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Ageing in the Margins

Understanding Intersectional Inequalities shaping the Ageing and Well-being of Non-European Migrant Women in Finland

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DOCTORAL THESIS

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Abstract

This doctoral thesis is situated at the interconnection of ageing, gender and migration. The focus of this article-based thesis is on exploring inequalities in ageing from an intersectional perspective. I used qualitative research methodologies that included semi-structured interviews with 20 ageing women from non-European migrant backgrounds and a scoping review of Finnish literature on ageing migrants analysed via thematic analysis. Drawing from intersectionality theory broadly, I also employ the concepts of vulnerability, race, racism, racialisation, a threefold classification of disaggregated agency: resilience, reworking and resistance and counter-narratives to interpret the research findings. The study centres the lived experiences of women, with an emphasis on ageing in the margins which is rooted in intersectional inequalities and thus contributes important knowledge on how we conceive ageing migrant women in social work and ageing research.

The empirical findings shed light, first, on the invisibility of ageing non-European migrants in scholarly discussions. Second, the inequalities experienced at the intersection of age, race and gender at the structural, societal and personal levels are brought to the fore to shed light on how accounts of their everyday lives are connected to structures of power. Third, the findings also reveal the untold agentic pathways of their resilience, reworking and resistance that contest the problematic and deficient construction of ageing non-European migrant women based on their vulnerability. The research illustrates both the constraints and possibilities generated from a gendered and racialised ageing position and their implications for social work. As a discipline committed to social justice, it is key for social work to be able to grasp how intertwined identities affect the lived experiences of ageing and well-being beyond the personal level. The thesis draws attention to the need to acknowledge structural inequalities, multiple forms of marginalisation and to reimagine ways of narrating the multifaceted stories of women ageing in the margins.

Keywords: ageing migrants, inequalities in ageing, intersectionality, vulnerability, gender, racialisation, resilience, reworking, resistance, counter-narratives, social work

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Helsinki, July 7, 2024
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Contents

List of original publications

This thesis is based on the following publications:

I. KC, S., Clarke, K., & Seppänen, M. (2023). A Scoping Review on Ageing Migrants in Finland Through the Lens of Intersectionality and Vulnerability. *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*, 13 (3), 1-18. https://doi.org/10.33134/njmr.561

II. KC, S., Clarke, K., & Seppänen, M. (2023). 'If I Count Everything That Is Against Me. It Is My Colour. It Is That I Am a Woman': Exploring the Lived Experiences of Racialised Older Migrant Women in Finland. *British Journal of Social Work*. https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcad178

III. KC, S. (2024). The untold stories of resilience, reworking and resistance of ageing non-European migrant women. *European Journal of Social Work,* 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691457.2024.2368255

The publications are referred to in the text by their Roman numerals.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

I study women who are ageing in the margins. As bell hooks (1989a) suggests, 'to be in the margin is to be a part of the whole but outside the main body'. The margins are both sites of repression as well as resistance. Often, the tendency is to view the margins from the lens of deprivation and deficits and to remain silent and refrain from writing and speaking about the margins as a site of resistance and possibility (hooks, 1989a). My research explores how ageing women from non-European migrant backgrounds narrate and construct their identities and lived experiences in relation to age, race, and gender. I utilised semi-structured interviews with 20 ageing women from non-European migrant backgrounds and a scoping review of literature on ageing migrants in Finland. I found it difficult to study the ageing of non-European migrant women without touching upon race and gender as their ageing was simultaneously shaped by those intersectional identities throughout the life course. My research explores how the personal narratives of older non-European migrant women are rooted in structures that impact the construction of their identities and influence the way they experience ageing and well-being. I also examine the ways in which such women negotiate and build strategies in the form of resilience, reworking and resistance to contest and resist intersectional inequalities from a gendered and racialised location and give meaning to their sense of well-being. The study contributes important knowledge on the lived experiences of ageing non-European migrant women, who are under-represented in the Finnish social work and social sciences research.

> Quite often when they are talking, I feel that I'm not a part of it, even when I have Finnish citizenship because I think they are talking over me. Even when I sit in their seminar, in front of the podium and somebody's looking at me, smiling, talking about how much women now have power and how they are on the board and there and there. It is like somebody has pierced my heart because I see that this person is looking at me, sees me, but is not talking for me. It's not my reality! (Ife, 63 years old)

I was struck by these words from Ife, one of my research participants (publication III), throughout my research journey, as her words shine a clear light on the intersections of gender, race and age and their interconnection to power, and it helped

me find my niche as I began writing my doctoral thesis. As a Nordic welfare state, Finland's national narrative is based on egalitarianism, universalism and exceptionalism (Keskinen et al., 2009; Loftsdóttir and Jensen, 2012). Similarly, homogeneity and gender equality are considered normative parts of Finnish society which may often disregard the intersectional barriers and lived experiences of racialised women (Keskinen, 2018; Peltola and Phoenix, 2022). Such notions are reflected in policies, research, practices and institutional structures intended to be equitable but often formed in line with quite Euro-centric, hegemonic, middle-class values that overlook the lived realities of groups in the margins (Brotman, 2003). The narratives of racialised encounters in the everyday lives of older non-European migrant women from my empirical findings, underpinned by the difficulties in articulating the layers of interlocking identities and complexities alongside my own positionality as a migrant woman in Finland, led me to take an intersectional perspective in this research study. I use the term racialised to imply the process whereby a person is assigned to a hierarchical social order based on their race (Fanon, 1967). Race is a not a biological category, but rather a socially constructed category, one that has real-life, social implications for racialised people in terms of their access to, or advantages, and privileges enjoyed in a certain society (Goldberg, 1993; Keskinen and Andreassen, 2017).

When I was collecting my data and inquiring about the everyday challenges faced by ageing non-European migrant women, most of the women shared stories about how racial discrimination has affected them. However, prior research on ageing migrants, has seldom given attention to the topics of how intersectional barriers and racism lead to inequalities in ageing (Zubair et al., 2012; Torres, 2020; Chaouni et al., 2021). This finding was also a turning point in my approach to this research topic. I then began to focus on this gap in the knowledge construction on ageing migrants to better capture their lived realities and to address the most pressing concerns of older non-European migrant women, as narrated by them. I highlight the structural, societal and personal aspects of their situation and how that leads to inequalities in ageing throughout the study. While I acknowledge the intersectional inequalities that many older non-European migrant women may face, I also present their counter-narratives which are important for contesting the problematic and vulnerable construction of ageing women in the margins prevalent in most dominant narratives, and I highlight their agentic factors, such as resilience, reworking and resistance. As hooks (1989b) states, racialised women often do not have a chance to share the stories that positions them as subjects. It is imperative to understand their perspectives because not all stories have an equal stance or visibility in research. Some stories are seldom heard or are even systematically overlooked in research; thus, there is a need to reflect on power and privilege to understand whose stories are written, who writes them, whose stories are heard and who benefits most from the stories in social work? (Spivak, 1988; Mohanty, 2003; McKenzie-Mohr and Lafrance, 2017; Berrett-Abebe et al., 2023).

Globally, ageing and migration constitute two most crucial and unprecedented demographic trends with several key social and economic implications, yet little is recognised about their interconnections (King et al., 2017). Finland has recently been changing quite rapidly from a demographic standpoint, with an increase in the ageing population and the rise of international migration. Finland is expected to have the second largest ageing population in the European Union by 2030 (Finnish Institute of Health and Welfare, 2020; Antolín et al., 2001). The Helsinki metropolitan area alone is home to migrants from 164 nationalities (City of Helsinki, 2019). Persons speaking a foreign language in Finland comprised of 8.3 percent of the entire population in 2022 (Statistics Finland, 2022). The increasing number of older migrants among the overall population is likely to increase at higher rates with many first-generation migrants now ageing in Finland, who began migrating for work in the early 1990s accompanied by their families. Likewise, many refugees and asylum seekers are also approaching older age in Finland. These societal changes are generating new concerns for the welfare system and social work profession (Donnelly and Torres, 2022).

Finland is a welfare state that foregrounds egalitarianism, social cohesion and universal public services, such as health care, social care, economic security in older age, education, maternity and comprehensive unemployment benefits, all financed by taxation (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Browning, 2007; Anttonen and Häikiö, 2011). While Finnish social welfare and care policies are based on notions of universalism and egalitarianism, it is important to understand the context of ageing migrant women from non-European backgrounds who are often rendered invisible in a culturally normative system (Torres, 2023; Koehn et al., 2022). Puwar (2004) has claimed that some bodies are deemed as belonging in certain spaces, while others can be considered trespassers or simply out of place, which is why some of latter's needs or concerns are left out and are not made a part of the research questions and institutional priorities. Heikkinen and Lumme-Sandt's (2014) study found that Finnish municipal old-age policies and integration plans are not yet prepared to understand the needs of and provide services for older migrants in the near future. In the recent times, the increasing number of older migrants within the general Finnish population has generated some scholarly interest in the field of social sciences (see Mölsä and Tiilikainen, 2008; Heikkinen, 2012; Heikkinen and Lumme-Sandt, 2014; Tiaynen-Qadir, 2020; Kouvonen et al., 2021). Although existing Finnish scholarship focusing on the nexus of ageing and migration has contributed to an understanding of older Russian-speaking and Somali migrants, very little is known about groups who are ageing in the margins, for instance, about how non-European migrant women age and how they give meaning to their intersectional identities in Finland.

Ageing non-European migrant women's experiential knowledge and lived experiences would enrich existing policies and practices in social work but they are under-represented in the knowledge produced by ageing and social work research which reflects how people who are ageing in the margins are devalued (Seppänen and Ray, 2022). Previous scholars have noted that most older non-European migrant

women undergo cumulative disadvantages, greater structural discrimination and marginalisation at different levels across their life course compared to the non-migrant population, which affects their ageing (Brotman, 2003; Dannefer, 2012; Phillipson, 2013; Ciobanu et al., 2017; Becares and Zang, 2018; Torres, 2022). Often, they are affected by the intersections of economic and social discrimination which are entrenched in interlocking systems of oppression and privilege such as, colonialism, racism, patriarchy, ageism, classism, capitalism, heterosexism and ableism (Crenshaw, 1991; Collins, 2020; Ferrer et al., 2022). Most older non-European migrant women are in a disadvantaged position in several interconnected spheres encompassing socio-economic status, health, participation in larger society and ability to take control of their own lives (Warnes et al., 2004). The unequal experience of ageing is linked to the structural and systemic inequalities that they face throughout their life course, a topic that has not been sufficiently explored in Finnish ageing and social work research. Torres (2019) argues that the key to remedying the inequalities in ageing lies in exploring how inequalities are created and maintained in everyday lives, social structures and social work research and practice. Along with the need for more discussions about such inequalities, she further writes that social gerontology's blind spot is the development of a social justice agenda (Torres, 2019b). The concept of intersectionality offers an understanding of how multiple categories of difference intersect in the context of social relations of power, which result in different experiences of oppressions (Crenshaw, 1991; Collins, 2000; Bernard, 2022). Intersectionality offers an important frame of reference when conducting research on ageing migrants (McMullin, 2000; Calasanti, 2004; Moore, 2009; Koehn et al., 2013; Zubair and Norris 2015; Calasanti and King, 2015; Horn and Schweppe, 2016; Karl and Torres, 2016; Walsh and Näre, 2016; Näre et al., 2017), but it has been rarely used as an analytical approach in the Finnish ageing research context. Intersectionality provides a better understanding of on-the-ground realities of communities that are ageing in the margins.

1.2 Research Aim

This thesis approaches the topic of ageing migrant women in Finland from an intersectional perspective and sheds light on the lived experiences of older non-European migrant women. My point of departure is grounded in older non-European migrant women's lives, plights, and triumphs as epistemological knowledge (Dotson, 2015). I argue that the women's personal narratives are interlinked with the broader structures that influence how they construct and re-construct their identities (Näre et al., 2017) and give meaning to ageing and well-being. By understanding identities as complex and situated in layers within structures that influence privilege, power, disadvantages and discrimination (Holman and Walker, 2020; Zubair and Norris, 2015), this doctoral thesis is situated within the academic discipline of social work, acknowledging the interlocking oppressions that operate in older non-European

migrant women's lives based on gender, race and age, each of which contributes to understanding inequalities in ageing. While I employ an intersectional lens broadly, I also utilise the concepts of race, racism and racialisation, vulnerability, counter-narratives, as well as a threefold classification of disaggregated agency: resilience, reworking and resistance that older non-European migrant women use that center them and their stories.

It is important to explore agency while at the same time exploring intersectional inequalities (Nash, 2008). Agency can be defined as the ability to act on one's own choices (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). Disaggregated agency, on the other hand, is the undertaking of an activity by people while resisting a disarray of situations involving a paucity of agency (Simeoni, 1997). I use the concept of disaggregated agency to make sense of how older migrant women resist the oppressive structures individually and collectively through tacit techniques and resilience that fosters them to be able to do so (Krieger, 2014; Holman and Walker, 2020). The idea of social justice is persistently reinforced in social work's core values, ethical principles and ethical standards that guides the profession and the discipline. For an instance, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) code of ethics, highlights the importance of promoting the well-being of all people with special attention paid to those who are in vulnerable and oppressed life situations (NASW, 2021). With the changing demography due to population ageing and migration, Finnish social work requires greater engagement with communities in the margins and theorisation on inequalities that impact service users' lives. My research strengthens the knowledge base of Finnish social work making it easier to understand the intersectional perspective in ageing, the complexity of lived experiences of older non-European migrant women that are rooted in inequalities and discrimination and to re-imagine ways of narrating their multifaceted stories to develop inclusion of ageing women in the margins. In short, my research explores both the constraints and possibilities generated from a gendered and racialised ageing location.

1.3 Research Questions

The thesis consists of three original articles and a summary chapter. The research questions unite the publications and are influenced by them.
The research questions are as follows:

i. How are ageing migrants researched from an intersectional perspective in Finland?
ii. How do ageing non-European migrant women narrate their lived experiences at the intersections of age, race and gender?
iii. How do ageing non-European migrant women negotiate and build strategies to contest intersectional inequalities and find the meaning of well-being?

1.4 Thesis Structure

In addition to three original publications, the thesis consists of the present summary chapter. The publications are listed above as well as included in the appendix at the end of the thesis. The introduction covers the background to the research, the aim of the study, the research questions, and the structure of the thesis. Chapter 2 positions the research within a broader research context. Chapter 3 outlines the theoretical point of departure that I employ to analyse the data. Chapter 4 discusses the methodological choices made, how I analysed the data, the ethical considerations, how I reflect on my positionality and on the limitations of the data. Chapter 5 presents summaries of the publications, which constitute the main body of this PhD study. Chapter 6 highlights the major findings of all three publications. Chapter 7 consists of a discussion of the results. The thesis ends with some concluding remarks and implications for policy, social work practice and research in Chapter 8.

2 Research Context

This chapter positions my research within a broader research context. I begin with a focus on the Finnish context, expanding its historical connection to the notion of Nordic exceptionalism, and how it influences the current discussions on topics such as migration and race in social work and ageing research. Finally, I end the chapter by throwing light on the complexities of ageing for non-European and racialised women.

2.1 The Finnish Context as a Starting Point and How It Shapes Contemporary Discussions about Older Migrants

The invisibility of older non-European and racialised migrants in Finnish scholarly discussions is linked to the historical context of Nordic exceptionalism, which in turn is entangled with the questions on belongingness and national identities (Loftsdóttir and Jensen, 2012). The notion of Nordic exceptionalism asserts the peripheral status of Nordic countries with respect to European colonialism, according to which colonial histories and structures of racism are presented as insignificant in Nordic public discourse (Keskinen and Andreassen, 2017). However, postcolonial critiques have challenged that very idea of exceptionalism in the Nordic countries (Loftsdóttir and Jensen, 2012; Mulinari et al., 2009). For example, Finland's history was marked by being colonised by its neighbors, by being a coloniser of Indigenous people in Sápmi and by defining its nationhood through a colonial imaginary overshadowing Sámi, Roma and Tartars and benefitting from the power structures formed by European colonialism concerning socio-political relations with previously colonised people (Martikainen et al.,2006; Keskinen, 2019; Keskinen and Andreassen, 2017).

The national narrative of Finland is based on the notions of homogeneity, Whiteness, consensus, good global citizenship and being good at resolving conflicts that can also imply that the Finnish welfare state is colour evasive, gender neutral, egalitarian and universal in its services (Hoegaerts et al., 2022; Hänninen et al.,2019; Krivonos, 2018; Vuorela, 2009). Universalism, anchored in a normative understanding of people that may be difference or colour evasive, does not necessarily facilitate the search for shared meaning nor does it support minorities who are in unequal positions (Anttonen et al., 2012). It limits the prospects of discussing the existing oppressive practices and differences (Häikiö and Hvinden, 2012; Eliassi, 2017). Often, people in need and in the most marginal positions may not be able to

access services due to structural barriers as well as the standardisation and bureaucratisation of services (Topo, 2011). Another factor underpinning informing discussions of the welfare system is the promotion of cultural homogeneity, alluding to the fact that, the rise in migration with its related cultural and racial heterogeneity, may potentially jeopardise such attributes of the system. Keskinen et al. (2019) have argued that homogenisation is as much about power over resources and the distribution of wealth, as it is about cultural hegemony and a normative understanding of people and ways of living. The state, as the dominant institutional structure, can overlook local practices (Nordberg and Wrede, 2015). Such conceptions are likely to result in racialised practices as well as generating perceived fear and insecurity towards migrants (Gans, 2017). In Finland, there is no mandate to collect population statistics on ethnicity or race (only on countries of birth and first languages), which also helps keep the migrant population, and its service needs or utilisation of services to be invisible (Peltola and Phoenix, 2022). Non-European and racialised identities are usually discussed in relation to assimilation or economic integration and are not so much a part of the research questions, institutional spaces and the social work profession due to the divide between notions of who is 'us' and 'them' (Hoegaerts et al., 2022; Kuokkanen, 2022; Krivonos, 2018; Keskinen, 2016; Eliassi, 2015; Leinonen, 2012). Mignolo (2009) argues that contemporary racism is based on a silenced history "of the formation and transformation of the colonial matrix of power". Often non-European migrant and racialised identities are consequently mis-represented and problematised in the broader society, social services, and research (Eliassi, 2017).

The vocabulary of race is not openly discussed in Finland and racial meanings are articulated by using euphemisms such as ethnicity, immigrants, refugees, diversity or multiculturalism (Leinonen and Toivanen, 2014; Laakkonen, 2022; Kantola et al., 2022). Nevertheless, racialisation has long been prevalent in Finland and intersects with many social categories in an ongoing, context-specific and fluid process (Gonzalez-Sobrino and Goss, 2019). The upsurge of neo-nationalism, right-wing populism and racist movements in recent times has brought tensions to societal discussions and media portrayals of migrants in Finland by stressing the threats that migrants and racialised minorities pose to the welfare state and by somehow inclining towards welfare chauvinism, that is, to divide the welfare benefits between 'us' and 'them', and who is 'deserving' and 'undeserving' (Clarke and Vertelyté, 2023; Keskinen et al., 2019; Jørgensen and Thomsen, 2016; Mulinari et al., 2009). Assimilatory practices and integration through work are usually prioritised in agendas. Consequently, it presents migrants as marginalised outsiders who could be a potential asset for the economic competitiveness of Finland, fulfilling its labour needs, but having no power to affect the definition of being a part of the Finnish community; and instead, migrants are constructed as a threat to the welfare state (Keskinen, 2016; Clarke, 2011). Such agendas are influenced by neoliberalism, where a migrant's entry, settlement and rights are predominantly based on their economic usefulness (Kilkey, 2023). For instance, at the global level, older migrant women are more adversely

affected by the market logics of neo-liberalism compared to men, since they have fewer or even no job opportunities, due to which they cannot secure a decent pension (King et al., 2017). Furthermore, the individualistic logic of neoliberalism suggests that people are responsible for their own problems, and they need to rely on their own initiatives to solve them (Collins and Bilge, 2020). Intersectionality as a concept has appeared in the Finnish Government Action Plan for Gender Equality 2020–2023 (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2020) and in the policy brief of the Ministry of Justice (2019). However, it has not been studied enough or brought to light in any concrete discussions or outcomes. The problem may well be that concepts like intersectionality are ultimately only fashionable, topical, buzzwords that many people want to use but that may not receive the necessary research attention. Likewise, excluding intersectionality from its originality and genealogy to Black feminism can run the risk of adhering to Nordic exceptionalism and the dismissal of race as a concept (KC et al., 2024; Ilmonen and Rossi, 2019; Ilmonen, 2020).

The intersectional inequalities due to multiple identities such as race, gender, class and age are not expanded on or otherwise brought to light in social work, especially in relation to ageing (Torres, 2023, 2020; Rajan-Rankin, 2018; Badwall, 2016; Singh, 2013). Critical race scholars in social work have outlined the importance of race in policy, practice and education (Bernard, 2022; Rajan-Rankin, 2018; Bhatti-Sinclair, 2011; Okitikpi and Aymer, 2010), but the discussions are confined to anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practices (Bernard, 2022; Thompson, 2011; Okitikpi and Aymer, 2010). Such practices are important in social work, but the historical context of oppression and colonialism cannot be overlooked when studying social inequalities in their totality (Singh, 2013; Rajan-Rankin, 2015). Nayak (2020) has brought to light the fact that that anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory social work practices often conceal and dismiss issues of intersectional racism under the label of multiculturalism and cultural competence. Torres's scoping review (2020) has concluded that racism is rarely discussed in ageing research but, is instead referred to as othering, injustice or lifelong discrimination, which reflects how slow gerontological social work has been to acknowledge it as a form of inequality in ageing. I argue that social work, as a discipline that is inherently geared towards social justice, has to be able to grasp how multiple identities affect the realities of people that it works with and understand the causes of inequalities in ageing. It is key for scholars of social work and ageing to move beyond the lenses of cultural sensitivity and cultural competence as they only classify people as different, which further others them and does not consider the deeper structural inequalities (Bernard, 2022, Eliassi, 2015; Badwall, 2015; Leinonen and Toivanen, 2014). Engaging with notions of racism and racialisation with older migrants provides a social justice-oriented lines of inquiry (Torres, 2019a, 2023).

2.2 The Complexities of Ageing for Non-European Migrant and Racialised Women

Ageing can be experienced non-uniformly from a gendered and racialised location (Calasanti, 2008; Rajan-Rankin, 2018; Koehn, 2022). Previous studies have shown that women in general have a longer life expectancy than men (Paz et al., 2017; Dutta, 2012; Arber and Ginn, 1995). However, longer lives can also mean more health concerns, social and age-related complexities, difficulties accessing services, non-existent or lower pensions, and loneliness in widowhood for older women as well as the need for more support (Calasanti, 2010; Ginn and Arber, 2001). This position is termed the feminisation of ageing, which necessitates and demands more attention to ageing women's issues (Davidson et al., 2011). Most ageing non-European migrant women are disadvantaged in several domains, including doing unpaid care work, and being over-represented in low-paid, precarious labour markets throughout the life course that affects their access to resources at older age (Brotman, 2003; Dannefer, 2012; Ferrer et al., 2022; Koehn, 2022). The cumulative disadvantages faced by ageing non-European migrant women throughout the life course impacts both their ageing and well-being (Calasanti, 2008; Rutagumirwa and Bailey, 2022). A scoping review done in Canada by Guruge et al., (2015) found that older migrant women experience greater social disadvantages, social isolation, poverty, unequal gendered norms, difficulty accessing healthcare and social services and that they underuse preventive health services.

Similarly, experiences of interpersonal and structural racism throughout the life course are likely to weaken racialised older migrants' agency in accessing services and negatively impact their sense of community, safety, immune systems, physical and mental health, and social support (Wang et al., 2019; Mac Innes and Walsh, 2023; Torres, 2023). Consequently, such experiences result in unmet care needs, poverty and socio-economic inequalities and health implications for ageing persons (Preston et al., 2013; Kobayashi and Mohsin Khan, 2020; Gubernskaya and Dobreva, 2023). Racialised older migrants' overall health and quality of life are comparatively lower than for those in the majority population due to their disadvantaged position throughout their life course (Repetti et al., 2021; Forrester et al., 2019; Bowen and González, 2008; Kulla et al., 2010). A study by Thorpe et al. (2020) has found that stressful events such as racism goes beyond having immediate social ramifications, disrupting the body's overall stress response for racialised people resulting in higher chances of chronic illnesses than among other groups. Ciobanu et al. (2017) have highlighted the discontinuity in the life course of older migrants who leave places, contexts and safety nets that gave meaning to their lives in the search of new homes in changed geographical locations and socio-economic contexts. Most of the experiences of such persons vary depending on whether they had migrated as younger people or late in life (Torres, 2012; Heikkila, 2004). Stronger experiences of loneliness and isolation are more common in older migrants (van Tilburg and Fokkema, 2021;

Fokkema, 2023). Older migrant people often have to establish or reestablish social networks that have been severed due to migration (Heikkilä, 2004). In addition to limited opportunities to (re) create such networks in the new locations, complex factors such as social support, language proficiency, skills needed to obtain employment throughout the life course, the ability to access information become interlinked with their intersectional identities and unequal care burden on the domestic front, meaning that older migrant women from marginal positions are often not able to fully take advantage of their residence or citizenship rights or access public spaces or participate in lifelong learning activities (KC and Walker, 2023; Zajicek et al., 2013; Warnes et al., 2004).

The complexities associated with such ageing experiences among migrant women arising from the rapture created by migration and changing socially constructed identities have not been researched enough within ageing and social work research (Zubair and Norris, 2015; Holman and Walker, 2020). Some scholars have adopted an intersectional perspective on ageing (Calasanti, 2004; Moore, 2009; Horn and Schweppe, 2016; Karl and Torres, 2016; Walsh and Näre 2016; Näre et. al., 2017). However, there is a need to apply it more to better understand the context of multiple marginalisation in the context of ageing (Hunter, 2018; Brotman et al., 2020).

Research on ageing migrants in Finland, mainly among Russian-speaking and those with a Somali background have found that older migrants have gaps in accessing the mainstream social and healthcare services (Mölsä et al., 2014, 2017; Shin et al., 2021; Heikkinen, 2011). Older migrants experience social exclusion and are confined to their own circles (Asikainen, 2021; Tiaynen-Qadir, 2020; Heikkinen, 2011). In addition to social exclusion, they also face digital exclusion when using e-services (Kouvonen et al., 2021; Safarov, 2021; Buchert and Wrede, 2021). Older migrants have been discriminated against based on their racial and ethnic background (Asikainen, 2021; Heikkinen, 2011). Although existing scholarship with ageing migrants in Finland has contributed to our understanding of their situation on certain aspects, little is known about non-European ageing migrants' interconnected dimensions of social inequalities, experienced by those in more disadvantaged locations such as such that of racialised older migrant women and thus, this is the focus of my doctoral thesis.

3 Conceptual Approaches

In this chapter, I elaborate on the theoretical premises of my research. I begin by presenting the genealogy of intersectionality, its scope and importance in relation to studying inequalities and ageing. I then discuss the critiques of intersectionality. Second, I expand on theorising race, racism, and racialisation in relation to ageing non-European migrant women. Within race discourses, I also situate my research with controlling images, race embodiment and post-raciality concepts. Third, I reflect on the concept of vulnerability and engage with its central criticism based on a restrictive definition. Finally, I discuss counter-narratives and utilise the threefold classification of disaggregated agency: resilience, reworking and resistance. I also outline some of their critiques. Overall, the concepts such as intersectionality, race and disaggregated agency take a more central role in the analysis provided in this summary to highlight the implications of the study as a coherent whole. In my doctoral research, I started by employing intersectionality and vulnerability in the scoping review article, which led to more targeted analysis of how racialisation affects ageing of non-European migrant women in my second publication and later to a focus on disaggregated agency in the form of counter-narratives in the third publication.

3.1 Intersectionality

Intersectionality as a term was first used by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) to describe the multiple layers of oppression faced by Black women. Deeply rooted in Black feminism and critical race theory, intersectionality is a theoretical concept that explains how systems are structured in society to provide power and privilege to some identities while oppressing others through a 'matrix of domination' (Collins, 2000). The 'matrix of domination' outlines society's intersecting oppressions such as sexism, racism, ageism, classism, and other types of discrimination, as ingrained in the institutions, policies, practices, and face-to-face encounters (Collins and Bilge, 2020; Krieger, 2014). Although the term was coined by Crenshaw, the interlocking systems of oppression for women of colour had been identified and developed previously by scholars of colour (Collins and Bilge, 2020; Lykke, 2010; Brah and Phoenix, 2004), for instance, in Angela Davis's (1981) work 'Women, Race and Class', Combahee River Collective's (1982) 'A Black Feminist Statement' and Audre Lorde's (1984) 'Sister Outsider'. It is important to acknowledge the historical genealogy of Crenshaw's work that builds upon the ideas of the Combahee River Collective (Collins and Bilge, 2020;

Hudson and Mehrotra, 2021) and is regarded as one of the strongest theoretical contributions in feminist studies (McCall, 2005; Nash, 2008; Mehrotra, 2010).

Intersectional analysis illustrates how Black women experience gender discrimination differently than White women and experience racial discrimination differently than Black men due to their racialised and gendered position (Crenshaw, 1991; Collins, 2008; Lorde, 1984; Bowleg, 2012). It, consequently, decentres the normative subject of feminism (Brah and Phoenix, 2004) by capturing the lived experiences at the nexus of various structures of power (Atewologun and Mahalingam, 2018). As a theoretical framework, intersectionality allows for an examination of the compounding aspects of gender, race, age, class, sexuality, disability and other social identities for groups in oppressed social locations (Yuval-Davis, 2006) and dissects complexities and inequalities of the social world (Collins and Bilge, 2020). Dill and Zambrana (2009) have outlined four key theoretical interventions offered by an intersectional analysis: (a) it centres the lived experiences of people of colour and other marginalised groups for theory development, (b) it identifies the complexities of identities while highlighting the ways in which diversity within groups is often overlooked or essentialised, (c) it illuminates how social inequalities in the interconnected domains of the power structure are seen and (d) it fosters social justice through research and practice.

Intersectional perspective in ageing is important to understand how ageing is unequal due to several intersecting axes of inequalities that operate simultaneously (Homlan and Walkers, 2020; Brotman et al., 2020). Older women from non- European and racialised background go through not only age-related issues in later life but also race, gender and class related stressors that become amplified as they age (Philipson, 2013; Rajan-Rankin, 2018). Previous research has shown that accumulated experiences of discrimination throughout the life course of racialised older migrants results into social exclusion and deteriorating mental health (Becares and Zang, 2018). The ability to access services, pensions, to maintain functional and mental health, to participate in society, to engage in active ageing and to find social connections are all related to intersectional issues in ageing which determine both privilege and disadvantages. Therefore, intersectionality provides a deep acknowledgement of how life course experiences, inequalities and structural factors impact ageing and highlight the need to recognise and support complex needs of older women who have intersecting identities and experiences (Bernard, 2022). Before the term intersectionality emerged, concepts such as double or triple jeopardy were used to denote multiple disadvantages (Beal, 1970; Bowleg et al., 2003). However, those concepts do not consider the in-group variations and simultaneous effects of oppressions that people face (Moore, 2009; Koehn et al., 2013). Intersectionality, thus, places emphasis on non-additive way of understanding inequalities (Crenshaw, 1991; Choo and Ferree, 2010).

Critiques have also emerged on the concept of intersectionality for being universalised (e.g., hooks, 2000; Mirza, 2016; Nash, 2017). Mirza (2016) argues that activists and feminists have used the term without real meaning and without exposing the genuine layers of women who experience it on multiple dimensions. Bilge (2013), Mügge et al. (2018) and May (2015) have noted the superficial use of intersectionality as a buzzword in feminist writing without incorporating race. Some have also used it without paying attention to its genealogy and connection to Black feminism or Critical Race theory. An intersectional lens may run the risk of stereotyping if heterogeneity is not considered as people also develop agency, resilience, and resistance against structures of oppression (Holman and Walker, 2020). However, it is widely acknowledged that intersectionality offers researchers a way to understand how inequalities shape people's lives and ageing (Nayak and Robbins, 2019; Bernard, 2022; Rajan-Rankin, 2018; Koehn, 2022). Intersectionality helps to connect the individual lived experience of a person to the structural and macro levels. It demonstrates how everyday social relations and interactions are impacted by social, political, and economic factors (Collins, 2022). I have also used an intersectional lens to identify agency, resilience, reworking and resistance practices among older non-European migrant women in the face of everyday barriers, oppressive systems, exclusion and injustices in this research.

3.2 Race, Racism and Racialisation

Omi and Winant (2015) define race as *'a concept which signifies and symbolises social conflicts and interests by referring to different types of human bodies.'* Race is not a biological category, but is instead socially constructed, and it thus, impacts the lives of people in very real ways (Goldberg, 1993). It is based on the historical process of racial formation rooted in colonial ideology (Quijano, 2007; Lutz et al., 2011; Uyan, 2021). Racism is a set of beliefs that gives power and humanity to some but not others (Dominelli, 2017). It can be internalised, interpersonal, institutional, and structural in nature (Jones, 2000). Fanon (1967) defines racialisation as the process by which race is saturated with meaning. It can be enforced through relations of power and dominance (Gonzalez-Sobrino and Goss, 2019). Racialisation goes beyond classifying different diasporic groups; it also assigns them in a hierarchical order where some groups are considered 'not quite White', close to or the complete opposite of White, which also reflects the fluidity and ongoing process of racial categories (Keskinen and Andreassen, 2017; Gonzalez-Sobrino and Goss, 2019). Collins (2022) argues that racialised women usually fall into the lowest hierarchical order due to their gendered and racialised location. Racialisation is also accompanied by the perception of threat, whether imagined or real, by the dominant groups, which includes fear of safety, downward mobility and others taking their jobs (Gans, 2017).

Torres (2015, 2019a, 2022, 2023) summarises the ontological premises of Cornell and Hartmann's (1998) three approaches to define race based on a primordialist approach (also referred to as essentialism), a circumstantialist approach (also referred to as structuralism) and a social constructionist approach. The primordalist approach assumes that people are shaped and conditioned by their backgrounds, racial biology and culture. Though social scientists no longer use these categories, various essentialist approaches are still prevalent among lay-persons trying to make sense of migrants through questions like *'where are you originally from?'*. The answer does not encompass everything about the person, it overlooks their heterogeneity of experiences over time and contexts, and it often reinforces colonial perspectives on racism. The circumstantialist approach is based on a fluid understanding of race that considers contexts, circumstances and resources as having an impact on the meaning that people give to race. Finally, the social constructionist approach extends beyond considering the background and circumstances that influence how people consider race to also explore how they relate to 'others' based on context and interaction (Torres, 2022, 104-107).

Patricia Hill Collins's (1986, 1991, 2004) concept of controlling images illustrates how racialised women's prejudiced portrayal is based on colonial perceptions of racial meaning. Racialised women are viewed as welfare mammies, welfare recipients, lazy, passive, unintelligent without making efforts to understand their life course, credibility and the value they add to society. These types of intersectional controlling images blame the women themselves for falling behind, for their own poverty and normalise racism, sexism, ageism and classism (Collins, 2000). They are also (re) created in social, institutional and historical settings to foster the interests of privileged groups that influence how people use them to guide their everyday interactions (Vasquez-Tokos and Norton-Smith, 2016). Ageing women from non-European and racialised background are depicted as scroungers for not contributing economically but instead being an economic and care burden for the welfare states (Collins, 2008). In Europe, racial profiling has targeted non-European migrants based on their race, religion and citizenship (Mulinari and Keskinen, 2022; Brouwer and van der Woude, 2017; Enroth, 2021).

Notions of visible and invisible difference also influence the racialisation of bodies (Alcoff, 2005; Leinonen and Toivanen, 2014; Rajan-Rankin, 2018). Alcoff (2005) has outlined the hyper-visibility of certain groups of people due to colour of their eyes, skin, texture of hair, dress, accents accompanied by invisibility due to the same attributes in relation to their lack of social participation and absence in public, institutional and policy spheres. Rajan-Rankin (2018) expanded the race embodiment literature's relation to ageing bodies by suggesting that age and race, both prominent in relation to the skin are markers of hyper-visibility and invisibility. The processes by which people become in/visible determine who belongs and who does not, but they are also contextual, shifting in time and in place (Leinonen, 2012; Leinonen and Toivanen, 2014).

In a time defined by neo-liberalism, certain ideas about post-raciality allude to the need to view people as existing outside or beyond race and putting an emphasis on personal responsibility (Goldberg, 2015). Such ideas also provide a reason for depoliticisation of racism (Hesse, 2011) and suggest why discussions and theorisation around race are silenced in social work (Rajan-Rankin, 2015; Singh 2013). In the context of Finland, the notion of Nordic exceptionalism trivialises racism (Seikkula, 2019). Lentin's (2016) three Ds of post-racial racism management are valuable for understanding why this topic has been silenced. First, the topic has been silenced through deflection by using positive vocabulary and euphemisms, such as diversity and multiculturalism, to replace race or racism. Second, it has led to a distancing of racism, restricting it to harsh and violent acts done by only a few people while undermining its systemic and structural forms. Third, it has led to denial of one's actions as racist. I therefore approach the theorisation of race through an intersectional lens to study the lived experiences of ageing non-European migrant women and their own understanding of their intersectional identities.

3.3 Vulnerability

The concept of vulnerability is often in line with the deficit perspective, referring to the need for protection against harm (Bozzaro et al., 2018; Gilson, 2016). To consider a person vulnerable simply due to age, gender and migrant status is to define a person based on a restrictive idea of vulnerability (Bozzaro et al., 2018). Ciobanu et al. (2017) have classified older migrants' vulnerabilities and resilience on three levels: micro, mezzo, and macro. The micro level includes personal factors that influence an individual's ability to act. The mezzo level includes societal factors, such as networks and family resources. The macro level includes the structural and political domains, which influence immigration and integration policies.

Nonetheless, it is important to critically employ the term vulnerability in research and practice. This does not mean that we undervalue the problems that some older migrant women face due to their position and life situations, but instead means that researchers should be mindful of how some research agendas can create a universal construction or homogenised label of vulnerability based on membership in certain groups (Leontowitsch, 2012). The pathological construction of old age, migrancy and minority status reinforces the power imbalances between the researcher and the research participants and can be disempowering for the research participants (Zubair and Victor, 2015). Often, it also excludes older migrant women from their own care by seeing them as less competent (Virokannas et al., 2020). Therefore, the complex life situation of an individual existing alongside structural inequalities and the role of the welfare services in creating and reinforcing vulnerability need to be explored before labelling a group into a singular vulnerable entity (Brown, 2011; Virokannas et al., 2020). Similarly, the role of agency cannot be overlooked while talking about

vulnerability since agency is central to how a person is able to tap into existing support within the given socio-political context as an active subject (McLaughlin and Dietz, 2008; Fawcett, 2009). Using this discussion of vulnerability as a point of departure, I reflect on how vulnerability is constructed and its implications in the case of ageing non-European migrant women in Finland.

3.4 Counter-Narratives

Stuart Hall (1994) has underlined that identity is grounded in the telling and re-telling of stories. The stories that people tell about themselves and other people shape identities and help them engage in social actions (Phoenix, 2022). bell hooks (1993) writes about how people theorise from pain and struggle to help recover and remember themselves. Different genealogies of struggles, histories and tactics employed by people, arise in the form of stories (Mohanty, 2003). The absence of social work support that genuinely fosters the well-being of all residents and the declining support in general of welfare services have led ageing women in the margins to survive and organise care on their own. They rely more on their own internal resilience, community support and on building resistance against oppressive systems. These strategies and experiences comprise the untold stories or the counter-narratives of people in the margins. The use of counter-narratives goes beyond the normative understanding of people and their stories and centres the efforts of those who have not had an equal standing to share their stories (McKenzie-Mohr and Lafrance, 2017). Riessman (2020) has poised some important questions in this respect, such as, 'Who is allowed to talk about their experience?', 'Who is listening?', 'Whose story is valued?' and 'Who gains from the research relationship?' which provide a backdrop for centring counter-narratives of ageing migrant women from non-European and racialised backgrounds. To study diversity in ageing, Daatland and Biggs (2006) have argued for the acknowledgement of many stories of ageing as a pathway. Counter-narratives, therefore, have the potential to contribute towards systematic social justice (Anciano and Wheeler, 2021).

Counter-narratives are also critiqued for its inclination to engage in romanticised thinking at times (Carney, 2001), with not all of them adhering to the aim of being liberating for people (McKenzie-Mohr and Lafrance, 2014). However, if research and education only focus on the disadvantaged intersections and complexity of people, then they create only deficit thinking, overlooking the strengths, and resilience of people (Holman and Walker, 2020). Counter-narratives can be an effective tool for social work research and education, helping to challenge racism and epistemic injustice (Berrett-Abebe et al., 2023) and providing a way to re-imagine social work interventions.

3.5 Disaggregated agency (Resilience, Reworking and Resistance)

Agency is a contested concept used by sociologists to refer to the capacity of people to act independently and to make choices without any constraint or coercion (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998; Higgs, 2022). It leads to actions influenced by the interplay between the individual and their environment, which also encompasses structural aspects (Parsell et al., 2016). Disaggregated agency refers to the action taken against notions of disorganisation and fragmentation when individuals lack agency (Simeoni, 1997). Little research has been done on the connection between agency and intersectionality (Brah and Phoenix, 2006). Older people in general are regarded as dependent and incapable (Higgs, 2022). Furthermore, Mohanty (1988,2003) claims that women of colour have been constructed as a homogenous, passive and powerless group. Combining agency with an intersectional approach challenges this problematic and binary construction of racialised older women as powerless. I have used Katz's framework of disaggregated agency that is based on a threefold classification of social actions: resilience, reworking and resistance against oppressive power relations.

Resilience is marked by the survival strategies that people employ with their internal and external resources within difficult situations, but it does not contest oppression (Katz, 2004). It makes use of a person's inner and outer strengths that helps to cultivate courage, hope, mastery and tenacity to survive (Flynn, 2012; Fry and Keyes, 2010). Nevertheless, scholars have likewise criticised resilience for promoting neo-liberal values in a way that places the burden of problems stemming from the state in the hands of individuals (Evans and Reid, 2014; Joseph, 2013; Sapountzaki, 2007). It can sometimes restrict people to their surroundings and circumstances and seemingly limit their ability to challenge oppressive structures (Wild et al., 2013). Reworking in turn is based on the strategies that people use to reconfigure and make their life situations more convenient regardless of the challenges and oppressive power structures (Katz, 2016). It involves finding ways that are practical, safe and realistic (Hauge and Fold, 2016; Weitz, 2011). However, like resilience, reworking practices run the risk of re-enforcing the adaptive side of people and not challenging the violence of oppressive structures, whereas resistance confronts historical injustices and re-constructs unequal power relations when subjectivity is diminished (Lugones, 2010; Katz, 2004). It challenges the status quo and strives to bring change to shift the power dynamic (Hauge and Fold, 2016; Weitz, 2001). Talking back, coming to voice (hooks, 1989b), risking and altering power structures are some examples of resistant practices (Rydzik and Anitha, 2020; McKenzie-Mohr and Lafrance, 2017). Resistant practices are less common than acts of resilience and reworking as they depend on the intersectional factors with older migrant women being positioned differently because of their complex identities (Riessman, 2000), the type and degree of power that they possess (Kapoor, 2002), and their access to resources, such as education, class, networks and social capital (Kabeer, 1999). Some older migrant women have no option

other than being resilient and tolerant, so agency can be viewed as both an enabler or a barrier in people's lives (Ndomo and Lillie, 2023). By employing Katz's classification of disaggregated agency, my research explores how older migrant women from non-European backgrounds navigate everyday challenges and oppressive structures at different levels and it centres them and their stories in research and practice.

4 Methods

In this chapter, I outline the methodologies and data that I used for my doctoral research. I begin by the introducing the different sets of data that I sampled and analysed in the publications. I explain my methodological choices, the analysis and ethical considerations underpinning the study. I reflect on my own positionality as a researcher illustrating my research pathway as an insider together with the challenges, tensions and negotiations associated with my positionality. Finally, I discuss the limitations of the data.

4.1 Methodology and Materials

This research study used qualitative methods allowing older women from non-European backgrounds to narrate their stories in their own words as a way to capture their own subjective meanings and understandings (Rinehart, 2021). The qualitative research methodologies that I used included a scoping review of existing literature and semi-structured interviews.

4.1.1 Scoping Review

My first article employed a scoping review focused on providing a comprehensive understanding of the current state of knowledge about ageing migrants in Finland. It was carried out to identify the key literature, themes and patterns, and to highlight the critical gaps in a study area that has thus far received little research interest (Levac et al., 2010; Daudt et al., 2013). It was also done to disseminate the summarised presentation of results to underline both policy and practice implications (Arksey and Malley, 2005; Munn et al., 2018).

The inclusion criteria were peer-reviewed articles in English and Finnish languages. The databases used to search the articles were EBSCOhost, Applied Social Sciences Index & Abstract (ProQuest), Social Sciences Citation Index (Web of Science), Scopus (Elsevier) and Google Scholar. In addition, three relevant Finnish journals were included in the search, *Gerontologia*, *Janus* and the *Finnish Journal of Ethnicity and Migration* and the reference lists from all the relevant articles were screened to identify whether any study was overlooked. The key words used were 'older migrants', 'ageing immigrants', 'race and ethnicity in ageing', 'intersectionality and ageing' and all possible combinations of these words to cover a wide range of research studies. These

key words were chosen because they helped determine the angle of inquiry that we wanted to pursue in our article from an intersectionality and vulnerability perspective. I read the titles and abstracts and selected sixteen articles, out of which twelve were in English language and four in Finnish language for sampling that were relevant for the study. All published articles focusing on older migrants and refugees were included since the research field on ageing migrants in Finland is still in its initial developmental phase. The scoping review excluded literature that had not been peer-reviewed. The search was conducted from December 2020 until November 2021, with no restrictions on the date of publication. Arksey and Malley's (2005) methodological framework was employed for the review which included the following five stages: 1) identifying the research question, 2) identifying relevant studies, 3) study selection, 4) charting the data and 5) collating, summarising, and reporting the results. The research question was as follows: How is the issue of ageing migrants discussed in the existing research in Finland? The findings and gaps that I researched from the scoping review article served as the basis for further line of inquiry in my research. The scoping review was useful for gaining a thorough understanding of the Finnish context, and the depth and extent of the research trends involving ageing migrants. It guided me to identify the research questions and directions for future research.

4.1.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

I conducted semi-structured interviews with twenty older women from non-European migrant backgrounds aged 55 and above and living in the Helsinki metropolitan area. Semi-structured interviews offer participants the chance to reflect on their lived experiences that cover a range of meaningful themes. The interviews were conducted between September 2021 and May 2022. Based on the findings from our scoping review, I purposely sampled older non-European women to explore intersectional aspects of ageing that particularly impact older migrant women's lives. The rationale for choosing only female participants was due to older non-European migrant women's under-representation and invisibility in research in ageing and the need for more research on the intersections of gender, age and race that such women experience as part of the ageing process (Crenshaw, 1991; Davidson et al., 2011; Rajan-Rankin, 2018; Koehn, 2022, Torres and Hunter, 2023). The choice to focus on women aged 55 years and above was influenced by the fact that many migrant communities understand ageing beginning earlier in their life course (Yazdanpanahi and Hussein, 2021), especially given the shorter life expectancy of some of those communities compared to the Global North contexts (Menendian, Gambhir, and Gailes, 2021) and as well as the fact that many migrant women are now entering an older age group in Finland. I also utilised the snowballing sampling method, according to which I first sampled whether some participants met the criteria of coming from non-European backgrounds and being 55 years of age and above, and then those participants suggested other women

that I could approach who were otherwise hard to reach only through formal contacts, NGOs or activity centres in Helsinki (Bryman, 2016).

I distributed my research posters to migrant networks and associations, NGOs and activity centres working for migrants and older people in the Helsinki metropolitan area and non-residential associations of several non-European nations to recruit participants. Recruitment materials and posters were circulated in English, Finnish and in the local language where necessary with the help of a translator. In some migrant communities, I had to negotiate access to older women through gatekeepers, who were mainly the women's husbands and sons. I usually had to navigate access to such women through them and gain their approval first before being able to talk to the women. One husband of a research participant said: 'My wife is not capable enough to say anything valuable worth your time. She is illiterate and incapable to giving the opinions for an interview that you are looking for.' I hurriedly answered that I was there to listen to her life story and what she felt about her own experiences which are valuable for my research. Then, the husband who had previously undermined his wife's participation in the interview, let me talk to his wife. Boneham (2002) and Zubair and Victor (2015) have also noted how men become key gatekeepers, especially in the context of South Asian communities, speaking on behalf of their female family members.

Two NGOs approached me after they saw the research poster and asked me to give a presentation about my research to their staff and service users and helped me to connect with a few participants for interviews. They also allowed me to engage in participant observation of their activities with ageing migrants. I observed such activities for a total of 35 hours of observation at one NGO that worked with older migrant women as well as at a popular community meeting place for some South Asians. The participant observation method was not included in the data analysis, though, which is why I have not listed it as a separate method, but it helped me to gain a measure of trust with the women and access to the field and to develop my interview questions. I introduced myself as a doctoral researcher and shared my objectives with the women I met throughout the observation process. I engaged in activities with them such as in doing physical exercises, dancing, going for outings, flower arrangement session, a potluck and a Christmas party with the women. During one of my visits, I also organised a session where I presented my research and had a discussion with older women about their thoughts and concerns regarding my work. I kept a research diary and wrote field notes after each visit. Several excerpts read as follows:

> There was a movement session where the staff started with some dance steps. The women were all in a circle, looking quite shy and silent. The staff insisted that one woman come into the middle and show something about her culture through dance. The woman came and did a step, and everyone clapped and burst with joy. Suddenly, the environment shifted to that of excitement and fun. Other women followed the dance step, and the staff urged everyone to come and do the same, and one by one, they all did it. I was quite surprised to see them be so open, to

> express themselves in the form of dancing and be full of life in a matter of minutes when I saw them being shy at the beginning. I can see that they love music and dancing. *(Excerpt one from my research diary)*
>
> Today, we went to Harakka Island for a group outing with older migrant women from the NGO. The weather turned out to be rainy and very windy. However, none of the women were dressed for the weather. The organisers had planned for a short 25-minute hike to go around the island, but it did not go as planned. A few women started saying that they had knee pain and could not walk after just a few minutes of walking. Most of them were in their late fifties. I tried to have a conversation with them about their physical health and fitness. They shared that they did not prioritise any forms of physical exercise at all as a part of their everyday routines. Talking further, they described how their days pass by doing household chores like cooking, cleaning and picking up the grandchildren from daycare/school and that they get tired. That said a lot. *(Excerpt two from my research diary)*

I wrote down my reflections, as indicated by the excerpts in my research diary after each participant observation session. Although I did not use the diary as a part of my materials and analysis, but it proved beneficial for gaining insights into and understanding the experiences of older migrant women in general in the Helsinki metropolitan area. It helped me refine my interview questions and make my research a reflexive journey. The initial observations also helped me to gain access to and conduct interviews with two women who were using the services of the NGO and with one older woman recruited through observation at a community meeting place. Additionally, when collecting data, I also reached out to and introduced my research at some of the community meeting places, such as in Asian and African restaurants and South Asian shops and places of worship which were recommended to me through the snowballing method.

The participants in my research came from West Africa, Central Africa, South Asia, East Asia, Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Central America. I have de-identified their home countries to safeguard their confidentiality. All the women had either a permanent residence permit or Finnish citizenship. At the time of the interview, the average amount of time they had resided in Finland was 21 years and 9 months. Their age range was between 57 years and 76 years. I conducted the semi-structured interviews in the women's homes, mostly sitting across from them at their kitchen tables, while other interviews took place in their workspaces, public spaces and cafes chosen by the participants themselves. Due to the situation created by the pandemic, the interviewees had the choice to do the interviews either in person or in phone to protect their health and well-being. The interviews lasted from around 40 to 90 minutes and were audio recorded with the participants active consent. Half of the participants with South Asian background were interviewed in their local languages i.e. Nepalese or Hindi, both of which, I speak fluently. Nine of the interviews were

conducted in the English language and only one interview was conducted with the help of an interpreter in Swahili. The themes of the semi-structured interviews included participants' life course, migration trajectory, lived experiences in Finland, access to social and health services, the barriers they encounter in their everyday lives, needs, their own ideas of good ageing and well-being, their strengths, and resilience.

Table 1: Description of research participants. The names are pseudonyms.

Participant	**Region**	**Age**
Bhanudevi	South Asia	76
Rewa	South Asia	73
Gloria	Central Africa	72
Yasodha	South Asia	72
Coney	Central Africa	68
Xiang	East Asia	65
Mehar	South Asia	65
Tapasya	South Asia	65
Kaeo	Southeast Asia	62
Gurpreet	South Asia	62
Vishnu Maya	South Asia	61
Ife	West Africa	60
Julie	West Africa	60
Radha	South Asia	59
Pariza	Middle East	59
Durga	South Asia	58
Obiye	West Africa	58
Ganga	South Asia	58
Chandani	South Asia	57
Carolina	Central America	57

4.2 Data Analysis

I did a thematic analysis for all the publications. Thematic analysis is relevant for identifying and analysing the explicit and implicit meanings of patterns within the data (Campbell et al., 2021; Braun and Clarke, 2006; Joffee 2011). For the first article which was a scoping review, I searched for themes that answered the research question on

intersectional identities and vulnerability in the Finnish ageing migrant literature from the sixteen peer-reviewed articles that were sampled. It followed a deductive coding of the data set.

For the second publication, which was based on semi-structured interviews, I inductively coded the data. I asked the research participants about their everyday challenges and barriers. After the interviews, the richness of the data, the recurring reference to such topics as racialisation as an everyday barrier for women specifically, the under published literature on the intersections of gender, race and age among ageing migrant women in the Finnish and Nordic context made me focus more on the racialised and gendered understandings of their lived experiences and ageing. I adopted a data-driven approach, where, as Simpson (2006) writes, 'You don't do fieldwork, fieldwork does you', meaning that I paid particular attention to repetitions and similar patterns in the data. Theoretical concepts were chosen at a later stage to interpret the research findings. I transcribed all the recordings of the interviews verbatim by myself, which gave me a chance to become deeply immersed in my dataset. I sent the transcripts to one of the participants who wanted to review them. I also read and re-read all the transcripts, created initial codes, designated files on each broad theme where I first began by copy-pasting quotes relevant to the themes. My thematic analysis drew from Braun and Clark's (2006) six steps of thematic analysis that consisted of: 1) familiarising myself with the data, 2) generating initial codes, 3) searching for themes, 4) reviewing the themes, 5) defining the themes, and 6) creating the report.

For the third publication, which made use of semi-structured interview data set, I followed the same six steps of thematic analysis as in my second publication. However, after choosing the initial codes, my research question served as a guide when conducting the analysis and classifying the codes based on the theoretical framework (Gubrium and Sankar, 1994).

4.3 Research Ethics

The research done for the doctoral thesis safeguards the integrity, self-determination, and private life of the participants by following the principles and regulations set by the Finnish National Advisory Board on Research Ethics (TENK). Interviews were conducted in an accessible language with the informed and active consent of participants to ensure their voluntary participation, confidentiality, autonomy and freedom to withdraw at any point from the process without any pressure (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). I used consent forms. I was mindful of safeguarding the participants from any unreasonable psychological distress or danger. Counsellor's information was also given to reduce any risk. Likewise, I was careful not to make generalisations about a migrant community or produce any information that is likely to increase the chances of any harm being done to the participants from this research (NESH, 2016). For this

reason, pseudonyms are used, and their home countries are de-identified to protect their confidentiality.

4.4 Researcher's Positionality

To make research more reflexive, it is important to reflect on the multiple identities of the researcher and the participants and how they interact and influence the research process (Berger, 2015; Ramji, 2008). As a South Asian and a non-European migrant woman living in Finland, I shared an insider position with the research participants. As a younger person and a researcher with an academic affiliation to the university, I was also seen as an outsider by the research participants. I outline below some of the advantages and challenges that I faced while doing the research.

4.4.1 Researching as the insider

With the South Asian community, I shared a racial and linguistic identity, as I speak both Nepalese and Hindi fluently. Whereas with other migrant communities, I did not share a linguistic identity and instead spoke English with them, nor did I share the same racial identity. However, due to my own non-European migrant and gender identity, most of the research participants who were older non-European migrant women saw me as 'us' and granting me better access to finding participants for the interviews. Most members of the migrant community that I approached for recruitment trusted me as a part of the migrant community in Finland and put me in contact with women who were otherwise hard to reach through formal links because of their age group, lifestyle and lack of participation in any NGO or activity centres. Prior studies have also found that having a woman researcher of the same ethnic or racial background fosters inclusion among the participants in the margins and makes it easier to navigate the gendered spaces and private worlds that often remain hidden in research (Boneham, 2002). During the interviews, I also felt that older migrant women found me approachable as they choose to openly share about certain topics with me, such as the challenges of being non-European migrant women and the impact of race in their lives openly, topics which are otherwise quite uncomfortable to discuss. Mayorga-Gallo and Hordge-Freeman (2017) define approachability in field-work as being seen as non-threatening and safe and who could relay their stories without holding judgement. Some of the older women were happy to share their stories for the sheer fact that someone was interested in listening to them and their experiences of living in Finland.

As a non-European migrant woman in Finland, my positionality was helpful for understanding the nuanced aspects and challenges of the migrant community and to approach the field with sensitivity. Intersectional identities are also a part of my identity as a woman of colour as hooks (1993) explains, since they are intertwined with how we look, from our hair to our dresses, our names to our accents, to name but a few

examples. However, I did not let it affect my curiosity to know their own side of the stories and how they have constructed themselves from their own standpoint. For instance, one such incident occurred when I went to give my research poster to a potential participant during pandemic times, with my mask on. She said, 'So many of you come from the universities and do research on us, and then what happens to us?', conveying her mistrust to the research being done on the migrant community. I attempted to explain to her my purpose and told her about my own migrant identity, removing my mask. It seemed that opening up about my identity as a migrant woman made her trust that side of my identity more than my researcher position with the university. Mayorga-Gallo and Hordge-Freeman (2017) refer it as the credibility that the participants give to us researchers to show comrade or as someone who is 'like us'. That situation also made me realise how valuable it is to have the trust of the communities that I am researching with and the ability to sustain that trust as I communicate their stories to a larger audience.

4.4.2 Challenges and negotiations as an insider

As much as I had several advantages as an insider, I also encountered a few challenges when collecting my data. Consistent with reflections of previous scholars of colour doing research in their own communities (Mayorga-Gallo and Hordge-Freeman, 2017; Zubair and Victor, 2015), the someone like us status also changed to an 'us' and 'them' divide due to certain aspects of my multilayered identity such as my academic affiliation, educational status and all the institutional protocols I followed when conducting the research that is not approachable to all the racialised communities. The concept of an interview un-eased and terrified some participants since they were not familiar with the research process. There was a sense of awkwardness about signing consent forms and being audio recorded which steered some suspicion and hesitation from a few gatekeepers' and participants. 'Are you, like, the media?' was a question that one of the gatekeepers asked me.

Not all research methodologies and a seat at the table for an interview for instance, empower people equally. Sometimes, it is important to re-think whether our methodology and the bureaucratic procedure of scientific inquiry empower or disempower people in reality. We may have to consider starting the research process from the level where people are if we think about reaching and including all people. Zubair and Victor (2015) have also discussed how methodological frameworks and formalised procedures othered people in the margins. Another tension I experienced was negotiating access to older women through gatekeepers who were mainly the male members of the women's family such as their husbands and sons. I also noticed that there were silences at times when asking about their gendered position, especially if they were in the family space in front of male members, but the situation was much more relaxed and the conversation more open if the woman met me personally, outside their homes.

Another important reflection that I want to add is that of writing about topics such as racialisation and intersectionality that can at times feel like banging your head against a brick wall (Ahmed, 2012). As Ahmed notes, 'the brick wall keeps its place, so it is you who gets sore'. When you use sexism and racism in papers and presentations, you are more likely to kill the happy environment and bring an element of unease and inconvenience to positions of privilege, White normativity, patriarchy and making groups who have some sort of power feel uncomfortable (Ahmed, 2023). The chances are good that you might sound as if you are a 'killjoy', as Ahmed (2023) further conceptualises it. At times, it is exhausting to be that person, particularly that person of colour who also feels hyper-visible and invisible at the same time, to bring those uncomfortable topics into academia and not know how people in those spaces will react to topics and lived realities they might not be familiar with. It is not that I and my research participants are ungrateful to for an instance to academia, to the Finnish services set up to help us while living in Finland, but it is also about starting those difficult conversations in academia that nobody wants to start, to be able to understand different standpoints and re-imagine what social work can become when including voices from the margins. However, as a scholar and social worker, I want to reflect on how this process can also be a pathway towards hope and inspiration for social justice issues, to ponder our privilege and what changes we aspire to achieve through our writing.

4.5 Limitations

The research data has generated rich information on how ageing non-European migrant women in Finland narrate their lived experiences at the intersections of race, gender and age and has contributed to the growing discussion and theorisation about the nexus of ageing and migration as well as in social work. However, there are also some limitations of the data. I used purposive and snowball sampling methods that may have limited my reach and recruitment to only certain communities of non-European migrants. This might have caused me to miss for an instance, older migrant women who are more isolated, socially excluded from the migrant communities, in vulnerable life situations or affected by physical health conditions. I interviewed 10 participants from a South Asian background in their local languages, whereas nine of the interviews were conducted in English language and only one interview was conducted with the help of an interpreter, in Swahili. I may have missed recruiting other participants who prefer speaking in their own language or in Finnish.

While I employed intersectionality theory broadly, my analysis was only limited to age, gender and race and I did not explicitly cover other intersectional categories such as class, ability, sexuality, education, indignity or religion. Race and gender appeared more prominently in my data than any other intersectional categories. The analysis was thus intentionally focused more on race, gender and age to capture a gendered and racialised understanding of ageing and I made their interconnection as the centrepiece

of this article-based doctoral thesis. Future research can broaden the intersectional analysis by adopting a more robust and complex view of identities and how they influence ageing and well-being. Similarly, the inclusion criteria for the sampling component of the scoping review article were only peer-reviewed articles in Finnish and English. The results may have been broader if we had covered grey literature such as organisational reports, news, blog posts on ageing migrants.

5 Summaries of the Publications

In this chapter, I reiterate the focus of and the dataset used for each article and briefly summarise their main findings.

5.1 Article I: A Scoping Review on Ageing Migrants in Finland through the Lens of Intersectionality and Vulnerability

Article I is a scoping review that studies the prevailing literature on ageing migrants in Finland from the perspective of intersectionality and vulnerability. The article sampled a total of sixteen peer-reviewed articles, among which twelve were in the English language and four in the Finnish language. The aim of the paper was to map out what has been researched so far on ageing migrants in Finland, to identify the critical gaps in ageing research on migrants and to highlight areas for future research in this field.

The article followed the methodological framework provided by Arksey and Malley (2005) which includes the following five stages: 1) identifying the research question, 2) identifying relevant studies, 3) study selection, 4) charting the data, 5) collating, summarising, and reporting the findings. A thematic analysis was conducted to the data which were guided by the research question: How is the issue of ageing migrants discussed in the existing research in Finland? The trends were studied by utilising the theoretical concepts of intersectionality and vulnerability. The results were divided into three main themes. The first theme had to do with the paucity of an intersectional perspective in Finnish ageing research which found that intersectional factors such as gender, race, sexuality have not been explored enough in detail. It reported that only two groups of ageing migrants, Russian-speaking and Somali migrants have been studied. Other ageing migrant groups were largely overlooked even though all the publications noted the growing diversity in Finland and the need to explore the needs and life situation of ageing migrants. The article argues for the importance of evidence-based practice, and the need to include racialised ageing population in research who go through several intersectional and structural disadvantages throughout the life course and additionally, the need to examine questions pertaining to identity, racialisation and discrimination, belongingness, agency and strengths of ageing migrants.

The second theme reported that ageing migrants have been constructed as vulnerable due to cultural and linguistic barriers, which had resulted in their social exclusion, unemployment and discrimination. The culture difference of ageing migrants was emphasised in some studies based on the caring patterns, intergenerational support, and values. We argue that research focusing on differences and culturising people further others them and keeps depicting them as problematic. It does not look at the structural barriers that many ageing migrant face. The third theme revealed gaps in accessing services for ageing migrants. Ageing migrants were often not able to access the services, lacked the necessary information and skills to utilise some of the social and healthcare services and were reluctant to use certain services for not finding them appropriate or meeting their needs. In conclusion, the article points out the need for more research in this field by including a robust analysis of the intersectional identities of ageing migrants to better understand inequalities in ageing.

5.2 Article II: "If I count everything that is against me. It is my colour. It is that I am a woman": Exploring The Lived Experiences of Racialised Older Migrant Women in Finland

Article II explores how issues of accumulated racism experienced at the personal, societal and structural levels throughout the life course contributes to inequalities in ageing for non-European migrant women in Finland. It studies how they narrate their racialised experiences in their everyday lives. The data consisted of semi-structured interviews with 20 women which were analysed using thematic analysis. Theoretical concepts of race, racism and racialisation were employed to interpret the results. Furthermore, concepts such as Nordic exceptionalism, controlling image, theorising silences, and invisibility in relation to race, post-raciality, and race embodiment were also discussed within the tapestry of critical race studies.

The article identified three themes. The first theme presented how older non-European migrant women experience structural racism mainly in the labour markets throughout their life course and how that impacts their ageing and well-being. The second theme shared insights on the everyday manifestation of racism faced by older non-European migrant women as microaggressions at the personal level and its relation to their sense of safety, well-being, physical and mental health. The third theme outlined their social exclusion and invisibility at the societal level which adversely affects their sense of belongingness in Finnish society and feelings of precarity.

The article demonstrates how racism lead to inequalities in ageing especially for older non-European migrant women, whose lived experiences occur at the intersections of gender, race and age. The article argues that racism is prevalent at all levels and the field of social work have to be able to grasp these concepts as well as

move beyond the personal level interventions when working with older non-European migrant women whose lived realities are grounded in intersectional racism.

5.3 Article III: The Untold Stories of Resilience, Reworking and Resistance of Ageing Non-European Migrant Women

Article III delineates the untold stories of older women from a racialised and non-European migrant backgrounds in Finland. The term 'untold' was used in the title to explicate the multifaceted voices of people who are in the margins and whose stories are seldom heard in social work. The paper pays particular attention to how ageing non-European migrant women develop their own tactics of survival, coping, subversion, and resistance despite the many challenges in their everyday lives, intersectional barriers and the absence of formal support from the welfare state or social work. The data consisted of semi-structured interviews with 20 older non-European migrant women. The article employs a theoretical framework of Katz's disaggregated agency: resilience, reworking and resistance. Using thematic analysis, relevant themes were first chosen based on the research question and then applied to the theoretical framework and its threefold classification.

The first theme on resilience practices revealed on cultivating home place and social connections, a sense of sisterhood, alternative ways of healing and spiritual grounding. The second theme uncovered reworking strategies, such as extending oneself through service to others and volunteering to help other migrant women. The third theme outlined acts of resistance against oppressive structures in the form of carving out their own spaces and coming to voice for their rights and inclusion. The article points out the need to re-imagine how stories are narrated and written in social work research reflecting upon questions on power, counter-narratives, and knowledge production. It challenges the hegemonic framework of social realities of people in the margins and the normative understanding of non-European and racialised older women and their complexities.

Table 2 Summarising the aim and scope of each article.

Article	Research aim	Research questions	Methods	Scholarly contribution	Social work practice and policy implications	Pathways for future research
1.	To identify the critical gaps and review the existing research on older migrants in Finland through the lens of intersectionality and vulnerability.	How is the issue of ageing migrants discussed from the perspective of intersectionality and vulnerability in the existing research in Finland?	A scoping review of sixteen peer-reviewed publications.	Highlighted the importance to study the intersectional positions to understand inequalities in ageing in relation to broader social structures.	It is key to include groups who are racialised and are in marginal positions in research as their narratives are almost invisible in the Finnish ageing research to understand what the issues and lived experiences are. It is necessary to reflect on how inequalities are (re) produced. Constructing migrants only as vulnerable groups will risk into othering them.	Consider who is included in research and who is not and why. Research questions in ageing should include concepts of identity, belongingness, racialisation, and discrimination to understand inequalities. Research should focus on resilience, strengths, coping mechanisms and have counter-narratives from migrant groups themselves.

Article	Research aim	Research questions	Methods	Scholarly contribution	Social work practice and policy implications	Pathways for future research
2.	To address the gap in scholarship on how issues of accumulated experiences of racism from the personal to structural levels throughout the life course contribute to inequalities in ageing of migrant women.	How do older racialised migrant women in Finland narrate their experiences of racialisation in their everyday lives?	Semi-structured interviews with 20 older women from racialised and non-European migrant backgrounds.	The connection between race and ageing migrants and its invisibility in social work is explored as the ageing process is shaped by how people construct and reconstruct their identities and needs embedded in broader social structures. It sheds light to recognise racism and its ramifications for ageing migrant women in structures beyond the personal level and to better understand the structural inequalities, intersecting identities, and the lived experiences of older racialised women to promote social justice.	As Finland's ageing demography is becoming more diverse, it is imperative for Finnish social work to understand the complexity of the lived experiences that are rooted in racism of the people they work with. The socio-historical contexts have to be studied to tackle injustices. It is important to acknowledge the racialised structures, intersecting identities and lived experiences of racialised groups and engage in critical, anti-racist and intersectional discussions and actions to promote social justice.	Be open to multifaceted and inclusive knowledge base for social work scholarship, research, and practice.

Article	Research aim	Research questions	Methods	Scholarly contribution	Social work practice and policy implications	Pathways for future research
3.	To centre non-European migrant ageing women and their untold stories of everyday resilience, reworking and resistance practices to contest the focus on deficits that is prevalent in research with ageing migrant women.	How do older non-European migrant women living in Finland develop strategies in the face of everyday challenges that contribute to their well-being?	Semi-structured interviews with 20 older women from non-European migrant backgrounds.	Focus on counter-narratives to uncover the stories of those who have been systematically silenced in dominant narratives. It contests the negative perception that produce problematic and binary construction of ageing non-European migrant women based on their vulnerability.	To re-imagine ways of narrating the multifaceted stories of women in the margins and to illuminate new pathways for social work research untangling questions on power and who gets to participate as knowers. To reflect on questions of power and privilege in assessing which stories get told and who listens.	Consider an empowering and decolonising lens in the epistemology of ageing and social work research.

6 Findings

In this chapter, I discuss the findings presented in my publications. I approach them thematically, meaning that I unite the findings from all the publications as a way of discussing the three main results of the doctoral research. I begin the discussion with the invisible narratives of women ageing in the margins, then proceed with an analysis focusing on intersectional inequalities in ageing, as generated from a gendered and racialised location throughout the life course and end by unravelling the agency of ageing non-European migrant women through resilience, reworking and resistance practices in their everyday lives.

6.1 Invisible Narratives of Women Ageing in the Margins

From the scoping review of Finnish literature on ageing migrants through the lens of intersectionality and vulnerability (publication I), we studied the current state of knowledge by focusing on what has been studied thus far, who is included and excluded in ageing literature with migrants and what are the critical gaps in this field of study. The scoping review reported that previous research had only studied ageing experiences among Russian-speaking and Somali migrants in Finland which does not provide a landscape about the lived experiences and accounts of other ageing migrant groups especially those in marginal positions such as racialised older women and non-European migrant ageing identities who are also increasingly becoming a part of the Finnish ageing demographics. Their under-representation and relatively peripheral status in theory development reflects how they are devalued in academic discussions and institutional research agendas (Torres, 2022; Calasanti and Giles, 2018). An intersectional perspective on ageing promotes the recognition of who is not included in research and why, in light of their multiple identities, social positions and the broader social structures (Kapilashrami and Hankivsky, 2018). It raises questions on power and knowledge production, on who gets to tell their stories and who listens to those stories? (publication I, II, III) The scoping review found that ageing migrants are constructed as vulnerable based on language barrier (Mölsä et al., 2014, 2019; Heikkinen, 2011, 2012; Asikainen, 2021; Shin et al., 2021), cultural and racial differences (Shin et al., 2021; Kuittinen, 2014; Asikainen, 2021; Mölsä et al., 2017, 2019), and social and digital exclusion to access the public services (Heikkinen, 2011, 2012; Tiaynen-Qadir, 2020; Kouvonen et al., 2021; Safarov, 2021). Most of the e-governance services such as the Social Insurance Institution (Kela), online banking,

tax administration, electronic forms, health care and public services have become digitalised in Finland. It was found that most of the Russian-speaking older migrants did not use the digital services and relied on family members or sought help from the third sector organisations if they had no option than to use them, which puts them in a precarious position, exposes them to possible abuse and raises questions on their autonomy, rights, privacy, and confidentiality (Holmqvist et al., 2022; Buchert and Wrede, 2020).

The scoping review revealed that older migrants face challenges from the micro and mezzo levels to interact and engage with the Finnish society and access services, to the macro levels where they are not included in the programme and policy design and structures. These challenges along with added intersectional barriers, absence of formal care and support system and migration related boundaries are higher for non-European migrant ageing women, who may not have the resources and power to advocate for their needs at an older age due to their gendered and racialised location (Koehn, 2022; Ferrer et al., 2022; Calasanti and Giles, 2018). The Finnish municipal old age policies and integration plan have outlined very little with respect to older migrants (Heikkinen and Lumme-Sandt, 2014) which makes it even more important to understand the complexities of ageing from marginal positions, where such migrants often become invisible. When the health, social, racial, gender and ageing inequalities of migrant groups are not known or well researched, then social welfare and care policies and social work services are not evidence based for all concerned, nor have they been created to address the emerging issues faced by the changing demographic situation (Bécares et al., 2020).

Research has shown that older migrants face more physical health issues (Williams et al., 2019; Kulla et al., 2010) and mental health problems (Becares and Zang, 2018) compared to the non-migrant population. However, for an instance, it was found from earlier research that migrants in Finland are assessed with the same tools as natives in the psychological and psychiatric services which can be problematic as it does not look at the structural issues that are detrimental to a person's mental and physical health (Kuittinen, 2014). Consequently, the scoping review found that older Somali migrants and Russian-speaking migrants were hesitant in seeking professional health as well as mental health services in Finland as they felt a gap in communicating their genuine concerns to health care professionals and vice versa (Shin et al., 2021; Mölsä et al., 2014). Similarly, older Somali adults reported that the Western social and health care do not incorporate indigenous ways of healing which were more familiar to them (Mölsä et al., 2014). It is important to understand the layers of multiple identities and how they impact a person's social and health conditions in different ways. Below is a quote from one research participant from publication III who explains why she was reluctant to seek out professional help:

> I had a traumatising experience once with the social services. I was diagnosed wrongly for my mental health, so rather than asking for psychological counseling and medicines, I try to heal myself with meditation and writing. Here they

> prescribe anti-depressants and pills for everything so easily without even understanding the issues. Rather than taking pills, I practice meditation which has helped me handle difficulties even when I am lonely. I would not go to a counsellor because they were not able to understand my situation. (Durga, 61 years old)

Durga's experience reflects the gap in social and health care professionals' understanding of service users' diverse contexts, intersectional inequalities, and the barriers they face and how such professionals assess the case through a Euro-centric, Western and middle-class lens. The older racialised non-European migrant women living in Helsinki repeatedly criticised the distorted gaze of Finnish health care professionals in the interviews, where they attested to the fact that they are constantly looked upon as welfare recipients and judged as not being trustworthy or a part of Finnish society (publications II, III). Collins (1991, 2000, 2022) refers to the notion of controlling images: societal, institutional and historical representations of women of colour set the tone for social relations and everyday interactions, with such controlling images calling into question their belongingness and worthiness and positioning them on the lowest rung of the societal hierarchical ladder. When older migrants are only constructed as vulnerable, passive, economically unproductive, helpless, and problematic, the narratives are likely to re-produce discrimination, inequalities, and social exclusion (Pérez et al., 2009; Campbell, 2008). It reinforces a life-long disadvantage regarding their ability to engage meaningfully with the Finnish society, participate in social and civic activities and access public services (Walsh et al., 2017; Scharf et al., 2005). The invisible narratives interwoven within intersectional identities are associated with multiple marginalisation at various levels (publication III). I found that not all narratives outside the dominant worldview, hold equal power which normalised their absences in research and knowledge production (Mohanty, 2003; Fricker, 2007; McKenzie-Mohr and Lafrance, 2017; Phoenix, 1997, 2022). However, to understand and address inequalities in ageing, intersectional identities have to be acknowledged within everyday interactions, practices, social structures, policies, knowledge production and research. There is a need to give space to the invisible narratives of ageing women in the margins.

6.2 Intersectional Inequalities in Ageing Generated from a Gendered and Racialised Location throughout the Life Course

Older non-European and racialised women narrated their lived experiences of ageing at the crossroads of gender, race and age (publication II, III). They described how their racialised and gendered position impacts their everyday encounters at personal, societal and structural levels throughout their life course and influences their ageing and well-being (publication II). At the structural level, some of them have never found

jobs in Finland commensurate with their qualifications and educational backgrounds. Some of the participants were well-educated either from Finland or their home country, while others had a basic education or no education. Most of the participants did only physically demanding jobs such as waiters, cleaners, childminders, practical nurses and eldercare workers. Migrant women are often expected to work in less desirable and dirtier jobs (Lauren and Wrede, 2008; Torres and Lindblom, 2020). Some of them also encountered visa issues and dealt with border regimes and precarious contracts that affected their entry and re-entry into the labour market. Their lives were on hold, and they had to wait longer when navigating with the immigration systems which made them feel that their time is less valued and created mental distress in their lives. A few of them were the first ones to be affected during pandemic layoffs and economic slumps (publication II). Furthermore, racialised women are blamed for their own poverty and failure to thrive within the systems, when often, it is structural racism within the institutions that dictates who is eligible and entitled to privilege and position and who is not (Dominelli, 2017). Also, unpaid care responsibilities in the domestic sphere fall primarily to racialised women that decreases their opportunities to thrive in the labour market throughout their life course. The results of the publications are in line with prior study (Koehn, 2022), that states that the gendered family dynamics for some older non-European migrant women can sometimes curtail their freedom, agency, decision making and ability to use their time which creates dependency on family members because of less income, limited language proficiency, low digital skills and immigration statuses attached to their spouses or children. As Crenshaw (1991) points out that women of colour are differently situated in economic, social, and political worlds and when reform efforts undertaken on behalf of women neglect this fact, women of colour are less likely to have their needs met than women who are racially privileged. This difference is related to ageing because accumulated inequalities become amplified over time and have an adverse impact on their health, well-being and self-esteem as also shown in previous studies (Koehn et al., 2022; Holman and Walker, 2020; Phillipson, 2013). Structural discrimination which affects their ability to participate in the labour markets throughout the life course impacts their access to pensions, savings, formal care and healthcare and support systems at older age. Labour market disadvantages can result into reduced standard of living of older migrants (Gallassi and Harrysson, 2021; Sumil-Laanemaa et al., 2021). It has detrimental effects on racialised women's mental and physical health due to the type of jobs that they mostly do that hold lower status, are physically demanding, have high-risks, are not well paid with odd working hours and no health-care benefits (Calasanti and Giles, 2018; Zajicek et al., 2013; Hunter, 2018).

At a societal level, ageing non-European migrant women expressed that they are not trusted or included because of their layered identities and judged solely on their phenotypical attributes such as their skin colour, hair textures and dressing styles (publication II). Some of the participants reported feeling unseen, unattended to, and incapable of making connections with the White Finnish society because of their

intersectional identities which become sharpened and more prominent with ageing for racialised women. The interviews revealed how hyper-visible they feel on one hand because of those intersectional characteristics that they physically embody while at the same time, those were also the very markers of their invisibility in having a space in structures, institutions and societal interactions for the same reasons (Rajan-Rankin, 2018; Leinonen and Toivanen, 2014). Hyper-visibility is connected with increased scrutiny and surveillance, where failures are amplified and people who are hyper-visible because of their phenotypes feel highly vigilant as well as powerless over how they are perceived by others (Lewis and Simpson, 2010; Settles et al., 2019). As a result, older non-European migrant women felt excluded from the Finnish society and accounted that their time and value were not as valued as others. The older migrant women questioned their belongingness in the Finnish society, even when some of them are legally Finnish citizens and married to Finnish partners. Earlier research with ageing Russian-speaking migrants in Finland has also found that such persons were racialised for their identities and accents which narrows their connections into their own migrant circles (Asikainen, 2021; Tiaynen-Qadir, 2020).

At a personal level, older migrant women noted that it is the microaggressions that they endure in their everyday interactions with people which made them feel dehumanised and cause them to question their belonginess in Finnish society. The controlling images that are institutionalised such as that of welfare recipients also subjugated their encounters and social relations, where racialised older women feel their worth was seen, regardless of their contribution to the Finnish economy and workforce (Publication II, III). As Collins (2000) notes, the controlling images are intersectional which are not only racialised but also gendered and classed, which presumes women of colour as state dependent and unproductive, as encapsulated by the neoliberal ideologies on personal responsibility. The act of condemning these women through disapproval and dis-credibility situates them as having problems, as lacking skills and as being poor, thereby shifts away the focus from structural forms of inequality (Miller, 2008; Collins, 2022). The negative interactions tend to generate low-self-esteem and doubts, fear and mistrust that have adverse consequences for emotional, mental, and physical health and their sense of safety and well-being (Castaneda et al., 2015; Williams, et al., 2019; Karlsen and Nazroo, 2002; Pascoe and Richman, 2009).

The racialised identities constructed by the women are influenced by the broader colonial, historical and political contexts. An emphasis on the cumulative disadvantages created by a multitude of different identities such as gender, race and age, experienced over the life course helps to highlight key aspects of inequalities in ageing and how structures are created and maintained to reinforce such inequalities. A single model of inquiry misses other intersections that offer a robust understanding of a person's lived experience (Chaouni, 2021; Torres 2019b). It is crucial to explore the intersectional inequalities experienced by racialised ageing migrant women vis-à-

vis broader social structures and power dynamics are key to understand inequalities in ageing.

6.3 Agentic Pathways of Resilience, Reworking and Resistance of Ageing Non-European Migrant and Racialised women

When I studied how older non-European migrant women narrate stories of their lived experiences in Finland, I also identified powerful narratives of ageing migrant women demonstrating agency and negotiating their own idea of self and well-being (publication III), despite them being labelled as a group that is vulnerable (publication I), racialised and being perceived as problematic at the personal, societal and structural levels (publication II). Intersectionality and vulnerability lens on marginalised groups without studying people's strengths, agency and resilience can be patronising and othering (Fawcett, 2009; Holman and Walker, 2020) and embedded in colonial thinking that reduces people's lives into measurable patterns (Quijano, 2007; Chaouni et al., 2021).

By employing Katz's threefold classification of disaggregated agency as resilience, reworking and resistance, I found that older women deploy many nuanced strategies to contest intersectional inequalities that may seem as unconventional ways of survival and finding well-being compared to the Western social work interventions (publication III). The creation of home as safe spaces against racism (hooks, 1990) and community solidarity to navigate support and familiarity were identified among older non-European migrant women in Finland. The women spoke of maintaining transnational relationships and community support in times of need and crisis. Tiamzon's (2013) study of Filipino older migrants in the United States who were seen to be integrated well to the American society, also found that they made the choice to be with their own Filipino circle during old age for being racialised throughout their life course. A sense of sisterhood as attested by older non-European women, made them feel heard when no one heard them and validated their similar struggles as women of colour. As Ahmed (2000) has mentioned the power of face-to-face encounters among women foster a space for them to verbalise their stories of injustice together and find solace from one another's experience. Beyond a survival tactic, conversations via sisterhood act as a source of healing as well as a form of collective resistance against microaggression and exclusion in times of need for women (Moran and Mapedzahama, 2022). A number of older women opt to engage in their indigenous and eastern ways of healing through *Ayurvedic* food wisdom, yoga, meditation, *satsang* where they sing folk songs together and discuss about common topics, resort to music and dance, cook authentic food to have a homelike feeling, write and use positive self-affirmations and mirror talk as alternative ways of healing techniques that differ from seeking professional interventions for mental health issues. Many women relied on spirituality as a way of coping and to regain positivity and strength in their lives amid stressful situations

which is also consistent with previous research findings (KC and Walker, 2023b; Stevens, 2016; Obrist and Buchi, 2008). Indigenous ways of healing can be useful decolonising pathways to heal traumas caused by oppressive structures, which are not captured within Western normative social work interventions (Park and Chatterjee, 2023; Clarke and Yellow Bird, 2020; Mignolo, 2011; Chaouni et al., 2021).

When systems and services are not compatible to their needs and when social work and state support are absent in their lives, they extend themselves to help other migrant women in need by volunteering to look after toddlers, assisting to help other migrant women navigate the Finnish system on issues of child protection, domestic violence, and workplace grievances as well as by being mediators and peacekeepers solving conflicts and family disputes as the eldest of their community as a way of reworking. In some migrant communities, the role of being the eldest member of the community garners some sense of respectability where other community members seek them out for advice and direction on family and marital issues. These women are able to tap into their own resourcefulness as they play the roles of seniors, grandmothers, sisters, mothers, story tellers, community organisers and advocates.

There were few nuanced acts of everyday resistance against gendered and racialised oppression through carving out their own spaces, where a few of them had even formed their own migrant associations, engaged in some form of community activism, and come to voice when they realised that their legitimacy, voices and subjectivities were being denied or rendered as invisible (Lugones, 2010). As bell hooks (2016) suggests, people sustain themselves by forming communities of resistance where they know they are not alone. These communities of resistance and fighting against oppressive structures in some way or the other seemed important to some older women to fill their lives with hope. A few women highlighted that they were not as free as men in their own communities and anywhere close to White women in Finland. Coming to voice and talking back against oppressive practices were liberating for them to break from oppressive structures while it was also at times, risking them into being categorised as angry, activist women who are breaking apart families when they choose to speak up (hooks, 1989; Brah and Phoenix, 2004). It was not easy to talk back or carve out spaces of their own. Thus, only few racialised women had found the boldness and means to utilise resistance strategies as their cumulative intersectional disadvantages such as education, class, privilege, networks, safety nets to fall back to and limited finances throughout the life course had left many others with no choice but to remain silent, adaptive and dependent on those very same unjust structures to be able to survive. The findings show that resilience and reworking practices were more commonly used by older racialised migrant women than acts of resistance (publication III).

Othering practices that predefine older migrant women into homogenous and essentialised categories do not take into account the structural inequalities created by intersectional disadvantages throughout the life course (Brown, 2011; Mohanty, 2003) or deconstruct the fluidity within migrant groups (Zubair and Norris, 2015; publications I, II). It is important to study how ageing women negotiate their lives and

build strategies to contest intersectional inequalities and controlling images, while also broadening research perspectives to better reflect the complexity of marginalised communities.

7 Discussion

I discuss the results of my research in line with international studies and the current state of the art literature on ageing migrants and the need for intersectional perspectives on ageing and I reiterate their importance in this chapter.

My doctoral research adopts an intersectional approach to the construction of identities and the lived experiences of ageing non-European migrant women, which is central to the findings presented in all my publications and has helped me contextualise the individual experiences of ageing within broader social structures. I have utilised the intersectional theoretical concept, which simultaneously positions such women within multiple social categories of gender, race and age and assesses how the categories intersect with structures of power (Crenshaw, 1989). I have used gender, race and age as my anchor points in the analysis, positioning them within the intersectionality theoretical framework, with the understanding that these social categories provide privilege to some while disadvantaging others (Kapilashrami and Hankivsky, 2018). Foregrounding intersectionality at the nexus of migration and ageing in this research project made it possible to recognise the complex and multi-layered attributes of everyday life and the interconnectedness of different forms of oppression for those migrants ageing in the margins (Bernard, 2022; Collins and Bilge, 2020; Yuval-Davis, 2006; Bowleg, 2008).

My findings help fill a gap in scholarship on understanding the nuanced lived experiences of ageing non-European migrant women in Finland. It demonstrates how experiences of intersectional disadvantages mainly from a gendered and racialised location, at personal, societal, and structural levels throughout the life course, contributes to inequalities in ageing. A focus on such agentic factors as resilience and resistance, in tandem with an intersectional perspective on ageing migrant women, has provided a new way of studying ageing in the margins and adds novelty to the social work-ageing-migration nexus by reflecting also on the possibilities generated from that position, such as solidarity, sisterhood and resistance. Older non- European migrant women from under-represented and marginalised backgrounds are kept at the core of this research, which adds to the paucity of literature on ageing migrants in Finland.

My data demonstrates that ageing non-European migrant women are disadvantaged throughout their life course at the structural level since they typically do not find employment that matches their qualifications and expertise, and they were the first ones to be affected by COVID-19 layoffs and the subsequent financial downturn. They instead often must do low-paid, precarious and physically demanding

work, like cleaning and providing care assistance, which have detrimental effects for their well-being. Being older, they have limited access to formal care services, networks, support systems, finances and pensions. Prior research done in Europe has shown that older migrants are less likely to receive sufficient pensions and are more inclined to depend on the minimum subsistence level afforded by means-tested income support (Hunter, 2018; Böcker and Hunter, 2017; Ginn and Arber, 2001). In addition, life-long discrimination has negative health outcomes (Stopforth et al.,2023; Forrester et al., 2019). The term 'weathering' has been used to account for the unique stressors experienced by racialised people, resulting in hypertension and cardiovascular disease and affecting their mobility and daily activities due to life-long segregation, racism and discrimination (Geronimus et al., 2006; Bowen and González, 2008). The 'weathering effect' of intersectional racism recognises the individual subjective reality of the biological, psychological and social harm caused by depression, alopecia, high blood pressure, alcoholism and social anxiety, while locating the systemic cause in racist social structures (Nayak, 2022).

The findings indicate that older non-European migrant women are often excluded at the societal level, meaning that they engage with and interact less with White Finnish society. Previous studies have found that social interactions are influenced by social identities that reflect structural and systemic issues (Chuang et al., 2022; Sun et al., 2020). Due to such complex factors as the availability of social networks, language proficiency, skills at obtaining employment throughout the life course and the capacity to access information, interlinked with their racialised and gendered identities and gendered care burden, older non-European migrant women in marginal positions face difficulties in accessing public spaces and services or participating in lifelong learning activities (KC and Walker, 2023). Koehn's (2022) study of older migrant women from a Punjabi background in Canada found that they depend more on family members to access services and navigate border regulations and that they are greatly affected by the gendered loss of decision-making power and expectations about how women should use their time. At times, even their leisure time and ability to participate in civic activities or group activities are controlled and gendered, with the result being that they are unable to decide for themselves. This reflects why a gendered angle in research on ageing migrants is necessary, as ageing may not be a uniform experience.

The results show that older non-European migrant women also face microaggressions in their everyday lives because of prominent controlling images, such as that of welfare mammies, welfare queens or welfare recipients (Collins, 2004), with others judging them based on their visible phenotypes, which gives rise to feelings of fear, mistrust and exclusion. Previous studies have also highlighted the extent to which racism affects the lives of older migrants (Wang et al., 2021; Ferrer et al., 2022). Phoenix (1997) writes about a 'normalised absence, pathologised presence' to refer to instances when the presence of the other can be deemed intrusive, whereas the absence of the other is often generally accepted and considered the norm. Drawing from race embodiment literature (Alcoff, 2005; Rajan-Rankin, 2018; Leinonen and Toivanen,

2014), older non-European migrant women are hyper-visible because of their phenotypical attributes, such as their skin colour, hair texture, the colour of their eyes and their clothing style, but at the same time they remain invisible in structures, institutions, knowledge production, research, policy and programmes. Most of the time, mainstream society can view them as backward, uncivilised and not knowing anything better for their own lives, whereas they do not have the means to access power or space to voice their discontents and concerns and create change. The findings presented here raise questions about how knowledge about ageing migrant women is constructed and whose concerns are taken into account.

Prior research on ageing migrants has focused more on language and cultural differences, which further others them and constructs them as vulnerable. It is a problematic construction of migrant women that shifts the burden of responsibility for the inequitable access to resources onto people in the margins and segregates people into the categories of 'us' and 'them' (Koehn, 2022; Torres, 2019a). Previous studies have likewise used euphemisms like diversity and multiculturalism and avoided such concepts as race and racism, further disguising the problem. The de-politicisation of race (Hesse, 2011) and the three Ds (deflection, distancing and denial) of post-racial management (Lentin, 2016) have influenced scholarly discussions on ageing migrants and social work. The topic has been silenced because the colonial roots of structural racism and race formation are not recognised; scholars tend to be averse to studying how racism is manifested in people's everyday lives in complex systemic ways, preferring instead to use a non-racialised vocabulary to allude to race and racism. Ahmed (2023) notes that the very act of dismissing certain vocabularies and terms like intersectional racism in scholarship actually provides evidence of the necessity of confronting how scholars sidestep issues of race and structural racism. Therefore, it becomes vital for researchers to turn the analytic gaze upon themselves, their writing and the topics they choose and to analyse their role in reproducing systems of oppression in scholarly discussions (Torres, 2023).

The act of constructing ageing non-European migrant women as problematic and vulnerable leads to a failure to examine their invisibility and exclusion at the structural levels. If they are only viewed from a deficit perspective, it can confine them to their own bubble, and seldom regard them as a part of the society. It may jeopardise their engagement with professional services, and vice versa, based on ideas of fear, a lack of safety and mistrust (Loveland and Popescu, 2016). Contesting the restrictive concept of vulnerability is helpful for shedding light on the structural inequalities that result from creating a complex life situation for people (Brown, 2011; Virokannas et al., 2020) and for making it possible to identify the multifaceted stories of agency, strength, resilience and resistance of ageing migrant women in marginal positions (Chaouni et al., 2021).

The counter-narratives of older non-European migrant women in this research and the questions raised about the normative understanding of people and well-being serve to contest a binary construction of migrant women grounded in vulnerability and

victimhood (Rydzik and Anitha, 2020). Such an approach exposes why some stories are systematically omitted in research and practice. Consequently, it highlights the importance of locating and listening to the silences and invisible narratives in knowledge production (Mohanty, 2003; Fricker, 2007). Ageing non-European migrant women possess decolonial and indigenous knowledge, which they have been using to deal with the traumas inflicted by oppressive structures and which simultaneously may be disregarded as unconventional by the Western knowledge and social work discipline (Park and Chatterjee, 2023; Clarke and Yellow Bird, 2020; Iseke, 2013). My findings indicate that such women exhibit agency in the form of resilience, reworking and resistance in the face of intersectional inequalities, which can offer a decolonising and culturally humble lens for understanding the epistemology of social work. It contests the controlling images of them in dominant narratives. It centres and empowers women in the margins by foregrounding alternative ways of knowing (Chaouni et al., 2021; Chalmers, 2017; Berret-Abebe et al., 2023). Furthermore, it focuses attention on why some residents are hesitant to seek professional social work services and must instead carve out spaces of their own. In the present context, which is influenced by neoliberalism and austerity, researchers tend to promote individualism in every facet of life, so much so that they tend to view the strong interconnectedness of older racialised non-European migrant women to family, community, sisterhood and solidarity as a means of healing as radical, a perspective further complicated by social work's problematic framings of dependency, which may even dismiss the concept of interdependency altogether, failing to recognise how such spaces are also a site of rejuvenating energy for women ageing in the margins (Nayak, 2020). The findings from this research note the importance of building an understanding of the socio-historical and structural dimensions that shape the complex ways in which multiple oppressions operate in people's lives (Collins and Bilge, 2020; Lee and Brotman, 2015). It also compels us to re-imagine our ways of narrating stories about older women in the margins and to promote strength-based perspectives to address intersectional inequalities. Strength-based perspectives embrace agency and approach ageing non-European migrant women from where they are positioned and build knowledge from there.

Thus, my doctoral research adds an intersectional perspective to the field of migration and ageing and social work scholarship to offer a nuanced understanding of the lived experiences of women ageing in the margins by focusing on the intersections of age, race and gender. It explores the inequalities in ageing generated by an intersectional position, demonstrating the connections and implications of intersectional racism at the individual, societal, institutional and structural levels for ageing non-European migrant women. My research makes the argument that inequalities in ageing cannot be studied in their entirety unless the intersections of age, race and gender are included in the research. Furthermore, gendered narratives such as those foregrounding the strength, agency, resilience, reworking and resistance of ageing women in the margins, are important to challenge how we can move beyond

categorising vulnerability and broaden our understanding of people that social work engages with.

8 Conclusion

My research makes the lived experiences of ageing in the margins visible by focusing on the narratives of older non-European migrant women in Finland, who are under-represented in scholarly discussions in social work and ageing research. It highlights that intersectional perspectives on ageing are important for understanding key aspects of the inequalities and disparities in ageing, especially for groups facing a multitude of complexities that overlap with one other as they age and experience greater disadvantages and structural barriers as a result of their gendered and racialised location. My findings indicate that their absence has been normalised in existing research, policies, institutional structures and knowledge production, rendering them invisible in those spaces, with their presence often viewed through gendered and racialised controlling images, often pathologised and made hyper-visible from a deficit perspective (Phoenix, 1997; Alcoff, 2005; Rajan-Rankin, 2018; Leinonen and Toivanen, 2014; Collins, 2022). This research raises important questions about who are we talking about when we work with and conduct research on migrants? Whose stories and narratives are we missing, and why? Which women are we including in our work? How are we constructing knowledge in the nexus of migration and ageing? Who does our scholarship serve? It is likewise necessary to question whether programmes and policies designed to promote social justice and inclusion are evidence-based or not. Such questions compel us to think about how social workers can be a bridge between personal/societal barriers and broader social structures. Additionally, this research helps scholars consider how to take meaningful actions to make our research and practices truly inclusive and to understand our own positions of privilege and power compared to the complex needs of the service users we are studying.

The research fills a gap in understanding inequalities in ageing based on the use of an intersectional lens, with an emphasis on age, gender and race, the ways such identities are intertwined and how that impacts non-European migrant women's well-being and ageing at three different levels, the personal, societal and structural, throughout their life course. An intersectional perspective on ageing helps reveal the life-course disadvantages, social and health inequalities, and structural factors that influence ageing, well-being and the support needs of groups ageing in the margins (Bernard, 2022). It provides the means to theorise about intersecting identities and oppressions in ageing non-European migrant women's lives, thus contributing important insights to social work scholarship. The findings from the research project

can be used to shed light on inequalities in ageing and the need for additional research in this field.

The research also highlights that amidst systems of oppression and inequalities in ageing, as experienced from a gendered and racialised ageing position, amidst the need to often grapple with service gaps in the absence of professional social work and state support, ageing non-European migrant women still showcase possibilities for agency through their resilience, strengths, alternative healing techniques, solidarity, reworking and resistance. By adopting an intersectional lens on ageing, I have moved the discussion beyond merely a focus on the problems faced by ageing non-European migrant women, centring the untold stories that are invisible in dominant narratives about ageing migrant women. These perspectives offer new windows into understanding the needs of ageing migrant women in social work, extending the discussion beyond Western onto-epistemologies (Park and Chatterjee, 2023).

To conclude, the contributions of this doctoral research project have been threefold: first, it studies the gaps in ageing and social work research with older migrants from an intersectional perspective; second, it identifies the everyday barriers in the lives of ageing non-European migrant women; and third, it brings agentic factors to the forefront, presenting how older non-European migrant women display disaggregated agency in their own tacit ways to contest intersectional inequalities and to find a meaningful sense of well-being, complicating the binary construction of vulnerability in prior scholarship. The lived experiences of such women illustrate how individual experiences of ageing are shaped and constrained by societal structures. In this way, I offer a more holistic picture of how we construct ageing women in the margins in knowledge production, the distinct ways in which they experience cumulative and structural disadvantages throughout the life course, and how that is connected to ageing and well-being, along with the implications for policy, social work research and practice. Departing from the notion that social justice is one of the key values in social work, an intersectional perspective on ageing adds value to centring, prioritising and learning from people in the margins (Hudson and Mehrotra, 2021). The essence of my research is to show that women who are ageing in the margins also have solutions, not only problems, which is why it is imperative to involve them in sharing their stories to better understand their lived realities and needs and to learn what works for them and what is in their best interest (Blackdeer, 2023). It broadens our understanding of what social work can be both in terms of its knowledge and practice. Finally, this research makes it possible to create a space for re-imagining the future of social work. I end by demonstrating the implications of this research project for policy, social work practice and further research at the micro, mezzo and macro levels.

8.1 Implications for Policy, Social Work Research and Practice

The findings presented in my doctoral research have clear implications for social work, a discipline committed to social justice, as it provides a knowledge base for understanding how the lived experiences of some residents and citizens are rooted in intersectional discrimination that leads to inequalities in ageing. Cane and Tedam's (2022) research found that social work graduates feel ill-equipped to deal with race or racism in real-life social work situations because anti-racist materials are not discussed in the curriculum or in work placements, which emphasise instead the need for an anti-racist, critical and intersectional social work education. Clarke and Vertelyte (2023) argue that only a few Finnish social work curriculums engage with the concept of racism and its impact. It is imperative for Finnish social workers to reflect on the ways in which social injustices are created and maintained by social structures, research agendas and knowledge production. My use of an intersectional lens shifts current perspectives on inequalities so that social workers can have better tools for engaging in critical, intersectional anti-racist social work that relies not only on personal-level interventions but also on what changes are required at the societal, institutional and structural levels. I have outlined the implications on three levels: the micro, mezzo and macro levels.

At the micro level, the doctoral thesis highlights the need for social workers and researchers to gain a better understanding and knowledge of intersectional identities, the lived experiences of older non-European migrant women, the everyday constraints they face and how that affects their access to services, engagement with professionals, well-being and ageing. It also emphasises the need to explore people's strengths and resilience and how social workers can identify and build on them by centring people, which would give ageing women in the margins more hope and strength to persevere (Matsuoka, 2015). Likewise, it is important for social workers and researchers to be reflexive about their own positioning, such as their privilege and implicit biases and how that influences their interactions with other identities (Hudson and Mehrotra, 2021; Nayak, 2022). As Ijeoma Oluo (2018) argues, '*when we identify where our privilege intersects with somebody else's oppression, we will find our opportunities to make real change*'. Exhibiting self-awareness and reflexivity about the positionality, privilege and power of intersecting professional and personal identities will help researchers identify areas where we can make change.

Older women in the margins should not only be viewed as vulnerable or incapable of knowing their own reality, issues and strengths (Virokannas et al., 2020), and social work professionals and researchers should not just assume they know what is best for them. There is a need to move beyond such euphemisms as diversity and multiculturalism and focus more on narrated experiences and situated knowledge, a need not to merely state differences in culture, values, beliefs, language and practices (Morton et al., 2023). Applying a culturally humble lens to social work can be more

valuable than exhibiting cultural competence. Cultural humility has emerged as a critique of cultural competence, a perspective that considers the people we work with more knowledgeable about their lives than the social workers or researchers claiming to be experts on someone else's life (Abe, 2020; Ortega and Faller, 2010). Cultural humility encourages social workers to possess humility, to recognise themselves as learners rather than competent experts and begin the intervention right from where people are, centring their lived experience. It is about more than having cross-cultural skills and knowledge and about being open to people from all backgrounds, being able to recognise our own implicit biases and positionalities when necessary (Nguyen et al., 2020).

At the mezzo level, the doctoral thesis articulates the need to question our normative understanding of service users and be able to identify and value alternative ways of knowing and healing among older migrant women. Using intersectionality in this research drew attention to power relations and inequalities in ageing, to the need to include the untold and seldom heard narratives of ageing women in the margins. It also highlights the need of having academics of colour engage with Finnish academy and of thinking about richer epistemologies.

Often at the macro level, international migration policies emphasise younger and working-age migrants and overlook the needs of older migrants, or they tend to view them as a burden on the welfare states, which is why there is a need for policies that are more receptive to exploring migration as a life course trajectory that needs to account for more than just the earlier parts of migrants' lives and recognise the long-term impacts of migration (Katz and Grenier, 2023). Likewise, even though it is important to practice cultural humility at the micro level, I also agree with Eliassi (2013), who argues that it is not enough to learn about other cultures unless we also discuss unequal power relations and the history of dominance and injustice in relation to non-European identities as well as their macro-level implications. Experts and social workers should be aware of the socio-historic contexts to remedy the traumas created by oppressive structures, to cleanse social work of the harms of its past actions and prejudices and to dissect the broader power structures that (re) produce inequalities (Park and Chatterjee, 2023; Rajan-Rankin, 2015). In short, it is essential to understand older racialised individuals' complex lived experiences and how they view themselves (Mehrotra, 2010; Bernard, 2022). Therefore, it is key for social work as well as migration and ageing scholarship and policies to recognise the unequal, gendered and racialised structures, intersectional identities and accumulated and multiple forms of marginalisation throughout the life course that result in inequalities in ageing and to develop a more rigorous critical lens that centres women ageing in the margins.

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Appendices

Article I and II were co-authored while Article III was single authored. Below, the contributions to co-authorship in Article I and II are outlined.

Appendix 1. Authorship Contribution Statement for Article I

KC, S., Clarke, K., & Seppänen, M. (2023). A Scoping Review on Aging Migrants in Finland Through the Lens of Intersectionality and Vulnerability. *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*, *13* (3), 1-18. https://doi.org/10.33134/njmr.561

Smarika KC was responsible for conceptualising the idea, forming the research question, and selecting the method. All authors gave ideas on inclusion and exclusion criteria, the review process and revising the review question. KC conducted the preliminary searches in the selected databases and journals and made the chart of the existing Finnish literature on ageing migrants. After sampling, KC analysed 12 peer-reviewed articles in English language and Clarke summarised and analysed the four peer-reviewed articles in Finnish language based on the research question. KC combined Clarke's findings and analysed the current state of knowledge section as a whole. KC was responsible for the first version of the manuscript and for writing (i.e., introduction, theoretical sections on intersectionality and vulnerability, methods, results, and conclusion). Clarke edited some parts based on KC's writing and added some insights on intersectionality. Seppänen provided comments to the manuscript and supervised it.

Helsinki, February 14, 2024
Smarika KC
Kris Clarke
Marjaana Seppänen

Appendix 2. Authorship Contribution Statement for Article II

KC, S., Clarke, K., & Seppänen, M. (2023). 'If I Count Everything That Is Against Me. It Is My Colour. It Is That I Am a Woman': Exploring the Lived Experiences of Racialised Older Migrant Women in Finland. *British Journal of Social Work*. https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcad178

Smarika KC collected and analysed the data. KC conceptualised the idea of the article and the research question. KC was responsible for most of the writing (i.e., introduction, theoretical section, methods, analysis of results, discussion, and conclusion). Clarke and KC jointly selected the theoretical concepts of the article. Clarke edited the manuscript and added some insights on race based on KC's writing. Seppänen provided comments on the structure of the manuscript, the themes of the results, and supervised the work.

Helsinki, February 14, 2024
Smarika KC
Kris Clarke
Marjaana Seppänen

Appendix 3. Tiivistelmä (Abstract in Finnish)

Tämä väitöskirja sijoittuu ikääntymisen, sukupuolen ja muuttoliikkeen väliseen yhtymäkohtaan. Artikkelipohjaisessa väitöskirjassa pyritään tutkimaan ikääntymisen eriarvoisuutta intersektionaalisesta näkökulmasta. Käytin väitöskirjassa kvalitatiivisia tutkimusmenetelmiä, joihin kuului 20:n Euroopan ulkopuolisesta maasta tulevan maahanmuuttajataustaisen ikääntyvän naisen puolistrukturoituja haastatteluja sekä katsaus ikääntyviä maahanmuuttajia käsittelevään suomalaiseen kirjallisuuteen, jota analysoin aihekohtaisen analyysin avulla. Tutkimukseni perustuu pitkälti intersektionaalisuusteoriaan, minkä lisäksi käytän myös haavoittuvuuden, rodun, rasismin, rodullistamisen ja yksilöllisen toimijuuden käsitteitä: resilienssiä, kehittymiskykyä ja kestävyyttä sekä vastanarratiiveja tutkimustulosten tulkinnassa. Tavoitteenani on keskittää naisten eletyt kokemukset ja ikääntyminen intersektionaaliseen eriarvoisuuteen perustuvissa marginaaleissa, ja täyttää tietovajetta, joka liittyy käsityksiimme ikääntyvien maahanmuuttajien yhteisestä normatiivisesta tulkinnasta sosiaalityössä ja ikääntymisen tutkimuksessa.

Empiiriset havainnot toivat esiin ensinnäkin Euroopan ulkopuolisista maista tulevien ikääntyvien maahanmuuttajien näkymättömyyden tieteellisissä keskusteluissa. Tutkimus toi myös esiin iän, rodun ja sukupuolen yhtymäkohdissa koetun eriarvoisuuden rakenteellisella, yhteiskunnallisella ja henkilökohtaisella tasolla ja osoitti, miten tutkimuksen kohteena olevien henkilöiden arkielämän kokemukset ovat kytköksissä valtarakenteisiin. Lisäksi tutkimustulokset toivat esiin tutkittavien henkilöiden resilienssin, kehittymiskyvyn ja kestävyyden näkymättömiä toimijuuspolkuja, jotka kyseenalaistavat Euroopan ulkopuolisista maista tulevien ikääntyvien maahanmuuttajanaisten ongelmallista ja puutteellista määrittelyä heidän haavoittuvuutensa perusteella. Tutkimus havainnollistaa sukupuolittuneen ja rodullistuneen ikääntyneisyyden aseman luomia rajoitteita ja mahdollisuuksia sekä niiden vaikutuksia sosiaalityöhön. Koska sosiaalityö on sosiaaliseen oikeudenmukaisuuteen sitoutunut ala, on keskeistä, että sen puitteissa pystytään ymmärtämään, miten yhteen kietoutuneet identiteetit vaikuttavat ikääntymisen elettyihin kokemuksiin ja henkilökohtaisen tason ylittävään hyvinvointiin. Väitöskirjassa kiinnitetään huomiota tarpeeseen tunnustaa rakenteelliset eriarvoisuudet ja moninkertainen marginalisointi sekä tarkastella marginaaleissa ikääntyvien naisten osallisuuden ja sitoutumisen tapoja.

Avainsanat: ikääntyvät maahanmuuttajat, eriarvoisuus ikääntymisessä, intersektionaalisuus, haavoittuvuus, sukupuoli, rodullistaminen, resilienssi, kehittymiskyky, kestävyys, vastanarratiivit, sosiaalityö

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A Scoping Review on Ageing Migrants in Finland Through the Lens of Intersectionality and Vulnerability

RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

Finland is one of the most rapidly ageing countries in the world while concomitantly becoming a more diverse society through increased migration in recent decades. Concepts of ageing have often been constructed on a normative basis embedded in the narratives of Finland as a homogeneous society with universal services. These constructions render the needs of ageing migrants with diverse backgrounds invisible. This scoping review aims to identify and review the existing research on older migrants in Finland through the lens of intersectionality and vulnerability. It presents findings from 16 peer-reviewed publications, and sheds light on the paucity of research on ageing migrants in the Finnish context. Through a thematic analysis of a range of publications in this field, this review finds that research has not yet included the perspectives and lived experiences of diverse older migrants from marginal positions. The inequalities experienced by older migrants through multiple social identities and increased heterogeneity within the migrant groups are not captured enough in the Finnish literature. Older migrants report gaps in accessing services and struggle with discrimination. Rather than viewing ageing migrants as vulnerable, the study opens perspectives for future research to be more inclusive to the needs of growing diversity by adopting an intersectional approach and engaging older people from marginalized groups to understand key aspects of inequalities.

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KEYWORDS:

Migrant older people; Ageing migrants; Race and ethnicity in ageing; Intersectionality; Vulnerability; Scoping review

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INTRODUCTION

Ageing and migration have transformed the global demographics (Warnes et al. 2006). Finland is one of the most rapidly ageing societies in Europe and its share of older population will become the second highest in the European Union by 2030 (Antolin et al. 2001; THL 2020). At present, people over the age of 65 constitute 22 percent of the population and are projected to be 29 percent by 2060 (Statistics Finland 2016). The share of Finland's older migrants is still comparatively small, amounting to 1.6 percent of the total population (Statistics Finland 2016). However, this figure will likely change soon with growing numbers of ageing refugees and asylum seekers as well as many first-generation migrants from the 1990s approaching retirement age. As pressure is intensifying on the social welfare and health systems to support ageing people, issues of intersectional identities and vulnerabilities are starting to come to the forefront in Finnish ageing research. Intersectionality is a concept that emerged from Black feminist thought to theorize the cross sections and overlays of complex entanglements of disadvantage, underprivilege and exclusion that have contextual origins in local systems of oppression (Collins 2020; McCall 2005). Although the concept of intersectionality is accepted as important in research with ageing migrants (Calasanti 2004; Horn & Schweppe 2016; Karl & Torres 2016; Mcmullin 2000; Moore 2009; Näre, Walsh & Baldassar 2017; Walsh & Näre 2016), many scholars are yet to embrace it in their research (Ciobanu, Fokkema & Nedelcu 2017; Holman & Walker 2020). An intersectional perspective on ageing opens up the heterogeneity of cumulative experiences and the fluidity of identities within migrant groups, where diverse categorizations can be deconstructed (Zubair & Norris 2015).

The article asks: How is the issue of ageing migrants discussed from the perspective of intersectionality and vulnerability in the existing research in Finland? The review presents key findings based on 16 peer-reviewed articles. The unequal experience of ageing of diverse older migrants is linked to structural and systemic inequalities that they face throughout their life course, an area which is not explored sufficiently in Finnish ageing research. Older migrants' simultaneous experience of ageism, racism, sexism, classism is encapsulated through their social invisibility, thus, the theoretical lens of intersectionality offers a robust perspective on the interlocking nature of their identities in relation to oppression (Koehn, Ferrer & Brotman 2020; McMullin 2000). Vulnerability is another key concept that reminds us to not simply categorize older migrants as a singular entity but rather understand their complex life situations which can also be a result of structural inequality. The aim of this article is to identify some of the critical gaps in Finnish ageing research. We highlight areas for future multidisciplinary research in ageing in Finland to promote the inclusion of ageing migrants in marginal positions to better address the inequalities in ageing and to capture the heterogeneity of their ageing experiences.

Finland has often been portrayed as a homogenous society with its normative understanding of the 'people' and their life situations (Keskinen et al. 2019; Koskinen 2015). Recent scholarship has started questioning the position and belongingness of Sámi and other 'old' minorities like the Roma and the Tatars (Siivikko 2019). As a nation that has been enmeshed in complex colonial relations – colonized by its neighbors, colonizer of Indigenous people in Sápmi and beneficiary of European colonial relations and imaginaries, Finnish society reflects similar structural power dynamics to industrialized Global North societies (Keskinen & Andreassen 2017; Koskinen 2015).

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However, compared to other European countries, Finnish society's exposure to racial minorities is much lower than fellow European nations due to comparatively lesser immigration and its peripheral location on the continent (Rask 2018). Race is not openly or adequately discussed in Finland and racial meanings are expressed in the context of 'ethnicity', 'immigrants' or 'refugees' (Leinonen & Toivanen 2014). Many still consider that talking about 'race' fosters racialization and that equality means treating everyone the same (Eliassi 2017). Yet as intersectionality scholar Kimberle Creshnaw (1997) points out, 'it is fairly obvious that treating different things the same can generate as much inequality as treating the same things differently' (Collins 2008).

INTERSECTIONALITY AND AGEING MIGRANTS

The concept of intersectionality has become a buzzword in contemporary social sciences. This article seeks to deepen the understanding of intersectionality by focusing on its roots in Black feminism to consider the complex meaning of the concept in terms of ageing research. Angela Davis' (1981) on 'Women, Race and Class', 'A Black Feminist Statement' drafted by the Combahee River Collective (1977) and Audre Lorde's Sister Outsider (1984) were trailblazing texts that outlined how interlocking systems of oppression had complex impacts on diverse social identities. The term 'intersectionality' was first used by a legal scholar, Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991), who conceived it as a way to describe the impact of multiple oppressions on individuals (Collins 2008). Crenshaw used intersectionality to illustrate how Black women were excluded from the mainstream White feminist and antiracist discourses (Bowleg 2012). Deeply rooted in critical race theory and Black feminism, intersectionality is a concept that explains how systems are structured to support the dominance of certain identities that are rooted in normative systems, while oppressing others through a 'matrix of domination' (Collins 2000). Critical race theory illustrates the oppressive experiences of racial minorities and highlights that failure to examine the interaction of identities lead to disparities (Constance-Huggins 2019). Crenshaw explains how the different identities of a person such as gender, social class, age, sexuality and migrant status are critical points where structures of power and discriminatory processes intersect (Crenshaw 1991). As a theoretical framework, intersectionality explains how multiple social categories such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, ability and class produce disparate opportunities and challenges. Racism, sexism, heterosexism, for example operate at the micro level of individual experience within broader interlocking systems of privilege and oppression at the macro, social-structural level (Bowleg 2012; Holman and Walker 2020). Intersectionality understands that oppression is not siloed and is indeed interconnected (Collins 2008).

There are also critiques of intersectionality that underline its ambiguity and open-endedness (Jibrin & Salem 2015) as well as the need for different analytical approaches for different identities (Foley 2019). It is also criticized for having departed from its original focus on race and gender (Mügge et al. 2018) with the influence of neoliberal academy (Bilge 2013). However, if the intersectional experiences of ageing migrants are not acknowledged in research and practice, chances are that they remain invisible and misunderstood, and key aspects of inequalities experienced by diverse groups will be missed (Collins 2008; Holman & Walker 2020). Accumulated interpersonal discrimination throughout the life makes older migrants feel excluded and can adversely impact their well-being and mental health (Bécares & Zhang 2018). The level of cognitive or functional capacity, pension wealth, social connections,

support system, access to services and technology are also intersectional issues specific to ageing. Intersectional differences due to marginal positions in society and inadequate resources result in unequal lived experiences of ageing (Marmot et al. 2020). Therefore, intersectionality scholars highlight the importance of understanding social identity as a complex and layered phenomenon within oppressive social structures that determine access, privilege and stigma (Holman & Walker 2020; Zubair & Norris 2015). In terms of ageing, studies suggest that people with intersectional identities can experience both greater depression and loneliness (Beam & Collins 2019), but they can also demonstrate high levels of resilience (Cortes et al. 2019). The intersectionality perspective features insufficiently in research on ageing with older migrants in Finland. We contend that intersectionality is an important concept that can open more far-reaching insight into how the complex identities of individuals are intertwined with social inequality in ageing (Bowleg 2012; Zubair & Norris 2015).

VULNERABILITY AND AGEING MIGRANTS

Vulnerability can be defined as having a need for protection against harms and support to access services (Fawcett 2009). There are restrictive concepts of vulnerability that see it as a state of being in various life situations such as social injustice, diminishing capabilities and dependency on others that result when a person or group has a need for social protection (Bozzaro & Schweda 2018). For some older people, declining physical health and psychological stress can make them more susceptible to challenges and harm (Bozzaro & Schweda 2018). As older migrants, some have difficulties with income wealth, saving and pensions, support networks with constrained resources, self-esteem and coping mechanisms due to societal structures of classism, sexism and racism (Fawcett 2009). Older migrants can lack local social networks and resources (Torres 2019). The double jeopardy theory claims that membership in two underprivileged groups at the same time causes an additive impact and can even lead to triple jeopardy if more statuses are added (Calasanti 1993; Calasanti and King 2014; Macnicol 2005). However, understanding people merely based on these discrete categories does not consider the within-group variations and multiple oppression they face (Koehn 2021; Moore 2009). Thus, being an older migrant alone should not be a sole criterion for being defined as vulnerable (Bozzaro & Schweda 2018). Researchers and practitioners should be careful while using this term as it should not come as patronizing, othering and stigmatizing a group (Virokannas, Liuski & Kuronen 2020). Labeling certain groups of migrant older people as vulnerable can be problematic as it creates stereotyping and ageism because ageing is not unidirectional and constant but rather a fluid process that depends on a person's life course (Bozzaro & Schweda 2018). Using only a restrictive concept of vulnerability demonstrates perceived weakness and dependence for help rather than looking at a person's strengths, autonomy and self-determination (Fawcett 2009).

Brown (2011) argues that presuming that older people are inherently vulnerable does not take into account intersectional vulnerabilities that are a result of structural inequality. Therefore, the layers of identities and complex experiences of a person should be studied through an intersectional lens. Instead of only identifying people as vulnerable, their complex life situations should be emphasized along with the role of the welfare services in reducing or (re)producing vulnerability (Virokannas et al. 2020).

Ciobanu et al. (2017) state that older migrants' vulnerabilities and resilience in their host country depends on different aspects at the macro, mezzo and micro levels. On the macro level, factors such as the social policies at the national and international level; migration regimes; care regimes; political and public opinions towards migrants; media portrayals of migrants and the economic status in the country of origin and at the host country affect power imbalance and structural conditions for older migrants' vulnerabilities. Universalism and egalitarianism are guiding principles behind social care policies and social service provisions in Finland. Universalism comprises ideas that all citizens have the rights to public services uniformly throughout the country (Anttonen & Häikiö 2011). However, notions of universalism often embedded in color-blindness that contests equality, neutrality and fairness can be questioned (Eliassi 2017) as it does not guarantee access to services of all inhabitants and limit the discussion of oppressive practices and hierarchical positions between groups (Häikiö & Hvinden 2012). The conception of deservingness and entitlement of services are based on exclusionary ethno-nationalist and racializing criteria, and non-European others viewed as undeserving and abusers of the system (Jørgensen & Thomsen 2016; Keskinen 2016; Krivonos 2019). Nordberg and Wrede (2015) argue that in welfare states like Finland, the notion of the 'state' as a dominant institutional structure gives rise to a kind of bias where local practices and encounters are not considered. As noted earlier, because Finnish identity is often constructed as a homogenous entity, a politics of Whiteness and privilege prevails where non-European forms of Whiteness are excluded and rendered invisible (Keskinen 2016; Krivonos 2019).

On the mezzo level, the availability of resources, community and family networks and sense of belongingness to a racial and ethnic group that encompasses their way of life, coping mechanisms and needs in old age determine older migrant's vulnerability and resilience (Ciobanu et al. 2017). For migrants, belongingness in the Finnish society is still challenged in their everyday interactions (Leinonen & Toivanen 2014). Migrants are often problematized and characterized as creating social problems which further reproduces exclusionary practices and hierarchical identities (Eliassi 2015). The process of othering happens when powerful groups have the ability to define 'us' and 'them' or 'deserving' or 'undeserving' which is reproduced (Eliassi 2015).

On the micro level, specific individual factors such as the person's unique migration trajectory, educational and economic status, health and activity, technological literacy and language proficiency influence older migrant's vulnerability and resilience (Ciobanu et al. 2017). Previous research has shown that migrants tend to have a lesser quality of life, well-being and health status compared to non-migrants or the majority population (Nazroo 2006). The complexity of ageing experiences among older migrant groups, resulting from changing social locations and socially constructed identities is generally under-researched (Zubair & Norris 2015).

In Finland, there is not enough data or statistics on care needs or healthcare and social service utilization among the different groups of migrant older people. Migrant health and well-being study (Maamu) studied working-aged Russian, Somali and Kurdish immigrants in Finland. However, its focus has not been ageing migrants. Social and racial inequalities of other age and migrant groups are under-monitored and under-researched. As a result, social welfare policy and programs designed to reduce discrimination and inequalities for all migrant groups cannot be informed by evidence (Bécares & Nazroo 2020). There are large-scale studies and gerontological data resources available for native older population to expand the understanding of their life course and well-being. However, there has been little interest or institutional research conducted with migrant older people especially from the non-EU background.

METHODOLOGY

The article uses a scoping review to explore the current state of knowledge about ageing migrants in Finland. A scoping review is a methodological process that maps relevant literature in a particular field of study (Arksey & Malley 2005). It is done to identify the range, scope and breadth of an emerging research topic (Levac, Colquhoun & O'Brien 2010). A scoping review is conducted when the study area is not yet saturated with research (Arksey & Malley 2005; Daudt, van Mossel & Scott 2013). It is also done to highlight research gaps and to disseminate research results conducted previously in the field (Munn et al. 2018). A key feature of scoping review is to identify questions and topics for future research (Anderson et al. 2008). It can leverage the practicalities of research outputs to practitioners, researchers and policy makers through its summarized presentation of findings (Arksey & Malley 2005; Daudt et al. 2013). With its comprehensive overview that not only accentuates the extent and context of a topic, this scoping review also offers important policy and practice implications (Davis, Drey & Gloud 2009). The technique used in this article comprises a process of identifying the available literature, methods, current knowledge and implications for future research about diversity and migrant ageing in Finland.

The languages included in the search were English and Finnish. Only peer-reviewed articles were searched manually. The databases that were hand searched were EBSCOhost, Applied Social Sciences Index & Abstract (ProQuest), Social Sciences Citation Index (Web of Science), Scopus (Elsevier), and Google Scholar. Apart from the databases, three relevant Finnish journals were also searched: *Gerontologia*, *Janus* and the *Finnish Journal of Ethnicity and Migration*. The key words used were 'older migrants', 'ageing immigrants', 'race and ethnicity in ageing', 'intersectionality and ageing'. First, the titles and abstracts were screened, followed by selecting those articles that included older migrants in Finland. As there were only limited numbers of publications done in this field in Finland, any publications that encompassed older migrants and older refugees were included.

The sampling consisted of 16 peer-reviewed articles on ageing migrants in Finland among which 12 were in English language and 4 were in Finnish language. The search was conducted from December 2020 until November 2021 with no restrictions on the date of publication. Additionally, reference lists of the relevant articles were screened to identify studies that might have been missed. This article follows the methodological framework given by Arksey and Malley (2005) which includes the following five stages: identifying the research question, identifying relevant studies, study selection, charting the data, and finally, collating, summarizing and reporting the results.

A thematic analysis was conducted. Thematic analysis is a method used for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns within the data (Braun & Clarke 2006). It draws on explicit and implicit patterns of meaning relevant to the study (Joffee 2011). This article searched for themes and patterns that were meaningful for the study from the 16 peer-reviewed articles. Mainly, similarities and differences were sought in the reviewed articles that were guided by the research question on intersectional identities and vulnerability to provide insights on Finnish research on ageing migrants (Nowell et al. 2017).

FINDINGS

Table 1 presents the articles that have been published about older migrants and refugees in Finland with details of their aim and methodology.

AUTHOR (YEAR)	STUDY LOCATION	AIM	METHODOLOGY
Mölsä and Tiilikainen (2008)	Finland	Explores how ageing immigrants (especially refugees) understand ageing and their social role in Finland.	Individual and focus group interviews with 41 people of Somali background.
Kröger and Zechner (2009)	Finland	Looks at how migration and care are closely interrelated.	Literature review.
Heikkinen (2011)	Finland	Examines the factors that affect the exclusion of older immigrants from the former Soviet Union and their everyday lives in Finland in line with the second and third generation.	Interviews with five three-generation families.
Heikkinen (2012)	Finland	Explores the everyday realities of life in a new country by older people from the former Soviet Union in terms of social relations and integration.	Content analysis of qualitative interviews of ageing migrants from 18 municipalities.
Heikkinen and Lumme-Sandt (2013)	Finland	Studies how later-life migrants from former Soviet Union in Finland sustain and maintain their transnational connections.	Interviews with 11 later life migrants.
Mölsä et al. (2014)	Helsinki, Finland	Studies the mental and somatic health of older Somali refugees and their pair-matched Finns, and the role of pre-migration trauma and post-migration stressors among refugees.	Survey done with 128 older Somalis aged 50–80 years through interviews. For each Somali participant, a matched Finn counterpart was selected who completed the questionnaire.
Heikkinen and Lumme-Sandt (2014)	Finland	Examines how ageing migrants are seen in municipal ageing and integration policies.	Analyzes 21 official documents related to ageing policies and 23 integration plans for migrants.
Kuittinen et al. (2014).	Finland	Compares the depressive symptoms between older Somalis and Finns.	Questionnaire with 128 Somalis and their matched Finnish pairs.
Mölsä et al. (2017)	Finland	Examines how past traumatic stress, present acculturation and discrimination are linked with mental health and, the role of religiousness to reduce the negative impacts of war trauma for older migrants.	Questionnaire filled by 128 older Somali refugees aged 50 to 80 years.
Mölsä, Tiilikainen and Punamäki (2019)	Finland	Explores the healthcare services utilization patterns of older immigrants and compare the accessibility between older Somalis and Finns; examine the mental healthcare preference and test the mental service usage gap of older Somalis.	Survey with 256 older people ages of 50–85; half were Somali migrants and the other half Finns.
Wrede, Tiilikainen and Vartiainen (2020)	Finland	Descriptive essay about the diversifying ageing population of Finland by leading gerontological policy experts.	Essay format describes the diversity of needs of ageing populations.

(Contd.)

AUTHOR (YEAR)	STUDY LOCATION	AIM	METHODOLOGY
Tiaynen-Qadir (2020)	Finland	Investigates how Russian-speaking migrant women living in Finland account for their ageing individually and in dialogue with collective identities.	Ethnographic fieldwork in an urban-based club for Russian-speaking seniors, written and oral life stories, ethnographic interviews with some of the participants and the group's coordinators, participant observation in the club.
Kouvonen et al. (2021)	Finland	Identifies the connection between depressive symptoms and self-rated health (SRH) with Digital Information Technology (DIT) use in Russian speaking older migrants.	Data collected from the Care, Health and Ageing of Russian-speaking Minority (CHARM) study. Random sampling of 3000 participants aged 50 and above from the Population Registry from postal survey. 1082 responded.
Asikainen (2021)	Helsinki Capital Region	Explores how a sense of groupness is negotiated in the meeting place for older Russian-speaking migrants.	Grounded in field work over a period of one year consisting of 150 hours of participant observation, 12 semi-structured interviews with attendees aged 65 and above, 10 follow-up interviews assisted by interaction diaries, 5 stakeholder interviews, review of documents and 3 video recordings of events.
Safarov (2021)	Finland	Examines the digital divide at the micro level of older Russian speaking migrants in Finland.	Participant observation of 100 hours, 17 semi-structured interviews and 16 collected documents.
Shin et al. (2022)	Finland	Studies the link between digital information technology (DIT) use and the utilization of transnational healthcare (THC) in ageing migrants and explore how this relationship depends on social integration or perceived discrimination in health services in Finland.	Data from the Care, Health and Ageing of Russian-speaking Minority in Finland (CHARM) study conducted in 2019, which targeted Russian-speaking residents aged 50 and above (n = 1082) nationwide, are analyzed.

Table 1 Presents the articles that have been published about older migrants and refugees in Finland with details of their aim and methodology.

CURRENT STATE OF KNOWLEDGE

A thematic analysis reveals the following main topics in ageing research on older migrants in Finland.

INTERSECTIONAL PERSPECTIVE INADEQUATELY EXPLORED IN FINNISH AGEING LITERATURE

All publications noted the growing diversity in terms of ageing population in Finland and their needs. Recently, Finland has changed its position, from being a country of emigration to one of immigration (Heikkinen & Lumme-Sandt 2013). There are migrants residing in Finland from all ages, nationalities and backgrounds (Wrede et al. 2020). Older migrants are a diverse group with different migration histories (Heikkinen 2011). Out of 16 articles examined on ageing migrants, 8 articles focused on Russian-speaking older people and 5 articles were written about Somali older

people in Finland. Migrants from Russia or the former Soviet Union are the largest group in Finland, comprising 20 percent of the total migrant population (Kouvonen et al. 2021; Shin et al. 2022; Tiaynen-Qadir 2020). Somalis are the third largest group (Mölsä et al. 2019). We identified no articles written about other groups of migrant older people. Although a significant number of migrants in Finland are from its neighboring countries like Russia, Estonia and the Baltic nations because of geographical proximity, marriage, ancestral lineage and work (Malin & Gissler 2009), there are nonetheless also migrant older people from a diverse range of backgrounds in Finland who have come for work, studies, family reunification and as refugees, which makes it important to open discussion and research beyond limiting to a few migrant communities in ageing research. It is especially key to include groups who are racialized and are in marginal positions as their narratives are almost invisible in the Finnish ageing research. Previous researchers have usually taken just one variable at a time approach, consequently ignoring other societal positions such as gender, class, race, historical and regional differences on the topics of ageing and migration (Chaouni et al. 2021; Torres 2019). These positions should be studied to understand inequalities experienced by ageing migrants in relation to broader social structures and power dynamics.

Heikkinen and Lumme-Sandt's (2014) study finds that the Finnish municipal old-age policies and integration plans mention little about ageing migrants. They are limited on Finnish language learning and adjusting to the Finnish culture. Their research pointed out Finland's minimal experience with migrant older clients and the need for more action to include ageing migrants. In the Finnish health care, there are no specific services for migrant populations. Migrants are assessed with the same psychiatric and psychological tools as natives which can be problematic (Kuittinen et al. 2014). The new Elderly Services Act views the need for skills to work with diverse clients (Heikkinen & Lumme-Sandt's 2014). Wrede et al. (2020) have also highlighted that Finnish policies have to be more inclusive to the growing needs of a diverse population.

Research showed that Russians are not accepted in Finnish society and regarded as an unwelcomed minority group and sometimes, referred to by derogatory terms like '*Ryssä*' even when they appear to be White and can speak Finnish (Heikkinen 2011; Tiaynen-Qadir 2020). Stereotypical discrimination against older Russian migrants for their accents is very prevalent (Asikainen 2021). The discrimination that older migrants face in the Finnish society have made them limit their group activities to only Russian-speaking participants (Asikainen 2021; Tiaynen-Qadir 2020). Due to discrimination and racism, some older migrants face microaggressions in their everyday lives along with limited opportunities to engage in the Finnish society. Additionally, the public and media have portrayed negative and stereotypical attitudes towards migrants which has all contributed to their minimal interaction with the Finnish community (Mölsä et al. 2017).

Studies need to explore how older migrants face barriers and discrimination in their everyday lives and access to services. Future research with ageing migrants should consider who is included in research and who is not and why. Lived experiences and perspectives of older migrants with racialized visibilities are lacking in Finland who would go through even higher individual and structural discrimination and have lesser resources to advocate for their needs. Research questions in ageing should include concepts of identity, belongingness, racialization and discrimination

to understand inequalities (Bécares & Nazroo 2020). An intersectional approach in ageing fosters understanding of not only who is left behind but also why this occurs and how, considering their multiple identities and social positions and the wider social structures (Kapilashrami & Hankivsky 2018).

AGEING MIGRANTS CONSTRUCTED AS VULNERABLE

Heikkinen and Lumme-Sandt's study found that relocating to a new country was not easy as it requires an array of resources and support besides considering the ageing process (2013). Older migrants' status such as being a refugee, repatriate or a migrant had an impact on how well they adjusted in the host country (Heikkinen 2011). Older refugees were considered vulnerable in a country which is culturally and linguistically different from their home countries (Mölsä et al. 2014). They endured challenges such as social exclusion, unemployment and perceived discrimination that take a toll on their mental health (Mölsä et al. 2017). Kuittinen et al.'s (2014) study states the differences in terms of culture, religion, care patterns, size of the family, collective and individual values among migrant older people. It was also found that cultural, gender and linguistic barriers are some of the reasons for older migrants' exclusion and insufficient access to formal and professional social and health services (Heikkinen 2012; Heikkinen 2011; Mölsä et al. 2019; Shin et al. 2022; Tiaynen-Qadir 2020). Migrant groups often relied on family care rather than formal care (Kröger & Zechner 2009).

The lack of language skills excluded them from forming meaningful social connections and friendships in Finland (Heikkinen 2011). Consequently, older migrants limited themselves with only their ethnic circles, associations and religious networks (Heikkinen 2011; Tiaynen-Qadir 2020). Asikainen's research reported that insufficient Finnish skills brought Russian migrants together because they were unable to mix with other groups or the Finnish community (2021). They found comfort and security in their own language and what seemed home-like to them (Tiaynen-Qadir 2020). Studies emphasized that health and social care are not culturally sensitive enough to understand the needs and culture of migrant populations (Shin et al. 2022). Most information is only available in the two official languages of Finland which may not be accessible to many migrant groups (Kröger & Zechner 2009; Mölsä et al. 2019).

Research has mostly emphasized the intercultural and linguistic differences, highlighting how migrant older people are different from the native population. This way of doing research further others them, producing, and reproducing inequalities and portraying them as different. It does not explore why they are excluded in personal, communal and structural levels. The increased heterogeneity within the migrant groups is not studied enough in the Finnish literature. When migrant groups are only problematized based on their cultural differences, they do not trust the system adequately and can confine themselves to their own circles. Constructing migrants only as vulnerable groups will risk stigmatizing them and considering them as incapable. It justifies interventions which 'know better' about what is best for people who are termed as vulnerable while excluding them from their own care (Virokannas et al. 2020). Research should focus on their resilience, strengths and coping mechanisms. It is equally important to have counter-narratives from migrant groups themselves and make research more participatory (Chaouni et al. 2021).

GAPS IN SERVICE UTILIZATION OF AGEING MIGRANTS

Findings suggest that migrants tend to reside in disadvantaged neighbourhoods and/or in poverty, which affects the use of social and health services (Heikkinen 2011). Having a racial and ethnic identity that is different from the majority population limited the use of resources and networks in Finland (Heikkinen 2011). Mölsä et al. (2019) study found that even though older refugees suffer from mental health issues, they do not make use of available universal healthcare services in Finland. Their research reported that older Somali went to doctors less and used fewer preventive health services than the majority Finnish population (Mölsä et al. 2019). Similarly, Somalis in Finland preferred somatic treatment more than psychological services, which was a practice back in Somalia where care focused on cure more than prevention (Mölsä et al. 2019). Further, based on cultural preferences, most older Somali preferred traditional healers, informal health workers and religious experts (Kuittinen 2014; Mölsä et al. 2019). Many ageing migrant clients did not use services in the western social and health care as they felt that western services do not necessarily value the holistic way of healing and security imparted by some cultural practices (Mölsä et al. 2014; Shin et al. 2022). Most of the Russian speaking older migrants were found to rely on transnational services to access health support when they have not integrated well in the Finnish system (Shin et al. 2022). Heikkinen (2011)'s research showed that there is a lack of cultural competence in Finnish social and health care providers. A need for cultural sensitivity in terms of the end of life for ageing refugees was also highlighted in Mölsä and Tiilikainen's study (2008).

Older migrants experienced social exclusion which gave them a disadvantage in terms of their ability to participate in the society, engage in meaningful social relations or civic activities and access basic services (Heikkinen 2012; Heikkinen 2011; Scharf, Phillipson & Smith 2005; Walsh & Näre 2016). In addition to social exclusion, they also experienced digital exclusion which is linked to their access to technology and digital services as it is also associated with inadequate education, socioeconomic status, ethnic background and migration status (Kouvonen et al. 2021). Safarov's research showed that older migrants in Finland did not use digital technology fully because of language barriers and exclusion (Safarov 2021). Many essential government services such as Social Insurance Institution (Kela), online banking, tax administration, electronic forms, health care and public services have become digital in Finland (Kouvonen et al. 2021; Safarov 2021). Not all older people with a migrant background had an online identification in Finland as they found digital services to be complex and difficult to use (Safarov 2021). Most of the online forms were available only in the Finnish or Swedish language. Many older migrants have no experience or knowledge on how to use them (Ibid.). Russian speaking older migrants were often found to be using digital information technology and health care services from abroad which also had a risk of disconnecting older migrants with the local health care services in Finland (Shin et al. 2022).

In many cases, the Finnish system has been known to favor those with the capacity to access services for themselves and can fail to support those who are in marginal situations (Topo 2011). It is important to address the inequalities in accessing services. There has not been enough research on how and why interlocking systems of discrimination create inequalities in access to services considering beyond the mainstream homogenous ways of understanding older people's needs. Many issues on intersectionality may seem similar to the concept of exclusion. Nonetheless, intersectionality covers a broader understanding of power relations and how they

shape inequalities. Intersectionality is helpful to grasp the differences in ageing among different people with overlapping identities. Future research should consider leveraging an environment of dialogue between migrant communities and social services and research organizations to especially engage older people from racialized backgrounds.

CONCLUSION

In this scoping review, we identified and reviewed the existing peer-reviewed literature on ageing migrants in Finland. It gave an overview of what has been done in this field and what could be the focus for future research with ageing migrants. We looked at who is studied and who is not and found that Russian speaking and Somali were the only groups represented in Finnish ageing research with migrants. Based on the scoping review, older migrants faced many challenges at the micro level to access services and engage meaningfully in the Finnish society, to the structural level on how they were excluded in policies, program structures and research. Future research with ageing should engage older people from under-represented, racialized and non-European background as they go through more substantial structural discrimination and have lesser resources to access services and uphold for their needs that result in unequal lived experiences of ageing. There is inadequate evidence-based knowledge about these groups in ageing research (Seppänen & Ray 2022; Torres 2022). Problematizing migrant groups and constructing them as vulnerable by highlighting their intercultural differences (re) produces inequalities. A more robust study on intersectional perspective with ageing migrants would be instrumental to understanding older migrants' complex experiences in relation to their social positions such as gender, race and ethnicity. Research on their everyday lives touching upon questions of identity, belongingness and the impact of wider social structures will be beneficial to develop a better understanding of their ageing process. This article serves as a starting point for these conversations to take place. Ageing research should not be limited to a homogenous discourse with migrants as they are a heterogenous group with diverse life courses. There is a need for more studies to focus on multiple compounding identities and life situations and challenge systems of interlocking oppression to promote the well-being of ageing migrants.

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The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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'If I Count Everything That Is against Me. It Is My Colour. It Is That I Am a Woman': Exploring the Lived Experiences of Racialised Older Migrant Women in Finland

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Abstract

Critical race scholars in social work have underlined the importance of race. However, research in social work with older people have often bypassed analysis of the significance of race and racialisation as barriers that marginalised groups encounter due to their complex identities. The lived experiences of older racialised women in Finland are not sufficiently explored to understand how racialisation has an impact in their ageing. This article aims to address the gap in scholarship on how accumulated experiences of racism from the personal to structural levels throughout the life-course contribute to inequalities in ageing of migrant women. It investigates how older women from non-European migrant background narrate their experiences of racialisation in their everyday lives in Finland. It utilises the theoretical concepts of race, racism and racialisation to interpret the research findings. The article presents empirical findings from semi-structured interviews with twenty older women, which were analysed using a thematic analysis. The article concludes that it is key to recognise racism and its ramifications for ageing migrants in structures beyond the personal level. This study sheds light on the need to better understand the structural inequalities, intersecting identities and the lived experiences of older racialised women to promote social justice.

Keywords: ageing migrants, anti-racist social work, inequalities in ageing, race and racism, racialised older women

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Introduction

International migration, increasingly complex transnational identities and ageing population structures are transforming the power dynamics of societies worldwide (Näre *et al.*, 2017). These phenomena bring with them new challenges to societies, welfare systems and the caring professions (Donnelly and Torres, 2022). Racialised older migrants are often disadvantaged by interlocking systems of racism, ageism, sexism and classism that generate significant intersectional economic and social discrimination throughout their lifetime (Ferrer *et al.*, 2022). The increasing diversity of the Finnish population in a political atmosphere of growing tensions around immigration and race demands that social workers gain better knowledge and skills to support racialised service users also on structural levels (Clarke and Vertelyté, 2023). Racialised older migrant women, for example, are currently under-represented in scholarly debates, which demonstrates how they are devalued (Davidson *et al.*, 2011; Calasanti and Giles, 2018; Seppänen and Ray, 2022; Torres, 2022; KC *et al.*, 2023). The concept of race is also largely omitted in mainstream discourse and more euphemistic terms such as diversity, ethnicity, culture and migration are substituted in social work (Laakkonen, 2022).

Nordic exceptionalism is the notion that the national identities of northern European states are constructed on common cultural understandings of egalitarianism, social cohesion and welfare structures that position them uniquely as peripheral to European colonialism (Browning, 2007). In recent years, there has been a postcolonial critique of the concept of Nordic exceptionalism that challenges the invisibility of colonialism, white supremacy and racism in the Nordic story (Loftsdóttir and Jensen, 2012). For example, though Finland was colonised by its neighbours, it was also a coloniser of Indigenous people in Sápmi, it has defined its nationhood through a colonial imaginary and has benefitted from the European colonial relations (Keskinen and Andreassen, 2017; Keskinen 2019). Yet, concepts related to race are not openly discussed until recently (Rastas, 2005; Leinonen and Toivanen, 2014; Keskinen and Andreassen 2017; Hoegaerts *et al.*, 2022). Whilst the Finnish welfare state's social care policies and services are based on universalism (Anttonen and Häikiö, 2011), they do not ensure equitable services to all groups of people, nor do they enable a discussion about the implications of the oppressive structures (Häikiö and Hvinden, 2012; Eliassi,

2017). Notions of Finnishness is often implicitly grounded in whiteness and homogeneity, attributes against which all other forms of identities are compared (Krivonos, 2018; Hoegaerts *et al.*, 2022; Kuokkanen, 2022).

This article addresses the gap in scholarship on how accumulated experiences of racism from the personal to structural levels throughout the life-course of non-European migrant women in Finland contribute to inequalities in ageing. It explores how older racialised migrant women in Finland narrate their experiences of racialisation in their everyday lives. The connection between race and older migrants is centred as the ageing process is shaped by how people construct and reconstruct their identities, their needs, values and subjectivities enmeshed in broader social structures (Näre *et al.*, 2017). This study specifically explores how a racialised understanding of old age can be connected to inequalities in ageing in Finland. Drawing on semi-structured interviews with twenty older women, the article uses the theoretical concepts of race, racism and racialisation to guide the interpretation of the research findings. In what follows, we discuss the theoretical concepts and then unpack our empirical findings in relation to how older migrant women narrate their racialised position and everyday encounters in the Finnish society. We examine the challenges surrounding race that have been experienced by these women and consider their implications for social work.

Theorising race, racism and racialisation

Omi and Winant (2015) define race as a 'master category' that is profoundly interwoven with the history, institutions and polity of countries in the Global North. Mignolo (2017) sees Global North coloniality as constituted by racism, meaning that some have the power to classify whilst others must endure the classification of race. Race is therefore not a biological category, but it is a powerful social construct developed through colonial social science and enacted through structural, institutional and interpersonal acts of discrimination (Goldberg, 1993; Stoler, 1995; Hesse, 2004). Racism is a systematised set of beliefs that assign a place and meaning to oneself and others normalising binary dyads of superiority and inferiority that assign humanity to some, but not others (Dominelli, 2017). Racism occurs on many levels—it is internalised, interpersonal, institutional and structural (Jones, 2000). Further, racism is entwined with intersectional oppressions such as sexism, ableism, homophobia and classism following the logic of coloniality that privileges some, but not others (Quijano, 2007). Concepts of race, however, are not completely consolidated or static but can also move and transform as studies of whiteness have demonstrated (Jacobson, 1999; Ignatiev, 2012; Ahmed, 2021). Social categories of race are embedded in historical and local processes of racial formation which ascribe race or racialise specific groups or individuals through a process of othering that can also

stigmatise other intersectional identities like class or religion (Lutz *et al.*, 2011). Uyan (2021) argues that processes of racialisation must be understood in the context of the colonial ideology of racism. Racialisation is how racial meaning is continuously recreated in society through racist relations of power and dominance (Gonzalez and Goss, 2019).

Collins (1986, 1991, 2004) developed the concept of controlling images to open how intersectional depictions of people of colour in society justify racial, class and gender inequality which reproduce prevailing colonial perceptions of racial meaning. Controlling images dominate perceptions of marginalised groups by maintaining a racial order (Vasquez-Tokos and Norton-Smith, 2017). These images normalise racism, sexism, poverty and other forms of social injustice as parts of everyday life (Collins, 2000). As Hall (2020) pointed out, representations are key to how meaning is formed in cultures. Controlling images as cultural representations are socially, institutionally, and historically constructed to promote the interests of the privileged groups and subordinate oppressed groups. Black women in the USA, for example, have been portrayed as 'welfare queens', or 'strong Black lady' that reinforce ideologies of unworthiness or not having the same emotional needs as others (Collins, 2000). In Europe, representations of non-European migrants tend to associate them with debates over social rights, criminality and irregularity (Brouwer *et al.*, 2017; Enroth, 2021). We contend that the concept of controlling images is helpful in this study because it explicates how society has normalised racialised older women's position within intersecting systems of power, placing them in the lowest hierarchical order due to their race, gender, class and age in personal as well as institutional spheres (Collins, 2022). Controlling images offer a set of unwritten rules for who belongs and who does not and guide everyday human interactions (Miller, 2008).

Although racialisation and racism are widely discussed by ethnicity and race scholars, they are not explored enough in social work, especially in relation to old age (Young, 2011; Singh, 2013; Badwall, 2016; Rajan-Rankin, 2018; Torres, 2020). Critical race scholars in social work have underlined the importance of race (Okitikpi and Aymer, 2010; Bhatti-Sinclair, 2011; Rajan-Rankin, 2018; Bernard, 2022). However, discussions of race are often limited within anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practices (Okitikpi and Aymer, 2010; Thompson, 2011; Bernard, 2022). There is no contesting that these practices have important roles, but the broader framework of historical struggles surrounding race and colonialism should not be minimised when examining systems, policies and services (Singh, 2013). Torres's scoping review (2020) finds that the concept of racism rarely informs scholarship on old age and only euphemisms such as oppression and othering are used when talking about racism. This suggests that scholars of gerontological social work are uncomfortable using the term racism or racialisation in their research, even though they sometimes recognise that it is a cause of

inequality in ageing (Ahmed, 2012; Torres, 2020). Badwall (2015) argues that there is a paradox in social work discipline that champions social justice, yet at the same time, fails to take into account the operations of racism in its discourses. There is a growing body of critical discussion on cultural sensitivity and cultural competence in social work (Nadan, 2017; Volckmar-Eeg and Enoksen, 2020; Rugkåsa and Ylvisaker, 2021). However, when people are classified as either 'similar' or 'different', the tendency of social workers is to culturalise the problems. This overlooks the structural inequalities such as racism that affects their life situation (Eliassi, 2017). Nash (2017) critiques the accumulated disadvantage theory of difference for being universalised and not historically specific. Others have criticised the use of the terminology as ornamental when studying gender but not touching race (Bilge, 2013; Mügge *et al.*, 2018). However, there is an extensive acknowledgement that intersectional perspective opens the possibility to examine structural factors that (re)produce inequalities (Bernard, 2022). Employing an intersectional lens with older women helps to capture the lived experiences of ageism alongside their gendered and racialised positions (Rajan-Rankin, 2018).

The de-politicisation of race undermines it as a useful critical tool (Hesse, 2011). Lentin (2015) writes about the three D's of post-racial racism management to demonstrate how the topic of race and racism has been bypassed. First, she argues, race is deflected by focusing on the positive vocabulary of diversity instead of mentioning race or racism. Second, there is distancing which attaches racism to only a few bad examples of individuals and overlooks its structural forms. Third, casual everyday racism is denied as not racist. Furthermore, social work tends to privilege assimilation and integration paradigms as prominent frameworks than exploring the dominant whiteness at the core of the discipline (Essed and Nimako, 2006; Eliassi, 2017). In short, the lack of recognition of the colonial roots of structural racism and race formation, reluctance to acknowledge the complex systemic ways that racism is manifested in people's everyday lives and the use of non-racialised vocabulary to reflect race are some of the issues why this topic remains invisible.

Methods

Our data consist of semi-structured interviews with twenty older women from non-European backgrounds living in the Helsinki metropolitan area. The interviews were collected between September 2021 and May 2022. The communities of older adults who are under-represented in Finnish ageing research were purposively sampled. A scoping review (KC *et al.*, 2023) found that only Russian speaking and Somali older groups were represented in Finnish ageing research with migrants. Our research had participants from West Africa, Central Africa, South Asia, East Asia, Southeast

Asia, Middle East Asia and Central America. All the participants either had a residence permit for Finland or Finnish citizenship. The median number of years they had lived in Finland was twenty-one years and nine months at the time of the interview. Their age range was fifty-five–seventy-six years. The rationale for including the age group of over fifty-five years were the perception of old age starting earlier as life expectancy is shorter in many of these communities compared to the Global North (Menendian *et al.*, 2021; Yazdanpanahi and Hussein, 2021) and the growing numbers of migrant women in this age group entering the demographic group of older population in Finland (Statistics Finland, 2015).

The first author conducted the interviews in places most convenient to the participants. Participants were given a choice to meet in person or do a phone interview because of the pandemic. The interviews were recorded with both written and verbal consent and transcribed verbatim. The research conforms to the ethical guidelines set by the Finnish National Advisory Board on Research Ethics (TENK). Full ethical approval was not required by our institution for this research. Pseudonyms are used and countries have been de-identified.

A thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. The process of inductive coding of data led to the concepts used in the article. The form of the thematic analysis was data driven and followed Braun and Clarke (2006) six-stages of thematic analysis: (i) familiarising oneself with your data, (ii) generating initial codes, (iii) searching for themes, (iv) reviewing the themes, (v) defining and naming the themes and (vii) producing the report. All the themes were checked for their coherence and consistency in relation to the research question.

Findings

We identified three main themes which were important in understanding how older non-European migrant women describe their racialised position and everyday encounters. The first theme provides closer insight into how racism operates in the structural level in the labour markets and how that affects women in old age. The second theme outlines everyday manifestation of racism at the personal level which is endured as microaggressions. The third theme presents their experiences of not feeling included on the societal level.

Racism in the labour market throughout their life-course

Many older migrant women mentioned that they found it hard to find jobs in Finland. Chandani has Finnish citizenship and has been living in Finland for more than thirty years at the time of the interview. She

speaks fluent Finnish, has a master's degree from Finland and is also married to a Finnish man. However, she is disappointed for not getting a job commensurate with her qualifications.

> Chandani: Job market! We will not even be called. You won't be even called for an interview. [...] It's very hard to get a job and then usually we get the job that that, nobody else want to do. There is structural racism. [...] I have one incident that I was going to work for my home country. It was a job from a well-established Finnish institution. I had a very strong background and had done similar projects in my home country. [...] Then they said I had to go for a psychological test and that's it. I started planning my move to my home country and I was happy about it. I went for a psychological test. Then I got a message saying I didn't get the job. [...] I called my psychologist because I didn't have the report and said so how did it go? And she said, why do you ask? I said I didn't get the job, so I'm wondering I must have done it really bad. She said oh no really, and among these four candidates you were number one, so you have the right to ask the employer why you didn't get it? I called and said why didn't I get the job? Well, there were issues with lot of competencies (from the phone). I said exactly what competencies you're talking about? Is it psychological? Well, that's true (from the phone). I said what? You're lying now because I talked to the psychologist before this. Then she got uncomfortable. Now you have to tell me exactly what is it? Then she said, well, you know, this job is meant for Finns. I said I'm a Finn. Well, you are not an original Finn! (From the phone)

This shows how structural racism in the institutions determine eligibility and entitlements to social resources by excluding some groups which creates the pathologisation of excluded groups for their failure to succeed within the system (Dominelli, 2017). Julie has a masters and PhD from a Finnish University yet has been finding it hard to get a job that matches her expertise. She feels there is structural discrimination in the recruitment process and limitations to work due to border controls. She also states that information about jobs is not accessible to migrants.

> Julie: I started with cleaning and then I worked with a restaurant where I was making salad. I put so many applications and I even saw many positions in the University, I did apply for, but I never got the chance. [...] I remember maybe it was around 2009, somebody sent me a job vacancy from Ireland, they were looking for someone that exactly matched my research profile, and the field work would be in my continent. I did apply and they called me for an interview. But around that time, it was so difficult to have the visa. I think there was difficulty securing the visa to the interview for Ireland, so I had to abandon that [...] It's not been easy getting a job, finding funding even if it's not a permanent job but even if it's a fixed term position [...] I assume that there are certain things that I don't know as I am not a native Finn. At least if I was given a chance, I apply. Sometimes there is some information, and you are not even aware of it. You don't stand a chance.

> Maybe, it is not that they want to hide information, but information is not accessible to me.

Durga has a bachelor's degree in Social Services from one of the University of Applied Sciences in Finland and has been applying for a social service worker role since her graduation in the early 2000. She has lived in Finland for sixteen years. However, she has never found a job that matches her qualifications.

> Interviewer: What kind of jobs have you had in Helsinki?
> Durga: Cleaning jobs, all kinds of labor jobs. A few times, I have been offered to be a translator for my community. I tried to look for jobs as a social service worker, but I could never find it. So, I worked at a care home for older people as a helper, like a support staff. That is the only good job I could find in all these years.

Ife who has lived in Finland for thirty-six years affirms the precarious position that migrants have at work where chances are that they are the first ones to be taken out of work when something happens such as a covid furlough or financial recession.

> Ife: Then when it's time of difficulty, financial difficulty or they have to downsize, so you are the first to go, because yeah, you are the least wanted.

Our findings reiterate Stypińska and Gordo's study (2018) that older migrant women face challenges on entering and re-entering the labour market depending on their race and ethnicity. Gloria talks about structural racism as a barrier to getting into educational institutions and how migrant children miss the opportunity to study in good universities. She gives an example of her son who was raised in Finland and educated to become a nurse but not trusted in the same way as a native professional.

> Gloria: Our immigrant children when they finish high school, now starts the problem. Many of them stay home. They don't find schools to go up. For them, they can do vocational school. That is easy but to attend the top universities, selection. They only take their own children but Black not too much. [...] Now they (white people) can attend university, get top positions, but for the others, no. University-no! You can do only professional. It's difficult. My son is a nurse. One day we were talking, and he said ei mumma I want to go to another country to work. I said you want to go to another country and let me alone here? He said mumma, I like my job too much. He works in a big hospital, but ahhh Finnish people sometimes they are racist. If they see my son in the room, [...] but he is Black. Now the Finnish people say no I don't like there, I wait only for a Finnish nurse. [...] He says oh mumma but not all of them are like that, but many do that. They are sure with their own Finnish people, but not with immigrant people. Even if you are in a shop, it can be these cucumbers, if it is written Finnish, it means that it is so good, the best and expensive. Only Finnish food. But for the other

> countries, there is low price. You see now, they don't care of the other countries. Other countries not good but Finnish is good, Finnish tomatoes good, Finnish cucumbers good, why?

Gloria uses the metaphor of vegetables and fruits coming from different countries in comparison to the Finnish produce and relates it to human subjects and trust factor in the Finnish society. These negative experiences of structural racism accumulate over time in a person's life (Phillipson, 2013; Koehn *et al.*, 2022). Structural racism in the job market is linked to inequalities in ageing as racialised groups have lower financial resources in old age than the white population because of the type of jobs they do throughout their lives and due to the way social security benefits are calculated in many countries. Likewise, structural inequality at work over the life-course affects physical and mental health and access to health care in old age due to the kind of jobs that racialised people mostly do that are likely to be risky and not well paid, with odd working hours and without any benefits to access health care (Calasanti and Giles, 2018). Many women described how they never got jobs as per their qualifications from early on in their lives which took a toll on their mental health and self-esteem. It also adversely impacts their social networks, financial resources, support systems and access to services at old age.

Facing microaggression

Many older migrant women shared prejudicial experiences of people's racist attitudes in their everyday lives. Coney describes her experience as follows:

> Coney: I have had instances in shops, with young men. They are just looking at me and they say go back to your country! [...] Once I went to see an orthopedic doctor, and there was this very racist patient who was like what are you doing here? Why did you come here? You are coming here so that you can be taken care of by the government? Why did you not stay in your country and die there?

Controlling images of racialised womanhood such as that of welfare recipients permeate the everyday narratives. Collins (2000) argues that creating the controlling image of a woman of colour and stigmatising her as the cause of her own poverty shifts the angle of vision away from structural sources of poverty and blames the victims themselves. There were also migrant women who worked hard and contributed to the Finnish economy, yet they expressed that they are judged on their phenotypic attributes ignoring their heterogeneity of experiences.

> Mehar: Sometimes, these older couple, naturally they have a different perspective in their minds thinking that immigrants take money from their social welfare, and it is because they cannot differentiate who is

> working here or who is taking money for free. For them, they may think that every immigrant is the same, using their money [...]. But slowly people are getting to know that our community is full of hardworking people and changing their perspectives about us. Sometimes it so happens that some ladies ask me where I am from and tell me to go back to my country. I tell them that we work here, we have a home here. If we want, we can go back. They think that immigrants have nothing.

Some women reflected that they have experienced prejudice especially from older people who treat racial minorities differently. Krivonos's (2017) research has also revealed that Russians in Finland were looked down as undeserving racialised migrant welfare claimants. Many women also mentioned people called them in a demeaning way.

> Radha: Some people are different and are from the old times, like when you sit next to them on the bus, they stand up and change seats after they see you. It has happened to me.

> Julie: Somebody said the N-word and I turned and looked, and they ran away. Then there was another occasion [...] there were two gentlemen, they were in the car, and they shouted the N-word. For them I did not even turn and that was it. It was not any violent attack or anything where they were trying to harm me because I have heard where some people are beaten up or shouted on quite aggressively.

Obiye has been proactive in her work and has been working together with many Finnish colleagues. However, she still receives comments such as:

> Obiye: Many people come and ask who is the manager of this organisation? They assume that it must be a Finn. When they see it is me, an African woman, they are like - really? I have to deal with that a lot.

Although controlling images seem unseen and unspoken, they continue to appear in organising everyday behaviour that shapes both professional and personal interactions for racialised women (Miller, 2008; Collins, 2022). Some older migrant women said that many people stereotype migrants as backward, uneducated and poor, just because they look different without knowing them or their contribution to the Finnish society.

> Ife: At work, it was always my experience that people never talked or then they have weird kind of like this, that in Africa the lions are going on the street. And you know there is no country called Africa to start with. If you go to Nigeria, when they produce a Mercedes car in January, the next week somebody is driving it because it is a capitalist country. The elites have money, of course we have poor people. [...] So, these kinds of questions and then somebody, because of the expectation they have of you.

This shows the subtle power dynamics that justifies privileged groups to define others' reality. Controlling images are intersectional. They are not only racialised but also gendered and classed, which discredit a racialised person's full exercise of her rights and undermine her capacity (Collins, 2000). Facing microaggressions makes older women feel that they are treated like lesser human beings and that they do not belong to the society. It has damaging effects on their confidence, mental health and physical health (Karlsen and Nazroo, 2002; Pascoe and Richman, 2009; Williams *et al.*, 2019). Castaneda *et al.*'s (2015) study in Finland states that experiences of discrimination faced by migrants is likely to break their sense of safety and trust towards society which are important indicators of well-being.

The feeling of being an outsider who is not trusted and included

In Ife's case, who has been living in Finland for thirty-six years and is a Finnish citizen by law, there are moments where she feels she is not trusted in the Finnish society.

> Ife: There is always lack of trust because you're an outsider. It's like ingroup and outgroup. You are not from here. Every Finn, every ethnic Finn because of course, I'm a Finnish citizen, but the whites, they feel that they have more things in common than the other one. They begin to act it. [...] I would like to go to work, and I have a lot to give but when I talk about it, then my friends tell me that it's also age. If I count everything that is against me. It is my color. It is that I am a woman. Because African woman, nobody knows anything about African women. Finish women are equal. But African woman, according to the picture of Finns, they have head cover and Muslim face, and are so suppressed, and should be helped. I am a woman. And then I'm 60. Who wants that old woman?

Ife expresses the feeling of being excluded on multiple levels because of her layers of identities. Stepping into sixty has made her feel more intersectionally disadvantaged. Although she believes that she is more than her age, gender and skin colour, the racialised and patriarchal structures harbour controlling images that shape Ife's freedom and belonging (Näre, 2017). These accounts reflect racialised women's hypervisibility due to their phenotypes but invisibility in institutions (Leinonen and Toivanen, 2014; Rajan-Rankin, 2018).

Carolina, who is married to a Finnish citizen, shares how she feels invisible whilst navigating in the city. For an instance here:

> Carolina: When I was in a department store, I was in the row and there were three cashier girls. When it was my turn, the lady looked at me because I was the only one waiting in the line. She looked at me and then closed the cashier and let me wait. As there were two more

> cashiers. But I am in the line, she didn't come to call me or attend me, but she looked at me, closed and started to do other thing in the same place, but I feel that she does not like to help me or to attend me and that is sometimes happening, and I feel I am now transparent here! And what would happen if Finnish people were waiting there? I am sure that she would call these people but not me.

Having a negative experience of not feeling seen is according to Carolina quite unpleasant. In line with earlier research, Mulinari and Sager (2022) argue that the constant neglect of racialised people's time and lives fosters exploitation, precarisation and insecurity. Xiang who moved to Finland twelve years ago for family reunification, feels that she has never had an opportunity to make Finnish friends.

> Xiang: My friends are all from my own community, [...] here I am a foreigner and I live alone. There is no chance I meet the local people. I don't know where I can meet them.

Many of the women expressed that they had no connection with the white Finnish society. Older people who have experienced prolonged disadvantage over the life-course are particularly likely to be socially excluded (Jivraj *et al.*, 2016). These narratives demonstrate how racialised women make sense of the world and how society determines who belongs and who does not (Leinonen and Toivanen, 2014).

Discussion

We found racialised encounters were a continuous and compelling barrier in the everyday lives of older non-European migrant women through their narratives. The findings indicated that most of them dealt with both overt and covert forms of racism from the structural, societal to personal levels in their lives. It gave them a disadvantage to meaningfully engage with the Finnish society. The structural inequality in the labour market has adverse consequences on their well-being and health in old age because it limits their access to services, pensions, financial resources, networks and support systems. The women faced microaggressions due to the prevailing controlling images that portrayed them as welfare beneficiaries and not full human beings. The negative social interactions they encountered created mistrust and fear, which brought not only physical and mental health risks, but also disrupted their sense of safety in the new home country. Similarly, not being trusted as a part of society resulted in social exclusion of migrant older women. Not valuing their time kept them in invisible and precarious situations. These accounts reflected their hypervisibility as well as invisibility in many facets due to their identities (Leinonen and Toivanen, 2014; Rajan-Rankin, 2018).

It is important for social work to acknowledge the racialised structures, intersecting identities and lived experiences of racialised women and engage in critical discussions to promote social justice, as they are left out from scholarly debates due to their disadvantaged life situations (Dominelli, 2010; Young, 2011; Torres, 2022). The gap in research on racialised older women in Finland reflects the narrowness of the discipline that lacks a knowledge base on the toll of the multiple layers of racialisation in residents' everyday lives. Relying on personal interventions without questioning structural oppression is not sufficient especially when older women's lived experiences are embedded in racism and discrimination. To remedy these absences, social work must consider the ways in which social structures create and reproduce oppression to have a holistic understanding of the challenges faced by individuals (Seppänen and Ray, 2022). Anti-racist, intersectional and critical perspectives in social work are crucial to promote social justice for all because the lives of people that social workers engage with are rooted in multiple layers of disadvantage (Bernard, 2022). These perspectives must be aware of its socio-historical context to construct a way forward to tackle social injustices (Rajan-Rankin, 2015). Finnish social work scholarship needs to also actively engage with the contributions of diverse academics who are racialised and face intersectional oppressions to recognise what the issues are, to develop a more inclusive knowledge base and to take meaningful action.

Conclusion

The experiences of racialised encounters of older non-European migrant women have shown that racism persists along the spectrum of the personal, societal to structural levels throughout the life-course and can have negative impact on their physical and mental health, sense of safety and well-being that leads to inequalities in ageing. The paucity of acknowledgement of the structural racism and race formation, aversion to view the complex systemic ways in which racism is illustrated in people's everyday lives and the use of non-racialised vocabulary to imply race are some of the issues why this topic remains invisible in social work. There is a need to acknowledge racism and its impact beyond the personal level and identify racialised structures and intersectional disparities that influence access to services, resources, networks and support systems in old age.

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The untold stories of resilience, reworking and resistance of ageing non-European migrant women

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The untold stories of resilience, reworking and resistance of ageing non-European migrant women

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ABSTRACT

Ageing non-European migrant women often do not have a space to share their stories in a manner that adds meaning to their lives. They are viewed as a group that embodies deficits. This article centres them and their stories to understand how resilience, reworking and resistance practices are embedded in their everyday lives by utilising Katz's framework of disaggregated agency. The data consist of semi-structured interviews with 20 ageing women from non-European migrant backgrounds in Finland. The findings suggest the need to re-imagine ways of narrating the multifaceted stories of women in the margins and illuminate new pathways for social work by untangling questions on power and who gets to participate as knowers. Shedding light on their untold stories challenges the hegemonic framing of social realities, destabilising the normative understandings of social work, and unravelling the nuanced unconventional strategies of survival and well-being utilised by them in the form of cultivating home place, sisterhood, community, decolonial healing, various strengths, reworking and everyday acts of resistance against oppressive structures. The findings contest the negative perceptions in dominant narratives, which produce problematic construction of migrant women based on their vulnerability.

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Introduction

Migrants are portrayed as a group that embodies deficits that further reproduces hierarchies, relations of discrimination and social exclusion in many dominant narratives (Campbell, 2008; Perez et al., 2009). They are constructed as an inherently problematic and vulnerable group in many political discussions and media portrayals (Keskinen & Andreassen, 2017). Many gerontologists and social workers seek to unpack old age as a site of injustice and inequality by positioning older people as structurally dependent or incapable of accessing their full rights as citizens (Higgs, 2022). Ageing research associates such perceptions, as many voices are silenced and disregarded as knowers (Quijano, 2007) and there are also gendered and racialised constructions of ageing bodies (Rydzik & Anitha, 2020). Female ageing bodies in general are depicted as unappealing (Clarke, 2011; Rajan-Rankin, 2018). Ageing migrant women are depicted as welfare recipients with the assumption that they may not be contributing economically but rather constituting an economic and care burden for the state and families (KC et al., 2023a; Collins, 2008). Racial profiling, such as policing practices based on race, ethnicity, religion, or national identity have also affected specially

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people in the margins (Mulinari & Keskinen, 2022). When migrant groups are only considered through the lens of difference and negative representation, it creates a sense of fear and distrust amongst both migrant and native populations, and migrants' trust in the social and health care system is thereby compromised (KC et al., 2023a). It is essential to highlight counter-narratives from the migrant groups themselves and study multifaceted voices in research (Chaouni et al., 2021).

Women of colour often do not have a chance to share the stories that position them as subjects (hooks, 1989). Counter-narrative provides a space for alternative interpretations of unheard, neglected stories and the lived experiences of marginalised groups (Andrews, 2002; Lueg et al., 2021). As Nelson (2001) suggests: 'counter stories allow oppressed people to refuse the identities imposed on them by their oppressors and to re-identify themselves in more respect worthy terms'. In this article, I study how ageing migrant women from non-European migrant backgrounds position themselves and make sense of their lives by drawing upon Cindi Katz's (2004) threefold classification of agency as resilience, reworking and resistance to shift beyond the problem-focused approach in research.

This article addresses the following question: How do ageing women from non-European migrant backgrounds in Finland develop strategies in the face of everyday challenges that contribute to their well-being? Ciobanu et al. (2017) point to the need for critical gerontologists to study how older migrants' manifest agency and develop strategies to prevent, cope with and overcome real and potential vulnerabilities. Drawing from semi-structured interviews with 20 older women from non-European migrant backgrounds, the article aims to provide a strengths-based lens to the rhetoric surrounding the negative representation of these women. Trauma and struggles are deeply damaging, but they may also be a source to bring hope and change. Contrary to an emphasis on shortcomings, adversities, deficits and pathologies in academic discussions, the focus of this article is on positive pathways such as resilience, reworking and resistance which are based on strengths (Browne et al., 2009). These perspectives are required in social work research to understand how the stories of some individuals have been systematically skipped over; often they are the ones that social work needs to work with. The term 'untold stories' in the title of this article is used to shed light on alternative ways of understanding the voices of people who are in the margins, as not all stories hold equal status often making it difficult to locate the silences and to assert knowledge that falls outside the dominant paradigm (McKenzie-Mohr & Lafrance, 2017; Mohanty, 2003).

The untold stories of ageing non-European migrant women elucidate a process of becoming resilient as well as resistant and finding well-being in their own ways amid the rupture brought on by migration and oppressive structures. Their conscious and unconscious roles as nurturers, sisters, storytellers, grandmothers, mothers, cultural biographers, advocates, and healers sustain decolonial knowledge, practices and beliefs held collectively within their communities and in some cases, serve as a basis to resist oppressive gendered and racialised structures (Iseke, 2013). The article is organised as follows. First, I elaborate on Katz's concept of disaggregated agency as resilience, reworking and resistance. Then, I present the empirical findings in relation to the research question. Lastly, I discuss how to re-imagine ways of narrating stories of women ageing in the margins and its implications for social work in Finland and internationally.

Katz's (2004) framework of 'disaggregated agency'

Human agency is defined as a person's capacity to influence, make choices and create meaning from their environment through purposeful consciousness, reflective and innovative action (Higgs, 2022; Houston, 2010). Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) sociological model of agency proposes that people do not only respond out of habit, or based on past experiences, and routines but that they practice agency in relation to their present situation and future possibilities. Agency renders human action as the dynamic interplay of persons influenced by their environment (Parsell et al., 2016). Disaggregated agency, on the other hand, can be an action taken against the ideas of disorganisation, fragmentation and chaos while lacking agency (Simeoni, 1997). In this article, I employ Cindy Katz's

(2004) framework of 'disaggregated agency', which relies on a three-step classification of social responses or actions to perceived oppressive and unequal power relations.

Katz's theory (2004) highlights resilience (survival), reworking (reconfiguration) and resistance (subversion). Katz defines resilience as a tenacity to survive within oppressive situations by making use of different strategies in everyday life. Resilience practices are creative ways of surviving that do not oppose social relations (Cumbers et al., 2010). A person is considered resilient when she or he makes use of internal and external resources in the face of challenges (Pooley & Cohen, 2010; Ungar, 2014). Rather than being an individual trait, resilience is a process of interplay between the individual and the environment (Canvin et al., 2009; Ungar & Liebenberg, 2009). It is anchored in the idea that older people can thrive despite facing adversities (Wild et al., 2013). A resilience perspective fosters the exploration of positive avenues, coping mechanisms, adaptive pathways, as well as the myriad resources, and interventions that create a sense of well-being (Fry & Keyes, 2010).

Some scholars have, though, criticised the concept of resilience for following a neoliberal agenda that shifts the responsibility for the risks from the state power structures to the people themselves to accept their vulnerable situations (Evans & Reid, 2013; Joseph, 2013; Sapountzaki, 2007). A focus on resilience also runs the risk of merely foregrounding adaptation strategies, which leads to people fitting into pre-existing structures, rather than influencing or challenging the structures of oppression in their everyday lives (Wild et al., 2013). Similarly, Canvin et al. (2009) argue that there is a need for more research on how social inequality hinders or enables access to resilient resources.

Reworking practices are strategies that people deploy to reconfigure the self and make changes in their lives to access resources and make their living situations more convenient despite oppressive power relations (Katz, 2004). Reworking acknowledges the turbulent conditions and provides realistic actions that re-order the barriers of everyday life (Hauge & Fold, 2016). It is a process of people accommodating themselves to a situation that offers them a safer route to power, even when power is limited (Weitz, 2001). As Ndomo and Lillie (2023) point out, a focus on resilience and reworking does run risk, though, of only noting the adaptive and tolerant side of migrants in difficult situations whereas for many of them being adaptive may only be the last resort when seeking to cope, as agency can both be an enabler and a barrier to older migrant women' well-being.

Resistance exhibits strong oppositional patterns, with the aim being to re-imagine and reconstruct unequal power relations (Katz, 2004). It confronts and dismantles the historical injustices and oppression in situation where people's legitimacy, voices and subjectivity are denied (Lugones, 2010). Resistance challenges the ideologies that support subordination via individual acts of everyday resistance that can bring change and shift the power dynamics (Weitz, 2001). Acts of resistance have an explicit repelling attribute, but they are less prevalent than resilience and reworking practices (Hauge & Fold, 2016). Not all older women have the means and will to resist the oppressive structures, as such actions depend on many other intersectional aspects, such as class, education, privilege, support systems and safety nets (Brah & Phoenix, 2004). Some women can mobilise available resources, whereas others remain silent and adapt with the limited options and cumulative disadvantages throughout their life-course, even when they are aware of the injustices (Riessman, 2000). Resilience practices build on a limited consciousness of oppressive structures and focus more on creating survival tactics, while reworking practices are based on an effort to create a better and comfortable everyday life. Acts of resistance, in turn, involve talking back (hooks, 1989), risking, drawing on an oppositional consciousness to the hegemonic powers and aiming to alter oppressive structures (McKenzie-Mohr & Lafrance, 2017; Rydzik & Anitha, 2020). Katz's classification of disaggregated agency allows researchers to give more attention to the interconnected practices that ageing non-European migrant women employ in the face of everyday challenges and oppressive structures. This framework is useful for exploring how they navigate problems at various levels and provides a new perspective on viewing them as subjects central to their lives.

Methods

The data consist of semi-structured interviews with 20 older women from non-European migrant backgrounds living in the Helsinki metropolitan area. The data were collected between September 2021 and May 2022. The research participants were from West Africa, Central Africa, South Asia, East Asia, Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Central America. They either had a residence permit for Finland or Finnish citizenship. On average, they had lived in Finland for 21 years and 9 months at the time of the interview. The interviews were recorded with their consent and transcribed verbatim. The research follows ethical guidelines set by the Finnish National Advisory Board on Research Ethics (TENK). Full ethical approval was not required by our institution for this research. Pseudonyms are used and countries are de-identified to protect anonymity (Table 1).

The data were analysed using Braun and Clarke's six stages of thematic analysis (2006), which includes becoming familiar with the data, generating codes, searching for themes, reviewing the themes, defining the themes, and producing the article. The initial themes, based on the research question were chosen by checking their coherence and consistency and then applying them to the theoretical framework and its threefold classification.

Findings

Three main themes were identified while exploring ageing migrant women's agency. The first theme is resilience practices, which are based on cultivating home place and social connection, a sense of sisterhood, alternative ways of healing and spirituality. The second theme is reworking practices that include serving to help other migrant women. The third theme is resistance, i.e. fighting back against oppressive structures, carving out their own spaces, and coming to voice for their rights and inclusion.

Resilience practices

Cultivating home place and social connection

Older migrant women prioritise relationships with their families. They care for their grandchildren, help their adult children in the care work at home and create their home as a nurturing and safe space. bell hooks (1990), has described home place as the creation of safe havens by Black

Table 1. Description of research participants.

Participant	Region	Age
Bhanudevi	South Asia	76
Rewa	South Asia	73
Gloria	Central Africa	72
Yasodha	South Asia	72
Coney	Central Africa	68
Xiang	East Asia	65
Mehar	South Asia	65
Tapasya	South Asia	65
Kaeo	Southeast Asia	62
Gurpreet	South Asia	62
Vishnu Maya	South Asia	61
Ife	West Africa	60
Julie	West Africa	60
Radha	South Asia	59
Pariza	Middle East	59
Durga	South Asia	58
Obiye	West Africa	58
Chandani	South Asia	57
Ganga	South Asia	58
Carolina	Central America	57

women away from the harmful effects of racism and discrimination. They make their homes into spaces where all members are subjects, not objects, regardless of any adversities suffered elsewhere and spaces where dignity can be redeemed which is not guaranteed in public spheres (hooks, 1990). The search for a secure place and to feel at home is articulated using words such as 'place' and 'space' within feminist discourses (Mohanty, 2003).

> Ife: What makes me happy is my children and my grandchildren. I'm ready any time to take care of my grandchildren, so that my children can go to work.

Most of the women also maintained good transnational ties and reported spending time on the phone talking to their grandchildren and extended families abroad to ease their isolation.

> Bhanudevi: My family is all together in one place, so this is my joy, even though it is a complete foreign land for us. I spend time on the phone everyday talking to my daughters and grandchildren, who are back in my hometown. I also go back to my country every other year and meet my relatives.

Their social connection is not limited to home and families. They preserve and maintain good community relationships. Participants shared instances of support that they had received from their community in times of need. Even though they have been excluded from the mainstream Finnish society in many ways, they shared how they navigate their way through the city with the help of someone they know. They rely more on one another's support before seeking any external and professional support.

> Radha: The people of my community came to check on me and visit me when I was very sick. I got good support from them in tough times. They dropped me to the hospital, took me back home, came along as translators when I needed help. Our bond is like brothers and sisters here. We don't let each other be in problem alone. We meet and talk regularly.

For migrant older women, organising events and being a part of the community mattered since most of their families reside abroad. They expressed that they checked on each other more often. The participants repeatedly emphasised the importance of asking for help as well as being there to help one other.

> Chandani: In any kind of a problem or crisis, the community comes along with you. They are still willing to help (…) It is also getting to know from each other that whatever trouble we go through, we're probably not the first one or the second or the last. If we share our experiences, then we can prevent many people from getting into trouble.

As migrants living in Finland, there face many common issues that arise in everyday life; they share their experiences with others so that people who come after them, can know how to handle them better.

A sense of sisterhood

Older migrant women expressed that they share time with other women which is beneficial for them to feel heard, validated and to manage stressful situations.

> Mehar: Time with my women friends give me joy because I get energy, motivation, everything from them. In any problem, or if anything bothers me, I talk to them for maybe two hours, then I sometimes even forget what the problem was. When I talk to my daughters or my sisters, my mind diverts. The most important thing is to have a chance to talk. If you do not have that, then it is terrible to not be able to express your problems. Old people like sharing stories of memories from their times. Coming from South Asia, we are connected to our place of birth somehow. Sharing gives meaning to our lives.

The sense of sisterhood was strong among older women, which gave them a feeling of belonging and being able to collectively share the same experiences. As most had similar stories and struggles as migrants and women with racialised and gendered social structures, they found each other's company to be comforting and uplifting during troubled times and to ease loneliness. Ahmed

(2000) writes about encounters between women, especially face-to-face encounters, which provides a chance for them to talk about their stories of oppression and inequalities.

> Julie: I feel there are certain avenues that I can use to reduce stress for example like going to meet my ladies (…). We are talking, laughing, and sometimes we sit for two hours. Those kinds of social relations are important, even if they are not family, but good friends.

bell hooks (1999) writes about healing among women as an act of communion. Previous research has found that women of colour gather strength through communal practices (Bannerji, 1995; Davis, 2015; Moran & Mapedzahama, 2023). Collective strength of women as a sense of sisterhood is important not only as a survival tactic; it also has the power to demonstrate collective resistance to microaggression, social exclusion and wider oppressive structures when necessary (Moran & Mapedzahama, 2023). Sisterhood among older migrant women supports their experiences in spaces that are completely new to them and formerly not meant for them (Williams & Chau, 2007).

Alternative ways of healing

> Pariza: I have suffered so much. I got sick in a serious way, but I managed. I left my country. I lost my mother, father, and sister. My life journey was full of challenges and all the time, I try to be the best version of myself. I write almost every day. One of my strengths is to be so sensitive (…) I cry because it gives me so much good feeling and, I use different kind of method to deal with pain. I talk with myself in front of the mirror; I enjoy being present. I say to myself, I am not the only one! Somebody else has the same problem, if she or he can make it, I also must. I have to survive. I have to be patient.

Pariza does not go to therapy or psychological counselling, even though she has experienced various ruptures in life. She uses different techniques to help manage pain and come out stronger, like mirror-talk with herself, allowing herself to feel all her feelings, letting herself cry, positive affirmations, and writing everything down. Yasodha uses some Eastern healing methods that are common is her country but not valued as a healing practice in Western societies.

> Yasodha: To overcome anxiety and tension, I do a little bit of *yoga*, breathing exercises and taking care of diet and mindful eating. Also, *satsang! Satsangs* are when people with similar interests come together and discuss some topics like devotion. They sing together, cook together, eat together.

Group activities like *Satsangs*, where people gather to sing folk songs and discuss a topic, are indigenous therapeutic and resourceful techniques to promote well-being (KC & Walker, 2023; Rybak et al., 2015; Singh et al., 2017). Durga attested that she was disappointed after being incorrectly diagnosed for her mental health, so she is reluctant to seek any help from the formal services. She instead resorts to meditation and writing which have helped her.

> Durga: I had a traumatizing experience once with the social services. I was diagnosed wrongly for my mental health, so rather than asking for psychological counseling and medicines, I try to heal myself with meditation and writing. Here they prescribe anti-depressants for everything so easily without even understanding. Instead, I practice meditation which has helped me handle difficulties even when I am lonely. I would not go to a counsellor because they were not able to understand my situation.

Euro-centric, Western practices and concepts are considered normative and transferable in social work without considering historical trauma, structural violence, or systems of oppression (Chaouni et al., 2021; Mignolo, 2011; Rajan-Rankin, 2018). Indigenous, integrative, and diverse ways of healing are often forgotten, lost or undocumented but they can be used as decolonising practices to heal traumas inflicted by oppressive structures (Clarke & Yellow Bird, 2020). Gloria, for instance, copes up with any hard-hit moments through African music and dance and by cooking authentic food with other women.

> Glora: I say this; let's go and dance! We put our music and dance, we put everything we want. We cook our food. Aaahhhhhh! *(Sighs loudly with a smile)*

Spirituality

Many older migrant women referred to spiritual practices that helped them ease their life situations. When nothing else worked for them, they relied on and put their hope in a higher power. Research participants came from different religious backgrounds but many of them shared about spirituality as a way to find strength and meaning.

> Yasodha: I mainly listen and sing devotional songs. Reading spiritual books bring me the greatest joy.
> Coney: When I was in my 40s, the doctor said I was not going to live longer because I always got sick. But look at me: I am soon to be 70 and still alive and it's because of my faith in God.

They shared stories about finding peace and solace through spirituality after facing many challenges.

> Reewa: We have realised that our life is incomplete without God. Now that I have been over 70 years, I have realized that life is nothing. We can find peace through God. A big tragedy happened in my life. My 45-year-old daughter who had two kids died recently after suffering from cancer. She had just bought a beautiful home, hadn't even shifted there. After that, our life changed, our minds stopped working. For me, nothing matters now except taking God's name, bowing my head down and doing service.
> Obiye: I pray, I mediate on God. I listen to spiritual music. That helps me a lot to deal with challenges.

Some older migrant women also use prayer as a way of coping which is in line with findings presented in previous research (Obrist & Büchi, 2008; Stevens, 2016).

Reworking practices

Serving the Community

Gloria, as the senior-most member of her community in Finland, is called upon to manage family disputes. She described it as a way of resolving issues in her community where the advice of an older person is considered valuable.

> Gloria: If someone needs me, they call me: 'Mumma can you come? I have little problem.' I am the oldest in my community, so they call me if they have a problem between husband and wife, for example. I go there. I listen. I give my advice and thing get better.

Apart from that, Gloria also volunteers to look after the young toddlers of migrant women who are learning the Finnish language at an NGO.

> Gloria: They said, 'you must be retired, and it is time for you to go home and relax'. I said 'I don't like that. I am still strong. I want to do something'. I am working as a volunteer. I am helping the immigrant women who want to integrate and learn Finnish. But the problem is, they have small kids, so it is impossible for them to attend the class. I take care of their kids so the mothers can attend the class. Maybe if I help, the immigrants will integrate rather than stay home. People say, 'oh why are you doing that? They don't give you money.' I say I know what I am doing, I must help.

Chandani spends a large amount time helping people her community who do not know the Finnish system so well, and face language barriers when trying to access services especially on child protection issues, domestic violence, and workplace problems. People come to her because she has lived in Finland for the longest time than anyone in her community.

> Chandani: As the demography of my community started changing, a lot of problems came. People started having troubles with daily life things and started seeking help from me. When they don't know how to go forward, I take them (…) I'm quite a lot in the phone with families and troubled issues.

Older migrant women shared their experiences of volunteering to help other migrant women when systems are not favourable to them as a way of reworking. Previous studies have shown such acts of service also provide them with feelings of usefulness, empowerment, and retention of a societal role (Cattan et al., 2011; Wilson et al., 2017).

Resistance practices

Coming to Voice

Some older migrant women have formed an association or joined one to help other women as a form of resistance against patriarchal and racialised structures.

> Ife: Often when they are talking, I feel that I'm not a part of it, even when I have a Finnish citizenship because I think they are talking over me. Even when I sit in their seminar, in front of the podium and somebody's looking at me, smiling, talking how much women now have power and how they are in the board and there and there. It is like somebody has pierced in my heart because I see that this person is looking at me, sees me, but is not talking for me. It's not my reality! And that's why we started this association.

Ife attested to the need to form an association for migrant women like herself because she felt that even though she lives in a Finnish society surrounded by common norms of Nordic gender equality, her position is not the same as that of Finnish women, and she does not feel her issues are talked about nor understood. Highlighting similar intersectional disadvantages and the need to reconstruct unequal power relations between men and women, Parizah formed her own organisation for migrant women.

> Parizah: I build an organization for women which stands for freedom. It's an NGO. It is based on volunteering, but the aim is improving immigrant women' position in Finland. The women are not so free as a man. Men easily can go wherever they want or do whatever they want to do. But for women, they even have a closed culture and they have so many rules. That kind of difficulties is so much for women (…) You have to be very powerful yourself. You have to know who you are, what you want, what is the meaning of being here and have self-knowledge.

Pariza expressed that she has learned not to tolerate any ill treatment from anyone and resists the patriarchal and racialised structures by being more confident and knowledgeable and taking back the power in her own hands. Many women likewise expressed that they resisted the discrimination, racism, and challenges they face. Most of them mentioned that things did not change on their own, but through collective effort, willpower, and resistance. Chandani describes how being proactive, choosing to join a Finnish association helped her become more a part of society.

> Chandani: As soon as I came here, I started joining an association that was established by the Finns. It's like 40 years old now, and they were not very welcoming because I didn't understand Finnish. But I insisted that, well, there's an election and I want to join. I joined and after that, all these board meetings were in Finnish. I just sat there. I was so adamant that I become a board member and I demanded that they explained to me what topics they talked about. That's how I started doing things. (…) And while our (migrant) tendency is just to keep on complaining, doing nothing about it. Go forward! Nobody will do it for you, bringing it to you and putting it to your plate.
>
> Obiye: We need to take our power back and say things ourselves. They do it for us because we don't. We cannot complain that they did this and that. We need to also be active and be in our community. We can't do anything alone. All migrants need to come together for important matters like anti-racism. We need to challenge politics. Women need to find an NGO to express themselves and be informed. When you have information, you are empowered. It's never easy. (…) Someone has to do the dirty job! Some men even tell their wives not to go close to me, they say: she is like this and that for the work I do.

Obiye and Chandani highlighted that migrant women themselves have to find their voice and bring the issues forward in order to enact change in society. This is in line with hooks's concept of coming to voice, which is moving from silence to speech as a form of resistance (1989). Coming to voice is considered a metaphor of self-transformation for women who have never had a public voice before, like speaking or writing (hooks, 1989).

Discussion

Our findings demonstrate that some ageing non-European migrant women manifest agency and build unique strategies in the form of resilience, reworking and resistance to cope with difficult life situations, challenge oppressive structures and foster well-being in their everyday lives. They utilise survival tactics through cultivating home place as a nurturing space, and staying socially and transnationally connected to overcome isolation, maintaining a strong sense of community solidarity when in need of support rather than making use of professional social and health care system. Through sisterhood, they were able to share stories of their mundane exuberance and tribulations as well as experiences of inequalities associated with gender, migrancy and ageing. Some of them used various alternative ways of healing instead of seeing a professional in the pursuit of their own well-being which did not resemble the Western ways of social work intervention. Some have also resorted to finding meaning through spirituality. Ageing non-European migrant women have employed reworking strategies to help other women when systems were not convenient for them, such as family counselling, childcare and migrant integration, by establishing alternative mechanisms that may seem unconventional to the standardised norms. They upheld resistance by fighting back against oppressive gendered and racialised structures, building their own spaces, and coming to voice about their rights and inclusion.

Learning about such stories of agency offers an empowering and decolonising lens in the epistemology of ageing and social work research (Mohanty, 2003). It centres ageing migrant women in research. It challenges the homogenised perspective on well-being and care. Counter-narratives question which narratives are visible and challenge the Western notion of knowledge production by introducing alternative ways of knowing (Chalmers, 2017; Chaouni et al., 2021; Rajan-Rankin, 2018). Furthermore, it contests the negative perceptions in dominant narratives that produce a problematic construction of ageing migrant women as passive, helpless, and powerless. Constructions of vulnerability and victimhood undervalue and under-recognise older women (Rydzik & Anitha, 2020). The findings present that older non-European migrant women have found sources of strength and support for each other and are often hesitant to seek support from the Finnish system. It raises some questions on why they have to adapt and need to carve out spaces of their own to promote their well-being? Does the existing system of care not support the idea of participation and well-being for all its citizens and permanent residents?

Despite the absence of support from available systems and evidence of social exclusion, ageing non-European migrant women have been active in developing their own mechanisms of survival, reconfiguration, and subversion by creating their own spaces and finding support through their own channels. Scientific knowledge has at times othered the stories of the communities in the margins (Chaouni et al., 2021). However, I also recognise the risk in highlighting such narratives of strength which people in power may use against marginalised groups when they are in need of support. Nevertheless, giving a space to these untold stories of resilience, reworking and resistance makes it possible to envision well-being for ageing migrants from a culturally humble lens in social work. Counternarratives have the power to move social workers to engage in deeper reflection regarding questions of power and privilege when determining whose stories get told, and who listens (Berrett-Abebe et al., 2023). A culturally humble lens provides self-awareness and openness that keeps the social worker in the learning mode, where people we work with are regarded as more knowledgeable, as opposed to the social worker being culturally competent or an expert in someone else's culture (Ortega & Faller, 2010).

It is important to explore how older migrant women have dealt with oppression throughout their life-course by developing different strategies that informs us about their everyday lives and how they make sense of them (Andrews, 2002; KC et al., 2023b). Our findings have important implications for social work in Finland and internationally, addressing the need to re-imagine current ways of narrating stories of women in the margins who have been put into specific boxes, and undertake a reciprocal

engagement with them as knowers and not only as objects in our scientific inquiry. It provides a space for communities that are historically silenced to make their seldom heard narratives understood and heard. As Anciano and Wheeler (2021) write, counter-narratives have the possibility to offer a pathway towards social justice which is a key element in social work. The findings also point out to the need of acknowledging diverse perspective on well-being and integrative healing in social work practice, education, and future research. It suggests us to shift beyond deficit thinking in how we construct ageing migrant women and instead focus on building on the strengths that individuals and communities possess and to sustain them in calling attention to existing inequalities.

Conclusion

Ageing women from non-European migrant backgrounds have developed and utilised various strategies, such as resilience, reworking and resistance in their own nuanced ways to confront everyday challenges and structures of oppression. These untold stories offered new perspective on agency, well-being and strengths and presented how ageing migrant women from non-European migrant backgrounds heal and re-build individually as well as collectively throughout their life-course. The findings have resituated these women in a position of agency and power, underlining their abilities to influence their everyday lives and leverage spaces of their own during the absence of formal support or professional social work. These stories bring new ways of knowing people's life situations and reimagining well-being. They also challenge the negative and vulnerable construction of these women in the margins. The untold stories provide a space for social work to open itself up to the seldom heard narratives, and deeply reflect on broader questions of power as well as on the power of stories.

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