier, she turned to her social worker for help. Through the social worker's involvement, it became clear to Shima that she was being accused of stealing free magazines that the boss had given her one week prior to the incident, which she had not been asked to return. Based on this accusation, the manager refused to pay her. This in-

cident is only one example of the multiple discriminatory incidents she faced in everyday public encounters, including in her workplaces, that made Shima realize that she was not perceived as trustworthy by the public. Similarly, Björnberg's (2011) study showed that asylum seekers in Sweden feel distrusted by others, which hinders their building of social networks and ultimately makes it difficult for them to trust others.

Despite the incident, Shima's social worker insisted that the manager pay Shima's salary for her allotted working hours. The services that Shima received from her social worker during the early years after her arrival consolidated her trust in Kela (the Social Insurance Institution of Finland).

> After a few years, I saw my first social worker on the bus, and it felt like seeing a family member. I wanted to give her a hug, but she just froze and did not say anything. She was shocked, which made me step away [laughter].

Shima's statement shows that feelings of trust and closeness are built through past experiences. The social worker's reaction may indicate that she perceived her interaction with Shima to be meaningful only within an institutional setting. Shima did not realize this until they interacted on the bus, which gave the social worker more opportunity to move away.

A few years after she arrived, Shima prepared herself for a university entrance examination and was accepted into a bachelor's program in engineering. During her studies, she found it extremely difficult to obtain internships, even those "without a salary," whereas her Finnish classmates successfully obtained paid internships. Comparing her situation with that of her classmates made her feel that she was perceived as untrustworthy by potential employers. Shima's experience shows that trust and mistrust are relational and are often affected by the context of resettlement (Essex et al. 2021). Finding an internship is often viewed as an opportunity to prove one's reliability on the job and to obtain future employment, but Shima was not given this opportunity.

> The Finnish people would not give me a job. They did not treat me well. These things all made me very angry [starts crying]. I learned their language so that I could speak with people in this country and be friends with them. However, I never felt that I

> was a member of the society. ... Now that I am older, I know that good and bad people are everywhere, but I was unlucky to meet the bad ones. I don't know why. Even my social worker wondered why nothing I did took me anywhere.

Despite the trusting relationship Shima formed with her social worker, this statement clearly reveals that discrimination at both the individual and institutional levels hindered her from building social bridges and social links. Thus, it was not entirely Shima's responsibility to trust and make social connections since others should have practiced equality and fairness in relation to her hopes and efforts (Goodall 2010). The challenges of building social links with work institutions predominated in Shima's narrative. Shima's trust-building progressed through repeated experiences (Luhmann 2018). Feelings of anger emerged from her loss of trust and lack of access to equal opportunities. However, gaining greater experience over time has helped her avoid generalizing about her mistrust toward others in society despite her bad experiences.

Integration programs include language courses, career guidance, and vocational training (Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture (FMEC) 2016), and their success in fostering integration in Finland is largely measured by the migrant employment rate (Masoud, Kurki & Brunila 2020). Integration programs in Finland often steer migrants toward vocational schools for sectors that are facing labor shortages, including the care and construction sectors (Masoud, Kurki & Brunila 2020). These sectors are mostly gendered, with women directed to do jobs related to caring for the elderly and children, which is one of the least attractive sectors for the majority population. (Wrede 2010; Näre 2013). Shima was able to avoid vocational training and obtain a university degree in Finland. Despite the promise of integration policies to utilize immigrants' skills (FMEC 2016), acquiring an academic education, even in Finland, did not guarantee Shima's employability in her field. A previous study stated that achievements such as education and employment can potentially enhance integration, but they should not be considered a direct indicator of "integration" (Ager & Strang 2008). Shima's experience clearly reveals the intersecting struggles around class and gender for racialized subjects.

About 12 years after her arrival, Shima had two children, and she had obtained Finnish citizenship status and a bachelor's degree in engineer-

ing from a Finnish institution. Her attempts to find a job in her field were unsuccessful. To escape unemployment, Shima worked in several sectors, but mainly as a caregiver, where she was either exploited or worked under precarious conditions. Once, her mother tongue became a resource for a job at a reception center for asylum seekers. After working in several camps, Shima was unable to obtain a permanent contract because "the competition was high among Finns and immigrants for those jobs."

Later, Shima worked for a private company where she was exploited. Her attempts to file a court case against the company were unsuccessful, and she consequently decided to quit her job. Raghallaigh (2014, 85) claimed that mistrust often develops in stressful circumstances of displacement. Shima's numerous experiences of discrimination aroused a sense of self-protection regarding her encounters with the public sphere (Raghallaigh 2014).

Now, Shima is over 50 years old, and the last time I met her, she was working in the care sector as a personal assistant, helping aging people or disabled citizens to continue their daily activities, which, according to Shima, does not require her to have a university degree. She has completely lost hope of finding a job that would give her "a sense of self-satisfaction," and she feels that her job position is at the bottom of the social ladder.

> I tried really hard, and I stayed on my feet and took care of my children. I learned the language very well and studied hard. Still, I am not successful. I am working as a personal assistant. I like helping others, and I am happy to help, and I do it from the bottom of my heart. But they made me do this. I am an engineer in my heart, but I was left with no alternative but to do this job. ... This is an expression of someone who is very angry and cannot do anything about it.

Exerting agency over one's own life and future is essential for establishing trust-based relationships (Eide et al. 2018), but these seemed to be absent from Shima's relationship with the Finnish labor market. The category of "refugee" in migration and integration discourses is constructed as "skill-less" and "unwilling to integrate" (Anthias 2013). Such discourses frame the positionality of racialized subjects as a personal outcome rather

than a consequence of the social structure. After living for over 30 years in Finland, Shima still does not believe that her achievements and hard work have been rewarded through social mobility.

Shima would have to attend a vocational school for two years in order to obtain a permanent contract for her current position. Her relationships in past work environments have made her feel insecure about her relationships with her current colleagues. Shima recognizes that her situation is difficult and states that "the field of engineering is less open to hiring an Iranian middle-aged woman who doesn't have work experience." Becoming a mother has also contributed to her late availability in the labor market. Thus, her employment experience has been affected by the intersection of gender, age, and race. Shima's sense of anger, lack of agency, and insecurity come from her structural positionality in relation to others. Earning only 200 euros more than unemployment benefits and having to pay that amount simply for petrol to commute between work and home, Shima is hopelessly awaiting retirement. With a bitter smile on her face, Shima stated:

> I am poor here. I do not have a good feeling. I am forced to live like this until I get old, and once I lose my health, maybe this system will give me a personal assistant, someone like me, to clean my home. … I wanted to leave Finland. Maybe if I had gone somewhere else, my life would have been completely different … but Finland is my home, even if Finnish people don't like me. At the same time, I would like to run away and go somewhere else.

Employment not only means financial security; it also restores self-esteem, especially the feeling of being *at home* (Ahmed 2014) as a respectable and trustworthy middle-class citizen (Skeggs 1997; Karimi 2020). Shima's narrative shows that trusting relationships are relational and emotional (Pirkkalainen et al. 2022). Embodied emotions become dynamic as migrant individuals start settling. Understanding trust as a dynamic process that can change across time and space, Shima has had moments of trust and mistrust in her encounters with mainstream society. Her life experiences have led to her having ambivalent feelings toward Finland as her "home." On the one hand, Finland became her *home* once she sought

asylum, but on the other hand, it did not allow her to feel *at home*. Experiencing these two emotions simultaneously is indicative of unresolved problems in social relations (Möllering 2006; Karimi 2019). To manage her exclusion, Shima relies on her co-ethnic community, spending time with them during holidays and on special occasions.

> When I came to Finland, the Iranians in Finland did not want to include me in their circle, perhaps because I was a divorced woman, and there were not many Iranians here. I was really alone. Now, my situation is different. The atmosphere has changed now, and many [Iranians] come here [to Finland]. The other reason is that all of us feel this void, and we try to be each other's roots. ... We keep those roots in our music, in our culture, in our hospitability, in sharing. Even if we have little to eat, we want to share it just to be together.

Sharing (time, food, and space) is associated with feelings of trust – something that Shima has found hard to gain while being perceived as an untrustworthy stranger in society (see also Ahmed 2000). This does not mean that her relationship with the Iranian community is static and formed only around trust. She has experienced exclusion from the Iranian community in the past years. Lenette (2015) has shown that women may feel excluded from their communities due to their marital status. However, Shima witnessed changes in the dynamics of the community, along with its size, which created a space for establishing trusting relationships within the community.

3.4. Sara's Story

Sara was born in Ethiopia. Her mother encouraged her to pursue higher education and a profession. She moved to Finland with her husband sixteen years ago on a student visa. One of her first impressions on arrival was that she was not trusted by the public due to her skin color. Especially in shops, she would be watched and followed "like a shadow" by staff and security, and people would hold their bags tighter when passing her on the street (see also Ahmed 2000). Sara stated that "there is even hate I feel like sometimes". The feeling of being hated or perceived as untrustworthy

in the public sphere has been a major obstacle for Sara in building social bridges, except with a few individuals.

Building social bonds with her co-ethnic community was not easy due to conflicts between members of the community, whom Sara described as "very dissatisfied with their own lives" in terms of jobs and accessing resources. These conflicts eventually affected intergroup dynamics and created mistrust and greater conflict. Sara also mentioned that most of the community had lived in Finland for over a decade and were Finnish citizens.

> Because we are not out there equally to compete for our own dream as a bigger part of society. … Among ourselves, we accept if Finns succeed because we already gave up. But if it is a migrant [being successful], then we think, "Oh, that immigrant, who is like me, [has] passed me [succeeded more than me].

Rainbird (2012) described the paradoxical dynamics of intergroup trust among people categorized by the state as asylum seekers. On the one hand, they needed to compete for resources, but on the other hand, they needed to trust and support each other. Sara described this paradox in her co-ethnic community. While the larger society was largely unwelcoming toward Sara, her co-ethnic community made her feel accepted. At the same time, the community seemed to be the only place where its members could define themselves as deserving. This created competition among members, which led to conflict, mistrust, and the breaking of social bonds. In addition, Sara's narration described the distinction made between the categories of "Finns" and "immigrants" (Lappalainen 2009; Keskinen 2022; Karimi 2023). This reveals the social positionality that are allocated to these categories, meaning that racialized minorities cannot be included in the category of "Finns" despite gaining Finnish citizenship (Hummelstedt 2022; Karimi 2023). Kvalvaag's chapter (in this volume) illuminates how this categorization is shaped by the media, and Lappalainen's (2009) study shows that it is even embodied in children's peer relations in the Finnish context.

During her study period, Sara and her husband began searching for jobs. Although her husband was unsuccessful, Sara was offered a part-time job at a cleaning company. In addition, during her studies, Sara de-

livered mail, while her husband's job search in the same sector was unsuccessful. She described her husband as becoming stressed and angry because of his unemployment and unsuccessful job applications. Sara eventually became the sole breadwinner for the family while studying and taking care of her household.

> He was very stressed and angry, and our relationship was so bad because he was so bitter and angry. We [had] just moved from Ethiopia, and men are not expected to do a lot [at home]. He didn't want to do anything at home, so I had to work, and go to school, and when I was at home and there was no food, I had to make it. And that [situation] really ruined our relationship, and some of it is still here. It hurt me very much psychologically. There is pain still here.

Sara had to save enough money to support their visa renewal while obtaining the obligatory study credits. This led to her experiencing burnout, which has affected her relationship with her spouse to this day. Sara's experience was not only connected to her positionality in the new environment; it was also tied to her marriage to a racialized individual. Her positionality in the public and private spheres became intertwined and inseparable (see also Lister 2003; Lister 2007). Despite her difficulties, Sara considered herself to be "a lucky one who at least could find those jobs to survive".

Just before her graduation, Sara gave birth to a child who needed intensive medical care.

> My child got all the care needed. So that was an amazing thing. The doctor and the unit took care of my child for a long time. That somehow helped me stay positive and be soft [starts crying]. I don't want to have this feeling of hate, you know, because at the end of the day, it is you having that bitterness inside.

The support her child received from the medical system restored Sara's sense of trust in the welfare system and helped relieve her accumulated discomfort. After finishing her degree, Sara struggled to find a job in her field. Instead, she found a job in the care sector. Although her husband

was still unemployed, Sara had a full-time contract at a private kindergarten. She was very happy because she could now financially rely on a full-time job instead of her previous part-time contract. "But over the years, working there became something else," Sara said, because she struggled with a work overload for many years. According to Sara, her boss was fully aware that she and her "other immigrant" coworkers had little chance of finding other jobs. Feeling trapped, Sara continued to work in the same sector for many years because her attempts to change her career or to pursue postgraduate studies were unsuccessful. Thus, Sara lost her trust in her workplace and her employer and started to hate the job that she had "once loved." Ultimately, Sara was diagnosed with borderline burnout syndrome and consequently left her job and struggled with health issues for a year.

During her time working as a kindergarten teacher, Sara applied for Finnish citizenship to put an end to the yearly visa application costs for the family. Obtaining legal citizenship is often viewed as an integration accomplishment when the applicant meets bureaucratic criteria, such as language proficiency (Pötzsch 2020). Sara remembered her ambivalent feelings after receiving the decision via a phone message; she had obtained legal Finnish citizenship, but she did not have any confidence that other people wanted her around. This experience should not be viewed in isolation. It was strongly associated with Sara's own and her family's positionality of not fitting into the category of "Finnishness," which is strongly tied to whiteness (Hoegaerts et al. 2022; Karimi 2023).

> When coming to Finland and getting [an] education here, I thought a better future was waiting for me. … When looking for jobs, they [the employers] were thinking that we are asylum seekers, and [that] we should know the Finnish language well. But we were different kinds of foreigners. When we were looking for job[s], they [would] hang up [the] phone on us; they were angry. When I am talking about this, I am talking about many other people [who have had the same experience].

The aspiration for a better life was the main reason Sara moved to Finland. However, through her experiences with some employers, she came to realize that she was perceived as an "asylum seeker" who would not be

able to speak the Finnish language well. Angry employers informed Sara of their unwillingness to share their social space, which led Sara to recognize her positionality as a "foreigner" of a "different kind," and that she shared this position with "many other people."

After a challenging year dealing with health issues, Sara was finally able to obtain a one-year contract as a social worker in the health sector assisting aging people. This boosted Sara's confidence.

> So far, I [have] like[d] it. This is the maximum that I could get. It is so funny that I have not seen a bad thing at my work so far. Now, these few months [have] made me ... realize that Finland has changed. It is not like [as if] they were willing to change. They have [had] to change to survive ... I feel like working in a different working area gave me [the feeling] that, okay, now they give me a job. I know that I am making so many [Finnish language] grammatical mistakes at work. But they [the supervisors] are happy, and we get through the conversation. I remember a time when I was studying Finnish by myself, and I went to a restaurant and told him [the waiter] "anna jäätelöä" [give an ice cream]. He said, "What?" I am sure that he understood what I said, as I repeated it several times. What else could I ask? But he made me say it in English.

Using the term "so far" when describing her new workplace, Sara assumed that something bad might happen in the future. This indicated that she had not completely regained her trust in the working environment. After facing extensive discrimination at both the individual and institutional levels, Sara finally found a sense of comfort that enabled her to partly mend her trusting relationship with the surrounding society. According to Wuthnow (2004, 150), trust is not merely a judgment of one person about a significant other; it needs to be understood in relation to norms, expectations, and past experiences (see also Raghallaigh 2014). Sara's experiences show that trust is not only multidimensional and in-process (Lyytinen 2017a) but also dynamic and ambivalent at times when previous experiences of racism play on the mind, influencing expectations of the future. This anticipation is not only connected to Sara's own position in the labor market, but also to her child's future.

> My child loves Finland. S/he all the time says, "Suomi, Suomi.". S/he looks at the Finnish flag admirably. ... If my child succeeds in the future, like Awak, then yes, it will be all over the news that a Finnish person succeeded. But if not, they will never see my child as a Finn who was born and raised in Finland and speaks Finnish as good as a native.

Awak Kuier is a successful Finnish athlete whose parents have a Sudanese background. Sara's reference to her implies her recognition that her child's full membership in Finnish society is not guaranteed by being born and raised in the country until the child becomes highly successful. Living in a neighborhood with a predominantly non-white population, Sara is not confident about the quality of the education that her child is receiving. This, in Sara's opinion, places her child in a disadvantaged position. While she believes that, over time, Finnish society has become more open to diversity, Sara still has doubts about her child's future. She talked about her mistrust of school staff who present "immigrant" children with only a few options to choose from for their future careers, none of which require a university degree. The trust-building process is not only based on direct personal experience but also on stories that circulate in the community (Feldmann et al. 2007). Sara does not trust her child's school because the school setting low educational expectations for her child. Other children in the community have had similar experiences. Sara is worried that her child is being guided to choose vocational schooling rather than a university education, which would increase the obstacles to social mobility. A previous study showed that adult migrants in integration programs are guided toward vocational training that is extremely gendered and does not match their previous skills or interests (Kurki 2019; Kurki, Brunila & Lahelma 2019; Masoud, Holm & Brunila 2021). Although Finland claims to promote equal education (Sahlberg 2016), the pattern of promoting vocational training for racialized children has rarely been studied. A previous study on education found that multicultural education in schools constructs a category of "immigrant Others" as opposed to Finns (Hummelstedt 2022). Such a discourse represents a hegemonic understanding of Finnishness that prevents non-white children from being viewed as Finns.

3.5. Conclusion

This chapter has reflected on the stories of two women who came to Finland many years ago. I closely analyzed the dynamics of their positionalities in Finnish society and the formation of trust in their life trajectories. As previously discussed, equality, hope, and autonomy are the main components of trust-building (Goodall 2010). Despite Shima and Sara's hard work and long-term residence in the country, their hopes of social involvement, equal treatment, and autonomy were significantly challenged when they encountered the social structure of their surrounding society. This became the main obstacle to building trust. Their experiences indicate that being mistrusted during the settlement process makes it difficult for them to trust others (Björnberg 2011; Raghallaigh 2014).

Experiences of racism and the challenges of social mobility are the main obstacles to building strong social connections. This should not be surprising, considering that Finland exhibits the highest rate of racism among 12 European countries (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) 2018). In contrast to Shima, Sara was not enrolled in an integration program. However, both women struggled in the labor market. This result aligns with other studies explaining the politics of the labor market with regard to racialized women in Europe and Finland (Wrede 2010; Näre 2013; Farris 2017). In general, trust was segmented in Shima's and Sara's experiences, meaning that it was not built in a way that guaranteed different forms of social connections (social bonds, social bridges, and social links). Access to the legal status of citizenship has not provided these women with the feeling of being *at home* as the Finnish word for integration, *kotoutuminen* (coming home) promises (Moilanen 2004).

Contributing to the literature on migration and trust, this research suggests understanding trust as an ambivalent construct, the dynamics of which uphold trust and mistrust simultaneously, which in the case of Shima and Sara fostered uncertainty about their membership in society. In addition, trust and mistrust do not merely result from direct personal experiences; they are rooted in the collective experiences of those who are categorized as "unfit." Shima and Sara became informed about their positionalities through everyday encounters and understood that they were assigned to a "non-Finnish" category. This may also apply to the next generations since the category of Finnishness is strongly tied to whiteness (see also Hoegaerts

et al. 2022). Trust as a mean for social connections is built when "the other" does not remain other but becomes "us" – and many different kinds of "us" (see also Anthias 2013, 336). Therefore, combating structural racism is the only way to make room for social connections for racialized groups. Although integration is mainly constructed as a personal achievement and a responsibility of racialized groups, it is time to discuss the responsibility of the wider society. Finally, this chapter suggests that further research on trust may greatly benefit from engagement with critical race studies.

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Devil's Flower (2021)

4 hours performance
Performance in New Performance Turku, Turku, Finland
Photo credits Jussi Virkkumaa

Devil's Flower took its title from a podcast by "Radio Ambulante" in which the survival story of Rosa Julia, a woman from Guerrero, Mexico, is narrated. Her life was severely affected by drug production and trafficking. The memories of the poppy fields she saw as a child re-dimensioned as her life was affected, understanding why her mother called them the devil's flowers.

The performance brought besides each other two different realities of the flower by overlapping one of the most recognisable and appreciated designs from the Finnish brand Marimekko with the story of Rosa Julia. The performance developed by cutting an expensive silk Marimekko dress printed with small unikko flowers. A silhouette in flames (last image in this book) was created behind the performer's body as the pieces of cut fabric were glued to the wall, meanwhile the story of Rosa Julia translated from Spanish to Finnish would sound in the background of the Botanic Garden of University of Turku. It is a matter of privilege what we see in poppies. This performance was presented in New Performance Turku 2021 under the theme Survival.

Zahra Edalati & Majid Imani

4. "Am I a 'Good' Woman?": Everyday Experiences of Non-White Women in a "Country of Gender Equality," Finland

Abstract

This chapter considers the integration experience of immigrant women in Finland, a country that has become famous for its so-called equality. It aims to broaden knowledge about the strategies of exclusion and othering that dominate the everyday experiences of non-white women in Finland. Drawing on in-depth interviews about the everyday experiences of 15 young and middle-aged immigrant women from Iran and Afghanistan, we used thematic analysis to examine the women's sense of sadness and exclusion. Conceptualizing women's experiences through ordinary whiteness and everyday racism, we describe integration in practice from a bottom-up perspective. We further argue that the perceived picture of Finnish society as an egalitarian space contradicts the everyday experiences of immigrant women in Finland. Experiences of othering on buses and in swimming pools, gyms, restaurants, workplaces, streets, and school meetings, together with experiences of being excluded from school parents' meetings, are concrete incidents that support this idea. In

addition, we criticize the present homogenized categorization of women from Muslim countries as Muslim women. This chapter takes a critical look at ordinary whiteness and concludes by arguing that to understand women's micro-level interactions and daily experiences of integration, one must recognize how immigrant women define integration and how the mechanism of this integration is related to their interconnected social identities.

KEYWORDS: ordinary whiteness, everyday racism, integration, Finland, non-white women

4.1. Introduction

Racism and far-right anti-immigration agendas have come to the fore in Nordic countries and across Europe in recent years (Seikkula 2019). Kantola and colleagues (2023) explained that Europe, as a continent, has been trying to depict itself as exempt from the racism discourse. However, with the help of different civil society organizations, academics, and politicians, antiracism discourses have gained prominence in public debate (Kantola et al. 2023). In a similar manner, discussing racism in Finnish society has been challenging. As Hoegaerts and colleagues (2022), pointed out, the exemption of Finland from racist histories is still relevant in current debates. Thus, racism has recently emerged as a strong theme in migration and ethnic research, with Finland often depicted as a racism-free zone before the 1990s (Rastas 2005).

While it is true that the number of immigrants in Finland has increased only recently, it is worth noting that migration to Finland is not a new phenomenon (Heikkilä & Peltonen 2002). Therefore, the perception of Finland as a country still learning to adjust to immigrant issues may not be entirely accurate (Rastas & Seye 2016). Accordingly, there is still much to be learned and improved upon in terms of how Finnish society addresses immigrant issues, and it is important to acknowledge the historical presence of immigrants in Finland. Moreover, the perception of Finland as a homogeneous white nation-state and the idea that Finland suddenly became multicultural and diverse, or racist, is false (Rastas & Seye 2016). As Keskinen, Skaptadóttir and Toivanen (2019) noted, failing to challenge this assumption perpetuates a hidden racism that has long

been ingrained in social narratives. For example, Finnish-language newspapers and dictionaries exhibited negative attitudes toward individuals of African descent in the early 1900s, although there were few, if any, people of African descent living in Finland at the time (Rastas & Seye 2016). This pattern of prejudice and discrimination can be traced back even further, as Finnish whiteness was historically defined in contrast to national minorities, such as the Roma, as noted by Seikkula (2019). Thus, acknowledging the history of immigrants and the relationship between whiteness and Finnishness (Keskinen 2019) is an important step toward understanding and addressing issues related to immigrant integration in Finland.

In this chapter, drawing on Essed's (1991) definition of everyday racism, we use the term everyday antiracism (Bonnett 2000) to present a comprehensive understanding of the racism experienced by non-white women in their everyday lives in Finland. Bonnett's (2000, 7) conception of everyday antiracism refers to "mundane actions by ordinary people and describes how individuals respond to racism in their day-to-day lives." According to Aquino (2016), everyday antiracism can be experienced at a micro level, specifically at interpersonal or individual levels, and can be separated from institutional action.

While highlighting the complexity of everyday racism, invisibility/visibility can explain how racialization and othering manifest in Nordic societies, as noted by Leinonen and Toivanen (2014), who stated that by examining the concept of visibility/invisibility, a more profound comprehension can be achieved of how the socially constructed concept of "race" influences the positioning of groups within Nordic societies. This is applicable to both racialized groups who are visibly different (Toivanen 2014) and to privileged individuals who, due to their "whiteness," can pass as "one of us" and as part of the majority population in day-to-day interactions (Leinonen & Toivanen 2014). Indeed, as Petäjäniemi, Lanas and Kaukko (2021) explained, the social construction of race forces asylum seekers to negotiate violent racism and degrading treatment in society to be considered "good" asylum seekers.

Although whiteness is essential for national identities in the Nordic countries, in Finland, the term "whiteness" is rarely explicitly invoked (Kolehmainen 2017), and racialization is sometimes perceived as synonymous with "non-white" (Krivonos 2019; Seikkula 2019). Thus, according to Keskinen (2013), non-white people are considered "immigrants" or "for-

eigners" despite having grown up or even been born in Finland. However, this situation causes migrants in Finland to find strategies for responding to exclusive whiteness. For example, migrants sometimes prefer to call themselves "foreigners" to distinguish themselves from "Finns." Haikkola (2010) introduced the term "positive visibility" to explain this approach. According to Haikkola's study on young people with migrant backgrounds in Finland, young migrants choose to associate positive characteristics with being a visible "foreigner" in Finland because their belonging to Finland is often questioned in everyday interactions.These studies have all shown the dynamics of racialized hierarchies in Finnish society (Leinonen & Toivanen 2014).

Additionally, a review of Finns' journey toward whiteness can explain the dynamics of othering in Finnish society. According to Keskinen (2019), Finland has been involved in colonialism on various continents, along with other Nordic and European countries. However, the historical position of Finns within the categories of Europeanness and whiteness has been ambiguous at times. Notably, racial lines have excluded some parts of the Nordic region, and Finns have been ethnically excluded from other Nordic people. Furthermore, Finnish society has created a long-standing division between Finnish- and Swedish-speaking populations, for which, as Keskinen (2019) explained, Finns attempted to compensate. Following national independence, Finn's knowledge production created racial and hierarchical distinctions between themselves and the Sámi and Russian peoples. These experiences have influenced Finns' journey toward whiteness, and understanding their dynamics can explain the racial relations and processes underpinning different discourses, including the gender equality discourse.

As Singh and Féron (2021) argued, it is crucial to consider the gender, ethnicity, and class dynamics of anti-immigrant and far-right discourses in research. In terms of the gender dynamics of racial anti-immigrant discourses, it is important to acknowledge the disadvantaged position of women of color resulting from their intersecting gender and racial identities. Finland is often presented as a model land of gender equality, and the gender equality assumption has always dominated discussions of equality in Finland (Lahelma 2012). Migrants in Finland are often viewed as a monolithic, undifferentiated group originating from non-Western

regions of the world and associated with outdated gender and family systems (Leinonen & Toivanen 2014).

Keskinen (2017) explained that racial perceptions overwhelm notions of gender equality in the Nordic region, with Muslim women perceived primarily as women who can benefit from gender equality policies. In other words, Nordic countries have ambitions to "save" people they perceive as lacking in terms of democracy and gender equality (Tryggvadóttir 2019). In addition, and similarly, white women define white borders to respond to the so-called refugee crisis, which has led to segregation, exclusion, and the deportation of racialized others (Keskinen 2018).

Based on the discussion so far, we aim to explain how the participants of this study defined "integration." As Heikkilä et al. (2015) have demonstrated, immigrant integration remains an ongoing challenge for the European Union (EU), and related policies remain a significant agenda among EU member states, with Finland being no exception. Indeed, public programs, policymakers, public authorities, and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Finland support immigrants' integration and allocate funding to integration programs that offer cultural activities. However, integration in many countries, including Finland, is typically viewed as a top-down effort rather than a bottom-up one (Rastas & Seye 2016). For instance, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland (2023), which is responsible for the integration of immigrants in Finland[1], states on its website that the integration plan includes immigrants studying Finnish or Swedish at a level that corresponds to their skills and abilities. Accordingly, the goal of the integration plan is to promote immigrants' integration or employment within one month of its introduction.

In Nordic countries and elsewhere, there is heated debate regarding the nexus between heterogeneity and migration. As Keskinen (2019) has shown, in Nordic contexts, homogeneity and a lack of ethnic diversity are considered determinants of social cohesion, societal security, and a desirable state of affairs. Thus, "increasing heterogeneity through migration has been approached as a potential problem and threat to the societal and political order to be resolved through the integration of the migrant Others" (Keskinen, Skaptadóttir & Toivanen 2019, 8).

[1] According to the establishment of a new government in Finland (2023), there will be some changes in the roles of ministries.

Thus, starting with the existing literature on "ordinary whiteness" and "integration," we developed an approach to explain why, in practice, in Finland as elsewhere, integration is often defined as a top-down effort rather than a bottom-up one. This chapter builds largely on empirical examples drawn from semi-structured interviews with Iranian and Afghan women living in Finland. Through these interviews, we aim to shed light on these women's experiences of everyday racism and their perceptions of integration into Finnish society.

4.2. Materials and Methods

To investigate the responses of individuals with immigrant backgrounds to ordinary whiteness and integration policy in Finland, we interviewed 15 Iranian and Afghan women in Finland, whom we identified via snowball sampling (Parker, Scott & Geddes 2019). For this, we used our networks and one of the Telegram pages launched for Persian-speaking immigrants in Finland to gain reasonable access to their communities. Thus, we invited 12 Afghan and Iranian women living in Finland to participate in the research, 9 of whom agreed to participate and recommended other potential participants who fit the research criteria and might be willing to participate. Ultimately, 15 women from Iran and Afghanistan living in metropolitan Helsinki and the city of Tampere in Finland participated in this research. The interviews were conducted during June, July, and August 2021, involving approximately 27 hours of interviewing. The duration of each interview varied from one hour to two hours. Interviews were conducted in coffee shops, interviewees' homes, or online. The women's ages ranged between 28 and 77 at the time of the interviews, and the Persian language was used for the interviews. The interview questions were mainly biographical and concerned the women's lived experiences in Finnish society.

In this research, our participants were Persian-speaking women living in Finland. We chose Afghan and Iranian women because both could be assumed to speak the same language, and many of the Afghans living in Finland had also lived in Iran. According to the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA), approximately 2.6 million undocumented Afghans lived in Iran in 2022. Indeed, we believed that because they shared some similar cultural experiences, bringing these individuals together made

analytical sense. The participants all spoke different dialects of Persian (Farsi – the Persian of Iran – or the Dari Persian of Afghanistan) and had different bases of residence (as students, immigrants, and asylum seekers).

We employed thematic analysis, with a focus on women's stories, to identify and interpret patterns of meaning (themes) within the qualitative data (Clarke & Braun 2018). The aim of thematic analysis is to capture patterns of shared meaning across a field (ibid.) and to access knowledge that is not clearly recognizable in the research participants' stories (Gansel & Vanderbeke 2012). The main thematic categories according to the analysis of the interview data were women's self-identity (how women connected with their ethnicity, religion, and race), women's perceptions of ordinary whiteness or racism in Finnish society, and women's definition of "integration" in Finnish society.

Since Finnish society was the site for this study, we should explain some specific characteristics of and information about the Iranian and Afghan immigrant communities in Finland. In recent years, Scandinavian countries, including Finland, have become destinations for international immigration (Honari, Bezouw & Namazie 2017). Although Russians and Estonians are still the two largest groups of immigrants in Finland, non-European immigrants comprise over 40% of the population of new immigrants (Skardhamar, Aaltonen & Lehti 2014).

According to Finnish statistical data for 2020, more than 15,000 Persian-speaking residents were studying, working, or seeking asylum in Finland (Statistics Finland 2021). Persian-speaking immigrants living in Finland speak Persian, Dari, and Tajik, which are three major recognized dialects of Persian, and they originate from Iran, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan (Beeman 2005).

According to Finnish government statistics, more than 10,000 Iranian nationals live in Finland, of whom 4,500 have Finnish citizenship (Statistics Finland 2021). Iranians have moved to Finland since the 1990s for different reasons, as refugees, asylum seekers, in search of jobs, and to study at universities. Although Iranians are among the largest groups of immigrants in Europe, knowledge regarding their experiences in Finland is relatively scarce (Karimi 2019).

Regarding the Afghan community, statistics show that more than 12,000 Afghan people live in Finland, and most South Asian women liv-

ing in Finland are Afghan women. Afghans are among the most populous foreigners in Finland. Afghan citizens formed the fourth largest group of recipients of Finnish citizenship in 2013; however, this rate decreased, and in 2021, Afghans formed the seventh largest group of recipients of Finnish citizenship. (Statistics Finland 2021.)

4.3. Ordinary Whiteness from the Women's Perspective

All the interviewees in this study lived in Finland and self-identified as Persian-speaking. In addition, they all had Muslim backgrounds or family connections to Muslim countries. Being born, raised, or having lived in a Muslim country does not necessarily mean that individuals practice Muslim traditions in their everyday lives or identify as Muslims. However, after interviewing the women, we realized that they were racialized in Finnish society as Muslim women. Sama – a 28-year-old student living in Tampere – broached this issue, stating:

> I don't want to be called a Muslim woman, although according to my birth certificate, I am a Muslim. I want to be called an Iranian woman. But I need to justify myself everywhere. Why don't they call other women from Western countries by their religions? (Interview in Tampere, July 2021)

The quote above shows that racial perceptions in Finland portray these women as Muslims only because they are born into Muslim families or in Muslim countries (Alghasi 2019). Sama defined her experience of being identified as a Muslim woman in Finnish society as an example of everyday racism because she did not identify herself as a Muslim woman, although others did. She added:

> I have long, black, curly hair. It's ridiculous, but my hair is problematic here, as well as in my own country, where I must cover it with a compulsory hijab. Here, the problem with my hair is that it is not blond enough! (Interview in Tampere, July 2021)

Even Sama's social appearance as an unveiled woman has not protected her from being racialized as a Muslim "other" in Finland. As Krivonos

(2019) put it, in addition to skin color, whiteness is also associated with other factors, such as history, class, clothing, citizenship, gender, accent, class, and ethnicity. Indeed, whiteness has historically excluded non-European forms of whiteness. In addition, in the Finnish context, whiteness has been constructed in opposition to the Sámi people, which may explain the connection between the politics of whiteness and the politics of domination.

Mana – a 35-year-old Iranian woman who has lived in Finland since 2017 – also referred to her interactions with everyday racism in Finnish society as follows:

> Once, I was on a crowded bus sitting on a seat beside a Finnish woman. After a while, the Finnish woman looked at me several times with a complaining and skeptical look and snatched her bag further away. It made me feel that she was not happy about sitting beside me and thought I might grab her bag. I wanted to react and say, "I'm not a pickpocket!" I wanted to say, "I am educated; I am working in ..." But I did not say anything. Instead, I got off the bus at the next stop. (Interview in Tampere, June 2021)

According to Killian and Johnson (2006), immigrants have distinct identities that are defined by their immigrant status, ethnicity, nationality/host country, religion, race, and gender. The nexus of these identities differs in specific contexts. In addition, people avoid inconsistency between how they see themselves and how others view them and their identities. As Singh (2020) stated, identity can be perceived as a dialectic contradiction of specific social meaning in a particular and indexical context: "The way we speak, the styles we draw on, and the narratives we tell index how we want to be perceived momentarily and concerning others" (Killian & Johnson 2006, 65).

Mana, like many other interviewees in this research, stressed her educational and occupational identity throughout the interview process. It seems that women sometimes emphasize their work-based identities because they believe that those identities will allow them to pass as whites in society. Mana added, "If she (the Finnish woman on the bus) knew that I was an engineer at Nokia, she would probably not have treated me with

hostility." Mana's understanding of the role of her identity in this incident aligns with Brown's (2015) argument that immigrant women, when confronted with a culture or context that is different from that of their homeland, must often address what parts of their identity are fluid and which parts will remain fixed. Identity negotiation is a central part of immigrant women's experiences, but it is sometimes fixed and sometimes fluid. Likewise, Mari – a 34-year-old Afghan woman living in Helsinki – used different terms to describe her identity. Mari grew up in Finland and has lived in the country since she was five years old. When she introduced herself, she said, "I'm an Afghan woman." Then, in the middle of the interview, she emphasized, "I am a Muslim immigrant." However, she also insisted at different moments during the interview, "I'm not a Finnish woman."

Based on the interviews, the women's identity building was influenced by their everyday life experiences in tackling everyday racism and the processes of racialization. According to Ringrose and Stubberud (2019, 131), regarding the experiences of Norwegian Pakistanis, these reactions can be categorized in terms of "counter identities," which originate from a sense of alienation and not belonging to society.

In addition, religion and the negotiation of religious identity were particularly evident themes in the interview data. Brown (2015, 41) claimed that "for those immigrants who hold particular religious identities and find themselves in contexts where the dominant religious tradition, or lack thereof, is different from their own, the negotiation of religious identity is particularly evident." According to the study participants, emphasizing one's identity as a Muslim is not necessarily associated with religious conviction. For many Muslim immigrant women, separation from their native countries and the feeling that they are aliens in a foreign culture may push them to define themselves first and foremost as Muslims; however, in certain contexts, they may operate with different self-definitions of themselves (Brown 2015).

Insisting on a Muslim identity or not may relate to the gendered nature of post-9/11 Islamophobia experienced by Muslim immigrants at the intersections of gender, religion, race, and nationality, as evidenced by previous research (Nasir & Al-Amin 2006; Sirin & Fine 2008; Ali 2014). For example, Sirin and Fine's (2008) research showed that the gendering of Islamophobia was prevalent in the post-9/11 United States (US). They

found that for Muslim young people and their families in the US, 9/11 marked a rupture in their identity negotiation process. A basis for exploring the multi-dimensional nature of Muslim identity is provided by social identity theory; however, to address the complexity of Muslim identity in diasporic women, cross-cultural and feminist perspectives, as well as empirical research on religiosity, should also be considered.

The women's narratives in this chapter show that lived realities do not simply relate to how people perceive themselves and the world, but also how they feel about themselves and the world. The experiences of the women in this study offered insights into their encounters with hostile treatment and everyday racism in their everyday lives. They faced everyday interactions with racism in what has been referred to as the "white landscape of Finland" (Huttunen 2002, 130). Hervik (2019) described this phenomenon as color-blind racism, where "race," "nation," or both function as master narratives that evoke ambiguous emotions, incompatible values, and non-negotiable entitlement. Across most of our interviews, the respondents reported experiencing racialization in Finnish society through a process of othering that defined them primarily as Muslim women. As Alghasi (2019) highlighted, there are fixed perceptions of Muslims in Western societies. Several women we interviewed explained that even adhering to Western values in attempts to integrate into Finnish society did not alleviate their experiences of othering. According to our respondents, portraying a homogenized image of women from Muslim countries contributes to the othering process in many situations. For instance, Erfaneh – a 34-year-old Iranian woman who came to Finland as a university student 10 years ago – argued:

> Even in the public sauna, where I had passed all the cultural boundaries, I was treated as the other. One woman asked, "Are you allowed to be here according to your religion?" She believed that she knew who I was.

Fatemeh – a 40-year-old veiled Iranian woman – reaffirmed Erfaneh's stance, arguing:

> Although I could get a good job based on my high level of education in Finland, I always have to explain to Finnish people

> and even other Westerners that my husband lets me work. My spouse has no issues with me working outside the home. Although I am reluctant to explain and justify my religious views regarding women's rights to white people, in many cases, I must do it. They perceive me as an oppressed woman, regardless of whether I am an engineer, I have a good job, or I am an active woman in society.

Erfaneh explained her identity to us by saying, "I don't wear a veil these days, but I am still questioned regarding my identity and whether I am a Muslim woman." Erfaneh attempts to introduce her identity to a society affected by historical practices through which Westerners typically view non-white women as "other" because they are of a different nationality, race, and religion, and because they are female (Killian & Johnson 2006). When Erfaneh said, "I assumed I would be living in a so-called country of gender equality," she revealed that racial inequality (Pyke & Dang 2003) prevails in Finland and that non-white women face inequality in their everyday practices while being deeply affected by the opinions, comments, and questions of Finnish people.

4.4. Am I integrated?

In addition to reflecting on racialized experiences of negotiation with whiteness in Finnish society, the women in this research defined integration in their own terms and reflected on their position in the integration programs in Finland. These women explained that they confronted the reproduction of hierarchies in Finnish society and during the integration program. Soodeh – a 41-year-old woman living in Helsinki – said:

> I am here but not in an integrated way. I have been an unemployed immigrant since 2018. I have participated in Finnish courses for two years. According to the document, I have been in the integration program since then. However, nobody invited me to participate in any activities. I just filled out the unemployment benefit form every month. Am I integrated?

As Krivonos (2019) showed in a study on unemployed young Russian people in Finland, the organization of labor highlights how whiteness operates in Finnish society. Indeed, unemployment is linked to a loss of whiteness, respectability, and worker identity. Moreover, some scholars (e.g., Keskinen 2018; 2019; Jokinen et al. 2011) have claimed that Finland has slowly transitioned from a welfare state toward a workfare state. According to new approaches, unemployment is no longer a structural problem, but is predicated on an individual's lack of responsibility, poor work ethic, and moral failure. Hence, employment functions as a key "integration" criterion for migrants (Krivonos 2019).

Similarly, our interview data highlighted how the integration process in Finnish society is intertwined with everyday racism despite the society claiming to integrate foreigners. Narges – a 31-year-old Afghan woman – explained that her family members are often mistakenly considered food delivery couriers (such as Wolt) when they go to a restaurant – an experience she and her husband have had several times: "When we entered the restaurant, the restaurant staff thought we were food delivery people and gave us a customer's order to deliver." She believed that they made this judgment based on their skin color and appearance. She continued as follows:

> I don't mind if they think we are all working at Wolt! They believe that we cannot work for any other carriers. It is true that this is one of the very limited jobs offered to immigrants in Finland! Just look around the city and see who works for Wolt. The problem is that Finns consider that all of us are the same. They don't care who we are, why we are here, and what we are doing, educated or not. For them (Finns), we are veiled Muslim refugee women who have moved from the camp to big cities very recently.

Fatemeh – a 45-year-old Afghan woman who moved to Finland as a refugee with her family 20 years ago – was critical of her integration process into Finnish society, stating:

> They (Finns) gave us an opportunity and let us go to school here, but in many situations, I have been excluded because of

> my race and ethnicity. Even at my son's school meetings and in WhatsApp groups for parents, I felt it. They (Finnish parents) talk to each other for hours without considering me. I have not talked with any of them for years. My son has been excluded since he was in kindergarten. He has rarely been invited to birthday parties or friends' homes or to participate in other joint activities. Do you think I am part of this society? How about my son? My son was born here. My father died here. This land should give me the feeling of home, but it does not.

These experiences shed light on the participants' everyday encounters with othering and exclusion in the society into which they are assumed to be integrated. Fatemeh learned and spoke the Finnish language fluently, but she did not feel integrated. This is similar to what Killian and Johnson (2006) highlighted in their study on North African immigrant women in France. Fatemeh connected her identity to her ethnicity, religion, or race and rarely called herself an immigrant. Pötzsch (2020) argues that integration and inclusion are labels attached to immigrants, whereby immigrant status is perceived as a static condition of existence rather than a pattern or description of movement. Korteweg (2017, 428) also critically discussed the exclusive structure of immigrant integration and showed that the notion of immigrant integration produces gendered and racialized feelings of non-belonging. As Korteweg (2017, 428) explained, "integration is a discursive practice that positions social problems within 'immigrant' communities as the result of a social, cultural, political, or economic distance between immigrants and nonimmigrants." Lentin (2012) argued that in these kinds of situations, racism is replaced by interculturalism and integration. Hence, as discussed by Lentin and McVeigh (2006), integration is perceived as a discriminatory act that shields the workings of state racism. They argued that interculturalism, community relations, and integration are all forms of racism. They asserted that while diversity is a term often used in anti-racist discourse, it doesn't address the root inequalities. In this context, diversity is being used by the government as a tool to reproduce these inequalities.

When we asked our participants about their definitions of "integration," they were critical and tried to explain the racialization of integration based on their experiences. According to the participants, "Finnish

language classes" and "job search" are the only services that integration programs in Finland offer. However, as one of our interviewees stated, "integration should be touched by people's hearts; it is not just a printed document."

Insisting on looking at integration from below was a bold strategy for the women we interviewed. For instance, Maryam – a 34-year-old Afghan woman in Tampere – made a revealing statement in this regard:

> I am struggling to create my own home in Finland even after 10 years, but I have resistance tactics. I use different strategies on different days and in different situations. Sometimes, I ask myself, "Am I a good Muslim woman?" But then I answer myself, "You should be a good Finnish woman, as you cannot return to Afghanistan.

We agree with Aquino (2016) that investigating racism in practice is difficult, particularly in the context of everyday life. However, in light of the interview data and our observations – since we are also immigrants in Finland – we can highlight different aspects of and strategies for dealing with everyday racism. Sharing experiences of everyday racism in everyday life can shed light on how communities creatively produce others at different levels. For instance, Zohreh – a 52-year-old Iranian woman – explained to us that after 12 years of living in Finland, she remains sensitive about specific questions that Finnish people ask foreigners, such as "Where are you from?", "Why are you here?", "Are you working?", and "Do you receive Kela benefits?" Zohreh showed that asking specific questions can be used as a strategy for formulating everyday racism. She claimed that Finnish people perceive all immigrant women as belonging to one nationality (e.g., Iraqi): "I can spell the name of my country for them several times, and they pretend that they haven't heard the name Iran before!" She laughed and continued, "Geographically, Iran is a huge country, and they cannot ignore it anymore."

Hoda – a 46-year-old Afghan woman who has been living in Finland for 20 years – questioned the ranking of Finland as "the happiest country in the world." She claimed that one of the criteria for this ranking should be immigrants' quality of life: "If they consider gender equality a measure of effectiveness, they should ask immigrant women how they evaluate

gender equality in Finland." Hoda believed that despite all the rights and benefits available to her in Finland compared to Afghanistan, she does not feel she is equal to other people in Finnish society in her everyday life. She explained:

> I graduated from a university in Finland but could not find a job. I am fine with what I have in Finland, but I don't feel like I am living in the happiest country. I have had no opportunity to be an employed working woman.

Farah – a 45-year-old Iranian woman in Tampere – explained that she came here with a master's degree to continue her education in Finland. She learned the Finnish language and obtained a master's degree in education in Finland. Her dream is to be a teacher in Finland, but this has not proved possible. She explained her situation as follows:

> My issue is not about working or employment; I am asking about integration. Why do they apply the word "integration" to Finnish language courses in the city? Integration means that I learn the language of communication in this society and then become a normal part of it. But this doesn't happen. I am eligible to be a teacher according to the document, and there are places for me, but as I am not a normal member of society, they don't call me. I always tell my daughter that she has to make two to three times more effort than normal Finnish people. She was born here, grew up here, and speaks fluent Finnish, but I believe she is not considered a normal citizen. I mean, that Finnish people don't perceive us (who have immigrant backgrounds) as normal.

Farah raised an important issue in her interview by highlighting that she and her daughter are perceived as something different, exotic, excluded, and beyond the norm. Farah perceived her identity as a non-normal person in Finnish society, showing that she believes the process of othering immigrant women is normalized in Finnish society. Farah criticized herself in parts of the interview, saying, "It is my fault. I do not react to people when they don't see me. I shouldn't be silent when Finn-

ish people ask me where I am from, even in very unrelated situations." Farah's arguments and many other women's comments regarding othering practices reveal how these practices impact women's self-awareness.

When Farah said, "I am not a normal member of society," she meant that othering is normalized and justified in society; thus, she perceived herself as a non-normal part of it. Such experiences suggest that through the reproduction of the non-white abnormal other, everyday racism not only constructs whiteness, but also constructs female respondents as "not normal" citizens. Here, the Eurocentric lens that initiates, promotes, and normalizes colonialism can explain this perception. Institutionally, the legacy of Eurocentricity and its values define unconquerable geographical, legal, national, and rhetorical borders (Khrebtan-Hörhager 2019). These borders are fixed in the sense that all women with Muslim backgrounds are perceived as belonging to a homogenized category, even in cases where women from Muslim countries such as Iran or Afghanistan are not eager to be perceived as Muslim women: "Shaping and insisting on that fixed homogenized picture is a strategy to normalize othering when 'us' is perceived as the normal, neutral state, whereas 'them' is something different and exotic, possibly dangerous, beyond the norm" (Siivikko 2019, 50).

Similarly, Elham – a 48-year-old Iranian woman in Helsinki who obtained her doctorate in Finland – claimed to be referred to as a homogenous racialized non-white "them." Elham plans to move to another country soon (after living in Finland for 11 years). She explained that in the early years, she thought that the problem was not knowing the language, but then she realized that the problem was her nationality based on her skin color. In the interview, she explained that when she came to Finland, she wore the veil, but she decided to discard it; nevertheless, nothing seemed to change, and she was still racialized and perceived as a Muslim woman. Elham explained, "Honestly, if I go and ask my Finnish colleagues something, they welcome me, but they rarely come to my door and ask me to join them for something." Then, she reflected on this statement and asked, "Is it normal? I don't think so!" Elham opened up an important issue regarding her feelings of abnormality in her everyday experiences in Finnish society. Similar to many other interviewees in this research, Elham claimed that she tried to become part of society

and align herself with the host society's values. However, she faced opposition from society, which practically prevented her from integrating. She explained:

> Now, I blame myself. Why did I put so much effort into integration with this society when the door to integration was completely closed? There is structural resistance toward foreigners here. I translated their [Finns'] behavior as keeping a social distance, but then I realized that this culture is selective. It's part of their resistance to others. I am thankful for my study rights and the benefits that I received from university. But I regret that, although they invested in my study here, there is no chance for me to continue living here.

Elham's statement reminds us that "social distancing" can be applied as a strategy for dealing with foreigners as other. According to Clauss-Ehlers and Carter (2005), studies so far have shown that white people seek more social distance from people of color, and that social distancing can explain the strength of traditional racial social norms and behaviors. Similarly, our interviewees highlighted that whiteness socially distances itself from "the other." This is what Sullivan (2014) claimed was the problem in educational settings: white mothers teaching white children to use bodily gestures and forms of address to maintain a social distance between themselves and non-white people. She employed the term "racialized Muslim woman" to describe her experiences of people keeping a distance in the name of cultural norms. The constructions of non-white others, which the women in this research experienced, were highlighted in Arezoo's narrative: "Where are you from? Why are you here? These are the main questions that remind me of who I am."

Arezoo – a 40-year-old Iranian woman in Helsinki – highlighted experiences that construct the homogenous racialized non-white "them." She gave the following answer when we asked her if she faced any problems in Finland as a migrant woman:

> I entered a coffee shop with my Finnish colleagues for the last drink of the year. Immediately after we settled down, a middle-aged Finnish woman brought her face close to mine and

> asked, "Where are you from?" At first, I expected my Finnish colleagues to respond to her in their language, but they all simply watched what was going on. I decided to answer politely, "I am Iranian." She passed us quickly, saying, "I thought you were Indian!" This incident affected my mood throughout the whole gathering, especially as my colleagues changed the language to Finnish, despite my presence. I decided to react. I stood up and said I should leave, but they could continue: nobody should interrupt me to ask me where I am from. After this reaction, they began discussing the situation critically, but they were silent before. They kept silent when they could have done something. That bothered me more than the questioning by the Finnish woman. Their solution to the situation shocked me again. They said maybe we should speak more Finnish than English!

As Kuokkanen (2022) stated, in these kinds of situations, whiteness effectively veils the structures of power and denies its complicity. In this case, Arezoo's colleagues denied their agency by remaining silent in reaction to the racialized incident. They also denied the constituted racism by saying that they should talk more in Finnish. Thus, according to Kuokkanen (2022), the problem for them was in terms of cultural differences rather than racialized experiences.

4.5. Conclusion

Finland is commonly portrayed as a country of gender equality where racism is a difficult theme to address. In this chapter, we have situated immigrant women's experiences of living in Finland at the intersection of ordinary whiteness, everyday racism, and integration. The picture that emerged from the women's comments and related contextualization revealed how immigrant Iranian and Afghan women perceive everyday racism in their everyday lives in Finland and how they perceive themselves in Finnish society. As Sara Ahmed discussed, "the very promise of inclusion can be the concealment of exclusion" (Ahmed 2012, 183). Likewise, the analysis of this study showed that the women in this study did not consider official approaches in Finnish society effective in foster-

ing integration. While official approaches set the criteria of learning the language and looking for a job as measures of integration, immigrant women living in Finland have vastly different feelings and experiences and do not believe that they are integrated. This chapter has shown that the everyday experiences of the women we interviewed contradicted the image of Finnish society as a safe and equal space. In this research, the respondents were perceived by Finnish society as racialized non-white others. In addition, although they did not perceive themselves as Muslim women, Finns racialized them as Muslim women.

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Mammiform Unikko Pot (2022)

High temperature ceramic, glazed
Image courtesy of the artist

One of my main methods for understanding Finnish society is based on the observation of the dress codes in Helsinki, the particular use of styles and brands. My observation method developed through social media, following the dynamics in different second-hand selling groups. The behaviour within the groups allowed me to learn which objects and brands held value regardless of their function and condition. After years of observing these patterns, I understood that these objects were not only appreciated as cultural identity but also acted as national symbols.

Marimekko caught my attention as a brand that has huge value in Finnish society, performing as a rectification of identity, maybe even of construction of Finnishness and class.

Within the Marimekko brand, the Unikko (poppy) design is used as the logo of the brand. I found it peculiar that the poppy is used broadly without holding references in society of its wide history. To me poppies have a direct connotation to illegal narcotic production and all the consequences that has, and I cannot avoid this reading of the flower. The mammiform tripod series are ceramics based on Mesoamerican ceramics where breast-like forms where common in functional and ritualistic objects. Breasts were decorative and functional elements on pots, when used in ritualistic manner they might have had relation to a festivity. The relation to breasts in the Mesoamerican civilization was passed down through pottery, as objects they do not objectify breasts.

The mammiform pot series has mainly decorations referencing iconography from huipils, nevertheless in this pot I used the unikko design as an experiment of how two aesthetics with background in different civilizations can come together.

Ceyda Berk-Söderblom

5. A Mission-Critical Task in Arts and Culture: How to Operate Meaningfully in a Culturally Pluralistic Society

Abstract

In this chapter, I aim to provide a brief overview of the role and contributions of culture and the arts with regard to processes of integration. I will elaborate on the role of arts and culture in social cohesion and which competencies in daily work are needed for arts managers to address and operate meaningfully in a culturally pluralistic society. Furthermore, I will reflect on my lived experiences In Finland as a foreign-born art professional. In Finland, for a long time, the arts and culture have only been seen as a service to immigrants as part of their integration into Finnish society, but not something they can actively participate in. Arts and culture are powerful tools to create a sense of belonging to new members of society if created by people with diverse cultural backgrounds, perspectives, and skills. The role of arts and cultural institutions is changing drastically; the shifting societal landscape has produced an environment where many must navigate carefully.

KEYWORDS: integration, arts and culture, diversity and inclusion, change making

5.1. Introduction

Imagining the world and the societies we live in as places that belong to everyone is perhaps the greatest challenge we face. Migration is a never-ending story of human evolution, adaptation, and our irresistible instinct to find a nest to reside. For thousands of years, people have been travelling, out of curiosity, because of necessity, or just to discover, trade, conquer, exploit, defeat, or fight. As an İzmirian from an 8,500-year-old city on the west coast of Anatolia, I am not unfamiliar with the stories of ancient heroes and their travels: Homer's Odysseus, the Persian messengers told by Herodotus, and the traders of the Silk Road. After spending more than six years in Finland, I understand the emotional stress of trying to make a place feel like home. The sheer reality of my experiences as an adult has not been anywhere close to that of the main characters in my childhood stories. In most cases, including my own, the attempt to make a new place feel like home is different from settling into a new life. The accompanied challenges often exceed a person's abilities. If you are a person occupied with seeking meaning in everything you do, the whole chapter could turn into a mission-critical task, as it has become for me. In this critical mission, the arts and culture, an endless collective meaning-making efforts of humans, provide a harbor for lost souls, allowing untold stories to be heard and making the invisible visible.

The Finnish Society for the Study of Ethnic Relations and International Migration, on its 20th anniversary, extended a warm invitation to academics, activists and artists to contribute to the compilation of this book. In return, in this chapter, I want to reflect on the blurred boundaries between private and public spheres and invite you to join me on a journey of dualities toward integration – personal and political, individual and social, based on lived experience and through the lens of available data. I will first paint a picture of the arts and culture sector in Finland. Then, I will use my outsider eyes and insider's compass as an art professional to examine the Finnish arts ecosystem and consider whether we all have equal access to the information, financial resources, and opportunities vital to professional actualization and full artistic and cultural expression.

On a personal level, so-called "integration" lies somewhere between resistance and acceptance, denial and confession, and belonging and

alienation. When I arrived in Finland, the available integration programs were, and still are, focused on assimilation without any proper means of recognition of education or professional experience gained outside Finland. As a transnational art professional with extensive experience, I wanted to extend my existing work sphere to include my new home country. The fight to retain my professional dignity; claim my own space as a highly educated, competent, and knowledgeable person; and insist on my right to work in the Finnish art scene meant, overall, constantly resisting widely practiced professional discrimination and ethnic and racial profiling. So, my anti-integration motto is "resist to exist". I am committed to public advocacy for diversity and inclusion in the Finnish arts field; thus, this paper is a product of personal interest, passion, and social justice awareness. I speak from the position of a foreign-born art professional with an experience-based understanding of the ways in which artistic work is influenced by intersections of ethnic background, race, class, gender, and language capabilities. My lived experiences and close collaboration with many artists and cultural workers over the past two decades have significantly impacted my choices, what I do, and why I do it. My efforts have been dedicated to an endless mission to identify and understand the competencies required for art professionals today and to examine the attitudes and beliefs of cultural professionals in Finland, particularly arts and cultural institutions' leaders. I am strongly convinced that, far from taking a one-size-fits-all mass-produced approach, adopting unique, tailor-made efforts to reach out to audiences and diverse communities would better fit integrating people and organizations that receive newcomers.

While putting our efforts into harnessing and utilizing the transformative power of arts and culture to create a sense of belonging for new members of society, we should not ignore the need to critically investigate how the cultural sector operates in terms of diversity, inclusion, and power dynamics. Without taking a closer look, perhaps we fail to gain a full understanding of how the arts and culture sector facilitates the creation of interchanging spaces in an inclusive context. Thus, rather than continuing the pattern of merely reproduced business-as-usual, which legitimizes the tick-box approach to diversity and inclusion, we should investigate how the sector itself functions in exclusive spaces based on nationalistic concepts.

5.2. Painting the Big Picture

Who is on the move? In 2020, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM 2022; McAuliffe & Triandafyllidou 2021), there were around 281 million international migrants worldwide – equal to 3.6% of the world's current population. Additionally, the world is currently facing a climate emergency. The IOM predicts as many as 1 billion environmental migrants in the next 30 years. In light of these numbers, a fundamental question that humanity needs to address is what a sustainable, equal, and meaningful way of living will look like in the near future. So far, a major hardship for new immigrants has been, and will probably continue to be, finding ways to coexist and integrate with the host society's cultural codes, become an active contributor to the society's future, and obtain equal access to social and economic resources. How can the existing integration policies or perspectives that underpin legislation make sense in the face of such massive displacement?

Currently, in Finland, similar pressing questions are on the agenda and will remain urgent if they are not answered. The *Helsinki Region Foreign-Language Population Forecast 2018–2035* (Helsinki City 2019) predicted that the greater Helsinki region's foreign-language population will double by the year 2035 – increase from 14% to 25%. Simultaneously, Finland is being actively promoted as an attractive destination for international knowledge workers, who may choose it as their new home. Another study (Finnish Centre for Pensions 2019) made it clear that Finnish society's future economic sustainability depends on work-based immigration, and this dependence will increase over time. Nevertheless, almost daily, the mainstream media feeds us narratives that position immigrants as unwanted burdens rather than as helpful and vital contributors.[1] We are exposed to an abundance of stories about people with different backgrounds facing structural racism and discrimination. However, the very same society, without implementing orchestrated efforts to dismantle racism and discrimination embedded in the ways it functions and operates, continues to invite more people to relocate to Finland.

[1] Ministry of the Interior (2019). International Migration 2018–2019 – Report for Finland, Ministry of the Interior Publications 2019:32, commissioned annually by the OECD, page 59 "Immigration and crime were discussed more often than other topics, as crime was referred to in 1,934 articles during the period under scrutiny".

Public opinion on the positive impact of immigrants is severely divided, with hate speech and hostility toward minorities increasing. However, a fundamental inquiry into how we can live together still hangs in the air. On the flipside, racism, and ethnic profiling, which are deeply interwoven into the social fabric of Finnish society, have long been disregarded.[2]

5.3. What Can Art Do?

Let us begin our mental journey by assuming that pluralism flourishes with the active engagement of diverse arrays of knowledge and experience. If this is the case, under which conditions and on which grounds can we rebuild a genuinely inclusive and diverse ecosystem that operates with an excellent sense of equity and equality for all? Art has been one of the best tools for addressing social issues because it helps people connect and share experiences. It plays a unique role in promoting social cohesion and justice. Recent global social movements have prioritized this role. Diversity, equity, inclusion, and access have become vital priorities for many international arts and culture organizations, and innumerable established institutions have indicated that cultural equity is pivotal to the long-term viability of the arts and culture sector. To highlight their efforts, many of these institutions have released strategic plans to support diversity, equity, inclusion, and access in their respective fields. This urgent attention directly relates to the transformative force of the arts and their capacity to rehabilitate communities, as writer Toni Morrison reminded us: "We speak, we write, we do language. That is how civilizations heal" (Morrison 2015).

I want to offer an example. My first large-scale project in Finland was a photography exhibition, *Studio Aleppo [Helsinki]*, at the National Museum of Finland in 2017. In March 2017, more than 10,000 people working in the arts and culture demanded more humane legal asylum procedures, claiming, "Statistics do not tell the story of immigration; the asylum seeker does not exist; the unknown is unloved." As a homesick immigrant myself,

[2] *Government of Finland Report on Human Rights Policy* (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland 2022, 45): "According to the Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey (EU-MIDIS II) published in 2017, Finland is one of the European countries in which ethnic minorities experience the most discrimination. The *Being Black in the EU* survey published in 2018 by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) also reports that experiences of racism are more common in Finland than in the other 11 countries included in the survey."

it took courage to engage in one of my most meaningful productions: an artistic work that also transformed an iconic institution – the country's national museum. *Studio Aleppo [Helsinki]* was a pop-up studio touring in Europe, initiated by Syrian photographer Issa Touma, who wanted to present the remains of a collection of negatives and prints from a photo studio in Aleppo to honor the lost to remember a society that has fallen into pieces because of the war. The pop-up studio adopted the name of the host cities, where citizens/residents and newcomers were invited to have their portraits taken by a prominent local photographer. After a couple of months' intensive work, thanks to the local residents and newcomers who responded to our invitation, the museum team and I exhibited the people's portraits in a fabulous structure erected in the main hall of the museum's great building (see Photo 1). The photographer Juuso Westerlund established his pop-up studio in the museum and shot portraits. We asked the participants to share their stories and dreams with us. Each portrait, without social status, presented one after the other, nonhierarchically, to celebrate the centenary of Finland's independence to remind us of a simple truth: We cannot change the past; instead, we can build a better future as current and future citizens, together. It was a brave call, a door opening from today to the country's history and its future.

Finding oneself in the middle of a massive structure surrounded by touching portraits of different people triggers curiosity about the stories behind each picture and each person. The process of moving to another country and trying to become a part of a new society is a very emotional and personal experience. Every tiny detail ornamenting me as a person made me an outsider in a new space, and I was feeling increasingly homesick, but an effective cure for homesickness was making new friends to share stories with.

The exhibition and side-events I curated during the installation all, in individual ways, dealt with different narratives and how we share our stories. The motivation behind this was, among other things, to question the circumstances that determine who we are, our values, our beliefs, and the experiences that, in the end, form the stories of our lives. The entire experience of creating this production gave me a better perspective on dealing with homesickness at my own pace than I could have discovered as an individual in Finland. As a newcomer in society, the collaboration also made my work, professional background, and the knowledge I had



Photo 1: Soile Tirilä (courtesy of the National Museum of Finland).

accumulated during my career relevant to the local context, with a rare possibility of being influential.

Returning to the question of what art can do, the most straightforward answer I can give based on my experience is that art can serve as a catalyst for hard conversations. It can allow people to experiment with alternative and better ways of coexisting in a shifting social landscape if arts professionals embrace their drastically changing role in it and navigate it responsively. The main task of today's cultural professionals should be to reconsider the purpose of the arts and the cultural institutions in which they operate and rethink their positions through a few overlapping perspectives: the transformation of their roles in the wider society, the content offered and accessed, and the networks of relationships and individuals within these institutions. Nevertheless, this task is not an easy one. It demands critical self-reflection to develop up-to-date methods, structures that promote inclusivity within the arts and culture sector, and a willingness to dismantle discriminatory practices by spotting and changing unconscious biases.

Artist Favianna Rodriguez, the cofounder of the immigrant rights organization *CultureStrike*, believes that artists are central to social change.

In an essay entitled *Change the Culture, Change the World*, she emphasized the importance of the arts in social change:

> You may attend a rally or vote, but you also read books, listen to music, engage with visual art, turn on the radio, and create your identity through culture. ... To have the movements that make the wave, you need cultural workers (Rodriguez 2013).

5.4. Finnish Arts and Culture: A Reality Check

The evidence provided by numerous studies (Lahtinen et al. 2020; Saukkonen, Ruusuvirta, Joronen 2007) has shown that diversity and inclusion remain unprioritized for publicly subsidized art fields in Finland. However, due to significant current and predicted demographic changes in Finnish society, embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion is unavoidable, as they are fundamental bricks for building a high-functioning society. In Finland, funds are distributed, and institutions are governed, by a homogenous "cultural management elite," which fails to properly represent diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and skills. Thus, it is worthwhile to ask in-depth questions of those who formulate new narratives in the Finnish arts and culture sector.

While the renovation of Finnish cultural policy to ensure that the increasing diversity of the population will be mainstreamed into the planning and decision-making procedures of the arts and culture sector is under discussion, the primary competencies associated with cultural diversity and social inclusion for arts professionals should be given the serious attention they deserve. It is not unreasonable to expect Finland's publicly funded arts and cultural institutions to be responsive and relevant.

The Finnish arts and culture sector experienced significant economic setbacks due to the COVID-19 lockdowns. The pandemic-related crisis also ignited self-examination within the arts and culture sector regarding its contribution to and impact on the Finnish economy. The arts and culture sector's direct economic impact on the Finnish economy is based on consumption and the jobs it provides. According to the Trade Union for Art and Culture Professionals (TAKU) 2021, the broad ecosystem employed up to 120,000 people and generated 3.3% of Finland's gross domestic product – an amount larger than, for example, that of the forestry

industry. In addition, the cultural sector accounted for almost 5% of total consumption in the country. According to a review by VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland, the turnover of the creative industries in 2022 was around 14 billion euros, including the event sector of around 2.6 billion euros (Naumanen, Vainikainen & Valkokari 2023).

Paradoxically, despite the crucial role played by the arts and culture sector as an employer based on the above-mentioned numbers, the working conditions of foreign-born artists and cultural workers have not been the focus of Finnish researchers until a couple of years ago. Among the rare studies on this topic, the final *Avaus – Opening* report published by the Center for Cultural Policy Research (Lahtinen et al. 2020) provided the most comprehensive account of the barriers immigrants face daily regarding language, the lack of recognition of non-Finnish qualifications, the absence of professional networks, limited access to information, prejudices, assumptions, ethnic profiling, and racism. Finnish researchers have excelled in investigating immigrants' integration and the accessibility of arts and cultural services. In contrast the status of Finland-based foreign-born artists and cultural professionals and their integration into working life have remained under the radar. The arts and culture sector that aims to address the needs of the society it serves should start by viewing its reflection in a mirror. Discussions regarding the diversification of the workforce and the decision-making structures and programs of arts and cultural organizations are relatively new in Finland.

The lack of inclusivity in institutions' daily practices not only prevents the field from becoming more all-embracing and diverse but also makes it difficult for the local arts and culture sector to appeal to potential waves of new audiences, board members, employees, and stakeholders drawn from immigrant and minority communities. The transformation of institutions with homogeneous workforces into organizations that incorporate diversity and inclusion at all levels requires drastic change, which should be implemented from boards to employees, from the artistic content to programs and publications, and from communication to audience outreach activities. A clear sense of equity requires new structures, policies, and inclusive ways of working.

Cultural competence and the practice of cultural humility are central to serving diverse societies and should start with intensive education. Developing these skills will enable professionals working in arts and cul-

tural organizations to analyze their long-held beliefs. In the report *Competences for Democratic Culture – Living Together as Equals in Culturally Diverse Democratic Societies*, published by the Council of Europe, Martyn Barrett (2016) highlighted various intercultural competencies, including crucial values, attitudes, and the skills and knowledge needed, such as valuing human dignity; enhancing cultural diversity, equality, justice, respect, and openness to cultural otherness; and nourishing empathy, collaboration, and critical thinking (Barrett 2016, 10–11). The art professionals, gatekeepers, and cultural management elite of the Finnish arts and culture sector should update their knowledge and develop new competencies, core practices, and tools to increase diversity and inclusion in the everyday organizational routines.

5.5. What about Unspoken Ostracism?

A core question we need to ask with regard to ostracism[3] is why foreign-born artists and cultural professionals with diverse backgrounds are not yet represented in the decision-making structures of the Finnish arts and culture sector. Ostracism – a term rarely used in this sector – usually refers to intentional actions of not including someone in a social group or activity. Political scientist Fred Kort (1986, 367–377) defined a society in which different forms of ostracism are practiced as "a society with solidaristic strategies for excluding its members from participation and from occupying positions of respect." If the Finnish arts and culture sector fails to support foreign-born art professionals with their professional integration, how can it successfully respond to the needs of the country's diverse society? My own professional practice is based on curiosity about the reasons behind professional exclusion and widely practiced ostracism in the Finnish art scene, with the aim of investigating and advocating for an intersectional approach to finding possible solutions.

Finland, like other Nordic countries, is often listed at the top of equality indices. Equality seems to be most successfully achieved when people have the freedom and ability to express themselves and the willingness and capacity to listen to others' views. Does everyone have such freedom and abil-

[3] Ostracism: exclusion by general consent from common privileges or social acceptance. In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary: https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ostracism.

ity in Finland? Prime Minister Sanna Marin's Government's *Making Finland a Global Leader in Gender Equality – Action Plan for Gender Equality 2020–23* (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2021, 15–16) report stated, "The labor market position of women with a foreign background is particularly weak. Even with good education and language skills, even after 15 years of living in Finland, they do not attain the employment rate of women with a native background." In other words, 43% of women with foreign backgrounds who are highly educated and competent are unemployed in Finland. Examining whether we all have equal opportunities for growth, development, and professional actualization in Finland, where the notion of equality is taken for granted, must set the context for reflective discussions, transformative actions, and structural change toward in which way one can integrate.

5.6. Change Is Inevitable: Art as a Reflection of Society

The urgent need to transform arts organizations by introducing structural changes became evident in response to the *Black Lives Matter* protests in 2020 and in the numerous open letters that shed light on arts and cultural organizations' discriminatory environments. Prominent arts institutions in Europe and elsewhere acknowledged, accepted responsibility for, and apologized for their role in excusing and participating in systemic discrimination. As an immediate response, they started to recruit experts to direct their transformation efforts (Pogrebin 2021). For example, the Paris Opera Ballet commissioned an internal investigation after receiving an open letter from five Black members of the ballet company, who were infuriated by discrimination in their workplace immediately following the creation of the New York Metropolitan Opera's first diversity and inclusion officer posting in January 2021 (Keener 2021). The final report stated that the Paris Opera must address the lack of diversity within the organization and urged the revision of the Paris Opera Ballet School's admission structure to attract and hire more diverse talent. The report also recommended a systematic approach to structural change that targeted Paris Opera's entire staff (1,800 members), which comprised technical and administrative personnel, musicians, and librettists.

Recruiting diversity and inclusion officers to dismantle structural discrimination in organizational practices is not enough. Such a transformation needs to be achieved collaboratively, with all operators in the arts and

culture sector rethinking the power embedded in patterns of behaviors, policies and practices that are part of the structures and maintaining an open dialogue to explore ways to overcome significant obstacles. Initiating efforts to rebuild more progressive and inclusive future arts organizations requires wholesale changes and dedicated action at all levels, and arts managers in positions of power have a vital responsibility to drive this transformation.

5.7. How to Operate Meaningfully in a Culturally Pluralistic Society

Nordic countries, like many other European countries, are struggling to find ways to negotiate cultural plurality within the paradigm of the nation-state and populist political discourses. Are cultural institutions only a means to an end for an identity and culture formed around totems of language and national values? Would and could a monocultural identity be translated into a new set of definitions based on cultural plurality? One response could be to move beyond nationalism and try to capture untold stories of minorities that are often ignored and unrecognized in definitions formulated by the dominant culture.

I believe in effecting change through diversity work. In *Living a Feminist Life* (2017, 91), Sara Ahmed, a feminist writer and independent scholar, conceptualized diversity work in two related senses: "First, 'diversity work' is the work we do when we are attempting to transform an institution; and second, 'diversity work' is the work we do when we do not quite inhabit the norms of an institution." After working in the arts and culture sector for more than two decades in an extensive international context dealing with concerns about inclusion, accessibility, and social justice, I constantly seek new ways to address the social issues we face in culturally pluralist societies. The Finnish chapter of my professional life has provided unique experiences thus far, opened self-reflective and enriching learning paths that have shaped my practice, and placed me on the frontline of public advocacy exactly in the way Ahmed defined "diversity work." I am occupied with equipping art and cultural professionals in Finland with the competencies and tools needed to effectively tackle ongoing societal transformations. With a broad outlook and art as a means of expressing imagination, we have the ability and cannot deny the need to develop adequate concepts and approaches to integration and multicul-

turalism. Finland has the potential to make the future ecosystem of the arts and culture sector more equitable for everyone.

5.8. Competence in Diversity and Inclusion

American political activist, philosopher, academic, and author Angela Davis, during the plenary session of the symposium *Planetary Utopias: Hope, Desire, and Imaginaries in a Postcolonial World*, emphasized the importance of terms that are supposed to "carry the entire weight of struggles for justice" (Davis, Spivak & Dhawan 2019, 68–69) and criticized the notion of diversity that she understood to mean "largely the effort to make the machine run more effectively with those who were previously excluded by the machine" and said "Who wants to be assimilated into a racist institution when the institution continues to maintain its racist structure?"

Committing to the fight for social justice and advancing equity to achieve ultimate inclusion is an ambitious agenda that raises questions of accountability and transparency for the institutions involved. As Ahmed (2017, 104) warned us, in many cases, organizations "translate their writing competence into an equality competence," and the produced documents, reports, and policies substitute for the tangible actions required. The work on equity and social justice requires professional teams within arts and cultural institutions to focus as much energy on the actual work as on the strategic plans.

The *Avaus – Opening* report (Lahtinen et al. 2020), based on a 2018 survey of 99 directors, showed that cultural diversity is not integrated comprehensively into many institutions' operations but rather is included as an add-on. This attitude and mindset have been prevalent for more than a decade since a study conducted by Saukkonen, Ruusuvirta, and Joronen in 2007 (cited in the Avaus report) obtained the same result. The number of people with a native language other than Finnish, Swedish, or Sámi in Finland increased 2.4 times between 2007 and 2020 (in 2007, the foreign language-speaking population was 172,928 people; in 2020, it was 432,847 people; Official Statistics Finland 2022). One may ask how the Finnish arts and cultural field and its gatekeepers have responded to this drastic demographic change in society. Without shifting mindsets, the change we are seeking will not happen.

5.9. What to Do?

This is a question that continues to engage me. Finding relevant answers depends more on being true to oneself as an art professional, which entails embracing all aspects of one's existence in a new society, than it does on finding a relevant definition of integration. The issue revolves around inclusion and awareness of how and when individuals build a sense of belonging. Developing a human-centered, inclusive approach is only possible if one protects one's integrity in the face of complex integration policies and maintains an ethical compass. The foundation of my current position as founder and artistic director of a small art organization that focuses on transnational and transcultural collaboration and not-for-profit advocacy work was necessary to further support the needs of underrepresented foreign-born artists and art workers in Finland. I have also taken the opportunity to enrich my knowledge through my expert contribution to the Ministry of Education and Culture's (OKM) working group on cultural policy, immigration, and cultural diversity. In addition, I made a major contribution to the final report, *Art, Culture and Diverse Finland* (OKM 2021), which includes recommendations to correct the shortcomings of existing cultural policy and renovate the existing legislation (January–December 2020). I attended the *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Workplace* certification program at the University of South Florida's Muma College of Business and wrote my master's thesis on diversity and inclusion management in Finland's arts and culture sector. Informed by my own experiences as a transcultural art professional with a keen interest in developing concrete solutions for advancing inclusiveness in the arts and culture sector and improving the receptiveness of the sector and its operators, I make the following recommendations.

A general, updated understanding of strategic diversity work is needed

Diversity and inclusion involve a complex set of issues that we need to address together, taking an intersectional perspective. Diversity work is not project-based work to be done when and if there is extra funding and promoting inclusion cannot be the sole responsibility of people from minority groups. Inclusive working methods should be incorporated into all

arts and cultural institutions' daily operations as a new norm regarding accessibility, representation, and participation for the people that make up our society.

We need to scan the field – primarily publicly funded institutions – and examine institutions from the top to the bottom to determine if they are diverse and inclusive in their:

- staffing and work cultures
- decision-making structures (including boards and leadership, management positions, etc.)
- creative content (artistic output, programs, exhibitions, publications, etc.)
- communication and audience engagement

Achieving a fair and equitable allocation of funding rests on the political commitment

It would be possible to improve the allocation of public funding by introducing multi-year funding for the diversity- and inclusion-related work of independent operators and concerned organizations. If financing remains limited and short-term, diversity and inclusion work will remain project based. Supporting collective initiatives and organizations run by foreign-born professionals would capitalize on the cultural energy of immigrant residents in the country. Specific funding targeting equity and diversity should also be provided to publicly funded institutions to support their work with foreign-born art professionals. Arts and cultural institutions should dedicate a certain percentage of their yearly budgets to working with foreign-born artists and cultural professionals.

New human resources management tools should be developed

Arts and cultural institutions should be committed to ensuring fairness and total equity in their employment and recruitment processes. Hiring decisions should be based on merit and potential, free from nepotism, and language should be used as a "door opener". Instead of asking people to advance in native languages without providing employment, offering Finnish or Swedish language education during the employment is necessary. This can only be achieved through employment equity actions that remove barriers to existing recruitment systems and monitor outcomes.

Targeted professional career development programs should be developed

To transform the arts field and encourage healthy professional competitiveness in Finland, we need to introduce professional career development programs to empower possible leaders with diverse backgrounds, with a focus on young and emerging artistic creators, and promote fresh ideas and outside-the-box thinking. Targeted opportunities and career development programs should be explicitly planned to empower underrepresented foreign-born professionals in decision-making positions. Long-term structural partnerships between Finnish arts higher education institutions and the active operators and institutions on the art scene are needed to secure work possibilities for newly graduated international students. Collaboration with experts from diverse backgrounds is vital; hence, artists and cultural professionals with diverse backgrounds and artistic practices should be included in the transformation work. We should actively work together to remove obstacles, correct shortcomings, and renovate, change, and update the structure of arts and culture sector in place. The way the Finnish art scene is governed, created, and distributed – predominantly by homogenous Finnish professionals – is unsustainable and needs to be changed.

Leadership transformation is required

To ensure that institutions operate with appropriate leadership and a solid will to create inclusive working structures that are relevant, responsive, and accountable to the society they serve. Publicly funded arts and cultural institutions have a moral responsibility to engage in this work. An independent authority should monitor their actions, and evaluation should be a direct criterion for them to receive funding.

Inclusion is practiced at school

The role of education is fundamental. We should also critically examine existing higher education institutions and ask whether they support an inclusive ecosystem by incorporating inclusive practices. As discussed earlier, inclusive working methods in educational institutions, such as

the establishment of diversity and inclusion departments, would help build capacity and provide solid knowledge of diversity and inclusion.

Investment in young audiences is also critical

Audiences, especially younger audiences, should be more actively engaged in the discussions of relevance in arts. Do arts and cultural institutions represent all our communities onstage, in their workforces, and in their content? Whose stories are being told? Who tells these stories? As society rapidly evolves, arts and cultural institutions should invest resources to stay relevant and equip themselves to reproduce positive role models for young people and children.

The audience profile should be diversified

Arts and cultural institutions need to engage with audiences, collaborate with expert organizations, and hire and work with people who have expertise in creating diverse content. Diversity and inclusion management require time, determination, and motivation for change. If arts and cultural institutions aim to support immigrant communities more effectively, they should start by posing a few crucial questions:

- What kinds of artistic content can be offered to meet the needs of a diverse society?
- What policies and good practices welcoming immigrant and minority communities can be applied to our institutions?
- What kinds of training opportunities may be useful or necessary?
- How are diversity and inclusion incorporated into institutions' staffing and employment practices?

Hope in Resistance

Undeniably, art plays a unique role in promoting social cohesion and justice and building truly diverse and inclusive societies that are concerned with the well-being of everyone. The structures necessary to protect individuals' integrity deserve a more comprehensive discussion, for which arts and cultural institutions could provide a platform in the public domain. Inequality, injustice, and discrimination are sensitive topics, and

anatomizing one's own role in preserving unjust, discriminative structures may be difficult and personal. Therefore, it is essential to consider, in-depth and carefully, the attitudes and mindsets of the Finnish cultural elite to examine the power dynamics of decision-making within the arts and culture sector. To develop new competencies for transforming Finland's publicly funded arts and cultural institutions, perhaps we should all have a genuine personal desire to understand more of the "why" rather than the "how" of this critical mission.

We need to keep resisting, being critical, and daring to ask tough questions.

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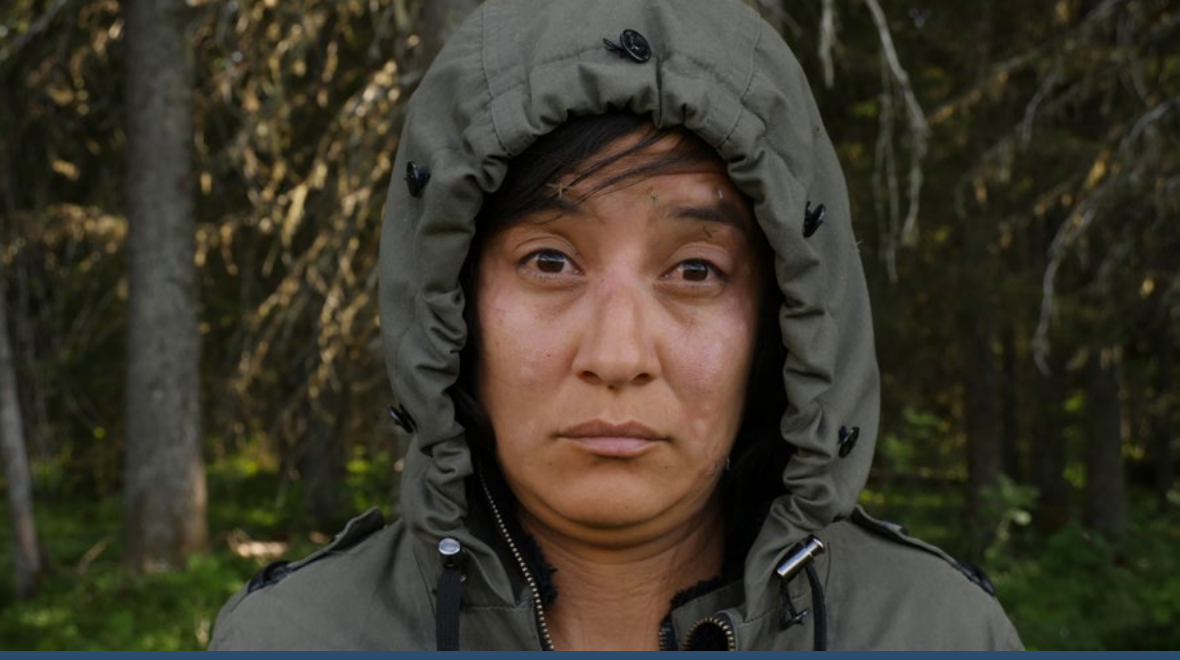
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Still image from the video work. In a second version of this work, I covered my body as much as possible excluding my face. Then I sat on a bench and kept still. The point was to avoid any reaction and to rely merely on the garnets I had on my body. The result was mostly painful.



Still image from the video work. I made a tuohi mask representing a True Finn, undressed, and climbed on a rock in the middle of an old forest. As the mosquitos approached me, I began to move my body, shaking them off. The point was to avoid hitting the mosquitos, so I moved my body and the movement turned into a dance. The face, protected by the mask, which remained still.

Mosquitos (2017–2019)

Performance for the camera
Image courtesy of the artist

How do we react to invisible (institutional) violence? How could it look like under different behaviour scores? The first working title of these video works was *True-Finn Versions*. These were made during my stay at Mustarinda Residency in 2017. My main interest was to trigger my reactions through interacting with mosquitos, playing and observing how a body can defend itself. I kept in mind the scale relation of a mosquito, a mass of mosquitos and my body. The mosquito is an almost invisible being that attacks my body, yet alone, a mosquito is vulnerable and can be crushed effortlessly.

Alyssa Marie Kvalvaag

6. Categorization and Racialization in Integration Discourses: Who is Framed as "Needing" Integration in Regional and Local Newspaper Articles

Abstract

Nordic countries often present themselves in terms of racial exceptionalism; however, studies are increasingly considering racialization in Nordic contexts. This chapter questions how integration discourses relate to the categorization and racialization of migrants by examining regional and local newspaper articles in the north of Norway. I argue that integration discourses produce categorizations by drawing on migratory pathway, nationality, and racialization in describing who "needs" or "lacks" integration, making a dispensation of integration apparent (Schinkel 2017; Schinkel 2018). These discourses tend to focus on "visible" migrants, involving a process of "doing race" and reinforcing whiteness as a symbol of Nordicness. It is important to investigate the categories produced by

integration discourses in order to make explicit power relations and potential consequences.

KEYWORDS: integration, migration, racialization, categorization, Nordic

6.1. Introduction

Researchers have argued that the concept of integration produces racialized and gendered non-belonging (Korteweg 2017), involving power relations whereby it is always members of the majority who decide when someone is "integrated enough" (Gullestad 2002). Furthermore, integration has been seen as a marker in discourses, drawing boundaries between who and what is seen as "inside" and "outside" of society (Schinkel 2017; Schinkel 2018; see also Andreasen 2019). Although several authors have examined the relationship between migration and racialization in the Nordic countries (e.g., Keskinen & Andreassen 2017; Hervik 2019; Führer 2021), less attention has been paid to the particular forms of categorization – involving implicit or explicit forms of racialization – that pervade integration discourses (exceptions include Andreasen 2019; Kurki 2019; Masoud et al. 2023). This chapter is based on the understanding that categories are produced by different actors in everyday life and investigates which categories are employed in integration discourses in regional and local newspapers. It is interesting to study categorizations in order "to understand what they do" (Evertsen 2022, 40). I investigated which types of categories are used to identify the subject(s) of public integration discourses and found that migratory pathway and nationality are the primary categories evident in the sampled newspaper articles. I argue that these categories involve underlying, often covert, forms of racialization that should be made explicit in order to identify underlying power relations. Discourse and power are intertwined in that they produce "social realities by generating criteria for inclusion and exclusion, rights, and expectations for particular categories of people" (Andreasen 2019, 331).

The focus of my research was not on a specific group of migrants but rather on who integration discourses target and what categories are used to mark "boundaries between 'us' and 'them'" (Dahinden 2016, 2216). "Migrant" may be a problematic category in itself due to, among other reasons, the fact that many people who move are not labeled as migrants; the conflation of immigration status, race, and ethnicity; the production

of hierarchies; and embeddedness in the national order of things (e.g., Anderson & Blinder 2015; Tudor 2017; Dahinden, Fischer & Menet 2021; Schinkel 2022). However, I use the term migrant in an inclusive way (Carling 2017) to refer to individuals who have changed their places of residence by crossing international borders. This approach is useful because migrants who become the subject of integration discourses have usually crossed international borders – rather than migrating within nation-states – but it still leaves room to acknowledge that not all individuals who cross borders become subjects of integration discourses (Favell 2022) and that integration discourses may also target individuals who are ascribed as migrants but who have not crossed international borders (Tudor 2017; Tudor 2018). An inclusive understanding of "migrants" allows for a broad examination of the types of categories produced by public integration discourses.

For the purposes of this chapter, integration is not used as an analytical concept or as a practice or process. Instead, I use integration as an emic concept that is employed in popular discourses – in this case, by regional and local newspapers – to critically investigate who the concept is directed toward and to make power relations visible (Rytter 2019) based on the understanding that subject(s) are constituted through discursive practices. Responding to calls to make integration discourses the object of research (Wieviorka 2014; Schinkel 2018; Rytter 2019), this chapter draws on an analysis of 1,056 local newspaper articles to question how integration discourses rely on the categorization of migrants and implicit and explicit forms of racialization. In line with Kurki (2019, 38), I argue that it is important "to trouble discourses of integration in order to find new spaces in which to think about immigration and integration differently."

I argue that there is value in bringing my findings in dialogue with the results of other studies in Nordic countries, despite important intra-Nordic power relations and racial hierarchies within the Nordic region (e.g., Keskinen 2019). Although many unique aspects relating to the national context impact integration discourses, there are many parallels between my findings in Norway and the findings of previous research in Finland (e.g., Kurki 2019; Masoud, Holm & Brunila 2021; Masoud et al. 2023). By bringing the findings from these two Nordic contexts into dialogue, I aim to challenge some of the nationalist thinking around integration discourses and demonstrate that the instrumentalization of categorization

and racialization is not only a Norwegian phenomenon. Thus, I aim to avoid reducing the findings to a mere outcome of national specificities (Hervik 2019) by including a regional perspective that assumes an entanglement of local and regional factors.

The chapter begins by detailing the conceptual framework underpinning the article regarding categorization and racialization and then presents an overview of relevant literature in the Norwegian and Finnish contexts. Next, I explain my materials, methods, and positionality, followed by a presentation of my findings on the categories that are produced and thus made relevant by integration discourses. I then discuss how my findings relate to other literature on the categorization and racialization of migrants in Nordic contexts. In conclusion, I argue that because integration discourses and the forms of categorization they rely on are not neutral it is important to make inherent power relations explicit (Schinkel 2017; Rytter 2019) as the categorization of populations "has wide-ranging consequences for the ways 'immigrants' are portrayed and problematized" (Schinkel 2017, 164).

6.2. Conceptual Framework: On Categorization and Racialization

Categories – for example, gender, age, religion, ethnicity, race, migratory pathway, and nationality – are produced by actors in everyday life; certain categories risk normalizing a "discourse of migration-related differences," whereby migration-related differences are viewed as "naturally given" (Dahinden 2016, 2208–2210). The categories "migratory pathway" and "nationality" may initially appear descriptive and rather uncontested. However, categorizations based on the migratory pathway – for example, "refugee" and "labor migrant" – often stem from legal categorical distinctions (Amelina 2022), and the terms may also have colloquial and social meanings that differ from or contradict their official legal definitions (Hamlin 2021; Abdelaaty & Hamlin 2022). Categorization is inevitably political, involving geopolitical power relations (Chimni 1998; Crawley & Skleparis 2018; Kurki 2019; Abdelaaty & Hamlin 2022), and categories are highly contested.

Regarding the category of nationality, there seems to be an underlying assumption that nationality is the same as what might be considered

one's "country of origin" or "homeland," but this is an oversimplification of identities that becomes strikingly clear in cases where, for example, individuals are returned to countries in which they are nationals but where they have never lived (Majidi 2017, 2). Thus, categorizations based on migratory pathway and nationality are inadequate for capturing lived experiences and the dynamic realities of migration (Collyer & de Haas 2012; Crawley & Skleparis 2018; Dahinden, Fischer & Menet 2021). Categories are inevitably embedded in historical and political contexts and thus are never neutral (Dahinden, Fischer & Menet 2021) but are produced and renewed via discourses. I argue that the categorization of individuals based on migratory pathway and nationality in public integration discourses often relies on underlying assumptions involving processes of racialization that operate implicitly and explicitly and shape who is portrayed as being "in need" of integration.

Fanon (1963) coined the term racialization to refer to a relational process that may occur on the basis of alleged phenotypic and cultural differences (Keskinen & Andreassen 2017). Racialization is intertwined with coloniality, geopolitics, power relations, and migration (Tudor 2017). Importantly, racialization is not only about minority positions; whiteness must also be understood as a form of racialization and a "constant process of 'doing race'" (Frankenberg 1993; Berg 2008, 214; Keskinen & Andreassen 2017). Whiteness is a geographically contextual phenomenon – historically, socially, politically, and culturally produced (Frankenberg 1993; Berg 2008) – that intersects with other categories such as gender, class, and religion (Garner 2012). Racialization and whiteness are complexly intertwined in Nordic contexts, made evident by, for example, ambiguity regarding racialization and whiteness of the Indigenous Sámi (Keskinen 2019; Siivikko 2019; Dankertsen & Kristiansen 2021), transnational adoptees (Rastas 2005; Zhao 2019), and Eastern Europeans and Russian-speakers (Loftsdóttir 2017; Krivonos 2019).

6.3. Migration, Racialization, and Integration in Norwegian and Finnish Research

The Nordic countries – including Norway and Finland – are often historically framed as homogenous, with whiteness seen as indicative of national belonging (Prieur 2010; McIntosh 2015). However, this framing

silences two important perspectives. First, ideas of homogeneity in the Nordic countries ignore the presence of the Indigenous Sámi, recognized national minorities, and the long histories of migration in the region (Gullestad 2002; Keskinen, Skaptadóttir & Toivanen 2019; Ånensen 2021). Second, equating whiteness with national belonging in Nordic countries excludes Nordic citizens of color and may ascribe an "*extra*-European migration" to individuals who are not racialized as white (Tudor 2017; Tudor 2018). Thus, it involves an "ascription of distance" or "sending elsewhere" within a racist logic that defines Europeanness – or, in this case, Nordicness – as whiteness (Tudor 2017; Tudor 2018, 1064). These ambivalences are crucial for highlighting that racialization and racism cannot be conceptualized solely in terms of migration (Tudor 2017, 24). Moreover, the term "immigrant" is a racialized category in Norway and Finland, often associated with visible differences (Berg 2008; Berg & Kristiansen 2010; Leinonen 2012; Krivonos 2019; Kurki 2019; Masoud et al. 2023). The idea of "visible migrants" reinforces a link between Nordicness and whiteness (Irni 2009), where "whiteness often acts as the unspoken norm against which 'others' are measured and defined" (Keskinen & Andreassen 2017, 66; see also Gullestad 2002).

The Nordic countries often present themselves through a lens of "racial exceptionalism" that posits racism as something "far away" or "in the past" (Hevik 2019, 18). Research in both Norway and Finland has shown that integration as a mechanism of racialization is not easily acknowledged in these countries due to notions of Nordic exceptionalism concerning racism and colonial histories (e.g., Gullestad 2002; Masoud et al. 2023). In the Finnish context, Masoud, Holm, and Brunila (2021) show how integration policies and training contribute to binary constructions that produce differences, necessitating integration measures. By elucidating the categories produced by integration discourses, this chapter aims to make transparent implicit forms of racialization that result in certain migrants being framed as "in need" of integration.

6.4. Materials, Methods, and Positionality

The starting point for this study was to make integration discourses the object of research; thus, I collected regional and local newspapers to question what types of categories are produced by and deployed in in-

tegration discourses. I used *Retriever*, a Norwegian archive of media texts, to find and access newspaper articles. The selection of newspapers was based on geographic coverage – regional and local coverage in the County of Nordland in northern Norway – and the number of readers, which led to the ultimate inclusion of nine newspapers: *Avisa Nordland*, *Rana Blad*, *Helgelendingen*, *Fremover*, *Lofotposten*, *Helgelands Blad*, *Saltenposten*, *Brønnøysunds Avis*, and *Vesteraalens Avis*. The search included newspaper publications from January 2013 to December 2020, using only the search term "integration" (*integrering*) to determine newspaper coverage (see also Kvalvaag 2023).[1]

The search resulted in 1,596 articles that I read and categorized, paying particular attention to the relevance of the articles and the subjects of integration discourses. Articles that used the term in other contexts, such as the integration of drones into airspace, were not included. A total of 1,056 articles were determined to be relevant to the research, covering three main categories: news articles (49%), letters from readers (24.8%), and editorials (6.9%). I consulted the Norwegian Centre for Research Data and the guidelines produced by the Norwegian National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and Humanities regarding the publication of newspaper excerpts. Since all the selected publications were edited forms of media, it was determined that there was a reasonable expectation of publicity and that they could be used for research purposes.

In order to analyze the newspaper articles I employed content analysis, driven by a theoretical and analytical interest. This involved a two-step approach to analysis in order to answer my research question on the categorization and racialization of migrants in integration discourses. In the first step, I read all 1,056 articles and coded them for the categories used in integration discourses. This involved using descriptive statistics to consider the frequencies of use of different categories (i.e., references to migratory pathway, nationality, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, phenotype). These categories were not predetermined but were derived from the data. The results of this first step showed that migratory pathway and nationality were the most frequently used types of categories in

[1] This date range was selected due to political projects aiming to attract and retain international migrants in Nordland County, Norway, during the same time frame, including a Resident Recruitment Project (2013–2017) and a Pilot Municipality Project (2016–2019).

the dataset. The second step involved an in-depth reading of the chosen examples, going beyond the manifest content based on a dialogue between my empirical material and earlier literature on integration, categorization, and racialization. The presentation of these readings is inspired by Jackson and Mazzei's (2012) "thinking with theory," where my findings are organized in terms of three analytical readings of common material to engage with multiple layers and different aspects of the data. While categorization in terms of migratory pathway and nationality was clearly evident in the data, racialization was more latent and required more interpretative work, informed by literature on racialization processes in the Nordic context.

The discourses in newspaper articles use a particular journalistic language, are produced for and consumed by an intended audience, and have specific relationships with agencies that have symbolic and material power (Richardson 2007). As suggested by Richardson (2007, 1), "the sourcing and construct of the news is intimately linked with the actions and opinions of (usually powerful) social groups". At the same time, migrants are underrepresented in the Norwegian media (Retriever 2021). Thus, the discourses used in newspaper articles may be understood as dominant in two senses: 1) the discourses are distributed via a large number of people, and 2) those with epistemic authority dominate the discourse. It is crucial to keep these elements in mind when considering "who has the power and legitimacy to demand *integration* of others" (Rytter 2019). As 24.8% of the material was letters from readers, newspapers may also be understood as places where the voices of different actors converge. The excerpts included in the analysis are not approached as personal opinions, but rather as general discourses situated and embedded in structural conditions. All data excerpts were translated by the author.

My research question was influenced by my positionality in Norway: as a migrant from a so-called "third country" outside Europe, whose migratory pathways in Norway have changed over time and could have been different. In addition, being a national of the United States and being racialized as white has led to conversations with people who have suggested that I am not a migrant and who have told me that integration was not relevant for me, despite being a formal target of Norwegian integration policy. Furthermore, the geopolitical power relations between

Norway and the United States have inevitably affected my mobility, legal and social categorization in Norway, and ability to be classified within certain migratory pathways rather than others. These experiences have resulted in many reflections on categorization and racialization, which sparked my interest in investigating these topics within a research context. In addition, this positionality informed my analysis due to my understanding of categories as dynamic, racialized, and mobilized by integration discourses to target specific groups.

6.5. Who "Needs" Integration? Categorization, Racialization, and Potential Consequences

First Reading: Naturalization of Categories and Migration-Related Differences

Migratory pathway and nationality were the primary categories used to describe the subjects of integration discourses across all 1,056 newspaper articles. Regarding migratory pathway, the categories "refugee" or "refugee background" were used in 29.9% of the articles, while the more general "immigrants" was used in 18.9% of the articles. Ultimately, 51.6% of the articles explicitly addressed varying categories of forced migrants. Other terminology included, for example, "new countrymen" (2.4%), "ethnic and religious minorities" (1.0%), "labor migrants" (0.8%), and "family reunification" (0.1%). For example:

> In the report [focusing on refugees], we can read that the Norwegian welfare model is vulnerable due to the high rates of immigration of adult individuals with low qualifications. On the other hand, the relatively small economic inequalities in Norway and the good educational system contribute to high mobility among the children of immigrants. In short, there needs to be even more investment in measures that result in good integration. (*Rana Blad,* 3 February 2017)

Here, as in other articles, although the primary focus is stated to be refugees, the authors alternate between "immigrant" and "refugee" rather freely. On the one hand, this can be interpreted quite positively since

contrasting "refugee" with "migrant" may undermine access to protection (Carling 2017). On the other hand, it may also be interpreted as a subtle equating of "immigrant" with "refugee" (Penner 2021, 149), which overlooks other types of migratory pathways in integration discourses.

The subjects of integration discourses were also frequently categorized by nationality, with the countries most commonly referred to being Syria (11.2%), Eritrea (4.8%), Afghanistan (4.6%), Somalia (4.5%), and Iraq (1.7%). However, these do not reflect the largest groups of migrants in the area – Poland, Syria, Lithuania, Thailand, and Sweden (The Norwegian Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi) 2022) – indicating what Schinkel (2017, 2018) terms a "dispensation of integration": the distinction in integration discourses is "between those for whom integration is not an issue at all, and those for whom it is" (Schinkel 2018, 5).

> At the same time that the white paper on integration (*integreringsmeldingen*) was sent to the Norwegian parliament, Statistics Norway published a report about immigrants and employment rates. [Researcher's name] meant that it was difficult to understand the numbers as anything other than integration in Norway being "rather successful." Who are these immigrants that are a part of the statistics? Well, Swedes top the list. 81.5% of Swedish immigrants are in work. We have, in other words, been successful in "integrating" Swedes! Integration has been almost equally successful when it comes to Poles; they are well-employed as well. However, at the other end of the statistics are Somalis. According to these numbers, 20% of Somali women are working, and the situation is not much better when it comes to women from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Eritrea, and Iraq. When we know that every non-Western immigrant costs the state 4.2 million Norwegian kroner, it becomes questionable whether we should call integration policy successful. (Fremover, 14 May 2016)

Reflecting the concerns of other newspaper articles, this excerpt problematizes Statistics Norway's understanding of both 1) who constitutes an "immigrant" and 2) whom to include when discussing integration, or framed differently, who is "in need" of integration. This definition of mi-

grants is criticized specifically in relation to the concept of integration and the interpretation that migrants are rather well integrated in Norway when the nationalities of migrants employed at the highest rates are Swedes and Poles. Here, nationality plays a key role where it is presented as a problem that Swedes and Poles are included in Statistics Norway's definition of migrants in their report on migration and employment rates. I interpret the quotes around "integrating" as reflecting an understanding that Swedes do not actually "need" to be integrated in Norway despite being one of the largest groups of migrants in the country. Rather, there is a gendered appeal to nationality – utilizing statistics in a different way than the Statistics Norway report – to argue that those who really "need" integration are women from "non-Western" countries, particularly Somalia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Eritrea, and Iraq.[2] Categorization based on nationality in these types of arguments is an indicator of who is described as "needing" integration; it is almost absurd to consider Swedes or Poles "in need" of integration. Rather, only certain migrants are portrayed as "needing" integration, and this may often intersect with other categories such as gender (Korteweg 2017; Kvalvaag 2023).

Dahinden (2016) argues that migration-related differences have been normalized, with certain categories of differences being (re)produced through migration research vis-à-vis a nation-state logic. My findings suggest that migration-related differences are also normalized in public integration discourses, where migratory pathway and nationality are naturalized. Thus, "migrants are, always in contrast to non-migrants and the 'ethnic, cultural self,' considered to be fundamentally (culturally) different" (Dahinden 2016, 2210).

Second Reading: Racialization and a White National Imaginary

The dominant integration discourses focusing on the refugee, asylum seeker, or unaccompanied minor risk reinforcing a dispensation of integration: Some migrants are perceived as "in need" of integration, whereas integration is not perceived as an issue at all for others (Schinkel 2017; Schinkel 2018). This was reflected in the extremely small percentage of articles using integration discourses that focused on "labor migrants" (0.8%)

[2] For a deeper discussion on integration discourses in Norway and gender, see Kvalvaag (2023).

or "family reunification" (0.1%). The predominant focus on refugees, asylum seekers, and unaccompanied minors in integration discourses – despite 73.6% of migrants coming to Norway via labor migration or family reunification in 2021 (Statistics Norway 2022) – may highlight an unspoken racialized aspect of integration discourses, with the media contributing to racialized thinking by framing integration as primarily an issue for forced migrants.

> Statistics Norway has defined an immigrant as a foreign-born person with two foreign-born parents, and thus has grouped immigrants from all countries of the world into the same category. Statistics Norway has found matters related to culture, language, and values to be irrelevant, and whether the immigrant is self-reliant and a financial contributor to society also has no significance to Statistics Norway [...] A labor migrant from Sweden is assessed the same way as an illiterate mother of five from Somalia on welfare. (Avisa Nordland, 30 July 2013)

As mentioned earlier, previous studies have shown that "immigrant" is a racialized category in Norway and Finland (e.g., Berg 2008; Berg & Kristiansen 2010; Masoud et al. 2023). The empirical material suggests that it is migrants who are perceived as "visible" that are positioned as the subjects of integration discourses in the media. This supports the assertions of previous literature that integration discourses often target individuals who are perceived as "ethnically" or "culturally" marked (Schinkel 2017; Favell 2022). When "visible" migrants are the subjects of discourse, the national "society" they are expected to integrate into is simultaneously and implicitly racialized as white; this reinforces an image of Norwegianess as whiteness, where whiteness can be left unspoken, claiming "neutrality" and "non-racial universality" (Schinkel 2018, 5). Whiteness thus becomes indicative of national belonging (e.g., Irni 2009; Guðjónsdóttir 2014). Here, whiteness is a "system of *domination*" that may be reproduced by denying its existence (Schinkel 2018, 12), with integration becoming a "vocabulary of power" (Rytter 2019, 692) and whiteness a norm and measuring stick (Keskinen & Adreassen 2017).

Furthermore, when considering the subjects of integration discourses by nationality and continent, 52.2% of the references were to Asian na-

tionalities, 29.2% were to African nationalities, and 16.6% were to European nationalities, the majority of which were Eastern European. As argued by Schinkel (2017, 102), nationality is often equated with ethnicity, and, in turn, ethnicity is often framed in light of migratory roots; however, important distinctions are likely to be ignored when national origin is treated "as a proxy for ethnicity or race" (Favell 2022, 109). Equating nationality with ethnicity transforms non-migrants "into 'nonethnic' persons" so that "ethnicity becomes a marker of the 'other'" (Schinkel 2017, 102; Schinkel 2018, 6). This is inherently linked to an ideology of whiteness by which the subjects of integration discourses "are racialized in particular ways" (Schinkel 2018, 3; see also Korteweg 2017; Favell 2022). This categorization of the subjects of integration discourses by reference to nationality, I argue, involves implicit references to visibility and racialization, through which the media amplifies racialization by framing integration discourses as relevant only to particular nationalities.

Third Reading: Economic Considerations and Calculating the "Cost" of Migrants

Rather than taking a holistic perspective, there is an economic appeal to how much each "non-Western" migrant financially costs the Norwegian state, ignoring other forms of contribution and value-making. This implies an understanding of migrants as individuals "who might not have been here": "to imagine, and make a record of, what the nation would be if the people marked as migrants ... did not exist" and to "record *what it costs* the nation now that these migrants *are* here" (Schinkel 2022). It becomes intelligible to talk about these costs because certain individuals are categorized as migrants in these discourses, and migration-related differences are assumed to be naturally given. Recording these costs subsequently results in "degrees of indebtedness" that relate to racialized hierarchies (Andreasen 2019; Schinkel 2022; see also Kurki 2019). In this case, racialized hierarchies are implicitly embedded in the category of nationality, made visible by arguments about who is a relevant subject of integration discourses. At the same time, "non-Western" migrants are homogenized in a dichotomy of "Western"/"non-Western" in the argument regarding who is "in need" of integration – a divide that may highlight the neocolonial nature of integration discourses.

> In the report [focusing on refugees], we can read that the Norwegian welfare model is vulnerable due to the high rates of immigration of adult individuals with low qualifications [...] The big problem is that many refugees have a lower connection to working life than the population at large. Getting these individuals to work is a big challenge. (Rana Blad, 3 February 2017)

This appeal to "refugee" is not only used in its strict legal sense, but it also reflects social assumptions of low qualifications for entering working life that, although unspoken, are often associated with racialization. Furthermore, the "lower connection" to working life seems to be attributed to individuals with low qualifications; hence, their "need" for integration. Although acknowledging that there is a need for better pathways for migrants to complete or build on their existing education later in the newspaper article, it pays little attention to other systemic issues that have been documented by research in both Norway and Finland, such as racism and discrimination (Midtbøen 2015; Midtbøen 2016; Kurki 2019; Ahmad 2020b; Masoud et al. 2023), employers' stereotypes (Friberg & Midtbøen 2018; Ahmad 2020a), and the lack of recognition of relevant education and experience or migrant educational mismatch (Larsen, Rogne & Birkelund 2018; Heikkilä & Yeasmin 2021) that may present difficulties for newcomers entering the labor market. In addition, the "big challenge" for integration referred to in the excerpt is to get migrants into work: there is no acknowledgment that migrants may be integrating into a stratified workforce (Favell 2022).

6.6. Concluding Remarks: On the Categorization and Racialization of Migrants in Integration Discourses

A main empirical contribution of this chapter is to make explicit the categories that are produced by and underlying assumptions present in public discourses on integration. The findings make explicit the "covert racialization" that is "smuggled into conceptions of integration" (Favell 2022, 6) and suggest that there is no Nordic racial exceptionalism when it comes to integration discourses: racism is neither far away nor in the past. These empirical findings have implications for at least four issues:

the naturalization of migration-related differences, racialization, the production of a white national imaginary, and economic calculations of the "cost" of migrants.

First, these findings illustrate the naturalization of migration-related differences in integration discourses that make such discourses intelligible in the first place. Critically questioning who the subjects of integration discourses are allows us to gain insights into what types of categories are produced by and made relevant in public discourses on integration. My findings indicate that migratory pathways and nationalities are naturalized and produced as important forms of migration-related differences in integration discourses, where they "become essentialized and come to appear natural" (Dahinden 2016, 2210). Take, for instance, the earlier argument where it is presented as almost absurd to include Swedes or Poles in reports on migrant employment and integration. The media contributes to the naturalization of these categories and of migration-related differences by amplifying the racialization implicit in integration discourses by framing integration as something that is relevant for certain groups in particular and, in doing so, "becomes a performative agent of racialization" (Hervik 2019, 6).

Second, the perceived need to manage differences of migrants vis-à-vis integration is not equal in these discourses but differentially applies to different categories – a dispensation of integration – with humanitarian migrants and migrants from "non-Western" countries being portrayed as most "in need" of integration. By highlighting certain migratory pathways and nationalities, and implicitly and explicitly racializing integration discourses, certain individuals are framed as "in need" of or "lacking" integration. This supports earlier research arguing that the subjects of integration discourses are often perceived as "ethnically" or "culturally" marked and "racialized in particular ways" (Schinkel 2017; Schinkel 2018, 3; see also Korteweg 2017; Favell 2022). This makes apparent the relevance of colonial legacies and racial hierarchies in current integration thinking, which ultimately positions certain migrants as a problem (Mayblin & Turner 2021).

Third, these findings corroborate whiteness as indicative of national belonging. Public integration discourses appear to target "visible migrants," corroborating earlier findings on racialization and whiteness in the Nordic countries (e.g., Irni 2009; Guðjónsdóttir 2014). I argue that

this reifies the idea of whiteness as indicative of national belonging and Nordicness: a white Nordic imaginary. This involves an equating of nationalizing and racializing categories that reproduce Europeanness/Nordicness as whiteness (Tudor 2017; Tudor 2018) and equate the civic category of citizenship "with a racialized ethnic distinction" (Favell 2022, 109). Through a dispensation of integration, the "society" that migrants "need" to be integrated into is coded as white (Schinkel 2018, 5; see also Favell 2022). Simultaneously, individuals racialized as non-white, the Indigenous Sámi, national minorities, and transnational adoptees, disturb the "white hegemony" produced in the "connection between whiteness and national identity," and this instability may create an opportunity for social change (Keskinen 2022, 349).

Finally, the findings suggest an understanding of migrants as individuals "who might not have been here," making it conceivable to "record *what it costs* the nation now that these migrants *are* here" (Schinkel 2022). The categorization and racialization of migrants in these integration discourses are linked to calculated costs regarding the presence of migrants and "degrees of indebtedness" that result in racialized hierarchization (Andreasen 2019; Schinkel 2022), whereby migrants who are categorized as "needing" integration are also the ones who are argued to create the highest costs for the state. Thus, integration discourses position migrants as "in the debt of gratitude" where they "have a duty" to be worth the money spent on them (Kurki 2019, 58). This is an example of how the categorization and racialization of migrants has wide-ranging consequences for how migrants are portrayed and problematized. Ultimately, a focus on the categorization and racialization of migrants shows that public integration discourses are not neutral, also in the case of the Nordic region (e.g., Gullestad 2002; Kurki 2019; Rytter 2019; Masoud, Holm & Brunila 2021; Masoud et al. 2023). The processes of categorization and racialization that ascribe some migrants as "in need" of integration, and the surrounding power relations that allow some to have "the power and legitimacy to demand *integration* of others," should continue to be investigated and made explicit by researchers (Schinkel 2017; Rytter 2019, 690) in order to refuse them and imagine how they may be thought about differently.

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Precious (Natural Colorants) (2022)

Performance in Live Action 17, Gothenburg, Sweden
Photo credits Christian Berven

This action took place in Brunnsparken, Gothenburg in September 2022. In my pocket I had cochineal (a red bug used as dye in many traditions. My immediate use references are different ethnic nations living within the Mexican territory, but not exclusively). I crushed the dry bugs on the floor powdering them, afterwards I would pour warm water from my mouth, diluting the dye on the floor. When I considered having around 10 spots, I would collect them on my clothing by different movements. The precious dye would mix with the natural dirt from the street, almost disappearing on the fabric. A slightly pink hint of the colourant would remain, nevertheless the dirt and the action of the body on the street floor would overwrite the delicacy and preciousness contained. It would depend on the viewer how much they wanted to see and understand.

Ioana Țîștea

7. From "Integration" to Creolization in Finnish Migration Research?: Romanian Roma Women's Stories of Making Homes in Finland

Abstract

This chapter answers recent calls in Romani studies to creolize Roma subjectivities and Roma-related research through pluritopic, multifarious Romani counter-histories that engage with other subaltern counter-histories. It further argues that Finland's inter-imperial, multilingual, and multiethnic history and current situation render it a suitable candidate for the decolonial project of creolizing Europe. First, it relates Romanian Roma women's stories about their experiences of oppression and racism in Finland to some of my own lived experiences and complicities as a non-Roma Romanian migrant woman and to the literature on the historical oppressive processes of Finnish nation-building and the attempted assimilation of minorities and indigenous people. Second, it foregrounds Roma women's stories about creatively defying the norms that subdue them in Finland, highlighting how they generated new creolized, subver-

sive literacies in the face of dominant migration discourses and systems in ways that crossed the vertical axis of colonizer–colonized power relationships and structures through minor–minor creolization. The chapter thus suggests a possible way of moving from "integration" to creolization in Finnish migration research.

KEYWORDS: creolization, storytelling, Roma, Romanian, migration, Finland.

7.1. Introduction

A growing body of research has drawn connections between Nordic settler colonialism in Sápmi (the historical land of the Sámi indigenous people, covering the northern regions of Norway, Sweden, Finland, and the Russian Kola peninsula), the internal colonization of Roma minorities, and Nordic nation-state building (Kuokkanen 2005; Tervonen 2012; Pyykkönen 2015; Keskinen 2019; Roman, Stadius & Stark 2021). Other studies have drawn connections between those historical power mechanisms and the more recent governance technologies that regulate migration, particularly through bordering and deportation regimes or integration systems (Keskinen, Skaptadóttir & Toivanen 2019; Hoegaerts et al. 2022). However, research entangling historical and current events in relation to Eastern European Roma migrants in Nordic countries is scarce.

For instance, some studies have focused on encounters between the Finnish and Southeast European Roma in Finland, addressing the contradictions, ambiguities, and recognitions/misrecognitions that emerge from assumptions of intra-ethnic solidarity and social cohesion between them (Roman 2014). They have also considered the religious mobilization, activism, and missionary work that has facilitated local and trans-local Romani connections within and among Finland, Romania, and Bulgaria (Roman 2018; Gripenberg 2019). In Roman's (2018) research regarding Finnish Roma academics', artists', and social workers' views of the more recently arrived Eastern European Roma, mainly from Romania and Bulgaria, the participants invoked common histories of attempted forced assimilation of Roma people as part of European nation-state building. However, they used those common histories as an argument for detachment, since the current severe marginalization and oppression of Eastern European Roma in Finland reminded them of their historical position in

the country and ignited fears of going back to something they thought belonged to a distant past (Roman 2014, 803). Further Nordic Roma-related migration studies have focused on bordering and policing practices, precarity, survival strategies, complex patterns of agency and adaptation, gendered migration patterns, and gendered economic divisions of labor, as well as encounters and collaborations between Roma migrants and Finnish activist collectives (Spehar, Hinnfors & Bucken-Knapp 2017; Tervonen & Enache 2017; Himanen 2019; Saarinen, Markkanen & Enache 2020).

This chapter expands on previous Roma-related research by strengthening approaches to gender, agency, and encounters across differences, making connections between history and the present in relation to Romanian Roma migrant women in Finland. It further addresses the questions raised by Saarinen, Puurunen, and Enache (2020, 65) regarding "who is a 'knower' and what is 'knowledge'" in research on Roma migrants in Finland by considering the stories Roma women shared with me and their storytelling practices as epistemologies and methodologies with the aim of creolizing migration research. Yet what is the usefulness of applying creolization in a Finnish context and in relation to Roma people?

7.2. From "Integration" to Creolization?

Despite Finland's common representation as a homogenous nation, historic 18th–19th-century nation-building was a collective effort between Finnish land owners, farmers, educators, and peasants; Swedish-speaking Fennomans and Russian imperial elites who supported the officialization of the Finnish language; the Sámi indigenous peoples; and the historical national minorities (the Roma, Jews, and Tatars), although on highly unequal and violent terms (Tervonen 2012; Koski & Filander 2013; Pyykkönen 2015; Keskinen 2019; Roman, Stadius & Stark 2021). Applying a creolizing lens (Glissant 1997) to this history of Finland, rather than single-root origins, can highlight transversal points of entanglement marked by inequalities, oppression, and interconnectedness, which denote fruitful tensions from which future possibilities can emerge. More recently, the consolidation of Finnish and other Nordic nation-states has been promoted through integration systems for migrants, which have been shown to feed into racialized inclusion/exclusion mechanisms of nation-

state formation (Keskinen, Skaptadóttir & Toivanen 2019, 6–8). Yet beyond official integration systems and discourses, migrants make homes in new places through creative everyday strategies, encounters, and connections embedded in socioeconomic reproduction and racialized inequalities, as well as in affective and transversal ways of living together (El-Tayeb 2011; Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2015; Hemer, Povrzanović Frykman & Ristilammi 2020). Thus, social inequalities based on colonial and imperial histories and current realities shaped by racialized configurations have always been and continue to be present, and learning how to live on mutually beneficial terms is an ongoing process rife with tensions and disharmonies (Hall 2015; Murdoch 2015).

In the same way that nationhood narratives and power structures obscure the multiple entanglements between the diverse inhabitants of our interconnected world (Glissant 1997), systems and discourses of "integration" also obscure migrants' creative everyday strategies (Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2015). However, if nationhood myths are dismantled through histories of transversal entanglements, there is no possibility of returning to the idea of single-root unconflicted origins, and therefore no possibility of a return to "integration" (El-Tayeb 2011, 171–172). Creolization is a way of analyzing the dismantling of nationhood myths, the entanglements of diverse peoples and histories, and the interrelations characterizing migration since it can capture the productive tensions between relationality and inequalities, myths of rootedness and experiences of multiple movements and connections (Glissant 1997; El-Tayeb 2011).

Édouard Glissant (1981) introduced the concept of creolization based on Caribbean histories and ontologies, including colonialism, enslavement of Black Africans, racial classification, forced displacement, loss of social identity, and a double consciousness based on experiences of oppression and struggles for liberation. Later in his work, Glissant (1997) engages creolization as a new way of seeing the world in relational and interdependent ways based on multiple, unexpected, transversal encounters and connections. He develops creolization in contrast to cultural mixing or hybridity. The latter reproduces essentialist racialized social orders inherited from colonialism by relating distinct racial entities to each other dialogically yet hierarchically, whereas creolization is a limitless hybridization that creates new vocabularies not inscribed in any hegemonic script, with its elements diffracted and its consequences unforeseeable (Glissant 1997, 34).

Roma people's diasporic histories and subjectivities present a few parallels with the African diaspora in the Caribbean and the Americas (Chang & Rucker-Chang 2020). These include the Roma people's historical displacement from India, their movements in multiple directions, their historical enslavement in the territory that is now Romania, their current exile to other countries of residence (either as citizens or migrants), and their double consciousness based on experiences of oppression and creative forms of resistance (Le Bas 2010; Matache & Bhabha 2021; Parvulescu & Boatcă 2023, 124–125). Creolization thus resonates with recent developments in Romani studies calling for a creolizing of Roma subjectivities through pluritopic, multifarious Romani counter-histories that engage with other subaltern counter-histories (Costache 2018, 39; Țîștea & Băncuță 2023). Yet creolization should not be romanticized, but rather treated as a mode of transformation and creativity premised on the unequal power relations that characterize modernity/coloniality—dispossession, colonization, violence, and enslavement—and their legacies (Parvulescu & Boatcă 2023, 127).

Following Parvulescu and Boatcă (2020, 19), who wrote about creolizing Transylvania, I argue that Finland's inter-imperial, multilingual, and multiethnic history and current situation render it "a suitable candidate for the decolonial project of creolizing Europe". The project contests the prevailing notion of a geographically, culturally, religiously, and racially coherent, or "integrated" Europe based on creolizing theory by "thinking through and with invisibilized, peripheral, or subaltern formations, histories, and experiences" and reinscribing them into social theory (Parvulescu & Boatcă 2020, 19). Within this logic, this chapter reinscribes into Finnish migration research Romanian Roma migrant women's stories of making homes in Finland.

7.3. Creolization Through and With Romani Storytelling

This chapter is based on the life stories told by Romanian Roma migrant women living in Finland, which I recorded, transcribed, and translated from Romanian into English. I met some of the women during 2018–2020 while volunteering with Finnish migrant activist collectives as a non-Roma Romanian migrant, conducting translations between activists and Romanian Roma migrants. I met more of the women later in 2021 while

working as a mediator, a Romanian–Finnish/English translator, and work supervisor for a project offering cleaning work and training to Romanian Roma women in Finland. I explained to the women that I am also a researcher studying Finnish migration systems and that there is a scarcity of Romanian Roma women's voices in the field. Some of the women agreed to share stories with me about their lives in Finland and to make their stories known to a public they would otherwise not have access to. Over time, I became friends with some of them, although our friendships have always been marked by tensions due to our unequal power positions. The women and I started spending time together outside official work hours or activist agendas, sharing stories at the emergency accommodation center, where some of them lived, at my apartment, and at one Roma woman's apartment. The Roma women told stories spontaneously, depending on what triggered their memories at a specific moment or during the course of a given day. To avoid homogenizing (Romanian) Roma women, the women's stories I selected present plural perspectives with multiple connections and interrelations, as well as divergences and diffractions. I did not have a predefined research agenda regarding their stories. Whenever we met, I witnessed with avid interest the women's insightful knowledge. The women decided in which directions and to what depths they would take the stories, and which stories to share or keep confidential. However, although such collaborative ways of working together can cross divides and hierarchies between Roma and non-Roma people, those divides continued to shape and influence our interactions and conversations and could not be eliminated by our collaboration. We therefore stayed with the discomfort of such tensions as openings for creative knowledge production and discussion of the challenging issues of "domination and hegemony, of appropriation and expropriation, conditions of subalternity and enforced obligation" (Hall 2015, 16). Gabriela Băncuță, the main Roma co-researcher, and I wrote about the possibilities/impossibilities and fruitful tensions of collaborative research practices elsewhere (Țîștea & Băncuță 2023). Herein, I focus largely on Romani storytelling's capacity to creolize Finnish migration research.

In applying creolization as a "process of becoming theory of the minor," I treat minoritized Romani formations and storytelling as alternative knowledge production practices (Lionnet & Shih 2011, 21). The Roma women's perspectives thus provide "explanatory theoretical narratives, and

not just the raw material" for this chapter (Constable 2011, 120). Their relational, dynamic vernacular viewpoints theorize social phenomena in and of themselves (Constable 2011, 121). I apply creolization as an onto-epistemology embedded in "the living dynamics of uneven but interdependent" multiple Roma and non-Roma ways of being and knowing, using a methodology that challenges universalisms by emerging from subaltern Romani lived experiences and remaining closely connected to the vernacular (Lionnet & Shih 2011, 2). The Roma women's stories resulted from encounters and connections within Roma communities, between Roma and other communities, and between Roma participants and a non-Roma researcher, with their "translations, mediations, clashes, and discords" (Constable 2011, 121). These encounters provided open spaces for creating knowledge from minoritized perspectives, through and with the differences of multiple entanglements and their sociohistorical contexts marked by colonial violence and power differences (Constable 2011, 113–114).

The next section is organized into three subsections. The first relates Roma women's stories about their current experiences of oppression and racism in Finland to some of my own lived experiences and complicities and to the literature on historical oppressive processes of Finnish nation-building and the attempted assimilation of minorities and indigenous people. This relating of Roma women's narratives of present-day processes to the previous literature on historical processes is an exercise of "speaking nearby" the Roma women's stories without containing and seizing them (see interview with Trinh T. Minh-ha in Chen 1992). The aim was not to offer comprehensive historical analyses but to experiment with the inter-relating of plural narratives and voices that speak nearby one another, placing them side by side to highlight unresolvable tensions and complicities as the basis for imagining possible future alternatives (Glissant 1997, 58, 199). Although this approach may appear not to foreground the participants' stories, I chose not to analyze their experiences of racism and oppression in this section to avoid contributing to their perceived "victimization." Instead, I argue that the women had already analyzed their current oppressive circumstances, and their analyses are embedded within their stories. This approach resonates with the research by Solimene (forthcoming), who refuses to speak on behalf of Roma participants, instead exploring silence as a way for non-Roma researchers to defer to Roma knowledges.

The second and third subsections foreground Roma women's stories of creatively defying the norms that subdue them in Finland. In contrast to the first section, here I engage directly with the women's stories to highlight how they generated new creolized, subversive literacies, first in the face of dominant migration discourses and systems, and second, in ways that crossed the vertical axis of colonizer–colonized power relationships and structures through "minor–minor" creolization (Constable 2011, 120). The latter approach valorizes vernacular practices and solidarity among the subaltern, which emerge through transversal, ongoing, plural, mutually transformative relationalities at points of contact and diffraction, and remain connected to social justice movements (Constable 2011, 121; Vergès 2015, 40).

7.4. Entangling Roma Women's Stories across Multiple Points of Connection/Diffraction

Past–Present Connections

Roma people have been present in the territory that is now Finland and in other Nordic countries since the 16th century, but they are still regulated through integration policies (Stenroos 2020). National integration policies implement European Union (EU)-level policy recommendations for Roma people without addressing the differing life circumstances of national minorities and migrants. Thus, although increased Roma migration triggered EU-level integration policy recommendations, these policy frameworks do not cover Roma migration or integration into new places (Piemontese & Magazzini 2019). Despite the abundance of migration-related policies and practices in the Nordic countries, regarding Roma migrants, state apparatuses shift the responsibility toward their Eastern European home countries while imposing everyday bordering and policing on Roma migrants and outsourcing social matters to activists, NGOs, and religious groups (Spehar, Hinnfors & Bucken-Knapp 2017; Tervonen & Enache 2017).

> *Georgeta*[1]*:* I attend a Finnish literacy and language course. I am the only Roma woman on the course. My classmates are mostly

1 Often referred to as Roma women throughout the text due to word count limits.

> Arab. Sometimes, I want to hide that I am Roma, but I cannot. Because my family did not send me to school, as you can imagine, I did not know how to read and write. The teacher always tells us that the most important thing for succeeding here is the Finnish language. I have been in school for a few months now. I've been trying hard, and I try hard, to study, to learn how to write, and to read at least a little bit so that I can look for work. As you can imagine, only with education can I find work. Without education, I cannot find anything because people avoid us. They say, "Look at those Gypsies." Not even Roma – Gypsies with no education! – and they refuse to give us work. And you can imagine, if nobody else knows how to read or write (my sisters-in-law don't know; my husband doesn't know), at least I will know. I am fighting to be at school and to have no complaints from my teacher. I don't want any complaints, like ... "Look. There is this Roma woman, and she does not know ..." But when the teacher sees how hard I am trying, she encourages me. If I were not encouraged, I would have felt devalued; I would have really felt like a Gypsy. Really like a Gypsy, I would have felt.

Integration courses for migrants today are offered in both Finnish and Swedish, but not in the Romani or Sámi languages. This goes back to the 1800s Finnish nation-building based on the Fennoman movement, which aimed to officialize the Finnish language and culture alongside the Swedish one "as the basis of national identity" by promoting them through popular adult education (Kantasalmi & Hake 1997, 361). The Fennoman movement aimed to museumize Sámi languages and cosmologies and erase the Romani language and way of life (Pyykkönen 2015). Finnish discourses on migrant "integration" promote an idealized image, to which students should aspire, of tolerable migrant subjects who are willing to internalize Finnish norms and customs without questioning them (Kurki 2019; Țîștea 2021). Similarly, the 19th-century Finnish nation-building project relied on popular adult education courses, which promoted the image of the hard-working, modest yet noble peasant from an idealized, relatively recent past, to which students – mainly Finnish peasants – should aspire, since it was believed that peasants, particularly the

landless rural workers, were being corrupted (Koski & Filander 2013, 586). This corruption was seen as being due to, among other things, too much interaction with people whose itinerant ways of life were considered "deviant," "work-shy," and hence a "threat" to national security, like the Roma (Tervonen 2012, 152–153), or with people who were seen as stuck in a more "distant," "stagnant" past, and hence an "obstacle" to modernization, like the Sámi (Pyykkönen 2015, 53). Racial anthropological studies contributed to such constructions, racializing Roma people as "black" due to racist associations between blackness and "deviance" (Stark 2021, 48), while constructing Sámi peoples as Finns' "racially weaker brothers" (Pyykkönen 2015, 52), which motivated oppressive measures against both the Sámi and the Roma. As part of 19th–20th century Finnish nation-building, which built Finnishness in opposition to the Orientalized Roma, Roma children were separated from their parents and placed in state custody to receive "religious, moral, civilizing and vocational education" (Pyykkönen 2015, 49). Since Roma adults were framed as too "backward" to be "integrated" through education, they were to be taught the meaning of "real" work through forced labor, whereas Roma children were seen to have some hope of being "potentially fit for a 'national life'" and advancing the future assimilation of their communities (Tervonen 2012, 144).

> *Sorina:* Both I and my husband were supposed to come to Finland, but he stayed at home with the children because there was nobody to care for my children, and I came here. It shouldn't be like this: either the mother stays at home with the children, and the husband goes to work, or someone else from the family stays, you know? But it's very hard for me with my children because I do not have any help taking care of them. While I am still strong, I want to work for them. And if one day when I am old [laughs], me and him, it will be my turn to stay with their children so that they have help. Since I never had help from anyone, I will help them with their children because it's very hard if you have no support.

In the case of Finnish Roma during the 19th–20th century, family separations were meant to break social ties and knowledge (Tervonen 2012, 144). The Romani language and ways of life were framed as a problematic hin-

drance, which should be annihilated since it supposedly prevented the Finnish Roma from "assimilation and submission to the norms of Finnish society" (Pyykkönen 2015, 49). Therefore, any contact between children and parents was prevented so that the children would not learn the Romani language and would forget their cultural customs and heritage (Ericsson 2017, 108). Family separations in the case of Romanian Roma migrants today are the result of severe inequalities and marginalization, with Romania forcing Roma people to migrate in search of any source of income (Tervonen & Enache 2017). While mainstream discourses on migration foreground racialized men as those who migrate under such conditions (Meger 2017), it is often Roma women who engage in circular migration and informal street labor and act as the main breadwinners in Roma transnational family situations (Saarinen, Puurunen & Enache 2020).

> *Loredana:* I asked my boss to give me work with a contract. She's Romanian. Because she trusted me, and that's why she gave me work. To deal with Finnish people, you need to have connections, someone to rely on, someone who can rely on you. You need to win and keep their trust. If you work for Finnish people, you get a good salary, but you need to know how to speak Finnish. If I don't know how to speak it, it's hopeless, because I don't understand anything. ... At least I have this cleaning job. My life improved after getting this job, but it's through Romanian mediators, and it doesn't pay much, because they only offer us zero-hour contracts. Still, with this job, I managed to register my EU right of residence at Migri [the Finnish Immigration Service] and bring my daughter here with me after being away from her for six years.

Through a project that employed me during 2021, Roma women with little or no formal schooling or language skills were assigned to do cleaning work. Romanian and Bulgarian non-Roma women with privileged socioeconomic backgrounds – like myself – were hired as translators and mediators, and white Finnish women ran and sponsored the project or promoted its cleaning services to potential Finnish clients. Finnish women also constituted the majority on the decision-making board.

None of the Roma women were part of the board. The project thus reproduced racialized, gendered, and classed hierarchies with which I was complicit. Some of the Roma women employed through that project worked in centers for homeless Finnish citizens or permanent residents with substance abuse issues. The latter can be seen as what Koski and Filander (2013) called the Finnish "commoners," who have been consigned to a normative category of "non-existence" during the past 150 years in Finnish society as part of inclusion/exclusion nation-building techniques: landless rural workers, the working class, uneducated dropouts, the unemployed, and the homeless (Koski & Filander 2013, 595–596). However, the "non-existence" that the authors mentioned was simultaneously occupied by the categories that they subsequently identified. Thus, these social groups entered a sphere of existence, albeit at the margins of society, which kept them at arm's length, inside but also outside the nation. The "non-existence" of Finland's indigenous people, historical minorities, and more recent migrants and their descendants became evident in the authors' findings:

> *Loredana:* At my work, I met some Finnish people who didn't have a place to sleep. It reminded me of how I used to sleep on the streets when I first arrived here. I also met them on the street and at the train station. When they see us Roma in a group, they come to us and ask for money and cigarettes … also, for pills. We tell them we don't do that. They have all sorts of problems, with drugs, with … At work, we clean the shelter where they sleep. It's the worst part of my job. Sometimes they break the doors and windows, they do things on the floor of the room instead of using the toilet, needles everywhere … I even got stuck [with a needle] a couple of times while cleaning and had to go to the hospital to get tested. But we help them sometimes when the boss of the shelter kicks them out in the cold during the day. We sneak out and give them blankets. Or when the boss tells us to throw away everything we find in their rooms, even their clothes and different objects, we don't do that. They yell at us, but I cannot throw away the person's valuables; they will need them at night when they come back to sleep.

> *Georgeta:* As soon as I learn a bit of Finnish and can write, I will look for a job. I mean, I will search for a better job ... a better job than what Roma women usually do here ... with a bit better pay and with a work contract. I think people here do not hire us because we are Roma... Gypsies, and because we don't have education. They think we are not employable, no matter how hard we work. Well, then, I will try. Let's see, will they refuse me or not? I will search for work at a Finnish company; this is why I go to school here. After I finish studying and learning the language, more or less, I will find a good job.

The Finnish approach to "integration" shifted in 2006 from cultural assimilation to "employability," which meant pre-selecting or training migrants who could succeed in the Finnish labor market and contribute to the economy while excluding those seen as "unemployable" (Saukkonen & Pyykkönen 2008, 54). This shift occurred after the EU's 2004 expansion into parts of Eastern Europe and before the 2007 entry into the EU of Romania and Bulgaria. Discourses of unwanted migration from Eastern Europe abounded during those EU negotiations and constructed the Roma as a scapegoat in both the "West" and "East." These discourses still resonate to the present day (Woodcock 2007; Țîștea 2021). The shift toward "employability" in Finnish "integration" discourses thus coincided with an increase in European anti-Roma racism emerging from discourses of "criminality" associated with the informal street work in which Roma migrants often engage (Nordberg 2004; Woodcock 2007, 495).

> *Elena:* I've been selling magazines here in Finland for ten years now. When the magazine doesn't sell, I beg, or I collect and recycle cans. Finnish people think we are lazy when they see us on the street. They think we don't want to work, but they don't know how hard street work is. We buy the magazines from this company for 5 euros each and sell them for 10 euros. We don't have a contract for this work; we don't have any rights. But the people selling us the magazines, they have contracts; they have salaries; they would not have those jobs if it wasn't for us. Sometimes they interview us and put our interviews and photos in the magazine that we sell. They think this will help us.

> Sometimes, they raise money with these stories, but where is that money?
>
> *Monica:* Finns avoid us because we are Roma. You can imagine that if we were Finnish, it would be different. But also, the Finnish Roma, they are racist. What differs between us and the Finnish Roma? Our culture is the same as that of the Finnish Roma. And you can imagine, the difference is that they speak Finnish, but they are still Roma.

During the 1800s, Finnish Roma were seen as not engaging in what white Finns considered "real" work, despite the fact that Finnish peasants often depended on itinerant Roma people's trades, such as "horse-trading, peddling handcrafts, tinkering, gelding, healing livestock, fortune-telling, housework, and seasonal fieldwork" (Tervonen 2012, 152). Itinerant Finnish Roma and Finnish landless rural workers thus engaged in reciprocal exchanges, such as exchanges of food and accommodation, beyond the norms exerted by Finnish farmers and landowners or the Swedish intelligentsia (Tervonen 2012; Stark 2021). However, the authorities saw the mutual support and collaboration between landless peasants and the Roma as a threat to national security and, hence, criminalized Roma people's trades while claiming to be doing this in their best interests to ease their way into "modern," sedentary lifestyles (Pyykkönen 2015).

Creolizing "Integration" Discourses: Future Possibilities

> *Mihaela:* Finnish people think we just come here to beg, so they look down on us. But they don't know how we grew up and all the things we have learned, even without going to school. We grew up through work and hardship. We did not grow up the way people in Finland do. We never had the chance to take things for granted. We always had to work hard for it. We have experience in cleaning, taking care of the home, construction, moving and lifting heavy things, painting walls, vegetable and fruit picking, soil tilling, cooking, baking, crafting different objects, gardening, etc. We are maybe 1,000 times harder working because some of us can carry a bag of cement, but Finnish or

> Romanian girls will not do that kind of work. People here don't realize that when we're on the street all day selling magazines, collecting cans, or, yes, begging, that's really hard work. We don't do that because we're lazy; we do it because they don't give us a chance to work normally with a contract. And when we sell the magazine, they don't even count it as work experience, even if some of us have done this work for many years. Normally, we would be able to apply to Migri based on this hard work. There is this old woman who's still doing this, even though at her age, she should retire and receive a pension for all the years she spent working hard on the streets of Finland. We had a talk about this with the people who run this business. Let's see what happens ...

Roma women have versatile skills, often based on informal work experience due to labor market gatekeeping, accumulated in Romania and/or Finland. Since their experience is not formally recognized, street vending is often the only option they have in Finland. One needs to have street survival skills to work outdoors from morning to night, adapt to changing (often extreme) weather conditions, make strategic choices regarding street spots, avoid potentially violent encounters by reading situations, people, and their intentions, and have good people skills to approach potential sponsors or buyers. Since street vending is not done under a work contract, Roma women's hard work is not counted as official work experience. By claiming the right to have their work and experience recognized and to have street vending officialized through work contracts, Roma women creolize "integration" discourses of "employability" and "real" work. In other words, they reinscribe into official narratives their own ignored, invisibilized, and peripheral perspectives (Parvulescu & Boatcă 2020, 19), thus challenging taken-for-granted assumptions on what it means to be educated or to have work experience.

> *Andrada:* I have worked as a cleaner for some time. They only gave me two hours of work here and there, always telling me to wait because I'm new, and saying that my hours would increase with time. I asked them, "How can I live with two hours' of work? I can make that much in a few minutes on the street. And

> if I am not here today, who knows if you will call me tomorrow? Like this, you're wasting my time. And what do you mean, I'm new? There are others who have only been in Finland for two or three months, and they already have stable work, and I have been here for so many years – 10 years! Ten years, and you won't give me a more stable position!" They told me to wait until they had more clients. They said to always show up for my cleaning shift, so they don't lose their clients. But the time for me to get to the client's home and back takes away from the time when I could be selling magazines or collecting cans. At least if I went there to work for six, seven, eight hours, then it would make sense ... One day, they took me to clean this woman's house – a big, bright, shiny home with nice, expensive furniture, where she lived all by herself. She wanted me to clean that entire place in only two hours. I'm sure she could have afforded to pay me a decent fee. That day, I snapped. I said to the translator, "Look, this place is already clean. My services are not needed here," and I walked out. My supervisor then shouted at me about losing clients because of me. So, I told her, "Don't worry. You can keep your clients because I quit."

The project I used to work for as a mediator, which I mentioned earlier, offered me a part-time, one-year contract with a fixed monthly income and an office. The Roma women were hired as cleaners with zero-hour contracts, meaning they could have between 0 and 40 work hours per week and be paid a certain hourly fee. It was up to me and other project coordinators to decide how many hours to allocate to each worker based on experience and seniority. The project thus claimed to "empower" Roma women through low-paid precarious labor and to "help" them reach the "right" level of "development" through an ideology of assimilation into the racial capitalist order (Vergès 2021, 14). Andrada, however, challenged the racialized, classed, and gendered hierarchies reproduced by the cleaning project. She was expected to be more patient and to wait until her "employability" eventually improved. However, she broke the status quo by refusing to perform cleaning services, thus refusing to invest in her subordination and precarious incorporation into the Finnish cleaning sector. Through her analysis of workplace exploitation, Andrada

creolized Roma-related research practices by disrupting the reproduction of whiteness as the norm against which to explore Romani experiences and the paternalistic intent to "help" or "rescue" Roma people, thus shifting the focus from Roma marginalization or victimization to Roma creative agency as free-thinking and acting subjects (Matache 2016, 2; Matache 2017, 1).

> *Monica:* My children go to school here in Finland. Everything I could not do, I want my children to do, so they can travel a road I could not follow. My children will go to school here until they're 21. Because I went through a very difficult situation, I told my children, "Whatever is offered to you, do not stop going to school. Especially school in Finland," which is the best, as I understand, among many countries. I explicitly checked it, and they said they had the most high-performing schools. I want my children to have a much better future because everything happens through education. My children are my priority, then my mother, and my husband comes last [laughs]. I want my children to have an education, to listen to their Finnish teachers, and to learn a good profession. But I also teach my children not to forget their origins; not to be ashamed, wherever they go in the world or whoever they are with, to say that they are of Roma ethnicity – that is the most important. Don't forget who you are. Even if one day they live well, have a beautiful house, and have money, that does not mean they will forget their traditions. We have beautiful traditions that we have kept up until now, and we respect them, although they need to be changed a bit. This does not mean that they are not good traditions. I like these traditions. They are beautiful, but they need to be changed a bit. For example, look at the clothes I am wearing; no other Roma women wear what I am wearing now. I mixed our traditions with what I learned here and in the other countries where I lived. Change means that I change a little bit. Change means that I don't want my children to go through what I have gone through. I want them to grow up with an education and marry for love. I pray to God that I will see them marry for love, out of happiness. I want my children to be well. I fight for them.

Roma women whose children attend school in Finland, like Monica, rather than advising their children to adopt Finnish norms without questioning them, as integration systems often expect, raise their children into creolized subjectivities. According to Glissant (1997), creolized subjectivities are based on dialogues between different knowledge systems and an openness to mutual transformation, while simultaneously maintaining one's distinctiveness and opacity. Modernity sees individuals and their communities as opaque to each other and threatening to the project of assimilating marginalized knowledges within dominant narratives, yet opacity, in the way the Roma women in my study used it, can be a strategy for resisting the urge to be known and thus controlled by dominant forces (Murdoch 2015, 74–75). The creolized subjectivities into which Roma women raise their children thus creolize "integration" discourses. This involves listening across differences and hierarchies and being open to transformation by encounters with diverse people and knowledges while also keeping one's opacity and not allowing subjects from hegemonic positions to subsume one's opacity within their own dominant transparency.

Minor–Minor Creolization

Some of the Roma women in my study had contact with activists who engaged in anti-racist struggles and could influence Finnish politics and policymaking, including diverse migrants and their descendants, the Finnish Roma and Sámi peoples, and white leftist Finns. I also participated in activist circles, sometimes acting as a translator for Roma women. In those circles, activists from multiple backgrounds form coalitions based on subversive communication; negotiate communicative difficulties; reappropriate and recycle paralyzing, reductive descriptions and classifications set by dominant oppressive forces; and produce new images, stories, subjectivities, and identifications (Lugones 2006). For instance, during eugenicist nation-building periods, Roma people in Finland and other European countries were racialized as "black" due to racist associations of blackness with assumed "deviance," and these racial classifications continue to affect how the Roma are perceived today (Turda 2010; Stark 2021, 48). Yet Roma people, including some of the Roma women in my study, have appropriated their racialization as Black and re-

versed its negative connotations into positive self-identification and self-affirmation (Weychert & Szelągiewicz 2020).

> *Monica:* I don't have any problems with my skin color because that is what makes us Roma. There are also Romanians who are darker than us, but no: we don't have any reason to ... I am proud. May God gift everyone with my color. Many try to tan, but I am natural.
>
> *Lili:* There are some who are brown-skinned, there are others who are lighter... There are others whose faces are very white and beautiful [silent pause]. If [a woman] is darker-skinned, people look at her in an ugly way, but I cannot say that one is beautiful and another one is ugly; only the soul is what matters.
>
> *Andrada:* I know that I am more dark-skinned. There are also Roma people who are white. There are people who are like me. Black. But you should know that it does not inconvenience me, and I am actually proud because others pay a lot of money at the tanning salon or during the summer to tan. But my color is natural: bronze [slight laughter]. I am proud of my color, and I teach my children the same.
>
> *Lori:* I don't know what color means ... We do not differentiate with that ...
>
> *Mihaela:* I feel very good and beautiful in my skin [slight laughter]. I don't want to be lighter. I like being darker. I'm not ashamed, and I never was.
>
> *Mimi:* I am lighter, and I feel good about my color [laughs].
>
> *Loredana:* I am Black. What, do I look white? [laughs]

Some Roma women claimed that they did not see color, particularly those who could pass as white if wearing non-Roma clothes. Those who can-

not pass as white, however, can challenge whiteness by taking "what they recognize as worthwhile in the ideas of the oppressors but turning these forms around to serve their goals of justice and dignity" (Vergès 2015, 55). Some Roma women thus further used their positive self-identification as Black as grounds for solidarity with African migrants and their descendants. This reflects the historical and current commonalities between African Americans' and Roma's struggles for rights. The history of Roma enslavement in the territory that is now Romania from 1370 to 1856 has many parallels with African enslavement in the Americas, and so do the historical anti-slavery struggles of African Americans and the Roma people, as well as more recent struggles for Roma rights in Europe and for civil rights of African Americans in the US (Chang & Rucker-Chang 2020; Matache & Bhabha 2021). Still, as I have noticed in Finnish activist circles, some African activists have difficulties accepting Roma people's self-identification as Black, and they sometimes do not distinguish between normative whiteness and Roma people's complexions despite Roma people's oppressed position in relation to whiteness. These tensions require the negotiation of communicative difficulties between members of the two coalition groups (Lugones 2006). From negotiating such tensions, new "minor–minor" coalitions can emerge that challenge and go beyond dominant narratives (Constable 2011, 120).

7.5. Closing Reflections

Similar to creolized cultures or communities, seemingly separate knowledges are in fact also historically inter-related and interdependent, which highlights that knowledge production practices and politics, academic and nonacademic fields, and social inequalities are mutually constituted (Lionnet & Shih 2011, 2). Creolization thus entails connecting knowledges that are "artificially separated by disciplinary, linguistic, or institutional boundaries" (Constable 2011, 138), while showing that those knowledges are already interrelated and mutually constituted despite them seeming divided and their interrelatedness fraught with tensions, frictions, socioeconomic inequalities, and colonial logics. This chapter does this in three ways.

By speaking nearby Roma women's stories about oppression and racism and relating them to previous research on indigeneity, histori-

cal minorities, migration, and nation-building in Finland, this chapter highlights a possible way of moving from "integration" to creolization in Finnish migration research. Entangling in new and unexpected ways those elements that are not usually brought together constitutes a possible means by which creolization can dismantle myths of single-root origins on which nation-states (in this case Finland) are built, and thus challenge unquestioned commitments to "integration" (Vergès 2015, 41).

The Roma women's stories of subversively defying the norms that subdue them, and thus creolizing "integration," constitute vernacular knowledge production that dislocates, resituates, reshapes, and rewrites discourses, histories, knowledges, and their foundational fictions and concepts (Constable 2011, 116). This is because the vernacular – in this case, the Roma women's stories – emerges from the subaltern and, when in dialogue with dominant discourses, generates "cultural and social friction and negotiation" from which future possibilities can be imagined and enacted (Vergès 2015, 41). The women thus carved out space within Finnish migration research for "previously invisible, ignored, disdained, or misrecognized realities," thus generating "new critical, creolized literacies" (Constable 2011, 138).

By using their self-identification as Black as grounds of solidarity with African migrants in Finland, Roma women engage in "minor–minor" creolization, which takes place between marginalized peoples who are usually prevented from expressions of mutual learning and solidarity due to barriers erected by hegemonic forces (Constable 2011; Vergès 2015). By creating new forms of radical subaltern plurality, minor–minor creolization transgresses the rigid roles assigned to the subaltern through colonialism and slavery (Vergès 2015, 44). Taking inspiration from subversive anti-slavery politics, such creolization occurs by absorbing practices imported from the colonizer and distorting them (ibid., 46) – as the Roma women did when they reversed the negative connotations of the association between Blackness and Roma-ness into positive self-identification and self-affirmation – thus inventing new expressions that enable multiple, unexpected, ongoing relationalities between various subalternized peoples.

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Every Day (2021–ongoing)

Self portrait with huipiles
Weltmuseum Wien ethnographic museum, Vienna

Huipiles (in Spanish) are the most common traditional handmade garment, made and worn by different Nations from central Mexico to Central America. They have square shapes and loose fitting, they can be long or short. Mostly they will have iconographic embroidery, each one referring to their own traditions, geography, and cosmogony; therefore, these textiles are considered text by their makers. In 2021 I began to learn about the use and meaning of huipiles, understanding their resilience and relevance. As a result, I decided to incorporate the use of huipiles in Finland in my everyday life as a way of thinking in my body as a place that can hold with dignity other aesthetics, which are contemporary and contain memory and knowledge.

Parallel to my observations about the dressing codes in Helsinki, dressing huipiles in Finland became the end of a phase where I tried for many years to adapt and integrate, rejecting to pass as a local, dressing the dressing codes.

The use of a huipil in Finland felt like a reverse integration. Instead of playing camouflage for survival, I immediately stand out. Uncomfortable at times, it is a performance but not an art performance. As a de-indigenised person, for me it is everyday resistance because not everything is taken nor is lost. I persist in my everyday life, for my neighbours, my students, my coworkers and whoever who wants to see. I give as much information I know about my clothing to those who ask: Nation, technique, origin, symbolism. I educate through the huipiles the other ways of being. I don't need to be an expert, as I am not. The huipiles talk for themselves, and I am the medium.

When I was in Vienna, I visited the Weltmuseum Wien ethnographic museum. I went there mainly to visit the famous Penacho de Moctezuma, a headpiece made of feathers that belonged to Moctezuma, the last ruler of Tenochtitlán. To my surprise, besides the penacho a collection of huipiles were hung from the walls. The huipil Amuzgo I dressed that day was in conversation with the ones behind the glass. The huipil Amuzgo through my body took space in the space of the living. I uploaded a picture from the huipiles to my Instagram account and some of the artisans I am in touch contacted me to ask the details about the pieces behind the glass in the image. These are alive pieces, their ancestors. It felt like paying a visit.

Ali Akbar Mehta

8. Politics of Togetherness: Beyond the Integration Infrastructure of State and Institutional Apparatus

Abstract

Politics of Togetherness explores migration-oriented mobility in its multiple modalities of capacity, privilege, right, and need. It hypothesizes that contemporary mobility is inseparable from passports, legal permits, papers, and the inherently normalized bias within the infrastructures they create, to highlight the inseparability of mobility from the politics of sanctions, regulatory policies, and policing, inseparable from its economies–literally of currencies and value–extending into issues of what affordances such value provides. By articulating how issues of mobility and integration are inextricably linked to bordered thinking, nation-building, and nationalism, it outlines nation-building strategies as inherently segregationist and instrumental in transforming the governance of human mobility into policing, security management, and the mitigation of risk. By problematizing 'integration infrastructure' as a political desire for financial stability, cultural homogeneity, and the enforcement of borders through the lens of historical struggles as well as the distribution of power

and privilege, it investigates how state-led art and cultural institutions support and work to maintain propaganda generation that normalize 'otherness'. Through four case studies in Finland and EU, the paper posits that the governance of human mobility may be one of the most important political problems to confront us in the 21st century and highlights the role and culpability of the art and cultural institutions that exacerbate it.

KEYWORDS: Migration, Contemporary Borders, Borderisation, Infrastructural Critique, Violence as infrastructural failure

> The Arctic Tern is a long-distance migratory bird, traveling a distance of 12,000 kilometers from its breeding grounds in the Arctic to its wintering grounds in Antarctica.
>
> – Stanely Cramp (1985, 5)

> [T]he technological transformation of borders is in full swing. In a sense, one of the major consequences of the acceleration of technological innovations has been the creation of a segmented planet with multiple speed regimes.
>
> – Achille Mbembe (2019b, 9)

8.1. Introduction

As the 21st century unfolds, renewed desires for tighter control of mobility are evident across nation-states. Wherever we look, there is a drive of varying intensities towards an escalation of the dialectics of opening and enclosing (Mbembe 2018a), where on the one hand, we are living in an era of "Planetary Entanglement" (Mbembe 2019a, 93) marked by globalization, transnationalism, and cosmopolitanism; on the other hand, there is a desire for secession, separation, localization, and enclosure.

Problems of Mobility

What does migration-oriented mobility mean, and for whom? Is it a capacity, privilege, right, or need? Implicit in mobility is the conceptualization of home and, by extension, of the "homeland" – Does mobility mean the ability to travel toward or away from home? An ability to re-

turn to it? An ability to seek out something beyond the confines of home? To seek out the unknown? As a "permanent or semi-permanent relocation of people from one place to another," migration has been theorized and classified as voluntary, reluctant, or forced (see UN General Assembly 2016). If any movement implies purpose – a move *to* and a move *from*: as a transformation of energy, desire, will, relations, or need – then whose energies, desires, will, relationships, and needs count? When thinking about art and cultural praxis, do we imagine the art world to be free from bordered thinking – as part of a borderless world? Do artistic practices betray an emancipatory impulse – a *militant* mobility?

Although the subject of mobility is topical, it is hardly new, at least for the multitudes within the Global South and the several historically marginalized, racialized, segregated, and oppressed communities. According to Mbembe (2018b), for many individuals, groups, and communities, "freedom of movement and true global mobility has never been a reality for the majority of the world". To deploy a neoliberal phrase, the right to mobility is a severely restricted commodity – a surplus of luxury.

Mobility has now become the center of renewed debates within the art and cultural spaces of Finland, where it has been particularly framed as an evocation of crisis, exemplified by the European Union (EU) immigration crisis, which saw a mass exodus of Syrians seeking refuge during the Syrian Civil War in 2014. More recently, it is a debate invigorated in part due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting restrictions to regulate movement, as well as by increasing environmental concerns regarding the consumption of resources that make global mobility possible. Can such debates be divorced from the fundamental reality that such discussions seem urgent precisely *because* they jeopardize this "right" of the relatively rich and social elite? Within the often white and privileged environs of Finnish art and cultural institutions that are now discussing the adverse effects of mobility, such as its ecological and climatic impacts, the capacity to decide who can move and who can settle where and under what conditions may become (or already are) the core of ongoing political struggles over sovereignty and nationalism; citizenship and identity; or for that matter security and freedom (Mbembe 2019b).

Of course, such mobility is a multi-layered phenomenon, with complex histories extending into several fields and disciplines of thinking. This paper does not seek to unpack every dimension of this term. It is

not directly concerned with, for example, issues of social mobility in terms of an aspirational movement across the performative constructs of class, gendered, racialized, and ethnic divisions; neither as seen through a wider lens of communication and access(-ibility); nor social movements, cultural revolutions, or their histories as may be defined through subaltern studies as a series of historical struggles and a distribution of power; nor the potential of mental mobilities today; nor a relatively newfound online mobility – although these as well are of interest, in other contexts.

Although this paper restricts itself to the limited domain of physical mobility, even a focused investigation of ways in which such mobility is dealt with in art and cultural institutions in Finland covers a broad spectrum indeed. Within the parameters of physical mobility itself, contemporary mobility is inseparable from passports, legal permits, papers, and the inherently normalized bias within the infrastructures they create; inseparable from the politics of sanctions, regulatory policies, and policing; inseparable from economies, literally of currencies and value, extending into issues of what affordances such value provides. Thus, issues of mobility and integration are inextricably linked to bordered thinking, nation-building, and nationalism.

Contemporary Borders

In framing the question of the border (and therefore of mobility), the power of the border lies in its capacity to regulate multiple distributions of populations – not simply human populations, but also nonhumans and non-living – the marginalized and often overlooked bodies, data, networks, and ecologies. More importantly, I mean the regularly (politically) subhumanised and dehumanized bodies – to regulate their distributions across planet Earth and, in so doing, to affect the vital forces of all kinds of beings, enhancing vital forces for some and crippling them for others. And in the process of sorting out who is whom – who should live, who should live where, who can move, under what conditions, and so forth. The *raison d'être* of the border is to attend to key questions, such as to whom does the earth belong – who can lay what types of claims to what parts of it and to the various beings who inhabit them – who determines its distribution and/or its partitioning (Mbembe 2019b).

Borders – as political constructs for regulating human and nonhuman mobility and agency – do not exist by default but are required to be conceived, imagined, and executed. They are no longer merely lines of demarcation separating distinct sovereign entities. In this sense, they are and therefore must be articulated as a set of active and ongoing processes, as "borderization" (Mbembe 2019b) – processes that cause the reinforcement, reproduction, and intensification of vulnerability. For Mbembe, they are the name we should use to describe the organized violence that underpins both contemporary capitalism and our world order in general – processes of violence that transform certain spaces into uncrossable places where specific bodies are racialized and immobilized.

More than at any other time in human history, we are confronted by contemporary borders. On the one hand, these manifest as incarceration camps, penal colonies, detention facilities, refugee centers, and a gradual shaping of countries into prisons for confining and containing "undesirable" bodies. On the other hand, contemporary borders are also configured as infrastructures that replace the wellbeing and welfare of citizens and ecology with security and risk management, through which legalized and deadly policing of racialized and stigmatized bodies continues to uphold apartheid, slavery, colonial and caste-based vertical identities as new old-norms. Authoritarian populism emerges in the EU and globally based on neoliberal contortions of consensus-driven politics. The rift between "the people" and the "other" is increasing, marked by racism, ultra-nationalism, sexism, ethnic and religious rivalries, xenophobia, homophobia, and other deadly passions. Borderization has simply become a tool for neoliberal capitalism to recycle pain. Such violence leads to long-term trauma, helplessness, and precarity, causing significant negative influences on our social fabric. However, in a hyperdigitized world, forms of violence remain invisible or unrecognized. Recognizing and narrating such experiences become difficult unless we find ways to understand how violence is defined and applied across micro (interpersonal), meso (institutional), and macro (trans-societal) scales. Within the domains of critical thinking, these contemporary borders, often identifiable only as intangible sociopolitical processes and forms of technological automation, are slowly becoming visible as key infrastructures – as active forces shaping collective planetary futures.

8.2. Infrastructural Critique

This key shift from institutions to infrastructures as the basis of critique is based on a desire to recognize infrastructure and not institutions, as "the sites of political, economic, and cultural transformation" (Phillips 2011), and as a "means of ensuring the reproduction of a wholly different form of social life over time" (Vishmidt 2017). If we recognize *Institutional Critique* as primarily a critique of institutions, with institutions understood in a sociological context as either stable, valued, recurring patterns of behavior, or "integrated systems of rules that structure social interactions" (Hodgson 2015), it is possible to read institutional critique as the problematizing of the *presence* of specific social, political, and economic structures.

On the other hand, if "infrastructure is made out of time insofar as infrastructure is that which repeats … normalized into an everyday routine" (Vishmidt 2017), it is then, for the sake of efficiency, essentially an invisible form of labor that supports and makes possible without any real inscription into an identified activity, serving to convert labor into production, economies, both financial and socio-political, and service a biopolitical expansion. In this sense, this translation of "human conditions into infrastructural networks" (Rogoff 2020) only becomes visible in its absence, when it stops functioning, or when its dystopian formulations reach critical mass. It is only through the critique of such an absence that historical materialism and power relations can be seen. Thus, I propose that Infrastructural Critique may be seen as a method for revealing and addressing the *absence* of necessary social, political, and economic structures.

8.3. Violence as a Symptom of Infrastructural Failure

If infrastructural critique is a method for revealing the absence of necessary social, political, and economic structures, it may be further possible to say that 'Infrastructural Critique' is, in fact, an articulation of the negation of fundamental needs.

This "negation of needs" is, for Johan Galtung, a Norwegian sociologist and the principal founder of peace and conflict studies, the definition of what constitutes violence. "When a basic need is not satisfied," Galtung wrote, "some kind of fundamental disintegration will take place" (Galtung

1990a, 304). He further subdivided needs into "survival needs", "identity needs", "wellbeing needs", "freedom needs" and "ecological needs".

Of course, this introduces the problem of "scale". Galtung further categorized violence as "Direct" (tangible, often physically identifiable); "Structural" (institutional and occluded in systemic behavioral patterns); and "Cultural" (forms that are normalized to the point of becoming invisible and indivisible from normal practices and patterns of being) (Galtung 1990b). Types of violence can be further categorized within this model according to *context*, as "Self-directed" (superficial to severe self-abuse and suicidal behavior), "Interpersonal" (including intimate partner, family, or community-based violence), or "Collective" (including social, political, and ecological violence), or in terms of *form*, such as physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, spiritual, cultural, economic/financial, verbal, neglectful, and cyber/information violence (Galtung 1969).

These different categorizations of violence illustrate how the defining frameworks, each with recurrent iterations and exponential overlaps, form complex networks that are not easy to unravel or simplify into a singular narrative or cohesive whole. This difficulty stems from the subjectivities of experience across multiple identities, emplaced upon layers of knowledge(s) situated and fortified as institutional, creating a kaleidoscopic metascape of vertically evaluated information overload, or what Achille Mbembe described as "Planetary Entanglement" (2019a, 93).

Let us say that it is sufficient to declare that 'violence is a negation of fundamental needs'. By extension, a negation of the fundamental needs of beings means that violence is also representative or may be viewed as a symptom of institutional failure – or perhaps even a *symptom of infrastructural failure*. Regarding the needs of the varying categories of immigrants (voluntary, reluctant, or forced), asylum seekers and asylees, refugees, and other paperless bodies, what does a negation of needs look like? Who or what systems are the negators of need and, therefore perpetrate violence?

To respond to this hypothesis and questions, this chapter delves into four case studies that otherwise may be considered traditional examples of institutional failure, but I propose reading them as progressively cascading iterations of failures of infrastructure – a failure of that (infrastructural) space that determines systemic, relational, rule enforcing operations; traverses multiple scales, is seemingly separate contexts and sub-

ject to constant evolution; and yet, only visible at the point of dysfunction.

Migrant, Evacuee, Human: Finnish History Museum (2016)

Whose History Is It Anyway?, a course conducted by Professor Nora Sternfield and artist Minna Henriksson, at the Visual Cultures and Contemporary Art (ViCCA) MA program at Aalto University in the spring of 2016, explored notions and strategies of nation-building from political-historical perspectives, asking about the implications of a created "other". In this course, participants confronted the problematics of selective amnesia in the Finnish context – the paradoxical relationship that Finland has with colonialism (Merivirta, Koivunen & Särkkä 2022), styling itself historically as a victim despite evidence to the contrary (Lehtola 2015), while simultaneously taking an "exceptionalist" approach to its history (Hoegaerts, Liimatainen, Hekanaho & Peterson 2022) – including its co-operation with Nazi Germany, the occupation of Russian territory during The Second World War, and denying its direct and indirect participation in colonialist and racist international projects (Jonas 2012; Wuorinen 2015).

As part of their coursework, a group of students visited the pop-up photography exhibition *Migrant, Evacuee, Human* (2016), presented by The Picture Collections of the National Board of Antiquities at the Finnish National History Museum. The exhibition comprised "photos of refugees, evacuees, immigrants, and migrants: people who have arrived in or left Finland over the course of several decades."

It is important to note that such an exhibition, sanctioned, and developed with state funding, show cased within the premises of a national institution, was held in the wake of the largest migration movement in the history of Europe when the EU was officially unprepared and without resources to accommodate the 20 million Syrians seeking asylum, refuge, and shelter. What subliminal messages can be read from the presentation of such an exhibition?

The exhibition purportedly aimed to present a transparent and clear understanding of the Finnish context to the "refugee crisis" by show casing examples of various Finnish and other regional communities in ambiguous states of arrival/departure. The problematic aspect of the exhibi-

tion was its oversimplification of the projected idea of "crisis" – a cementing of the propagated rhetoric that has served to shift the nature of the crisis away from the lack of accommodation or unwillingness to make space, instead reconfiguring crisis to signal and amplify cultural, ethnic, and racialized differences. In so doing, generating a conception that bodies, specifically bodies seeking asylum and refuge, become abject, unwanted, and problematized in themselves. This way, the influx of bodies becomes a crisis in itself, wrapped within another crisis of the politics of hate.

For example, a striking and recurring phenomenon in the exhibition was the repeated signaling of who is named and who goes unnamed. In the multitudes of photographs on display, often simply as a timed slideshow, an outflux of Finnish citizens to the United States of America (USA) or an influx from Northern Karelia after the annexation were almost always referred to by name, whereas non-Finnish bodies were almost always referred to as ethnically gendered "refugee" or "asylee", for example, in captions such as "Vietnamese refugee woman using the electric stove in the kitchen," "refugee boy riding a cycle," and so on. Through this politics of naming, representations of bodies generate a skewed and unequal narrative that present Finnish migrants with dignity but non-Finnish bodies as unknown dependents, further heightening prevalent Finnish social anxieties concerning migrants as inherently *unknowable* entities.

The exhibition as a temporary pop-up exhibition, was perhaps not intended to be highly significant. This was clear at its outset, perhaps amplified by the fact that it was installed in the basement of the museum next to the museum café and restrooms. Yet, what is significant in such a placement is that the exhibition was a gesture that having done the bare required minimum, simply "checked the box", a symbolic gesture that failed to generate any meaningful discourse on the topical subject of the refugee crises, and remained a cursory nod that left no trace, not even in the archives of the National Museum.

Furthermore, implicit in this presentation was the fact that by mounting such an exhibition, the museum – as an official "national" institution – situated the nation as culturally "open" within the larger European Union (despite its border politics being not open at all). Instead of providing relevant information about complex histories of war, conflict, and migration, the exhibition offered comfortable examples of "integration" and

the productivity of refugees within the larger Finnish social framework, casting their bodies as desirable only if useful to existing society – as commodified and consumable artifacts. The exhibition provided nothing in an educational and enlightening mode, while imbuing those susceptible to it, a feeling of false nationalist pride.

To contextualize the reading of such an exhibition in 2022, one only needs to consider current events of the Ukraine–Russia War, during which Finland has faced another wave of evacuees, refugees, and asylum seekers. In contrast to 2014–2015, the EU and Finnish responses could not have been more different: mass outrage, vociferous social opinion, the bypassing of bureaucratic red tape, the expediency of the political machinery, generosity regarding the provision of spatial accommodation, and a continuous warm welcome, have been features of the day.

In 2015, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), a United Nations Refugee Agency, recorded a total of 65.3 million displaced individuals, of whom 21.3 million were refugees – the highest number recorded since the establishment of the organization in 1949 in the aftermath of the Second World War – with 4.9 million from Syria, 2.7 million from Afghanistan, and 1.1 million from Somalia. A majority of these refugees have been hosted in the Global South, by countries such as Turkey, Iran, and Lebanon. However, only 107,000 refugees were admitted to official resettlement programs (UNHCR 2016).

But even as recently as in 2021, after the fall of the Afghan government in Kabul to Taliban militants, the interior ministers of the EU in a press release for the Council of the European Union placed a higher priority on preventing "illegal migration from the region", vowing to "[reinforce] border management capacity" (Council of the European Union 2021) than on providing Afghans with protection after two decades of failed Western military interventions. This use of language – moving from the neutral "irregular" to the more ideological "illegal" – marks a highly significant shift. The European Commission (EC) itself has argued that the phrase is damaging: "Terms such as illegal, undocumented, non-documented, and unauthorized migration can have different connotations in national policy debates. Due to this and the association with criminality, the term 'illegal migration' should be avoided, as most irregular migrants are not criminals" (EC 2019).

In comparison, approximately 7 million Ukrainians fled their country in less than 100 days, with the great majority finding refuge in the EU. Four EU member states border Ukraine, and each of them opened its borders to accommodate the mass exodus, with contestable political comments issued in the public media; for example, CBS News senior foreign correspondent Charlie D'Agata stated that "Ukraine isn't … like Iraq or Afghanistan, that has seen conflict raging for decades, [but is] relatively civilized, relatively European" (In Context 2022); Ukraine's Deputy Chief Prosecutor, David Sakvarelidze, expressed horror at "European people with blue eyes and blond hair … being killed every day" (Manga Man 2022); journalist Phillipe Corbé was dismayed at witnessing "Europeans leaving in cars that look like ours"; or an Al Jazeera anchor, in referring to refugee seekers who apparently looked prosperous and middle-class, claimed they did not look like "people trying to get away from areas in North Africa and the Middle-East." Ironically, the bodies that were stopped at the borders, harassed, and detained were BIPOC students and non-Ukrainians trying to exit a volatile environment (Bayoumi 2022). Commissioner for Home Affairs, Ylva Johansson, reportedly said, "I would say it's Europe at its best" (EC 2022).

Decades after the conception of the EU – which claimed as its motto "United in diversity" (European Union 2000) – the EU came under direct threat from its own actions in 2015, the lack of sympathy toward close to 21.3 million (non-EU) human beings seeking refuge and asylum. It marked an ideological decay of the founding principles that can only be averted if EU citizens realize that they have replaced the former motto with a new one borrowed directly from the Nazi Right – "Europe for Europeans" (Murer 2010).

Kaikuu Project, Ateneum National Museum (2020–2021)

In 2020, an open letter entitled *Call to Action* was issued to several state-run institutions and universities in Finland, with a centralized focus on Helsinki. This call to action, "encouraging organizations to do more to confront racism in all its forms, and closely integrate anti-racist ways of working," outlines racism as a deeply rooted problem in Finnish society, the confronting of which has been left to the very people most affected by it, such as members of BIPOC communities and other ethnic minorities.

Furthermore, it articulated that structural racism has not been properly identified, taken seriously, or sought to be eliminated. Quick on the heels of the *Black Lives Matter* movement, which gained considerable traction and visibility in Finland, the Call to Action seemingly mobilized several institutions to break their institutional silence and respond through several degrees of action. Although token responses, several actions continue to make slow progress within the Finnish art and cultural sphere.

The *Kaikuu Project* at Ateneum National Museum (2020–2021) was initiated as a response to this call for action that "*aims to strengthen the foundation and continuity of culture*" and had been "designed for Finnish language students with *different backgrounds*" [emphasis added] (Laamanen 2021). These two quoted sentences provide entry points into the problematic nature of institutionalized learning, which on the one hand compels one to ask whose culture is strengthened and continued, invariably leading to the path of historicization within frameworks of the "nation," while on the other hand making it clear that the project of history-making is a buttress that supports nationalism. That the project was designed to recognize and therefore make visible through its legitimizing gaze only those enrolled in some kind of integration process is unfortunate, but it is not new, and is therefore unsurprising. It emerges as a key instance of public programming, as well as a pedagogical mode of programming for its staff that promotes one-way integration *within* a closed cultural system.

Although the *Kaikuu Project* at the Ateneum was *prima facie* a benign pedagogical program – a tool for teaching Finnish language through classical art and art history that evokes a quintessential "ways of looking" approach (Laamanen 2021) – it is precisely in the utilization of such approaches that effectively reinforce and legitimize the integration practices within cultural institutions. Here, it is important to mention that within the vertical and graded identities of who may be considered a "Finn" demarcations exist in terms of citizenship, along lines that are clearly linguistic (whether Finnish-speaking Finns, as well as Swedish and Russian speaking Finns), racialized (Afro Finns, Inari Sámi, Swedish-Finns, Russo-Finns), ethnicized (Finnish Roma, Baltic Finns, Karelians, Ingrian Finns, Finnish Kale, Finnish Tatars) or generationalized (Somali, Vietnamese, Iraqi, Syrian, Turkish, Romanian, Chilean, Indian, etc.). A relatively new demarcation, "New Finns" (Finnish: *uussuomalainen*), has recently

emerged to explain the existence and presence of those people in Finland who have a non-ethnic Finnish background and who reside permanently in the country. A person who is a New Finns may have one of the following backgrounds, including immigrant, immigrant-origin, refugee, and/or family (re)unification. The term is especially used to emphasize a range of those who have (recently acquired) Finnish citizenship and carry Finnish passports to those foreigners who live permanently in Finland and intend to become naturalized in Finland at some point in the future.

Like the fictional term "race", weaponized and deployed within the histories of modernity, leading to processes of racialization and otherness, the term New Finn is shaped through similar neocolonial tactics and neoliberal capitalist market conditions. It also seeks to flatten identities within equally damaging intranational dynamics. The normalization of such terminology, specifically by institutions that claim to represent large sections of previously unrepresented communities, represents a dangerous turn for multicultural aspirations, especially within increasing xenophobic climates fueled by the political right. Rather than recognizing cultures' capacity to evolve organically as inherently diverse, plurally voiced, and multifaceted, Finland's integration policies remain a nationalist project encoded with colonial tactics designed for a monocultural social order.

Close Watch, Finnish Pavilion, Venice Biennale (2022)

The third case study marks an itinerant progression towards issues of representation and questions of borderization in a more-than-national context. Previously published as *Who Watches Whom?* (Mehta 2022), excerpts of this text provide a crucial piece of the puzzle insofar as it seeks to engage with issues of power through the lens of cumulative responsibility and culpability of an artist and an institution, especially when making and commissioning works that orbit questions of security (and, in contrast, agency) in a markedly specific relationship between security enforcers and an open-ended interpretation of publics. Furthermore, the case study here questions whether issues pertaining to embodiment and social intervention – and by extension, research conducted and the artistic practice developed through it – can ever be free of the power relations implicit in the political, identity-driven understanding of society today.

While the aforementioned text is a line of critique aimed at *Close Watch* as a project and at Pilvi Takala, implicated as an artist present(ed) in the pavilion (at the time) representing Finland, it also casts light on the structural inequalities that give birth to projects such as *Close Watch,* which are generated through *infrastructural apathy*. As such, this critique squarely addresses the infrastructure of institutional bodies tasked with the governance of art and culture; their choice to take seemingly "apolitical" positions; whose stable income positions have been dominated by white Finnish workers, without even isolated solitary examples of people of color (POC) occupying leadership positions. This forces upon the Finnish art and cultural scene, a dissonance where institutional policy regulations are made and enacted by those who do not fall under the purview of such policies, on behalf of, and *affecting* those who are not in positions to contest such regulation (Kallio-Tavin & Tavin 2018).

Close Watch, by Pilvi Takala, curated by Christina Li, and commissioned by Frame Contemporary Art Finland, was an installation housed in the Finnish National Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, 2022. The commission comprised a multi-channel video installation, a website (http://closewatch.site), and a publication (at the time unavailable to the public). The space of the pavilion was designed to mirror 'transgressional dynamics' via the installation of a one-way police mirror that divided the interior. The multichannel video was the pivotal element of the project. With the project articulated as "based on Takala's experience in the private security industry, where she worked covertly as a fully qualified security guard for Securitas," the first inquiry of critique asks: Can the ability of the artist (as a white, middle/upper-class body) to secure for themselves a job and receive training within a security company in order to carry out their process of artistic research be perceived as anything other than a striking signal and affliction of privilege?

Even if we ignore the fact that Takala occupied a position that likely could have allowed another candidate (in greater need) to potentially earn a living wage (and obtain funds required to secure a year's worth of residence permit from Migri, the Finnish Immigration Service), it is impossible to deny an element of perversion at the core of this situation: an artist is structurally enabled by a system to enact a choice, to legitimately utilize a work opportunity to conduct artistic research while hundreds, if not thousands, of art and cultural workers, competent beings who excel at what they do, are forced to devalue, let go of, or set aside their exper-

tise, never mind their desires and goals, to perform labor and work *outside* their primary vocation and field of work – the majority of foreign-born students and even "professional" artists (of color) left with no choice but to work in kitchens, deliver post, enter the cleaning industry, and/or take up construction jobs. While it is difficult to find jobs to supplement an art and cultural work, the field is saturated with "unpaid internships" (Maury 2020) that demand a bursting roster of *useful* skills, offer non-to-minimum wage, involve language barriers, and increased wage disparities between Finnish and non-Finnish workers. Although "foreign-born unemployment is almost four times higher than the overall unemployment rate" (Elonen and Woolley 2014) and "immigrants earn, on average, 25% less than native-born Finns" (Smith 2021), a majority of non-Finnish art students who face these structural inequalities, permanently return to their home countries (Elonen and Woolley 2014) after being unable to secure basic living conditions for themselves. Those who believe that staying in precarious conditions is a better option than returning (Elonen and Woolley 2014), or those who are tenacious enough to stick with the task of creating a diverse art field in Finland, are almost always working multiple jobs, performing administrative tasks for their practice, and navigating a system that reproduces a politics of separation (Mbembe 2018a) that is designed to be more closed to outsiders than open.

The idea that the Finnish art and cultural space is 'a system that is designed to be more closed to outsiders than open' is an important analogy to keep in mind when critically unpacking a work on security and power. For this, it may be useful to think through Achille Mbembe (2018b), who has spoken:

> "Wherever we look, the drive is towards enclosure, or in any case an intensification of the dialects of territorialisation and deterritorialization, a dialectics of opening and closure. The belief that the world would be safer, if only risks, ambiguity and uncertainty could be controlled and if only identities could be fixed once and for all, is gaining momentum. Risk management techniques are increasingly becoming a means to govern mobilities. In particular, the extent to which the biometric border is extending into multiple realms, not only of social life but also of the body, the body that is not mine."

It is significant in the context of a work exhibited on a platform such as the Venice Biennale, *especially* as it holds space in the national pavilion where national identities are played out in the domain of art and culture, that questions of representation on national and transnational scales become a critical line of inquiry. At which stage do we define "we the people"? "Who really are 'the people? And what operation of discursive power circumscribes *the people* at any given moment, and for what purpose?" (Butler 2015).

Like any group, a "people" are a *contingent* group. This means that any taxonomies that form the parameters defining such a group are equally derived from the understanding of those *outside* it. For example, by saying that there exists a group of people designated X, another group is automatically created – those who are not X. Any attempt to define a group, a community, or a people creates a process of othering by default; every contingent group creates another, comprising those not included – the other. When people attempt to answer the most basic question humans can face, "who are we?", they answer this question in the traditional way human beings have always answered it – by referring to what means most to them – in terms of ancestry, gender, religion, language, history, values, customs, and institutions; identifying with cultural groups, whether tribes, ethnic groups, religious communities, nations, and at the broadest level, civilizations. Things that provide the greatest stability are also perversely the concepts that resist change, and a systemic condition is generated under which we know who we are only when we know who we are not, and often only when we know who we are against. We inhabit a world that has created new levels of precarity, where the most important distinctions among peoples are not only ideological, social, political, or economic, but a potent mix of all these ingredients – they are cultural. If it were possible to make such a choice, one's choice would ideally depend on one's comfort with the level of contingency – at which stage do we choose to exclude? If membership is an inevitable act of exclusion, then any kind of delineation of a people, is a "status symbol" (Mbembe 2002).

That the Finnish art and cultural space is a system designed to be more closed than open to outsiders is an important idea to bear in mind when critically unpacking a work on security and power. It cannot be ignored that for many of these bodies, the contestation of identities is not between consumer and citizen, but whether such bodies are even con-

sidered to be citizens. In the case of foreign-born professionals and immigrants, the fitness of non-citizens is judged entirely on the basis of economic value, with the sole significant criterion being an open-ended contract. Does such a configuration of economic fitness and management of the right to live render the difference between consumer and citizen irrelevant? In this case, do all immigrant bodies become reluctant consumers of the state? Does the state itself become a market? How, then, would comparisons of the mall and the state as sites of consumption work within the context of *Close Watch*?

The original text clarified conceptually fundamental differences between "covert research" (deployed to maintain well-defined ethical principles), vs "deception research"; and the contentious history of "limited disclosure" in the fields of sociology (Homan 1980; Bulmer 1982; Calvey 2008; Pearson 2009). Through these concepts, the texts delve into how artistic research practises are often based on dated conceptions of knowledge production that have been appropriative and exploitative. *Close Watch* deployed several ethnographic methodologies familiar to those operating within urban anthropology and human geography. Can "going undercover to infiltrate communities and disrupting social equilibrium" (Li 2022) be done without an implicit awareness of the relational dynamics of power between the observer (here, the artist) and the observed? What are the ethical implications of the artist's deception of their fellow workers? Must these workers be placed on trial under the socially voyeuristic gaze of an international audience at the Venice Biennale, or elsewhere? Perhaps the questions that really need to be asked are, "Who is really surveilling whom? Who is observed, judged, and policed? To what end?"

Another key distinction lies between research participants and research subjects. It is important to note that this deception is carefully designed: while the artist's coworkers (research subjects) were unaware of the artist's intentions and motivations, specific members of Securitas' managerial team (as research participants) were aware of who *Johanna Takala* (the artist's alias) was and what her motivations were during the six-month period of employment. The artist was in regular communication with her contact, Kari Holmström, a security manager at Securitas for over 30 years, who not only facilitated Takala's employment but also ensured the safety of the artist during her employment.

It is in this, the artist's mutually consensual and "cordial" relationship with Securitas and the selective covertness of her dealings with fellow security guards that create, for me, a skewed constellation of power. This constellation is visible in the fact that, while the security guards as individuals were objects of critique, whereas the company – an institutional structure that generates and imbues these individuals with authoritarian power – was not. It seems unfortunate that in the wide spectrum of a global corporation (Securitas n.d.) spanning multiple countries, containing a dense hierarchy of legislative power structures, and a global workforce of 355,000 employees (Securitas n.d.), the focus remained on the most precarious, on-ground staff, within one. single. shopping mall.

Is this an acceptable gaze of artistic research? In *Artistic Research as Institutional Practice*, Esa Kirkkopelto forwards an argument that the dilemmas formerly related to institutional critique practiced by artists have now been removed within academia and mark a change and/or shift of "the medium of making and action itself: an artist changes her artistic medium into a medium of research" (Kirkkopelto 2015). This shift has notably taken place within academic settings and also within the field "primarily *because of* academic settings" (Holert 2011), giving birth to the agency of the *artistic researcher*. Specifically elaborating upon the triad of "innovation, invention, and institutions" within capitalist (university) frameworks, Kirkkapelto's claims that "artistic research not only takes place in institutions, but it should also conduct research on them" (Kirkkopelto 2015, 52-53). Such a claim corresponds to Holert's cautions against the current institutionalization of Artistic Research, that Artistic Research can hardly be viewed in a "value-free" manner. It is linked all too closely to the concept of knowledge as a utilitarian tool – aiding the production of economies within present capitalist orders – for it not to be questioned. Within institutional practice, the concept of knowledge is fortified through multiple iterations, and this way, institutionalized as politics of knowledge, knowledge economies, and power-knowledge relations as a productive force for biopolitical expansion. In their scathing critique of Documenta 13, Manifesta 9, and the seventh Berlin Biennale, artists Alice Creischer and Andreas Siekmann proclaimed that because any critique of capitalism pursued by artists, curators, and theorists is usually spawned within the contemporary bourgeoisie (and therefore remains firmly grounded in the art world as we know it), such critique is

not capable of bringing about structural political change "but is first and foremost a question of the political ethics of each individual protagonist" (Creischer & Siekmann 2012).

The exhibition essay on the project website closed with the statement, "Close Watch reflects on how control is enforced, and shows that it is *we*, and no one else, who govern each other's behavior" (La Biennale di Venezia 2022; A Menadèo aRTs 2022). Can this be understood as an accurate description of the work? Can we say that it is *we* who are ultimately governing each other's behavior? While in the presence of such a clear power hierarchy? Who is the "we" whose agency is claimed?

Can the position of the artist as a researcher, and her team of professional actors and theater pedagogues, create a space free of their own subjective positions of expertise? Can such positions be made equal, and were they? Can researchers become invested in sharing positions of vulnerability they seek to generate with the participants? Do researchers' roles and their agenda of extracting data (here, stories and experiences) separate them from the positionality of the participants?

What does it mean for an artist to perform such a covert operation, to perform critique in the limited form as an exemplifier of security through a handful of complicit bodies, to extend a claim that the only forms of aggression relevant to the project's scope of inquiry were the direct and tangible acts of violence the artist witnessed?

It is perfectly understandable that, through and due to the extended timelines of the research process, the artist bypassed the ways in which security guards are encountered by the public, instead faced them as colleagues, acquaintances, and peers. In the video, it is clear that the artist sympathized with the security guards, but it is unsettling that broader questions of solidarity and support remained limited to the group as a closed ecosystem and echo chamber, where it is the body of the aggressor that was prioritized and coached on dealing with such aggression, and strategies were developed to circumvent and diffuse this body's aggression. Furthermore, in dealing with security guards as *compromised bodies* who were asked to evaluate their own culpability in the on-the-job excessive use of force, racist language, and toxic behavior, is it not troubling that the process did not include a single qualified person who may have provided a toolkit for ensuring the safer space required for an effective assessment? The project's text declared that the artist worked as a

"fully qualified security guard", but was the artist or anyone on the team also a fully qualified social service worker, psychoanalyst, therapist, or other professional with relevant experience in handling such potentially difficult dialogues?

On the other hand, the party that apparently faced aggression was again made invisible in the work. The "Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey: Being Black in the EU" report cites Finland as having the highest rate of racist violence, including assaults by police (14%); the highest rate of racist harassment (63%); 31% of its participants experiencing racial profiling; 61% of hate crimes conducted by individuals from non-minority backgrounds, and an overwhelming 86% of unreported cases (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2022). Why were these voices missing from the dialogue in *Close Watch*? What does such an omission in a project dealing with civic liberties and social injustice sediment as an artistic practice and an artistic gaze? What is the value of critique it generates, if it limits itself to being concerned with a closed ecosystem and does not critique the broader context of security – the structural and cultural forms of violence embedded in the very nature of enforcement, both in its physical embodied form and in terms of techno-legal infrastructures, the formulation of protocols and policy, and the hyper-normalization of what is tolerable (to whom)?

It is difficult not to imagine alternative scenarios and wonder, for example, what the tone of the project would have been if Takala had been employed with the knowledge and consent of management. What if the on-the-job artistic research were conducted in conditions of precarity as opposed to in collusion with the authority of the artist's employers? What if her fellow security workers were "in the know," and the company was ignorant of her covert workings? Could there have been more visible signs of institutional critique and speaking truth to power?

In this sense, it is difficult not to question, at least in relation to these security guards as participants, what is really the aim of the work. Is it to provide sensitivity training through diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) discourses? Could such an interventionist model of the project, at least for the security guards, provide some articulation of the sociopolitical constructions of everyday racism, whiteness, and critical diversity? Could it have facilitated techniques that would have allowed them to divest themselves from positions of "oppressive" authority carriers? Can such a

process serve as a template, inviting reformation of how security guards themselves approach public spaces differently to create an "encounter of equals"? (Mehta 2020). However, I am more interested in the *field* as the site of governance, in as much as governance has been reduced to the role of "management of risk", where "the image of piloting, that is to say, management, has become the cardinal metaphor to describe not only politics but all of the human activity as well" (Tiqquin & Hurley 2020, 111-112). Who is the "we" in these public spaces? Is it the security guards, or those being managed? Are the latter – those being managed, the public – a homogeneous entity? If not, what tags, markers, or politics of identity, what methodology are employed by the security guards to profile, assess, and engage the public? Along with the need for collegial solidarity, are these methodologies also learnt "on the job"? Or part of the six-month compulsory training? What structural methods of learning cement cognitive biases? What dictates levels of threat? What goes into the creation of the training modules that security guards trainees (such as Takala) undergo as part of training – sensitivity or apathy? Are these biases that make themselves visible as racist humor and toxic masculinity present due to the high pressure of the job or is it a deeper-seated mental construction of the social orders of our society?

In his text *Coloniality of Being*, Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2007) contended that what emerged in the 16th century was something more pervasive and subtle than the concept of race: an attitude characterized by a permanent suspicion that is central to European modernity. Torres claimed that "scepticism becomes the means to reach certainty and provide a solid foundation for the self." He named this idea of coloniality "Manichean misanthropic scepticism", a method that generates *doubt* in a way that is most obvious – as "a worm at the very heart of modernity." Through it, statements of fact are replaced by cynical rhetorical questions: "You are a human" becomes "Are you completely human?"; "You have rights" becomes "Why do you think that you have rights?"; and "You are a rational being" takes the form of the question "Are you really rational?"

Generally speaking, and within the project context, it is clear that interactions between security guards and those they policed were not innocent. There is no sugar-coating the fact that the social dynamics at play when two bodies (to use crash-and-burn terminology) collide are

not neutral. Make no mistake; these are not benign or desirable interactions. At the moment of the encounter, both parties are wary, guarded, and view the other as hostile and capable of unexpected violence. In these scenarios, one party is vested with authoritative power (the freedom granted to one in authority), while the other is already a subject of marginalization, imbued with an authority bias, expected to be compliant, or otherwise considered volatile, and requiring to be made submissive, even by force. These encounters transform the "field" into performative sites of reinforcement, reproduction, and intensification of vulnerability for stigmatized and dishonored groups. In such interactions, there is often no middle ground, no room for resistance.

For Marshall McLuhan (1964), it is in the inherent nature of the "medium, of any and all media" to be the amputation and extension of its own being in a new technical form. No technology may shed its political nature, and the tools of surveillance carry within them the means to generate its position of power. A journey back along the timeline of surveillance shows the following:

> Eighteenth-century records of criminal justice rarely recorded any more information about the criminals than their names. ... By the mid-nineteenth century, detailed records were kept about their age, physical characteristics, education, religion, family, and previous convictions together with judgments about their "character." This information was routinely collected long before it was consolidated into the 1869 Habitual Offenders Act, and it presaged the better-known late-nineteenth-century introduction of photography and fingerprinting (Shoemaker 2017).

Today, the conditions of the "field" are much more complex. With biometrics, retinal scans, genetic tests, and personal identifiers embedded in credit cards, passports, and other "verified papers," surveillance capitalism has become the key marker defining civilizations as "modern," with personal experiences and knowledge production both being shaped by and through surveillance. Are security guards reduced to embodied technology – already cyborgean manifestations of surveillance systems, with their own humanity simply a ghost in the machine?

8.4. Revisiting Infrastructural Failure

The final case study, although no longer related to art and cultural institutions, nor directly connected to the Finnish state or the idea of Finnish nationalism, is nevertheless tethered to key issues that stem from them. In a way, this case study represents a speculative future in the making for how our world, our political relationalities, and our art and cultural praxes will be shaped, both in the EU and outside of it.

iBorderCtrl

iBorderCtrl is an EU-funded automated virtual avatar-based border security system developed by the L3S Research Center. According to its website (https://www.l3s.de), L3S "develops methods and technologies for digital transformation and researches the effects of digitization. Based on this, it derives options for action, recommendations, and innovation strategies for industry, politics, and society." (L3S Research Center n.d.)

To explain the iBorderCtrl app:

> **"iBorderCtrl** aims to enable a fast and efficient border control for third-country nationals crossing the land borders of EU Member States with technologies that adopt the future development of the Schengen Border Management. The project re-engineers the system of border crossing by enabling automated control. [...] the workload of human agents can be reduced and be partly replaced by objective controls with automated [...] means."
>
> iBorderCtrl [as a] complete two-stage solution is **currently under lab testing,** and all individual components, and the system as a whole, is being tested. In the upcoming period, the **actual commencement of piloting deployment will start** [...] in Hungarian, Greek, and Latvian land borders. (L3S Research Center n.d.)

At this point, it would be remiss not to argue that there is a right to "cognitive liberty" and that the inner workings of people's brains are off-limits to the state. However, what the iBorderCtrl project proposes is far more

insidious. The app involves two stages, as described on the research center's website, and the pre-travel (first stage) instructions are as follows:

» Travelers are required to use the Traveler User Application (TUA) by entering and/or updating personal information and uploading travel-related documents (such as visa or passport), travel information (hotel reservation, vehicle data, etc.). TUA verifies that the traveler has entered all the mandatory information, checks the authenticity of the uploaded travel documents, and *stores all information in the iBorderCtrl database*.
» Travelers must go through an *avatar interview* with an "avatar," an *artificial figure that represents a border guard* that uses an *Automatic Deception Detection System (ADDS)*.
» During the avatar interview, a set of traveler- and travel-related questions will be asked by the virtual border agent, similar to what an actual border guard may ask travelers in a real-life border-crossing scenario. The avatar interview is designed to detect false answers, as it observes *non-verbal behavior*, meaning that *the traveler is filmed, while computer software observes the facial (micro) gestures of the participant to detect deceptive behavior.*

The border crossing (second stage) process is as follows:

» Travelers present their QR codes, and the border guard will, by scanning the QR code via a portable unit, access the traveler's personal information gathered during pre-travel registration, as well as the risk assessment score.
» Then, using a portable scanning device, the border guard will validate the authenticity of the travel documents, validate vehicle information (e.g., registration, plate number, etc.), and proceed to match the fingerprint reference with the traveler.
» Further biometric validation will be performed if the fingerprints do not match or if travelers' behavior and/or information provided has led the border guard to suspect that they have given false information about their identity. This includes the use of *facial recognition* and *palm vein technologies*.
» A border check would then move on to hidden human detection (applicable only in the case where the traveler crosses the borders using his/her private car).

The overall system involves an extravist process based on the following:

1. "**Biometrics Module**", a biometric identity validation using an integrated network linked to relevant border and/or law-enforcement agency databases on an (at least) European level;
2. "**Face Matching Tool**" for performing facial recognition during both pre-registration and border crossing phases;
3. "**Document Authenticity Analytics Tool**", where security features of travel documents (passport, visa) are examined by DAAT against fraud characteristics;
4. "**Hidden Human Detection Tool**", an integrated electromagnetic/radar sensor and an acoustic sensor to detect humans hidden inside transport vehicles;
5. "**External Legacy and Social interfaces system**", used to crosscheck the traveller's information against legacy systems, such as SIS II (the second generation Schengen Information System);
6. "**Risk Based Assessment Tool**" for calculating and managing traveler related risks by providing a *user friendly and flexible tool to support the decision-making process of the Border Authorities*;
7. "**Integrated Border Control Analytics Tools**" used to utilize past travels to identify outliers in behaviour;
8. "**Automatic Deception Detection System**" that performs, controls, and assesses the pre-registration interview and quantifies the probability of deceit in interviews by analyzing interviewees' non-verbal micro-gestures.

Critics of this system, such as Patrick Breyer, Member of European Parliament (MEP), have called it a supposed "video lie detector," stating that whether such "deception detection" technology works is highly controversial (Article 19 2021). The only scientific assessments of the technology have been published by Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU), which is part of the iBorderCtrl consortium. MMU scientists have patented the technology and are selling it commercially through a company called *Silent Talker Ltd.* Since the technology is based on machine learning, the developers themselves are unclear about what the system detects as signs of deception.

What is truly alarming in the proposal of such a surveillance system is the reinforcement of currently cemented attitudes and values. As dis-

cussed in the earlier examples in this chapter, even in a field as *diversity sensitive* as the field of art and culture, its institutional, structural, and even select individual elements remain colored with bias. What happens when state-led organizations that are, relatively speaking, *diversity conservative* (i.e. they engage in cherry-picking definitions of diversity that are suitable for nationalist narratives, where diversity is not understood to mean diversity of class, gender, and sexual orientations, but instead are configured within white and white-passing identities that exclude existing racial and ethnic power relations). What happens when these state-led organizations adopt structurally unsound systems fraught with bias? Furthermore, what happens when such bias is cemented into technological systems and transformed into algorithmic bias?

Beyond the risk of exposure to unforeseen disadvantages and intensification of the vulnerability of its users, iBorderCtrl's process for collecting data clearly demarcates an overt qualitative and class division between EU and non-EU citizens. Moreover, it is unclear who trains the AI algorithm and how it is trained (i.e., what human biases become systemic); what demographics and groups the AI program classifies as "liars"; what the error rates are and whether they are higher for certain groups of people; and what data can be held, for how long, and for what unknown purposes.

As of Autumn 2022, a revision of the project website claims that the research has been suspended due to ethical concerns about using AI – as a newly arising technology that may pose risks for fundamental human rights. What must concern us is not simply whether a human or a machine that should be in charge of processing immigrant mobility. Instead, whoever is at the helm of such processes, our concern must be to ask why are skepticism, apathy, and stoicism the default modes of operation, rather than warmth, empathy, and care?

8.5. Conclusion

The chapter provides evidence of how the governance of human mobility is transformed into the policing and management of risk and, more importantly, how state-led art and cultural institutions actively support and work toward maintaining such propaganda generation, which normalizes the otherness of not only asylum seekers, immigrants, and international BIPOC students, but also of its own citizens. These case studies

highlight systemic issues in the articulation of integration by the state, both as a desire for financial stability, cultural homogeneity, and the enforcement of borders.

One of the dominant myths of our time is the belief that the world will be safer if only risks, ambiguity, and uncertainty can be controlled. The belief, that we would be safer and our lives enhanced if only identities could be fixed and secured once and for all, is shared worldwide. Such beliefs are gaining momentum. The discourse of identity, which was used in the service of emancipation, further inclusion, and expanded belonging, is increasingly being coopted and deployed in the service of "closure" (Mbembe 2019b). So we live in a world where risk management technologies have become one of the dominant means of governing mobilities, and these technologies are proliferating. Contemporary borders are in danger of becoming sites of reinforcement, reproduction, and intensification of vulnerability for stigmatized and dishonored groups. The most racially marked and ever more disposable people are those who, in this era of entanglement are forced to pay the heaviest of prices, for instance, for the most expensive period of prison construction in human history.

According to Maldonado-Torres (2007), the instrumental rationality that operates within the logic that misanthropic skepticism helped to establish, is the reason why in modernity, the concept of progress always means progress for a few and why human rights do not apply equally to all, among many other apparent contradictions. Misanthropic skepticism provides the basis for the preferential option, which explains why security for some can conceivably be obtained at the expense of the lives of others. The imperialist attitude promotes a fundamentally genocidal attitude toward colonized and racialized people that deems colonial and racial subjects to be dispensable.

In his seminal book *Necropolitics*, Achille Mbembe (2019a) declared dispensability to be a central issue. He critiques modernity within the framework of governance and the Foucauldian conception of Biopolitics, as well as the role of governments as bodies tasked with securing for their citizens the "right to live" as being enshrined within the order of their powers. The question of dispensability is intertwined with the conceptual framework of necropolitics. It reconfigures the biopolitical relationship on the premise that the right to life, which is secured by governments for those under their remit, such as their citizens, is based on the ques-

tion of who is dispensable, those who are not citizens, and those whom they may "let die" (Mbembe 2019a). Agamben defines apparatus as anything that has the capacity to capture, orient, determine, intercept, model, control, or secure the gestures, behaviors, opinions, or discourses of living beings. By defining apparatus as a system inscribed into any play of power, Agamben outlines governance as a Foucauldian biopolitical machinery, that outputs living beings through intense subjectification while simultaneously being indifferent to the objectification caused by its actions (Agamben 2020).

The framework of the necropolitical apparatus, similar to that of misanthropic skepticism, has been a guiding force in the conceptualization of coloniality, is based on the "normalization of the non-ethics of war" (Maldonado-Torres 2007), and continues to be deployed in a tactical sense in the contexts of nationality, citizenship, and security, as counter-narratives to the self-determination of identity against those who are considered dispensable. These specific dispensable objects, data, and networks are generally those that do not actively serve, or more accurately, are not profitable for either the economic machinery of the global neocapitalist system or for nation-states as political systems geared to policing their citizens in the name of governance. By denying the fundamental myth of operational power as inherently benevolent, it becomes possible to create new infrastructures and (knowledge) systems that may work to actively counter them.

In postcolonial theory, unlearning dominant knowledge has repeatedly been discussed as an important practice for challenging the value-encoding apparatus inside the knowledge production structure. Is it even possible to simply leave dominant knowledge behind? It seems that the answer is clear – there is simply no way back to a time or place before the history of relations of power and violence that are responsible for what we know today. "Unlearning" is not merely concerned with finding ways to avoid hegemony, but instead aims to formulate counter-hegemonic processes. Unlearning, therefore, involves neither the imagination of going back to a time *before*, to a utopian past, nor a clear-cut correction process. It is about naming and thereby socially transforming histories of violence and spaces of agency created by resistance and struggles in the interests of liberation. In this sense, it is a form of learning that actively rejects dominant, privileged, exclusionary, and violent forms of knowledge and acting, which we still often understand as education and knowledge.

Kapoor (2007, 423) claimed that "what distinguishes political from civil society is that the discourse of citizen's rights must translate into a pre-emptive commitment to radical change." This change must occur in the stark light of a reality where the rifts between power structures and the subjugated have not decreased, and nor have the gaps between class distinctions. Rather, we inhabit a contemporary world that today has created new levels of precarity, the refugee class, and in contrast, "a new kind of human beings – the kind that are put in concentration camps by their foes and in internment camps by their friends" (Arendt 2007, 265). In the words of queer black feminist Audre Lorde (2007, 138), "There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives." This means asking ourselves who is and is not in our feminist spaces and working to create a more inclusive environment.

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Silhouette, the ending part of the performance Devil's Flower (2021), Diana Soria Hernández, Photograph by Leonardo Soria Hernández.

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What if we understood our social environment as regulating access to a variety of capitals? What if, as an academic community, we critically and routinely interrogated discourses of "society," "community," or "culture" in light of how they produce or maintain difference? What if we acknowledged the harm "integration" has caused, not as an "accident" but as an ideology doing the work it was designed to do? What if we had a space to grapple with these questions, and what if the ETMU book was providing such a space? With the goal of honoring experiences, activism, art, and scholarly work that stand against "integration," this book invites the reader to rethink integration.

As we grapple with complex questions around discourses and policies of "integration" that shape our professional and personal lives, this book may help to learn and think about these complexities in new ways.

This book is written to celebrate ETMU's 20-year anniversary.

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