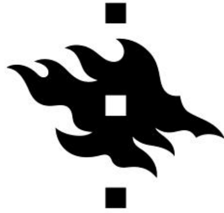
“I KNOW I’M NOT WHITE, SO THEN CAN I BE QUEER?”:

Examining the possibilities and challenges of BIPOC and queer peoples’ hybrid identity constructions in the Finnish context

Author Eva Udeh
University of Helsinki
Faculty of Social Sciences
Social Psychology
Master’s thesis
June 2022



Abstract

Faculty: Social Sciences

Degree programme: Master's Programme in Contemporary Societies

Study track: Social Psychology

Author: Eva Udeh

Title: "I know I'm not white, so then can I be queer?": Examining the possibilities and challenges of BIPOC and queer peoples' hybrid identity constructions in the Finnish context

Level: Master's Thesis

Month and year: June 2022

Number of pages: 86 + 2 appendices

Keywords: Hybrid identity, Ethnic minority, BIPOC, Queer, Critical social psychology, Intersectionality, Queer identity, Queer theory, Cultural identity, Reflexive thematic analysis, Insider research

Supervisor or supervisors: Satu Venäläinen

Where deposited: University of Helsinki, Helda

Abstract:
This research aims to examine the identity construction processes of sexual and gender minorities who are also a part of visible ethnic minorities. There is very little research conducted on the topic by social psychology scholars in the Finnish context. The present research is interwoven with critical social psychology drawing its' framework from intersectional theory, queer theory, and notions of hybrid identity, theorized by Ang (2001), Bhabha (2012) & Hall (1999). The main framework of the study is constructionism which treats the established understandings of the social world and identities as phenomena that are constructed in social practices, rather than as natural truths (see e.g. Gergen, 1985).

This research examines how and in relation to which social environments BIPOC and queer identities are constructed, whilst considering how local and global interlocking systems of oppression and privilege challenge and enable such identity negotiations which are done from a state of "in-betweenness" of cultural identities as visible ethnic minorities often describe, and hybridity theories suggest. Using the framework of intersectionality and hybridity capacitates the examination of both,

challenges, as well as possibilities of identity construction from the intersections of BIPOC and queer identities in the Finnish context.

The research questions are: 1. What kind of challenges and possibilities of cultural identity construction do BIPOC and queer people face in the Finnish context? a. How were the intersections of their identities negotiated? b. How did hybridity figure in their identity negotiations? The data consists of three focus group interviews conducted in the context of insider research. The analysis method used was Reflexive Thematic Analysis. As a result, three themes were generated from the data: (1) Hybrid identity as a necessity, (2) Queerness is white, and (3) Hybrid identity is inherently queer.

The analysis suggests that queerness and BIPOC:ness create an intersection of identities, which demand and enable hybrid construction of identities, not only in terms of cultural or BIPOC identity but also in terms of queerness. However, identity construction is done in relation to the available communities which either support and enable exploring and constructing such identities or challenge and limit these processes.

Table of Contents

1 INTRODUCTION **1**

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK **4**

2.1 Identity in social psychology *5*

2.2 Cultural identity and "the Other" *10*

2.3 Hybridity *13*

2.4 Intersectionality *17*

3 BIPOC and Queer identities as analytical concepts **21**

3.1 BIPOC (Black, indigenous & people of colour) *21*

3.2 "Queer" as a theory and identity *23*

4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS **26**

5 DATA AND METHOD **27**

5.1 Data *27*

5.2 Method *28*

5.2.1 Group interviews 29

5.2.2 Insider research 31

6 ANALYSIS **32**

6.1 Reflexive thematic analysis *32*

6.2 Theme 1: Hybrid identity as a necessity *36*

6.3 Theme 2: Queerness is white *48*

6.4 Theme 3: Hybrid identity is inherently queer *56*

6 DISCUSSION **62**

6.1 Findings of this study *63*

6.2 Contribution of this study *69*

6.3 Limitations *71*

6.5 Positionality *73*

6.5 Further research *75*

6.6 Conclusion *76*

REFERENCE LIST **78**

APPENDICES **87**

Appendix 1: predeveloped interview guide 87

Appendix 2: The consent letter of the present research and safer space policies 88

1 INTRODUCTION

In 2020 the Finnish government published an action plan for equality in which it outlined that the plan is based on an intersectional lens, which is used to recognize more dimensions than gender in terms of what affects an individual's position in the society (*Hallituksen tasa-arvo-ohjelma*, 2020-2023). By recognizing that some individuals face discrimination for belonging to multiple marginalized groups it is easier to improve their situation through politics, Maria Ohisalo, the Minister of Interior at that time commented in an interview for Helsingin Sanomat ("Intersektionaalinen feminismi on hallituksen uuden tasa-arvo-ohjelman kantava ajatus, sanoo Maria Ohisalo – ja ihmettelee, miksi se pelottaa osaa," 27.6.2020). The declaration caused public discussion, of which some was critical and questioning. However, it did have an impact on the public agents' pursuits for inclusivity.

Consequently, during the same year of 2020, the city of Helsinki replaced the conventional pride flag with a new version called "a progressive pride flag" in which the symbol of the trans flag, as well as black and brown stripes were added to the side of the former six stripes. The aim of using the progressive flag was to obtain more visibility for the most marginalized groups within the queer minority, by symbolically referring to trans people and people of color. By using the flag, city of Helsinki promises to commit to supporting the rights of all marginalized groups within the queer minority (*Helsingin kaupunki käyttää progressiivista Pride-lippua kaupungintalon liputuksessa*, 2020). However, this reform caused critical discussion among sexual and gender minorities, and some bloggers questioned whether a reorganization of the pride symbol is actually needed, and whether it is truly inclusive (*Onko ns. progressiivinen pride-lippu oikeasti inklusiivisempi kuin perinteinen kuusiraitainen?*, 2020; *Progressiivinen Pride-lippu valtaa alaa*, 2020).

Without taking a stand on the subject of the progressive pride flag, it seems that the conversation itself is a manifestation of BIPOC (Black, indigenous, people of colour) and queer people longing and gaining more voice in Finland, as well as within the Finnish queer community and that their needs are no longer completely invisible. This poses a question of

how BIPOC and queer people experience their position in the Finnish society on one hand, and within the Finnish queer community on the other. In this research paper, when I refer to BIPOC and queer people, I refer to individuals, whose identities reject dominant gender and sexual binaries, and who simultaneously are a part of a visible ethnic minority (see Miller et al., 2016) Moreover, it might be relevant to ask how queer identities influence BIPOC peoples' position in the BIPOC communities they belong to in Finland. This research is particularly interested in how queer and BIPOC people manage to construct their identities in relation to the communities that they are surrounded with.

Examining identity construction through a sense of belonging is relevant considering that, research suggests that queer identities are bound up in the constructions of "we-ness" and finding people alike. The community does not necessarily have a shared physical space, such as a neighborhood, but instead, it is based on an imagined community of others alike, which leads to an assumption of having a shared understanding of meanings and values, as well as experiences of discrimination and stigma (see Bell & Valentine, 1995.; McCallum & McLaren, 2011; Weeks, 1996; Weston, 1995). Belonging to such "queer imaginary" is suggested to negate the negative outcomes of marginalized identity, such as the need for self-censorship, and self-regulation (Valentine, 1993). Therefore, a sense of belonging to a queer community strengthens the construction of queer identity, resulting in positive outcomes. Similar logic has been recognized in research on ethnic or cultural identity. Furthermore, a strong sense of ethnic identity provides security of one's ethnic group memberships, which is associated with positive outcomes, such as closer friendships, self-confidence, and reducing the negative influence of perceived prejudice, thus leading to better psychological wellbeing. (see Seaton et al., 2006; Whitesell et al., 2006; Wong et al., 2003.) Furthermore, Hudson's (2015) qualitative research on mixed-race queer peoples' needs for a community of people alike, indicates that lack of community was perceived as a source of stress, grief and pain, whereas belonging to one was perceived to increase their wellbeing (Hudson, 2015).

In addition, focusing on the intersection of queer and BIPOC identities is relevant considering they are both marginalized identities, which expose individuals to prejudice and victimization. In terms of queer identity, according to the European Union Agency of Fundamental rights' survey, 3 % of the Finnish respondents had experienced physical or sexual violence during the prior 12 months, whereas victimization of verbal assault, harassment and threatening was reported by 32 % of the Finnish respondents. The perceived reasons for hate crimes were based on the respondents' sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Notably, hate crimes are highly underreported, thus a great deal of cases is never reported to the police. These results indicate that being queer in Finland remains unsafe. (Seta, 2019.)

In terms of BIPOC identity, Finland does not gather equality data based on ethnic background, therefore, for example, Afro-Finns form a so-called invisible minority because there is no accurate data on how many people of African descent there are in Finland in terms of those who have migrated and those who were born in Finland. Thus, little is known about the minority's experiences and well-being. Consequently, it is impossible to make efforts to create services or other measures to improve Afro-Finns' wellbeing. (Moua et al., 2021, pp. 89-90.) Many Afro-Finns have grown up without peer support in terms of their cultural identity and suffered from every day and structural racism, which often leads to accumulated experiences of outsider-ness. In recent years, it has been recognized that Afro-Finns are longing for spaces in which they can escape white normativity and discrimination, but in which they can also explore their cultural identity and find relatable representation. (Moua et al., 2021, pp. 89-90.) Since Afro-Finns are a relatively known and organized minority in Finland there have been some efforts to create such spaces. However, even less is known about other BIPOC peoples' experiences and their needs. It seems likely, that their experiences of othering and outsider-ness are similar, and that they too long for more inclusive spaces to explore their cultural identities in.

From what is known about the challenges of living in Finland as a member of a visible ethnic minority group, and as a queer person, it is easy to draw an assumption that the intersection

of these identities poses a threat of multiple marginalization and challenges in terms of identity construction. This phenomenon has been researched in the field of social psychology (see Bowleg et al., 2003; Ghabrial, 2017; Haritaworn, 2015; Jungar & Peltonen, 2015), but to my knowledge very little research on the topic has been conducted in Finland. Most research focuses on the pressing issue of queerness and its role for refugees in their processes of seeking asylum from Finland (Ali et al., 2021). Knowledge of other migrants or BIPOC people who have been born in Finland is scarce. Therefore, this research focuses on a wider group of BIPOC and queer people.

This research aims to examine what kind of possibilities and challenges queer and BIPOC people face in their identity construction processes. To address the issue, I will first discuss the theoretical framework of this study. Since the aim is to examine how identity is constructed at the intersection of BIPOC:ness and queerness, I will first discuss how social identity has been studied in the field of social psychology and how this study is positioned within the discipline of social psychology. I shall argue, that in order to grasp the lived experiences of queer and BIPOC people and to relate them to the workings of global and local power structures, the theoretical framework of cultural identity, hybridity and intersectionality are worth addressing and using as a framework for this research. Second, I will introduce the terms BIPOC and Queer, which are used to describe the group of interest of this research, as well as analytical concepts in the data analysis. Third, I will introduce the research question and present the process of data gathering, as well as Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) which was used as an analytical method. Fourth, I will discuss the analysis and introduce the three themes that were generated from the data. Finally, in the discussion section, I will further address the findings of this research, my position in the interpretation of the data, and suggest further research based on this study.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research aims to shed light on the challenges and possibilities queer and BIPOC people face in terms of identity construction. To do that, it is needed to set this research in a suitable

theoretical frame in regard to how the concept of identity is treated and which elements play a role in its construction and research on that process. The research interest itself forms a framework in which it is presumed that queerness and BIPOC:ness (among other dimensions) have an intersecting role in identity construction. However, the notion of identity as something that does not merely exist, but instead is constructed also calls for a suitable approach.

In this chapter, I will first briefly discuss how conventional social psychology suits the interests of this research and argue, that constructionist and critical approaches are the best fit for research on complex social identity construction. Second, I will introduce Stuart Hall's theorization of cultural identity and its relation to the processes of othering and racialization. Third, I will discuss the relevance of hybrid identity theories in terms of the identity construction processes of BIPOC people in Finland. Finally, I will elaborate on the benefits of using the intersectional approach as a framework can provide to social psychology scholars, as well as for this research.

2.1 Identity in social psychology

Social psychology has a long and multifaced tradition in doing research on ethnic identity. Since in my thesis the starting point of the analysis does not lie in essentialist nor cognitive ways of defining ethnic identity categories, I will discuss such approaches only briefly. However, I will use Verkuyten's rationale for stating how I shall treat the concept of identity in this research.

In order to address issues on ethnic identity construction, it is needed to first define the concept of social identity. According to Verkuyten (2018), when we discuss "social identity" we refer to individual's relationship to their environment. Social identity research is not interested in what differentiates the individual from others, but rather what is shared with others. Hence, social identity is constructed on similarities to some individuals and differences from others, in terms of categorical characteristics. Such categorical

characteristics could be gender, ethnic background and age, to name a few. These characteristics position and locate people in social spaces depending on which categories they possess memberships for. These memberships also define their location in the society. (Verkuyten, 2018, p. 79.) Social identities are public realities since they are based on socially recognized categories, in which individuals are assigned to by others, as well as by themselves. Furthermore, the meanings and outcomes of these categorisations are socio-historically and contextually located. For example, queer identity has different meanings and leads to different expectations in terms of behaviour and norms, depending on the spatial and temporal context. (Verkuyten, 2018, pp. 80-83.)

Social identity is one of the core concepts of social psychological research, however, Verkuyten (2018) argues that many conventional social psychological theories are ill-equipped for understanding complex social identities since they tend to be studied as unitary categories to be perceived as mutually exclusive. In other words, social identities are assumed to have clear-cut boundaries, thus, they are presumed to be unable to occur at the same time. For example, one cannot represent dimensions such as woman and man or minority and majority simultaneously. Within cognitive approaches, group memberships are taken for granted and being used as the starting point of analysis and they focus on the consequences of social categorizations. (Verkuyten, 2018, p. 186.) Furthermore, Bowleg (2017) argues, that conventional social identity research, especially based on Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 2004) often has a starting point of assuming that individuals have only one or a primary social group with which to identify. Thus, assuming that categories such as race, gender or sexual orientation are uni-dimensional and independent categories. (Bowleg, 2017.) Consequently, other conventional social psychological theories, such as the Self-categorization theory (Turner et al., 1987), have been criticized for tending to assume that social identities are clear and separable. Despite SCT's notion of self-categories as dynamic and context sensitive the theory does not allow for inconsistent self-categories to be salient simultaneously. Therefore, SCT like many other conventional theories does not provide a suitable framework for understanding multiple identities. (Verkuyten, 2018, pp. 186-187.)

However, there have been efforts to better recognise and reconcile the notion of multidimensionality of identity categorisations and their relation to socio-historical context within the tradition of cognitive social psychology (Settles & Buchanan, 2014). Notably, group memberships and categorisations are perceived as different than group identification. Identification refers to the process of an individual perceiving themselves to be a part of a group and accepting the membership as a part of their self-definition. Such identification provides a sense of meaning and a perspective through which the world is viewed (see Ashmore et al., 2004; Hogg & Reid, 2006.; Sacharin et al., 2009). Furthermore, group categorisation can be done from the outside, in the case of, for example, visible ethnic minorities. Hence, such categorisation affects how the individual is treated by others. Race, gender and ethnicity have been described to be the most salient and primary social categories, due to their visibility and stability (Brewer & Lui, 1989). In terms of this research, categorizations coming from the outside might often conflict the individuals' self-identification. For example, being visibly BIPOC might lead to being categorised as not Finnish. Furthermore, gender and sexual orientation are prone to be categorised in normative terms, through heteronormativity and cis genderism.

On the other hand, the presumption of primary social categories has been questioned by stereotype and categorisation research, which implies that such categories are not primary as singular categories, but rather as combinations of such group memberships. For example, stereotyping in terms of ethnicity and gender becomes particularly evident when valuing black women. A scenario study conducted in the context of the U.S. suggests that African-American female professors were valued as being less legitimate and competent than African-American male professors, or Caucasian professors of any gender (Bavishi et al., 2010). Another example from the U.S. context suggests that stereotypes of women vary according to their ethnicity. For example, the classic stereotype of a woman as nurturing, kind and helpful is in fact, a stereotype of a white woman (Heilman, 1995; Heilman, 2001). Similar logic has been used in conducting research on how multiple jeopardy of belonging to many marginalised groups affects peoples' mental health, socio-economic status and experiences of victimization and violence, for example. Without going to further detail, the

vast body of research suggests that multiple jeopardy does increase the risk of having a lower socio-economic status and more experiences with mental disparities and victimization (Settles & Buchanan, 2014).

More relevant studies in terms of this done have been conducted in regards to how multiple group identities are organized and integrated. However, this body of research does not focus on the unique experiences of multiple social positions, but instead, it examines whether the individuals' multiple identities are organized as separate or integrated. For example, according to Settles' (2016) research, Black women rated their combined "Black woman" identity as more important than separate identities of being Black or a woman (Settles, 2006). Furthermore, identity research based on cognitive approaches has also focused on examining whether aims to integrate multiple identities result in identity conflict or identity harmony. Identity conflict is a result of difficulties in trying to enact or meet the expectation of multiple identities. Sacharin's (2009) research suggests that identity conflict occurs when multiple identities are perceived as incompatible or oppositional by the individual (Sacharin et al., 2009). In terms of this research, queer and BIPOC identities might result in identity conflict for various reasons. Settles' research on Black women's identities suggests that interference of black identity and woman identity was related to lower self-esteem and depression (Settles, 2006). Moreover, identity harmony in which multiple identities facilitate each other has been suggested to be related to greater psychological well-being. (Brook et al., 2008).

Notably, the focus of this research is not on the content of social identity, nor on the consequences of certain social identity, but rather on the construction process of social identity in terms of ethnicity/culture, queerness and possibly other categorisations. Despite Verkuyten's critique on cognitive approaches, I find that some research, be it conducted from a different framework, might be useful when considering the analysis of this research. The challenge in applying the results of the aforementioned studies is, that they have been conducted in the U.S. context, which likely differs greatly from the Finnish context when it comes to cultural and queer identities. Moreover, when it comes to research on identity construction, Taylor (2015) proposes, that suitable theories conceptualize identity as being produced within a certain cultural, sociohistorical, interactional and situational context. The

notion of the situatedness of identity construction inherently emphasises that identity is fluid and multidimensional. Additionally, Taylor points out that people's resources for identity construction vary greatly. These resources have been named and defined as, for example, "discourses", "representations" and "narratives, depending on the theoretical approach. (Taylor, 2015.)

The common factor among applicable theories on identity construction is that they are based on the constructionist framework (Taylor, 2015). Therefore, instead of resorting to mainstream social psychological theories based on cognitive or essentialist views on ethnic identity, I will draw from social constructionist approaches to examine what kind of possibilities and challenges queer BIPOC people face in their cultural identity construction processes. In these approaches the focus is not on the consequences but rather on the antecedents of categorization, emphasising the processes of construction and definition of the social categories (Verkuyten, 2018, p. 186). The constructionist framework is crucial to use as an overlying framework in this research, because it enables the examination of how the established understandings of the social world and people have been constructed in social practices, thus affecting the possibilities and challenges of how one can construct their identities (see Gergen, 1985). Furthermore, social constructionism treats knowledge of the world as relative, thus being based on concepts and categories, which are historically and culturally contextualized, rather than as natural features of the world (Burr & Dick, 2017, pp. 77-78).

In the context of researching complex ethnic identities, Verkuyten (2018) also introduces the concepts of hybridity and intersectionality, which I find necessary frameworks to use in this research, and which are aligned with constructionist notions of the social reality being constructed through social interaction. Furthermore, the aforementioned theoretical frameworks also emphasise, that knowledge and thus identity production is not free from the prevailing global and local power relations, hence sharing a critical stance on social psychology and social theory (Burr & Dick, 2017, pp. 62-63). Recent cultural and social scientific theories emphasise that globalization has led to hybridization and fragmentation of

social identities, making them more complex than conventional approaches tend to assume. Post-colonial hybridity theories have let go of the homogenous and uniformly defined identities by rejecting essentialist and absolutist notions of social identities (see Ang, 2001; Hall et al., 2021). In order to address the theories of hybrid identity construction, I will first discuss Stuart Hall's notions on cultural identity and the production of othered and racialized identities.

2.2 Cultural identity and "the Other"

Of many possibilities for theorizing and examining ethnic identity, I have chosen to use Stuart Hall's notions of cultural identity as the underlining theoretical framework for this study. In his work, Hall emphasises the normative nature of Western cultural identity, thus it functions as a base for his rationale since he argues that identities are always constructed through difference. These differences and the identities they produce are constructed through discursive formations and practices which are rooted in specific socio-historical contexts. For Hall, as well as many critical social psychologists (e.g. Bowleg, 2017) identities are at the root of modalities of power and are products of marking difference and exclusion. Identification of a certain identity can only take place when the identity has the capacity to exclude what it is not. Therefore, identities are always in relation to the excluded "Other". (Hall, 2011, pp. 5-6.)

Furthermore, when discussing identities, Hall (1999) proposes the notion of a postmodern subject, which does not have a constant, essentialist identity, but instead a shifting and changing identity, which is always in relation to the ways one is represented and addressed as in their surrounding cultural system. The postmodern cultural subject is not defined by biology, but by history and defined not by one "self", but many. These "selves" might be conflicting and constantly changing due to being affected by the influences of increasing amounts of meanings and representational systems around us. (Hall et al., 1999, pp. 22 – 23.) Similarly to Hall's notions of cultural identity, Ann Phoenix (2021) argues, that shared ideas of race and ethnicity are socially constructed in relational processes, from which, however, the least powerful are often excluded from (Phoenix, 2021). In Hall's thinking, cultural

identity refers to those parts of an individual's identity that are a part of ethnic, racial, language, religious or (foremost) national cultures (Hall et al., 1999, p. 19). The national cultures we are born into are one of the main sources of cultural identities and identities in general. However, we are not born equipped with such national identities, instead, they too, are formed and transformed as parts of representations and in relation to them. Having a Finnish identity is always related to how Finnishness is being represented in the Finnish culture. Therefore, Finland or any other nation is not merely a political unit, but also something that creates meanings as a cultural representation system. Therefore, instead of being legal citizens of a nation, the individuals are also a part of the idea of a nation, which in turn is a symbolic community. (Hall et al., 1999, p. 19.)

Since in this research, my point of interest is the way queer and BIPOC people in Finland construct their cultural identities in relation to not only the Finnish society, but also to each other, I find that is necessary to briefly address the discourse of "West and the rest" since it remains a salient shaper of BIPOC identities everywhere, but especially in the "Western" societies. Therefore, the relationship between the "Western" Finnish identity and the "Othered" BIPOC identity is highly relevant. Hall addresses this duality in his critique of the idealized Western cultures and their relation to the rest of the world by providing an extensive overview of the socio-historical process of creating an idea of The West, and its consequences, but in this study, I will only discuss it briefly.

Notably, in Hall's thinking, the notions of "the East" and "the West" are crucial. Instead of being geographic locations, they are rather complex, historically constructed concepts which vary in their meaning. Thus, when we talk about "Western" societies, we, in fact, refer to societies that are perceived as developed, industrialized, urbanized, capitalist, secular and modern. Another common factor of the "Western" societies is that they emerged around the same time period around the 16th century, and they were a result of certain historical, economic, social and cultural processes. Thus, whichever nation fits this description is referred to as a "Western" society, despite its location. Therefore, the "West" is an idea. (Hall et al., 1999, pp. 76 -77.) Furthermore, Hall argues that the "West" is also an ideology since

it enables the categorization of societies into Western and non-Western ones while being a part of a larger representation system. Consequently, the idea of the "West" produces a norm of comparison and a basic standard, with which we can compare how much or how little different societies resemble each other. Hence, providing the evaluation criterion which is used to categorize and sequence other societies in terms of how close to the Western ideals they are, resulting in positive or negative attitudes and emotions towards these societies. (Hall et al., 1999, pp. 77 - 80.) Once the idea of the "West" was produced, it itself began producing, and like other discursive or representational systems, it began to have real consequences, since it produced information and enabled people to think and speak about the world in a certain way. It became both, an outlining factor regarding the global power structure, as well as a structuring concept for a whole way of thinking and speaking. It became an effective representation system and at its core was the idea of the superior West and the rest. (Hall et al., 1999, pp. 79 -80.)

The Western ideology functions as a base for cultural identities since national cultures function as discourses – ways of constructing meanings, that direct and organize our actions, as well as our ideas of ourselves. Hence, they construct identities by producing meanings of "a nation" which we can identify with. These meanings are parts of the stories, which combine the present and the past of these nations, affecting the memories and images that are being constructed. (Hall et al., 1999, p. 47.) Therefore, national identity is an "imagined community" as the differences between nations lie in the different ways of imagining them (Anderson, 2006). The strategies of building imagined communities are processes that do not only produce ideas and ideologies of "us", but also the "Others". Thus, the very process itself is characterized by aims to differentiate from the other, "non-Western worlds" or "the rest", (Hall et al., 1999, pp. 47-51) which for the majority of Finns, are represented as the people of who are black, indigenous or people of color, regardless of their possible desires to build their identifications around Finnishness. Therefore, people who might be deeply invested in the Finnish identity are simultaneously cast aside, excluded and othered in the process of creating this imagined community.

The notion of othering or the “Other” has been widely used in critical social theory, hence it captures the nature of intergroup relations and power structures. In this context, “Others” refer to individuals who have been actively positioned on the outside of the dominant representations of Westerners or Finns, while having been put in a subordinate position in the process. Othering has been addressed for example, by Simone de Beauvoir (1997) in terms of women being the other, subordinated sex in a patriarchal society. Aligned with Hall’s aforementioned logic, Said (1978) has addressed orientalism and the “cultural Others” as a construction stemming from the fantasies of the Westerners representing the “Others” as different from those whom Westerners could position as superior. In the constructions of otherness feelings of hatred, disgust and fear are often intertwined with the subordinate positioning of the Other in relation to the dominant group. (Said, 1978, pp. 7-10.)

Furthermore, the notion of racialization is closely related to the notion of otherness, since the ways of defining national identities and national belongingness exclude many groups based on racialization. For example, notions of Finnishness are highly connected to an idea of white Westerness and other normative demands that are beyond reach for some because of the colour of their skin or other features. Racialized assumptions based on, for example, skin colour or the (imagined) country of origin lead to being positioned as the Other. (Keskinen, Näre, & Tuori, 2015.) I shall discuss the process of racialization further in chapter 3.1.

2.3 Hybridity

In the previous chapter, I aimed to address Stuart Hall’s notions on cultural identity and its relation to the hegemonic idealized idea of the West. As the identity constructions of the queer and BIPOC people in Finland cannot only be viewed through the dualism of being “half Finnish” and half something else, it is useful to discuss hybrid identity theories.

As I elaborated previously, traditional social psychological theories tend to study social identities as unitary categories which are to be perceived as mutually exclusive. The hybrid identity theories, on the other hand, underline the mixing and fusion of meanings, hence,

emphasising that social identities can be mixed and non-essentialized (Verkuyten, 2018, pp. 187-188). The concept of hybridity has been used in multiple ways (e.g. Castle, 1996; Modood & Werbner, 2015) but my focus is on the following conceptualisations. First, one way of using the term is in cases where two or more forms, elements or meanings merge into a new one. Hence, social identity can be located between two social categories, creating a new category which has a meaning of its own (Verkuyten, 2018, p. 188). In this research, the identity could be located between Finnish and Namibian identity, for example, and articulated as “half Finnish – half Namibian”. Second, hybridity can refer to a state in which one positions oneself with reference to two or various categories, which then merge into one category. This notion of hybridity presupposes existing old categories and differences between the prior forms, of which the new “form” is created. For example, in The Netherlands people of Dutch and Indonesian descent are considered “Indo”. In this notion of hybridity, mixed ethnic categories make up a new, separate social identity in which plurality becomes singularity. (Verkuyten, 2018, pp. 187-188.) In this research, an example of such hybridity could be articulated in terms of being an Afro-Finn, which carries meanings beyond African and Finnish identities, creating a new form of identity.

Another notion of hybridity, which I find to be even more suitable for my research framework, is based on Bhaba’s (2012) conception of “Third Space” and Ang’s (2001) “Critical Hybridity”. These concepts describe hybridity as a process of subversion in which a space of discontinuities is constructed. In this form of hybridity, the two original forms of identity are not to be traced, but the focus is on the third emerging form (Bhabha, 2012, p. 211). Verkuyten (2005, p. 152) sums that “It is from this space of liminality or ‘in-between-ness’ that it is possible to interrupt, to interrogate, to challenge, to unsettle, and to intervene tactically in the dominant discourses and categorical constructions.” Ang’s (2001) notion of critical hybridity is also used to transcend dualism and binary thinking, while emphasizing the togetherness-in-difference rather than the othering notions of e.g. multiculturalism (see Nortio, 2020). In addition, Ang discusses hybridity as a political project of decolonization, which destabilizes cultural power relations, for example, between white and black or the West and the “Others” by questioning these established binaries and boundaries by the

process of transculturation. In terms of this research, Ang's notion of critical hybridity enables me to examine, what the experienced in-between-ness produces. Ang argues that terms such as "biculturality", treat the state of being between cultures as an empty space, in which one gets lost in the cultural translation of not being from here but not being from there either. (Ang, 2001, pp. 16, 34, 35, 198.) Following Ang's rationale, I aim to examine in this study, whether the state of being in-between cultures fills this space with a new form of identity and a new form of constructing it. Incorporating cultural hybridity into this research, provides a possibility to examine self-identification, as well as the interaction between an individual and their community since the framework emphasizes the autonomy of the individual in constructing identity and sense of belonging, while recognizing the space or environment in which it is conducted (Boland, 2020).

However, hybridity is highly theorized, yet under-researched in terms of how hybrid identities are constructed (Cieslik & Verkuyten, 2006). A qualitative study conducted by Karachaliou et al. (2018) in which they examined Greek immigrants' identity constructions in Canada, suggests that instead of constructing their identities in the framework of dualism as Greek-Canadians, the majority of the individuals build hybrid "stranger" identities for themselves. The discovered self-positionings were very complex and the individuals used creative ways to combine Greekness and Canadian-ness while negotiating their attachment and detachment to both countries. Furthermore, the research suggests that the Greek immigrants were not quite comfortable with such hybridity, since they expressed the need to justify and negotiate their identities. (Karachaliou et al., 2018.) Furthermore, Boland (2020) has studied "1,5" and second-generation Muslim migrant youth's hybrid identities and negotiations of belonging in Madrid. The qualitative case study suggests their hybrid identities were constructed by combining one or several aspects of variegated religious or cultural practices, alongside their ethnic identification with Spain or Madrid. The most notable finding in Boland's research was that the youngsters did express attachment and a sense of belonging to the Spanish society, while additionally demanding recognition for their plural, hybrid identities. (Boland, 2020.)

Due to their critical and post-colonial nature, I find it useful to use hybridity theories as one of the frameworks of this research. Furthermore, the perk of these theories is that they strongly rely on notions of diaspora, when referring to the group of interest for this research. "Diaspora" refers to a group's dispersal from the original homeland to which ties of allegiance are maintained (Cohen, 2008, pp. 6-7). The term bears a meaning of people feeling emotional involvement and connection to their ancestral country even in cases where they have not been or lived there. The term diaspora shifts the scope from ethnic relations at the national and local levels to more affective relationships and identities spanning borders. Diasporic identity can better than ethnic identity, provide a sense of connectedness and belonging with others who have left the same country of origin, thus relieving the sense of dislocation that migrants commonly experience. Diaspora as a concept and as an identity also might be used to reject the unfavorable position of "ethnic minority". (Verkuyten, 2018, pp. 176-177.)

Despite the fact that hybrid identity theories are mostly discussed in terms of ethnicity or culture, I find that the theories might be applicable also to other dimensions of identity, such as queerness. Some scholars do argue that hybridity is increasing in all spheres of life and, that the theories cover unlimited sources of identity, such as race, religion, gender, etc. However, there is very little research on how such diverse identities are managed and how the hybridity of such identities manifests (Cieslik & Verkuyten, 2006). Furthermore, I am hoping that along with an intersectional approach, hybrid identity theories enable to examine the possibilities and challenges of identity construction in a manner that does not presume certain identifications or their relations to each other, but instead enables me as a researcher to conduct the analysis, and the participants to express and construct their realities in manner that is not pre-determined. With these goals in mind, I will discuss the intersectional approach in the following section.

2.4 Intersectionality

In terms of this research, I am certain that integrating an intersectional approach will provide me with better tools for understanding the unique experiences and positions that emerge in the intersections of gender, sexuality, cultural identity and other social categories in Finland. In this chapter, I will briefly discuss the intersectional approach's origins and its role in social psychology scholarship. Furthermore, I will argue how I shall apply the approach in this research and why it is necessary to do so.

As the intersectional approach was put forward by critical race theorists and feminists, it has shed light on how different social categories depend on one another for meaning, creating unique experiences of oppression (see Collins, 2002; Crenshaw, 1989; Rosenthal, 2016). In the field of social psychology, intersectionality has been widely addressed by Bowleg (see Bowleg, 2008, 2017), who describes intersectionality as:

> *A critical, theoretical, and analytical framework that highlights how multiple social identities such as race, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status (SES), and disability (to name a few) intersect at the micro-level of individual experience to reveal interlocking systems of privilege and oppression (i.e., racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism) at the macro social-structural level. Intersectionality represents a radical departure from "single-axis" thinking— race or gender primarily or only—toward a "matrix" perspective (Crenshaw, 1989) that renders the notion that social identities or oppressions could be merely added or ranked, nonsensical.* (Collins, 2015; Crenshaw, 1991; as cited in Bowleg, 2017, pp. 508-509.)

According to Bowleg (2017), intersectionality has been widely acquired by social justice activists, gender studies scholars and critical legal studies. However, social psychology scholars have been puzzlingly slow to adopt intersectionality as a critical lens. Bowleg (2017) argues that it is paradoxical especially because social psychology is a predecessor of

research on stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination. Hence, intersectionality as a theoretical framework is essential for social psychologists, since it provides a more nuanced, complex and complete critical understanding of marginalized groups' experiences while spotting privilege and social structure. (Bowleg, 2017, pp. 508-509.) According to Bowleg intersectional framework has much to offer to social psychology scholars and it is needed to improve the scholarship, which currently needs to be developed in multiple ways. Two of Bowleg's critiques are especially relevant in terms of this research.

First, in line with the criticism discussed previously in this research paper, Bowleg (2017) argues that mainstream social psychology tends to view social identity categories, such as ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation as uni-dimensional and independent, whereas the intersectional approach emphasises a perception of them as multidimensional and interlocking, thus they cannot be separated and added. Furthermore, in line with the constructionist scope of this research, the intersectional approach critiques the pre-assumption that social identities would be stable and fixed, and instead emphasises that they are dynamic, thus varying historically, politically and contextually. Therefore, the intersectional lens enables social psychologists to take into account the historical legacies of power and privilege, which as social structures uphold social identification and categorisation processes, thus institutionalising group relations. (Bowleg, 2017, pp. 516- 517.)

The second issue that Bowleg suggests intersectional lens might improve is the fact that in traditional social psychology, White western college students are the norm and that research done within this group is considered generalizable (see e.g. Cauce, 2011). Contrary to mainstream social psychology, the intersectional approach brings the experiences of the marginalised, understudied and oppressed to the spotlight of research, without trying to examine the ways they deviate from the norms of the White western middle class, but rather appreciating the intrinsic value of such knowledge production (Bowleg, 2017, p. 518).

Furthermore, recent social psychological research has focused on examining intersected identities. For example, research conducted in the United States by Settles (2006) discovered

that a black woman identity is often perceived as more important than separate identities of being a woman or being black. Conversely, the logic of marginalisation and oppression cannot be traced back to separate social categories, since the dynamic and multidimensional social identity creates dynamic and multidimensional experiences of oppression, as Bowleg's research on black lesbians suggests (Bowleg et al., 2003). It is safe to assume, that a similar kind of identity construction occurs also in the present research is on women's, nonbinary peoples' and queer peoples' identities and their intersections with BIPOC:ness.

I find it necessary to approach these issues from the intersectional framework, not only using intersectionality as an analytical lens but rather as a guideline for the whole research. I am hoping that using the intersectional approach will draw my own, and other social psychology scholars' attention to structural-level phenomena whilst promoting social justice and equity in terms of this research's marginalized interest groups (Rosenthal, 2016). The intersectional approach enables examining how intersecting social categories challenge and enable belonging to certain communities or groups, which is highly relevant in terms of this research. The dynamics of belonging are not only significant for intergroup relations, but also intragroup relations. When it comes to queer communities, exclusion and inclusion take place both, in relation to the heteronormative society as a whole, but also within queer communities. The intersectional approach endorses examining how the politics of belonging are constructed through the intersections of difference in terms of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class and religion, for example. (Juvonen & Kolehmainen, 2017.)

Moreover, the social categorisations in terms of gender, sexuality and ethnicity, to name a few, do not only create consequences for the "Othered" but also affect the experiences of the privileged and powerful. Thus, the acceptable forms of queerness are constructed at marginalized individuals' expense. According to Haritaworn's (2008) research, white, middle-class and able queers are the most included in the German society, in which the research took place. In other words, queers, who are not otherwise normative faced more rejection than the people, who were not marginalized in multiple ways (Haritaworn et al., 2008, pp. 37-38.) Despite the fact that in this research, the focus is mostly on intragroup

relations within queer communities in Finland, it is good to keep in mind that BIPOC and queer identity together very likely create a uniquely marginalized position in relation to the heteronormative Finnish society, as I elaborated in the introduction chapter. However, to my knowledge queer and BIPOC identity has been scarcely studied in Finland. Nonetheless, Swedish research by Kehl (2020) suggests, that the intersection of these two categories creates marginalisation of BIPOC people also within queer communities. According to Kehl's research, BIPOC Muslims who are also queer, are made intelligible in predominantly white queer spaces by either relating them to white LGBTQ-friendly "Swedishness" or to LGBTQ-phobic racialized "Others" (Kehl, 2020). Along with Bowleg's argument of the need to incorporate intersectionality in social psychology scholarship, the current research and lack of it, demands the application of intersectionality also in this research.

I argue, that by using the frameworks of hybridity I will be able to examine how the experience of in-between-ness is constructed and negotiated in terms of cultural identity, and possibly other axes of identities, such as gender, religion and queerness. Furthermore, by incorporating intersectional approach to the examination, I will be able to detect how the interlocking systems of oppression and privilege, tied to such identity positions, influence the group of interest's abilities of identity construction. Using both intersectionality and hybridity capacitate the examination of both, challenges as well as possibilities of identity construction from the intersections of such identities and from the state of in-between-ness that the individuals possibly experience. As the frameworks are critical by nature, they allow room to examine the subjects' own processes of identity construction in terms of their identities. Hybrid identity theory enables me to examine the identity negotiations from a more critical standpoint than of white Western normativity, while paying attention to how other than BIPOC-related intersections of identity are aligned with the negotiations.

In the following section, I will introduce the terms BIPOC and queer, which I have decided to use as analytical concepts, by which I characterize this research's group of interest in a manner that is in line with the introduced framework.

3 BIPOC and Queer identities as analytical concepts

As elaborated in the previous sections of this research, in this research I treat social identities in a constructionist manner, thus being constructed in social interaction. Therefore, I have tried to pay close attention to how the group of interest is articulated in the research setting. I have decided to use the terms BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of colour) and queer when articulating identity categories in terms of cultural and non-normative sexual and/or gender identity. By using these terms, my aim is to leave as much room for self-categorisation as possible for the interest group of this research. In the following sections, I will first discuss how BIPOC as a term is located in the wider discussion of ethnicity research in social sciences. Second, I will address "Queer" as a theory and identity and address its location in a wider framework of post-colonial and critical theorisation.

3.1 BIPOC (Black, indigenous & people of colour)

In this research, I am using the abbreviation or acronym BIPOC for describing the group of interest in terms of this study. The reason for using the term BIPOC (black, indigenous, people of colour), stems from the complexities of inclusively naming visible ethnic minorities in the Finnish context. A great factor in carefully picking the most suitable term, lies in the fact, that I aim to examine the possibilities and challenges of identity constructions of people who are often defined and positioned by outsiders. Therefore, I find it crucial to discuss the reasons behind this choice of term. In the following section, I will shortly address how alternative conceptualisations are or have been by scholars and argue why I found the term BIPOC to best serve the goals of this research.

When it comes to social psychological research on group relations and ethnicity, terms such as "racialized" and "ethnic minorities" are often used in the Finnish context. The term "racialized" has its conceptual roots in the racist race doctrine. "Races" as social categories have their roots in racist positioning which was and still is highly connected to historical, locational, temporal and situational factors. How and for what purposes racism has created

racial divisions between people, has varied across time and place. Notably, most of the Finnish population has lived in a time where racism based racial doctrine has been the base for constructing ideas about nations and cultures, normalising ideas of the white Finnishness and casting the racialized others as inferiors (Rastas, 2005, pp. 95, 80).

In Anglo-Saxon societies, “race” as a social category has been accepted as a term in academia as well as in everyday vocabulary. The use of the term has been argued to be necessary in order to resist racism and recognise the collective identities of the oppressed, that were created by racial doctrine (Britton, 1999.) However, the Finnish scholarship has acquired the norm of not using the term “race”, along with other Nordic countries, thus aiming to prevent the reproduction of the assumptions behind racial doctrines (e.g. Hervik, 2004, p. 149). Consequently, Finland does not make official statistics based on race or ethnicity (Rastas, 2005, pp. 82-83). Despite, “race” is not used as a social category in the Finnish context, whiteness is a strong norm in the Finnish society. By talking about “white” people, a distinction is often made between Western (European) people and their offspring, and non-white people – everyone else. Therefore, whiteness and non-whiteness have been shaped by racist ways of representation and perceiving differences. Hence, racial differentiation has little to do with the subjects being viewed at, but more to do with the ways of perceiving what is seen. Racism has shaped these processes so greatly, that the “white” Western European functions as a self-evident norm, and in relation to the norm, the non-whites are perceived as deviations and thus, become racialized. (Rastas, 2005, pp. 84 -85.) From social psychological perspective, Ann Phoenix (2021) argues, that notions of race and the process of racialization are socially constructed, and that the ethicized and racialized positions are relational and contextual. Notably, the ones who have least power in the society, also have least power in influencing their position in the racialized social reality (Phoenix, 2021).

Despite, “colour talk” and different ways of referring to race have been perceived as problematic in the Finnish context, recently the terms Black, Brown and POC (musta, ruskea and people of colour) along with the term “whiteness” have become commonly used among visible ethnic minorities in Finland. These terms have been circulating through media, art,

and antiracist action and found their way to the sphere of public discussion. (Rastas & Poelman, 2021.) Additionally, the term "racialized" has established itself in the Finnish discussion recently. The term challenges the essentialist discourses of race and emphasises the social constructionist nature of race and the racialization process. However, the term has been criticized for having the tendency to only refer to certain groups, which obscures the position of whiteness in racialized relations. In other words, it implies that people categorised as white, are not racialized, be it in other ways and giving different positions than for other racialized. (Rastas & Poelman, 2021.)

When conducting research, the definitions and ways of naming race or ethnicities must be aligned with the ways the research participants conceptualise these issues and their own identities (Rastas & Poelman, 2021). Therefore, in this research the term BIPOC is used loosely to characterize the interest group of this research. As the focus of this research lies in how cultural identities are constructed by those who experience a wide range of marginalization due to both, their non-normative ways existing in relation to the white normative Finnish culture, as well as, to heterosexist Finnish society, this study aims to enable as much space for self-definition as possible, in terms of both marginalized identities.

3.2 "Queer" as a theory and identity

In this research, I will use the term "Queer" to address the sexual, gender and possibly other dimensions of social identities. The term queer is used as a theoretical framework, as well as an identity category which best describes the group of interest in this research. In the following section, I will first briefly discuss queer theory in academia and finally discuss how queer identity has been researched and why I have decided to use the term in this study.

Queer theory has its origins in the Anglo-American poststructuralist paradigm, which has examined themes around gender, body, sexual desire and discursive identity categories in a critical manner. the In the 1990s it was emphasised that queer rises to the level of conventional sexual identity categories by highlighting their fluid and constructionist nature

while critiquing the heteronormative demands of sexuality. In academia, discussions about queer often refer to a conception which aims to question and interrogate heteronormativity by crossing boundaries, critiquing binary thinking, and deconstruction. Instead of providing an identity category outside of the norm, it reacts to it by questioning identity categories that are marked by gender or sexuality. (Ilmonen, 2011.) Eventually, queer became a term for crossing the boundaries of the problematic norm of obeying sexuality without an ambition to construct a certain kind of sexual identity (O'Driscoll, 1996, pp. 31-36). Despite queer studies having spread and become more common throughout the academic world, Ilmonen argues that queer needs to retain its ability to interrogate and challenge institutionalization and remain a critical counterpower for normative standardization (Ilmonen, 2011).

Despite its resisting nature, queer studies have been facing intersectional and postcolonial critique which calls for room to examine queerness less in terms of normative white Westerness and more in terms of hybridity (see Bhabha, 1990) in regards to diasporic, positioned and local sexualities (Ilmonen, 2011). As early as the 1980's postcolonial scholars have criticized the notion of queerness and queer theory for being inherently white, including only white males as its subjects (see e.g. Somerville, 2000, p. 5). Henceforth, around the 1990s and 2000s scholars debating postcolonial and queer studies started to address one another's writings, and queer and intersectional frameworks started to approach each other (see e.g. Hawley & Altman, 2001). However, it is notable to consider that non-white lesbian feminists, such as Audre Lorde (1984) demanded the recognition of different identity categories and their effects before intersectionality had commonly recognized academic or theoretical definitions (Ilmonen, 2011; Lorde, 1984). Eventually, Gayatri Gopinath (Gopinath, 2002, p. 150) coined the concept of "queer diaspora", which aims to challenge the notion of heterosexuality and nationality as the original ideals. The realization of how situated in the Anglo-American context queer theory is, brought up the question of local and global closer to the core of recent queer theory (Ilmonen, 2011). In addition, to raising new questions in academia, queer theory has also affected identity categories on the individual level. Since its foundation in the 1960s, the lesbian and gay movement has expanded covering different sexual and gender identities, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer

(LGBTQ) under its umbrella of non-normative forms of gender and sexuality (Ilmonen, 2011.)

Queer as an identity has been researched in social psychology mostly in the Anglo-American context and conceptualized as a collective identity. Queerness as an individual's identity has gained very little attention from social psychology scholars (see e.g. Berg & Kokkonen, 2022; Miller et al., 2016). However, Miller, Taylor & Rupp (2016) have conducted qualitative research on the University of California's queer women students' identities. The research suggests that queer identity is perceived by its holders as an identity which rejects dominant gender and sexual binaries and is perceived as more inclusive of nonbinary people. Additionally, the study proposes that queer identity is both, a personal identity as well as a politicized collective identity (Simon & Klandermans, 2001), which is often linked to activist pursuits (Miller et al., 2016.)

In the Finnish context, queer-identities have been mostly studied in the discipline of gender studies, for instance by Tuula Juvonen (2000). According to Juvonen's (2000) research, individuals who categorised themselves as queer possessed gender identities, which were often outside the binary gender categories. Additionally, the research proposed that women who had (also) other than heterosexual relationships, also categorised themselves as queer, due to their experience of it being a term that would better include their shifting desires (Juvonen, 2020; Sprott & Benoit Hadcock, 2018, p. 223). Notably, the popularity of lesbian as an identity category has been declining for a long time, possibly due to it being perceived as a too stable and limiting social category. As the available categorisations of sexuality and gender have diminished in popularity, the possibilities of refusing to self-categorise have become more popular, and might therefore be tied to queerness. (Lehtonen, 2015, p. 53.) Furthermore, also in the Finnish context, queer identity has been perceived as an identity category which emphasises the political and deconstructive aspect of normative forms of sexuality and gender (Holma et al., 2018, p. 60). All of the aforementioned aspects were also evident in Juvonen's research (Juvonen, 2020).

Further research on queer identity is needed because it is hard to grasp in a theoretical sense, let alone as a lived experience. Jagose (1996) discusses queer as an identity and emphasises that it is more than a synonym for sexual minority identity. "Since queer does not assume for itself any specific materiality or positivity, its resistance to what it differs from is necessarily relational rather than oppositional" (Jagose, 1996, p. 98). Thus, Jagose argues, that by refusing to define what queer is, it can maintain its resistance to what constitutes as normal. Despite queerness tends to include non-normative sexualities, it has been argued that the queer project aims to speak from and to the differences and silences that have been suppressed by the binary notions of homosexuality and heterosexuality. Furthermore, it aims to emphasise how sexualities are complicated by race, gender and ethnicity. Sedgwick (1993) takes this notion even further, arguing that queer cannot be compressed under dimensions of sexuality and gender, instead, the leverage of "queer" should be used to do justice to how ethnicity and postcolonial nationality intersect with those identity-constituting and fracturing-dimensions (Hennessy, 1993, p. 7; Sedgwick, 1993, p. 9).

To examine how the intersections of different axes of social identities enable and challenge identity construction within the Finnish context, I have decided to use the term Queer both, as a theoretical framework as well as an identity category in this research. By using the term, I am hoping to contribute to the scarce social psychological scholarship of queer as an individual identity category, as well as, to maintain a critical approach to identity research. Furthermore, queer as a theoretical framework as well as an identity category coheres with the notions and acknowledgements that the frameworks of intersectionality, hybridity and BIPOC offer for this research. Without limiting the group of interest's self-categorisations to monolithic notions of a lesbian or sexual minority, for example, I am hoping to be able to make room for their self-identification and possibly grasp its unknown implications to identity construction.

4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In the previous chapters, I discussed how queer and BIPOC identity construction have been discussed in social theory. Additionally, I emphasised the lack of research on the topic in the

Finnish context and the need for a more critical and intersectional approach to the topic within social psychology scholarship at large. Furthermore, I briefly addressed how the intersection of these identities has affected the treatment and intelligibility of queer and BIPOC people in Sweden (Kehl, 2020), suggesting that such phenomena likely occurs also in the Finnish context posing challenges to queer and BIPOC peoples' identity constructions. In the light of the complexities of theocratizing these phenomena, I am curious to examine how such complexities are constructed by queer and BIPOC people in discussions of their lived realities. By drawing from hybrid identity theory, intersectional approach and queer theory, I aim to critically examine queer and BIPOC peoples' identity constructions in terms of the challenges and possibilities they face in the process. Moreover, I am hoping to shed light on the structural-level phenomena which are intertwined with those experiences and the ways they are constructed.

Considering the previous discussions, the research questions of this study are:

1. What kind of challenges and possibilities of cultural identity construction do queer and BIPOC people face in the Finnish context?
    a. How were the intersections of their identities negotiated?
    b. How did hybridity figure in their identity negotiations?

5 DATA AND METHOD

5.1 Data

This study's research data was gathered by conducting three distinctive focus group interviews. The interviewees were recruited through my personal networks on social media, by sharing a post from a personal account. The post stated that people who identify as queer and BIPOC (black, indigenous, or people of colour) are wanted for a research interview. Additionally, the post stated that the research has a particular focus on women's and nonbinary people's experiences. The post was shared on Instagram both in Finnish and in English, and it was re-shared by 9 individual users, as well as, by Qaareva Ry's account, which is an NGO for Queer students. After having been contacted by individuals who showed

interest in participating, the snowball sampling method (Gobo, 2004, p. 419) was used, by asking the already interested people to invite people from their communities to join in case they were suitable for the research.

Altogether, the interview was conducted with eleven participants, which formed three groups of three to four people. The interviews were semi-structured and lasted for approximately 2 hours each. All the participants identified as black, indigenous or people of colour and were currently residing in Finland. Two of the participants implicitly expressed coming from indigenous backgrounds, being of Latin American descent and being a part of a visible ethnic minority in the Finnish context. Otherwise, the backgrounds of the participants varied greatly, since they had roots or strong ethnic and cultural ties to India, Korea, Latin America, and to multiple countries in Africa. Some participants were “mixed”, having either one Finnish parent, or parents from different ethnic backgrounds. The participants’ ages varied from 21 to 40, and 10 of them identified as queer. Two of the participants used the pronouns they/them and the rest used she/her.

5.2 Method

In this research, two interviews were conducted online due to the covid-19-pandemic, and one was conducted face-to-face. In order to keep the interview agenda in sight, a predeveloped interview guide which consisted of predetermined themes and related questions was used (appendix 2). A semi-structured interview with open-ended questions was chosen as a data-gathering method since it enabled an interview setting, in which the agenda remains clear, yet the interviewees had space to redefine the topics and to generate their own insights of the themes at hand (Willig, 2008, pp. 24-25) For the purposes of this research’s interests and due to the theoretical standing points of this research, it was crucial to gather the data in forms of not only focus group interviews but also in the framework of insider research. Therefore, these methods and the choices behind them in will be further discussed in the following sections.

5.2.1 Group interviews

The chosen method for data-gathering was group interviews, given that it is considered a method, which emphasizes the meaning of interaction between the participants instead of highlighting the researcher's role as a guide of the discussion (Pietilä, 2017, p. 111). Therefore, in focus group interviews, the interviewer is often referred to as the facilitator or the moderator of the discussions, since the aim is not only to get answers to questions but also to examine what kind of ideas are presented within the group, how the interaction forms in the group and most importantly, what kind of shared notions and descriptions of the discussed themes emerge in the group (Pietilä, 2017, pp. 112-113) Facilitator was also the role I as a researcher aimed to take in this study.

Furthermore, in comparison to other methods of data gathering, focus group interviews are especially useful in situations where the researcher aims to capture a multitude of voices. Therefore it fit for this research's purposes since it provides a possibility to examine the different interpretations, shifts in the meaning-making processes and argumentation (Pietilä, 2017, p. 113). Additionally, according to Wilkinson (1998), the basic characteristic of a focus group interview is, that the participants often try to form a common and shared knowledge of issues that are based on their individual experiences and notions (Wilkinson et al., 2007, p. 338). This interaction also reflects the participants' norms and values (Pietilä, 2017, p. 113). As many elements of this research's interests are complex constructions by nature, and therefore can be discussed, perceived and experienced in a multitude of ways, the process of common knowledge production was not only a point of interest but in this setting, also the best possible way of discussing and examining issues such as cultural identity, belonging, queerness or BIPOC:ness. In case I as a researcher had taken a stand on how these issues are perceived in this research, by any way defining them, it could have possibly excluded or diminished some participants' experiences or even identities.

Since the recruitment process of this study relied strongly on the participants' self-definitions, they came from various backgrounds and positions, thus they brought their own unique identities and notions to the discussion, while simultaneously having many shared experiences. However, as the author did not have any background information about the participants beforehand, except that they had seen the call for certain types of participants and related to the description, it was extremely useful to have an interview setting where the researcher was not the only one asking the questions or framing the setting, but instead, the norms in terms of what is comfortable to share and from which perspective, was strongly formed by the group as a whole. Therefore, the participants were able to determine how and to which extent they wanted to define themselves through ethnicity or queerness, without being forced to categorize their identities through these characteristics in a manner that they often expressed having to do in their everyday lives.

Furthermore, a focus group interview was chosen as the method, because it is considered to provide a less artificial interview setting than one-on-one interviews, thus being more likely to provide rich data with higher ecological validity (Willig, 2008, p. 31). In this research, one of the three focus groups was a pre-existing group, which consisted of a group of friends. In another group, there were two pre-existing friends, and the rest of the group was not acquainted with one another beforehand. The third group also consisted of unacquainted individuals. Ideally, the focus group interview participants would interact with each other in a similar manner as with peers outside the interview, and in the pre-existing group interview, the situation was very unformal and natural from the beginning (Willig, 2008, p. 31). Due to the length of the interviews, the other interviews became also rather friendly and laid back in their nature and rapport between the participants and me was formed quickly, due to an atmosphere, that many of the participants described as safe and empowering. Towards the end, in the interviews in which the participants were not acquainted before, all expressed willingness to stay in touch, due to the need and desire to further share their experiences with others in similar positions.

5.2.2 Insider research

In addition to conducting this research by gathering the data through focus group interviews, it turned out that my own position as a researcher was also crucial in the data gathering process. This research setting was mostly based on insider interviews, due to my own identity position. The practice of doing insider research is especially useful in cases, where the participants belong to marginalized groups which face prejudice, othering or racism, which unfortunately was the case also in this study (Hayfield & Huxley, 2015).

In many cases, research participants find it easier and more comfortable to discuss topics related to their experiences of marginalization, with researchers who might have similar experiences and come from similar positions. Additionally, conducting insider research, particularly in a constructionist interview setting, likely enables the interviewees to share and construct notions, that might remain unmentioned due to the interviewees' lack of trust and expectations for mutual understanding of the discussed themes (Bridges, 2001; Perry et al., 2004). In this research, such experiences could be the perceived marginalization both in the Finnish society, and their other cultural communities, for example. Moreover, coming from similar positions as the subjects of this research has been a fundamental point in formulating the research in the first place and made it easier for me to recruit "people alike" through my pre-established networks among BIPOC and queer people, which is a commonly acknowledged advantage of insider position (Hayfield & Huxley, 2015; LaSala, 2003).

Notably, this research includes women's and non-binary peoples' experiences, as well as some BIPOC peoples' who have migrated to Finland. My own position and identity is queer/lesbian person of color, but I am also a cis-woman and mixed in terms of having one parent who has migrated from Nigeria and one white native Finnish parent. I have been born and raised in Finland and speak Finnish as my mother tongue. Thus, my position does not by any means provide insider knowledge of the experiences of non-binary people or people, who have migrated to Finland and/or do not speak Finnish. My position as a cis-woman or cis-gender describes a person whose gender identity corresponds to their sex assigned at birth, and often to those whose gender identity and expression fit cultural expectations,

whereas non-binary describes a person, whose gender identity and expression do not fit the gender binary of men and women (Holma et al., 2018, pp. 9, 11).

Despite me as a researcher having somewhat similar positions with many of the participants in this research, it is important to recognize the different positions as well, since especially in qualitative research the researcher is considered a central figure influencing the gathering and interpretation of the data. In addition, the researcher's behavior affects the behavior of the participants, and the meanings are always negotiated within a certain social setting and context. Furthermore, the rapport and the relationship between the participants and the researcher a co-constituted. (Finlay, 2002.) Therefore, when it comes to the intersections of gender, age, class, health and status in terms of "Finnishness" the full role of an insider is impossible to achieve within this research setting, which led to my dual role as an insider and outsider (Fish, 2008; Tang, 2007). Furthermore, the power balance cannot ever be fully achieved in a research setting, since the position of being the researcher and the researched will always remain (Hayfield & Huxley, 2015).

6 ANALYSIS

This research aimed to examine what kinds of possibilities and challenges queer and BIPOC people encounter in their hybrid identity construction processes, by using Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) as a method. Three themes were developed from the data; (1) Hybrid identity as a necessity, (2) Queerness is white, and (3) Hybrid identity is inherently queer. In this section, RTA as a method as well as the coding process will be discussed first, whilst shortly introducing the methodological lenses, which guided the analytical process. Second, the three developed themes will be introduced and discussed.

6.1 Reflexive thematic analysis

In this research, the chosen method of analysis is Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA), which highlights the researcher's active role in producing knowledge. RTA is a form of Thematic Analysis, which can be traced back to Joffe's work in 2012, but which has been discussed and clarified by Braun and Clarke (2006) more recently (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Joffe, 2012).

Due to their contributions, TA has gained more interest and it has been better understood by scholars. (Byrne, 2021.) In RTA reflexivity is carried along throughout the research process, all the way from designing the study, to the interpretation of the data, and finally to reflecting on the researcher's analytical skills and resources. Given that RTA is a qualitative method which strongly relies on the constructionist ontology, researchers working with RTA are in fact discouraged from attempting to conduct consensus-based "accurate" or "reliable" coding, but instead, they are required to engage with their data and analysis reflexively and thoughtfully. Contrary to positivist epistemological approaches, researchers conducting RTA are encouraged to embrace subjectivity, reflexivity and creativity, which Braun & Clarke perceive as assets to conducting research, instead of threats. (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2019; Byrne, 2021.)

This study's analysis was conducted by following Braun & Clarke's (2006) guidelines. They suggest a six-phase procedure for conducting the analysis. In the first phase, the researcher is to familiarize themselves with the data. This can be done during the transcription process and by reading and re-reading the data while noting down initial ideas. In the second phase, initial codes are created by systematically going through the entire data set and collating interesting and relevant parts of it into each code. The third phase includes searching for themes, which is done by collating the generated codes into potential themes, and by gathering all the data that is relevant to each theme. After the third phase, the themes are to be reviewed by making sure that the themes work in relation to the coded extracts and the entire data set. The fifth phase includes defining and naming the themes by reviewing and analyzing the overall story the analysis tells with the chosen themes and generating clear definitions and names for each generated theme. After these five phases, the report production follows, including the final analysis and selection of vivid extract examples which relate back to the research question and enhance the compelling-ness of the analysis. (Braun & Clarke, 2006.)

The coding and theme development process of this research was conducted in a flexible manner, which evolved throughout the analytical process and further familiarization with the

data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Byrne, 2021). After the first phase of careful transcription and familiarization with the data, initial codes were developed based on the preliminary research questions. ATLAS.ti 22 software was used to manage the data. After the initial coding, the generated codes were re-valued, and the research questions were revisited. After revaluing the relevance of some research questions and their relation to the data, a new, more focused set of research questions were created and the codes were managed accordingly, by discarding the irrelevant codes and merging overlapping codes. Eventually, I generated relevant themes, via thematic mapping and later revisited them in order to form a coherent set of themes, which appeared relevant in relation to the whole data set, as well as to the research questions. After the fourth phase of theme generation, I named and thoroughly defined the themes and ensured that they were not overlapping. Finally, I proceeded to produce the report and pursued to ponder positionality in the analysis.

The coding and theme development processes were based on constructionist assumptions, resulting in coding which was based on the meaningfulness of the expressions rather than their recurrence. The approach to the data was critical and a mixture of latent and semantic coding. A critical approach results in an analysis, which rejects the assumption that the language use of the participants would sheerly reflect their experiences. By using the approach, I aimed to examine and interrogate the patterns of constructing meanings and identities during the interviews. A critical approach to the analysis enables me to examine how the wider social context may cultivate certain kinds of meaning-making systems. (Terry et al., 2017, pp. 226-228.) A mixture of latent and semantic coding in this research led to a coding process which was partly based on interpretations of meanings that lie underneath what the participants explicitly expressed during the interviews. On the other hand, focusing also on semantic meanings, in other words, the surface meanings of the data without further interpreting what is explicitly said by the participants, was in some situations needed in order to preserve the participants' agency in the data generation process. For the same reason, the chosen approach to analysis in this research, was abductive, thus loosely guided by theoretical assumptions, while being strongly grounded by the data. (Terry et al., 2017, pp. 225 - 226.)

In the next sections, I will discuss the results and present data excerpts to support the analysis. Pseudonyms have been used in the excerpts to replace the names of the participants, as well as the cities they refer to in order to protect the participants' anonymity. Any details that might make the participants recognizable have been eliminated or replaced. However, the participants' ages, pronouns and information about whether they identified as queer have been provided, to contextualize the excerpts. The pronouns she/her are often used by individuals who identify as women and they/them by individuals who identify as non-binary. Since thematic mapping was a part of the RTA as an analytical method, the discussion of each theme begins with a figure of the visualized thematic maps I generated from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Byrne, 2021).

I will discuss the analysis of the data in first person, due to the notion that the common use of third person in result and analysis reporting effectively highlights the absence of reflexivity. Hence, it contributes to writing out the presence of the researcher in the research setting, as well as from generating the results of the study (Lazard & McAvoy, 2020, p. 6). Additionally, due to the epistemological standing points of this research, by writing the results in first-person narrative I aim to emphasize the fact that the meaning-making processes were collectively constructed during the interviews, and my position as a researcher has not only affected the process, but also highly influenced interpretation of the data and the research setting as a whole. In the next sections, I will introduce and discuss the three themes I generated from the data: (1) Hybrid identity as a necessity, (2) Queerness is white, and (3) Hybrid identity is inherently queer. As the research questions are all intertwined, the analysis of each theme does not provide clear-cut answers to all of them. However, the themes do elaborate on different aspects of how the hybridity of the participants' queer and BIPOC identity constructions manifested, and how they were enabled or challenged by the surrounding communities.

6.2 Theme 1: Hybrid identity as a necessity

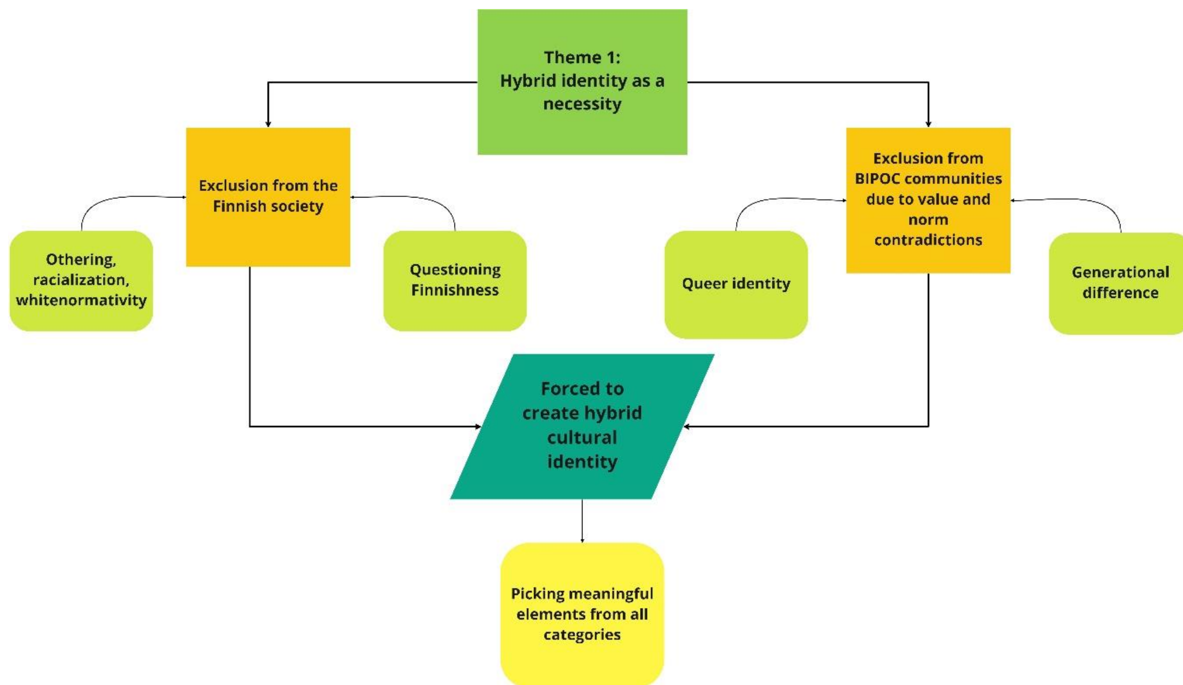


Figure 1. The thematic map of the theme: Hybrid identity as a necessity.

The first theme: Hybrid identity as a necessity, was generated from the data, since for many participants, cultural identity construction processes were described as challenging, due to their experiences of being excluded from both, BIPOC communities through family & cultural ties and the Finnish society in a general sense. A commonality among participants who have been born in Finland and those who have migrated to Finland was their shared experiences of having been excluded through othering and racialization. Such notions were brought up in discussions about their relationship to Finland and Finnish culture.

Excerpt 1 demonstrates how one participant describes her difficulties in belonging to communities or friend groups of white Finns.

Excerpt 1.

> *"Well for me it has been very difficult to form any kinds of like friendships with really native-Finns, who don't have any connection to other countries. So, I can't come up with any native-Finn friends that I've had, who aren't either married to a foreigner*

or who haven't lived abroad for years [A city name removed] used to be very inbred, so you couldn't make much friends there, so that was pretty tiresome."

(Ailin, 40, she/her, queer).

Like many participants, Ailin traces her experience of exclusion from white Finn's communities back to her past, when she was living in a smaller city which she describes as "inbred". Multiple similar descriptions of having been the only, or one of the few BIPOC people in their cities or towns, occurred in the data. Such experiences enhanced the disappointment of being excluded from the white Finn's communities and created an identity contradiction for the participants, who sometimes strongly identified as Finnish. Alin and many other participants described that despite their efforts to form friendships with white Finns, they have not been able to do so, leading to them ultimately growing tired of trying. Furthermore, Ailin describes only having relationships with white Finns who have strong ties to other countries through partners or having lived abroad. The experience of exclusion recurred in other accounts when discussing participants' relationship to Finnish identity, as Excerpt 2 demonstrates.

Excerpt 2.

"Well like sometimes I do feel like Finnish culture is my culture like it's been really important for me. And my mom is from South Ostrobothnia and I always stayed there for the holidays with my grandmother so the country life has always been very important for me [shot pause] but like Joanna just said, I also think that sometimes even if you speak native Finnish, especially in customer service jobs, there you must constantly prove your like [shot pause] Finnishess. Like people come and question where I'm from and I deliberately reply "The central hospital of Jyväskylä" and then when they are like "yeah but where are you really from" I tell them to "go to Nurmo and walk 20 kilometres of Isokoski street that's where you can find where I'm from.'' Like I just want to punch them with these jokes for questioning my Finnishness."

(Cecilia, 30, she/her)

In excerpt 2 Cecilia describes experiencing a cultural identity contradiction. She states that sometimes she experiences Finnish culture as her own, by providing an example that implies a strong and rather classic relationship to the Finnish culture, reminiscing about spending her childhood holidays in the countryside with her grandmother. Despite she describes experiencing ownership over Finnish culture only *sometimes,* she also expresses a fierce need to defend her right to self-determination in terms of identifying as Finnish. Cecilia's description of having to defend her cultural identity and right to identify as Finnish was similar to many other descriptions of identity contradiction stemming from othering done by outsiders. In addition, participants depicted experiences of being in white or white Finn dominated environments, in which they felt like the public did not see them as for who they are, but rather having been treated and watched through an othering gaze. Excerpts 1 and 2 demonstrate the lived experiences of racialisation and othering. Cecilia's reaction to the mundane question "where are you really from" demonstrates the frustration of experiencing what visible minorities constantly face in white Western countries (Phoenix, 2021). The question denies their identity and sense of belonging to the country and demands a defensive response which underlines that they possess cultural knowledge and take part in local practices. (Cheryan & Monin, 2005).

White Finn's notions of Finnishness are so tightly connected to an idea of white Westenerness and other normative demands that are beyond reach for the participants because of the colour of their skin or other visible features contradicting the normative ways of portraying Finnishness and Westerness (Keskinen, Näre, & Tuori, 2015). Racialized assumptions based on, for example, skin colour or the (imagined) country of origin lead to being positioned as the Other, even in a situation, which Cecilia describes in excerpt 2. Having been born and raised in Finland, whilst speaking the language natively does not guarantee sufficient affirmation of her Finnishness to outsiders, forcing her to negotiate and defend her own identity (Phoenix, 2021). In addition, Cecilia's description of her experience (in excerpt 2.) is in line with Hall's (1999) notions of the postmodern subject, which he describes as having shifting and changing identity or identities, which might be conflicting and are highly affected by how the surrounding representational system that addresses them

(Hall et al., 1999, pp. 22 – 23). Similar experiences were discovered in Boland's (2020) research which was discussed in the theoretical framework section of this paper (Boland, 2020).

Furthermore, when discussing whether Finnish culture is their culture, a participant described how they experience Finnish culture on a societal level.

Excerpt 3.

> *"I find like Finnish culture to be like this very small village mindset. It's very strange, even though, like even in Helsinki, it's a very small, small village mindset and I'm uh also being critical and ridiculing it. And I'm also like recognizing something and the ridicule comes from, like, you know [short pause] it doesn't operate on like the positive aspects of being a microsphere, like all the benefits one may get from being a small community, which is like everyone is being seen and everyone is heard, the minorities are included in decision making and so on. It doesn't have that, but it actively works on how to keep [short pause]. I'm just using a very weird metaphor here: like all the heat to oneself from the fireplace like so, it's all the time this strange need of keeping light to oneself…"*
>
> (Kranti, 35, queer, they/them)

Excerpt 3 demonstrates a larger-scale experience of Finnish society. In their statement, Kranti describes their disappointment in the Finnish culture, which despite its possibilities, functions by systematically excluding BIPOC people from decision making and the rights and resources that are available for white Finns. Differing from the previous excerpts, which describe experiences of exclusion on individual and communal levels, excerpt three represents societal level phenomena, which were highly evident in the data. The structural exclusion was described as taking the form of not having similar access e.g., to education, jobs, art grants, information and spaces that feel safe. The lived experience of being racialized does not only reflect personal possibilities within the Finnish society, but also the fact that racialization forms economic hierarchies and that the foundations for social order are both,

economic and racial structures (Fanon, 1986, pp. 30-31). Furthermore, attachment to Finnish identity and society becomes challenged through multiple levels of exclusion which do not only take social forms but also political and material, as Kranti describes in excerpt 3. When discussing their relationship to Finnish culture, excerpt 4 demonstrates how cultural identity was negotiated during the interviews even between the two interviewees, Rebecca and Sarah, who are siblings.

Excerpt 4.

> *"Sarah: We came from the outside (of Finland/Finnish culture) and so I feel like our relationship to Finnish culture is about assimilation and coping. I don't think it is necessarily like [short pause] but I think it's not like. There's not really any part in me that feels like I would want or need to identify as Finnish.*
> *Rebecca: What do you say when people ask you where you're from?*
> *Sarah: I say Finnish every now and then, but I think that every time I say that I don't believe it myself. (Laughter) I think I would just say [parent's countries of origin]."*
> (Rebecca, 29, she/her, queer & Sarah, 27, she/her, queer)

In excerpt 4, by stating that she does not need to identify as Finnish, Sarah rejects the culture and identity, which she also states as being an outsider to. Additionally, she describes her relationship with Finnish culture as being based on assimilation and coping. However, she later describes claiming a Finnish identity occasionally when asked, but then rejects it again by stating that she does not believe in that identity position herself. Sarah and Rebecca's dialogue reflects the way they constantly navigate through their own needs and desires in terms of constructing their cultural identities but are also forced to reflect and adapt to how they are being perceived by others and which positions are available for their use. According to Ang (2001), such hybrid or diasporic identities are not necessarily oppressive, since often individuals who belong to ethnic minorities feel a diasporic pride in belonging to a "homeland" which is elsewhere. However, Ang argues that this identification to "where are you from" is also a sign of surrender in terms of marginalisation in the place "where you're at" (Ang, 2001, p. 34). Sarah's statement in excerpt 4 demonstrates this contradicting

dynamic also due to her description of her relationship with Finnish culture, which is based on “assimilation and coping”. A similar discovery of hybrid identity construction by detachment to the residing country’s culture was evident in Karachaliou et al.’s (2018) research on Greek immigrants in Canada. As discussed previously, in their qualitative research, the Greek immigrants build rather complex and hybrid “stranger” identities, which balanced between attachment and detachment to both, Greek and Canadian cultures. However, the participants of that research too, expressed discomfort with those identities, since they were forced to justify and convince outsiders of their unique identities. (Karachaliou et al., 2018.)

Excerpts 1-4 demonstrate how BIPOC:ness has created identity contradictions and difficulties in terms of including Finnishness in their identities on one hand and feeling included in the Finnish society on the other. Such identity contradictions are caused by othering and racialization on many levels, from interpersonal othering to structural levels of oppression. As discussed in the theoretical background section of this research paper, the notion of racialization is closely related to the notion of otherness, since the ways of defining national identities and national belongingness exclude many groups based on racialization (Keskinen et al., 2015; Phoenix, 2021). The data demonstrates the lived realities of how notions of Finnishness are highly connected to an idea of white Westerness and other normative demands that are beyond reach for some because of the colour of their skin, or other features. Racialized assumptions based on, for example, skin colour or the (imagined) country of origin lead to the participants constantly being positioned as the “Other”. (Keskinen, Näre, & Tuori, 2015.)

A second major dimension in the theme: Hybrid identity as a necessity, is that in addition to feeling excluded from the Finnish society, queer and BIPOC people face the pressure to create hybrid cultural identities because of exclusion from BIPOC communities as well. When discussing BIPOC dominated environments and communities in the interviews, a great deal of collective negotiating around these concepts occurred. In many cases, BIPOC communities in Finland were understood to have been formed through family ties and as

communities the participants' parents had created after migrating to Finland. For some, BIPOC communities were understood through cultural and ethnic ties, referring to associations or other groups revolving around certain nationalities, or local religious communities that consist of members who have migrated from certain countries. For many of the participants' parents', the religious communities in Finland were the communities they turned to regardless of having a religious background since they were described to resemble the communities back in their origin countries.

Excerpts 5 and 6 demonstrate how notions of BIPOC communities were constructed in the interviews and how the participants experienced their queer identities in relation to the BIPOC communities that were available to them through family ties.

Excerpt 5.

> *"At our house, my mom and dad were atheists[--]here they found the local religion and for our family that was the community here and through that we had a BIPOC community, but during my puberty, that world started to make me really anxious. Like Joanna said, they have such strict norms and so forth and then that didn't really fit my set of values anymore and then I was left longing for a community here in Finland. So I've always been balancing like [short pause] I haven't had the feeling of belonging anywhere until now living in Helsinki"*
>
> (Ailin, 40, she/her, queer).

Excerpt 6.

> *"I started to really think what my sexual identity was and at that point the latest, I realized that the things my childhood community had been feeding me since I was a kid is not quite what I want. And then the latest it kind of hmmm [short pause] led to me having to kind of drop out of the community. [--] Later I considered whether I should try to join the catholic community again but after coming into terms with my sexuality I realized that I would have to hide so much of who I am, that it just did not feel reasonable or pleasant."*

(Joanna, 25, she/her, queer)

In excerpts 5 and 6 Ailin and Joanna both describe their relationships with the BIPOC communities that are available to them through family ties. In both of their cases, their parents had migrated and found a community from religious communities in Finland. Joanna and Ailin describe having belonged to a BIPOC community but eventually having grown out of it around their teenage years, because of contradicting norms and values between themselves and the communities they used to belong to. Joanna's statement: *"after coming to terms with my sexuality I realized I would have to hide so much of who I am"* illustrates how the norm and value contradictions are strongly tied to exploring her queer identity, which she and Ailin both found incompatible with the positions they were offered in their former communities.

Such contradictions with the available BIPOC communities, which were strongly based on the older generations' norms and values, might be tied to the strategies the migrant parents use to construct their own cultural identities. According to Chikwira's (2021) research on Zimbabwean women who have migrated to the UK, some participants viewed non-conformity and rejection of ascribed Zimbabwean gender roles as a loss of cultural identity (Chikwira, 2021). Preserving cultural identities in an essentializing manner in terms of norms and values might be used as a strategy to protect oneself from racism, discrimination and exclusion (Salih, 2013). Furthermore, somewhat related research by Rosario et al. (2004) indicates, that in the U.S. context Black and Latino youths disclosed their sexual minority identities to fewer people than their White peers. Despite the ethnic minorities "came out" to fewer people, the results indicated no other ethnic differences in identity integration in terms of sexual minority identity. They were as certain about their identities as their white peers. (Rosario et al., 2004.) In the present research, it seems that despite the experienced norm and value contradictions with their BIPOC communities, the participants did have a strong urge to explore their queer identities and find a safer community to do that in. Excerpt 7 demonstrates similar notions on excluding themselves from the local and global Indian community as Ailin and Joanna do in excerpts 5 and 6.

Excerpt 7

> *"Oh my God, I can never be friends with like others. [short pause] I cannot be in a community with other Indian folks. I can be friends because one on one the dynamics are very different. But like soon as we are a group, we tend to reproduce certain patterns and Indian. Uh, education, like a scholar and social both educations force you into certain kind of decorums, you know, like you need to have a certain class, you need to say certain things. Yeah, don't be loud. You cannot be too queer, you cannot like [short pause] There are so many decorums that it starts to feel very suffocating. And then? It's a bit like my reason to like choose to live in Finland and not go to India is because of trying to escape all these patterns."*
>
> (Kranti, 35, queer, they/them)

As expert 7 demonstrates, for Kranti, migrating to Finland was appealing due to an environment in which they could express their identity more freely, without being suppressed by certain set of norms which they associate with both, Indian communities in their origin country as well as to Indian communities in Finland. Kranti describes how they feel suffocated, as the norms and values are reproduced in Indian communities despite relocating to Finland.

Due to being excluded from their former or available BIPOC communities, the participants described having to generate their own, curated relationships with the communities, as well as their own cultural identities. As they had sparse identity construction resources in terms of their BIPOC cultures, they often described being in a process of creating their own versions of cultural identities, which they imagined being hybrid constructions, in which their relationship to Finnish culture, their other ethnic cultures and their queerness were all fused together, creating a new way of being. However, many participants described the process as being multiphase and lonely, due to a lack of representation and community. Ghabrial's (2017) research on sexual and ethnic minorities in Canada provides similar results as this research. In both cases, queer BIPOC people sometimes feel forced to leave their ethnic

communities due to feeling disconnected from them, because their queer identities are perceived as incompatible with their ethnic communities (Ghabrial, 2017).

Excerpts 8 and 9 demonstrate the ways the participants described their relationships to the available BIPOC communities as well as to their own cultural identities.

Excerpt 8.

> *"Yeah, my identity clearly revolves around Finnishness, but then again, all kinds of things have been constructed around that Finnishness, so it has like a link to Congolese-ness and [short pause] somehow understanding that the core of my identity is Finnishness and maybe then my sexuality and the whole complex and everything else is around it. And clearly, during my years at the University, I have tried to kind of turn it around in a way that my Congolese-ness would kind of be at the core, but I haven't succeeded that well."*
>
> (Joanna, 25, she/her, queer)

Excerpt 9.

> *"Even though my life is in Finland, I think it comes and goes like in waves, and in adulthood, it's more like getting to pick up the cherries on the top, like those things that I like about this community and what I find meaningful and like within my own limits, like that nice communal life and within that, I have the smaller group that I feel safe around because through my parents there's so much like [short pause] that conservative thinking and stuff like that"*
>
> (Alice, 30, she/ her)

In excerpt 8 Joanna illustrates her struggle to actively compartmentalize and merge the three identity categories and later in life, trying to actively bring her Congolese-ness to the core of her identity, and not succeeding in it.

Moreover, in excerpt 9 Alice describes a process which occurred commonly in the interviews. Her way of creating her cultural identity was "picking the cherries on top" of the available cultural resources and communities, creating an environment that feels safe for her. The expression "picking the cherries on top", was common in other participants' descriptions as well, describing the process of taking enough distance to the experiences of being excluded and eventually approaching the cultural spheres in a more controlled and self-defined manner. Thus, enabling them to include the meaningful parts of each cultural sphere in their own cultural identities. Similar discoveries were made by Boland, whose research on Muslim second-generation immigrant youth in Madrid suggested that a major part of the youngsters' hybrid identities were constructed by combining meaningful elements of the available cultural spheres in their lives, while simultaneously longing for recognition for their hybrid identities from the surrounding communities. (Boland, 2020.)

Furthermore, expressions of feeling and not feeling "safe" commonly occurred in the discussions of feeling excluded from BIPOC and white Finn's communities, thus implicating, that environments which did not allow the participants to freely explore all parts of their identities and self-determination were perceived as unsafe. During the interviews, utopian BIPOC communities were discussed. The following excerpt demonstrated how the participants longed for a sense of belonging in their senses of in-between-ness.

Excerpt 10

> *"Maybe that kind of people, like I was saying. [short pause] That would be in the same situation as us living here in Finland. We all have experiences of not always being understood, but then again our own communities don't understand us either so to be normal somewhere so to speak. That would be so fulfilling for me at least."*
>
> (Ailin, 40, she/her, queer).

Ailin's statement in excerpt 10 demonstrates the commonly occurring theme of wanting to be around people who understand the unique position of being in the middle of cultures and to be "normal" somewhere. Despite such statements being very common in the interviews,

they were not always directly linked to the difficulties the participants' queer identities brought to belonging to different communities. However, they were strongly linked to general value and norm contradictions. A desire to be a part of a community that would accept them as they were, was constantly underlined in terms of all available communities, implicating that for many, the "void" as one participant put it, might be filled with a safe community to explore their identities as a whole in.

To conclude, for many participants in this study, it was hard for them to identify and find a place in their BIPOC communities, that were available for them through cultural or family ties due to their queer identities. The fact that the available communities were often dominated by an older generation, more reflecting the age of the participants' parents resulted in the participants having acquired different values and norms than their parents. In many cases, the participants also had a very different experience of being racialized in the Finnish society, compared to the folks in BIPOC communities, due to the age difference, or their relationship to the Finnish society and its perceived values and norms. The different experiences also stemmed from the fact that the participants were not migrants like their parents, or that they had migrated for different reasons than the older generation. The great differences in the position of migrants and their children have been discovered in multiple Finnish studies (see e.g. Alitolppa-Niitamo & Väestöliitto, 2004; Peltola, 2017, p. 150; Niemelä, 2003). For some participants, value and norm contradictions within their communities through family ties were a reason to migrate to Finland in the first place, as they pursued to find an environment which would accept their identity as a whole.

Moreover, the identity contradiction was enhanced by the participants' queer identities and the participants did not perceive the BIPOC communities as safe spaces, where they could be themselves or express and explore their identities freely. Therefore, they often described having to do their identity work separately from those communities. The experiences of exclusion led them to seek BIPOC communities from other places and for many participants, those communities were yet to be found. They expressed a desire to find queer-friendly BIPOC spaces, where they could explore both sides of their identity – BIPOC:ness and

queerness, without being othered or assigned to certain identity categorizations by outsiders. To conclude, the participants were forced to individually create hybrid identities, which they tried to do by exploring their heritage on their own while picking appealing sides from both, the Finnish culture and other cultures they had ties to. For many, the appealing bits of Finnish culture were the norms and values, that freed them to explore and identify with queerness.

6.3 Theme 2: Queerness is white

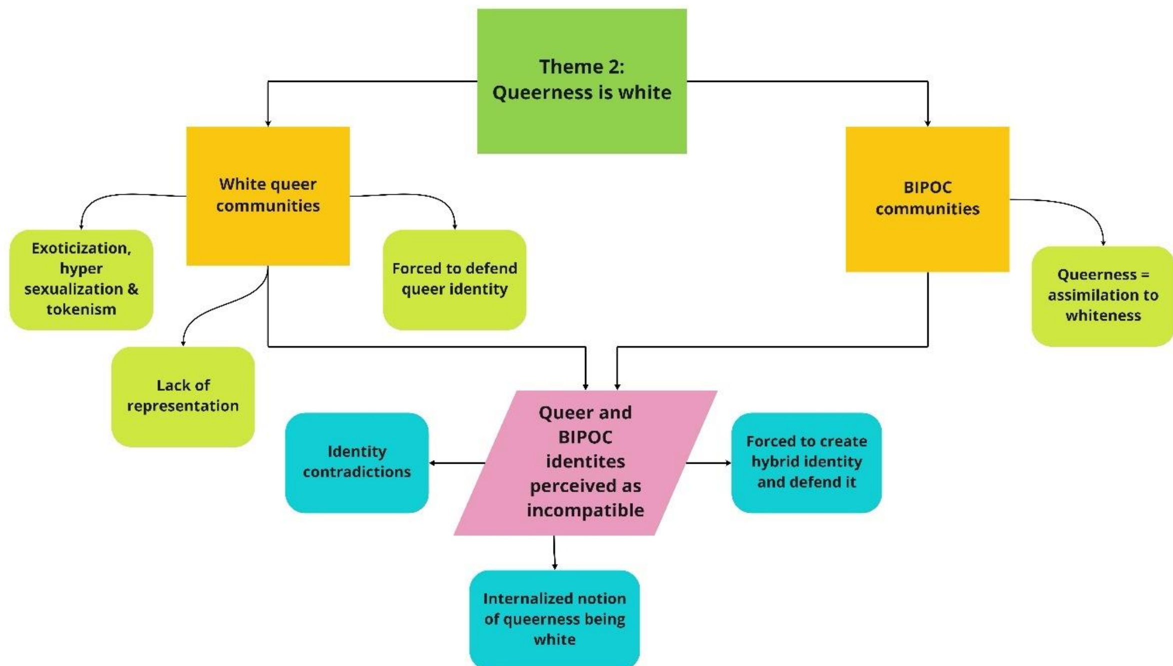


Figure 2. The thematic map of the theme: Queerness is white

The second theme generated from the data was: Queerness is white. One of the most common issues in the data was the experience of queerness being "exhaustingly" white. As elaborated in the previous chapter, queer and BIPOC people in Finland had challenges in fitting into both – BIPOC communities, as well as the Finnish society as a whole. In addition, it was emphasized that the queer communities in Finland were not a self-evident place to turn to either, in their search for safe communities and spaces. The rejection of queer communities was explained through their whiteness, which took the form of not providing representation

nor understanding in terms of BIPOC identities. Another key point in the discussions about this theme was the notion of white queer spaces being prejudiced and unsafe spaces, in which the BIPOC people were forced to constantly negotiate, prove and defend their identities. Thus, white queer spaces did not provide a community in which they could explore all sides of their identity either.

The following excerpts 1-3 demonstrate the participant's experiences of being exoticized and hyper-sexualized within white queer spaces.

Excerpt 1.

> *"My experience is like [short pause] it has showed up mostly in Finland with Finnish people, and I do experience as like being a queer person a lot of the fetish or the exoticness of who I am is what's attracting people so. It's a blurred line like I cannot say this for everyone. But in my experience is um there's a culture in the Finnish culture like itself, there is a whole fetish of being different or being from abroad. [---] So I feel like I lose aspects of who I am when I'm meeting a lot of people because I'm I am just the different and the exotic. I call it the exotic bird complex.*"
>
> (Iara, 29, she/her, queer).

Excerpt 2

> *"But then I lose the sense of [short pause] they don't want what's inside, and once I really get into new relationships, once we got in-depth people were starting to question if they could really be truly, fully themselves by not speaking their mother tongues with me. So it's the balance, it's the balance that people want to be with me. But do they really want the full part of me? So that's my experience of queerness and being a woman. [--] I also have the [short pause] it feels gross to say but the appeal to people and, but then I become a token. I'm not feeling like myself. [--] I cannot speak on the matter of prejudice because I haven't experienced it in Finland. I cannot tell that side. But being a queer BIPOC person in here, I feel a lot of times just like a*

> *token of an exotic Latin. A sexualized version of me and I'm not those things. So that has been my experience."*
>
> (Iara, 29, she/her, queer)

In excerpts 1 and 2 Iara describes her experiences of being exoticized and fetishized in white queer spaces and in the field of dating white Finns. She describes exoticization as a phenomenon, which is inherent to the Finnish culture also outside queer spaces, but which she struggles to categorize as prejudice. Furthermore, she describes having to balance and navigate in situations in which she meets new people in queer spaces, in order to evaluate how she is viewed by them, constantly doubting is she is wanted as a whole and being possibly considered as a candidate for serious relationships, or only as a sexual partner, who is either sexualized or viewed as a token. In Iara's description, the whiteness of queer spaces was evident through prejudiced and stereotyping notions of what queer people are like, and what is considered exotic in the queer spaces. Furthermore, her experience reflects what kind of queer people are considered serious candidates for long-term relationships and who are perceived only through sexual desire.

Similar notions of being exoticized and sexualized were commonly found in the data and experiences of feeling used and unsafe in the white queer spaces were strongly linked to the overwhelming whiteness of Finnish queer spaces, as Lila phrases it in excerpt 3.

Excerpt 3.

> *"I think like for me. Well first of all because I'm Arab like [short pause] people are often shocked and like asking, is that why you came to Finland? When I'm you know, I mean one can be very openly queer in Egypt and in so many different ways I wouldn't be able to be here (in Finland). Um. But I think like if or when I would want to be a part of queer spaces, then it's kind of like. Yeah, whiteness is [short pause] it's very, very, very overwhelming. Um. And. Yeah, it can vary. You become then very exoticized then a lot of what Iara said like a person can't really see a future with you*

because [short pause] you're a lot of fun to be with, but then? Not really a serious partner and you know, like you're like, a toy. You're discarded once you're used."

(Lila, 26, she/her, queer)

In addition to being othered in queer spaces, queer BIPOC people face exoticization and hyper-sexualization from the heteronormative Finnish society as well, as excerpt 4 demonstrates.

Excerpt 4.

"This space that I earlier defined as like this in-between space of intersectionality like especially when you are a visibly black or brown and then you are queer [short pause] what's actually happening, like at least with this exotic thing that has so many times, at least twice has come up from (other participants) like expressing this like the exotic factor, which is not just to like the folks that are attracted to me, but also like from the white male gaze."

(Kranti, 35, queer, they/them)

In excerpt 4 Kranti describes experiencing multiple jeopardy in terms of being exoticized and sexualized as a queer BIPOC person. They describe recognizing the experiences of being exoticized by other queer folks, but also bring up being perceived through the white male gaze. The intersection of queer and BIPOC identity creates a unique position of being exposed to prejudice from multiple directions, for example from the heteronormative spheres of whiteness, white queer folk and the heteronormative BIPOC communities. Similar notions related to gender were also evident in Iara's statement *"So that's my, my experience of queerness and being a woman"* in excerpt 2. The intersection of queer, BIPOC and woman's identity thus, seems to create a specific nature of exoticization, sexualization and tokenism for queer BIPOC people. However, Kranti's experience as a non-binary person possibly deviates highly from the experiences of those, who express their identities in a normative, binary manner.

Consequently, similar experiences of exoticization and hyper-sexualization were apparent in Kehl's (2020) qualitative research among racialized/ non-white and Muslim LGBTQ people in a Swedish context (Kehl, 2020). Hyper-sexualized othering and exoticization are narratives, that have a long history of externalizing BIPOC people in Western societies, as well as the positioning the racialized as the sexually exciting and possibly dangerous "other". Such notions stem from the European colonial history and function as positioning the civilized West in opposition to the underdeveloped rest (Han, 2007.; Laskar & Oprea, 2015).

Another key point under the Queer is white theme, was the occurrence of participants frequently describing being forced to negotiate and defend their identities. Excerpt 5 demonstrates how notions of queerness include a certain set of ideas of what is the normative way of being queer, and how the authenticity of one's queer identity comes to being questioned and challenged by others in the community.

Excerpt 5.

> *"I just want to add that authenticity comes into question like whether you're actually queer or not. [--] This is the topic of like being BIPOC and queer. Then are you really queer? Like it's because maybe you're a person who just doesn't engage in, like, specific parts of queer culture and like read the right stuff or engage with the right politics, or so I think like. Yeah, your validity really comes into question. [---] So then it's like. I feel like it's an either-or [short pause] people can't really imagine the overlap of both like being an Arabic woman and queer. A queer who doesn't hate like their own country. But there is a very like small line of an overlap."*
>
> (Lila, 26, she/her, queer)

In excerpt 5 Lila describes experiences of her queer identity being questioned by outsiders, because of her cultural identity as an Arab person of colour. Lila and other participants described similar situations, in which either their queer identities or BIPOC identities become questioned and negotiable by outsiders because the identity categories of queerness and whiteness are seen as possible to occur together, whereas queerness and BIPOC:ness are

perceived as contradicting identity categories from the viewpoint of white Finns. Other scholars' research also suggests, that especially queerness and being racialized as Muslim creates situations, in which individuals experience stereotyping and become often positioned as token victims (see e.g. Jungar & Peltonen, 2015; Kehl, 2020). Lila's statement "*people can't really imagine the overlap of both like being an Arabic woman and queer. A queer who doesn't hate like their own country*" well describes how Muslims are sometimes positioned as the "hateful others" in terms of LGBTQ+ rights in opposition to "Western" ideals of equality, leading to controversial demands in terms of queer, BIPOC and in this case, Muslim identity (Haritaworn et al., 2008). Similar tokenism is often experienced by all BIPOC people, who are perceived as exceptions, who have emancipated themselves from oppressive cultural environments, or who in turn, need to be liberated by the White Westerners (see e.g. Haritaworn, 2015; Jungar & Peltonen, 2015; Kehl, 2020).

Beyond the issue of prejudiced notions of queer BIPOC people within queer spaces, the participants also faced challenges in exploring and constructing their identities due to the lack of representation in the Finnish society as a whole, as well as within queer communities, as excerpt 6 demonstrates.

Excerpt 6.

> *"I feel like I didn't know what goes to that intersection for a long time because like [short pause] for example in [name of a city removed] first of all, the majority is white gay people and also in Finland as well a lot of what we see as queerness is white. Like when I see a lesbian black girl, I'm just like whaaaat (laughter) they are like unicorns! You only see them in movies or like... [Short pause] So it took me a long time to understand that because if we see like queer people and they are only white it makes me think that cause I don't identify with that so maybe I'm not queer. [Short pause] I know I'm not white, so then can I be queer? Because it took a long time for me to understand how those can like intersect!"*
>
> (Sarah 27, she/her queer)

In excerpt 6. Sarah describes her past difficulties in coming to terms with both queer and BIPOC identities, due to lack of representation. As a result, the possibility of having an identity in which queerness and BIPOC:ness intersect was for a long time perceived as impossible, due to the internalized idea of queerness being white. Kehl's (2020) research of queer BIPOC people's experiences provides very similar results. The absolute lack of positive representation does not only make queer BIPOC people difficult to be recognised for the white majority without a stereotyped or offensive gaze, but in addition, it makes the BIPOC people question their own identities due to a lack of representational tools, as Sarah expresses in excerpt 6. (Kehl, 2020.) Lack of representation in terms of queer and BIPOC people can be articulated as cultural invisibility, which Settles & Buchanan (2014) posit as a sub-category of the forementioned intersectional invisibility (Settles & Buchanan, 2014). Cultural invisibility refers to the experiences of individuals who belong to intersecting marginalized groups, and who are scarcely or poorly represented in representations or cultural schemas. Thus, queer BIPOC and especially non-binary and/or Muslim people, suffer from a lack of representation. (Settles & Buchanan, 2014.) The data demonstrates the lived experience of queer exclusion, which has been pointed out by postcolonial scholars as early as the 1980s, by criticising queerness and queer theory for being inherently white (Somerville, 2000, p. 5).

Correspondingly, the data suggest, that the notions of queerness being white were shared by not only the white queer community but additionally by the available BIPOC communities in the participants' lives. Excerpt 7 demonstrates how the unwanted queerness as a part of Annie's identity has been associated with whiteness, and how her Finnish identity was used as an explanation for her breaking the norms of her BIPOC community

Excerpt 7.

> *"I would like to add to that from my father's side and what comes to West Africans, I see that most of our family, not family members, but like family acquaintances. They know my sexuality and my background, but I have had that kind of discussion [short*

> *pause] for example, with my father's friend and it seemed that he saw me as weird just because I have this Finnish side in me that because I'm half white that explains why I am what I am [short pause] basically queer. That also affects how I see queerness."*
>
> (Annie, 29, she/her, queer)

Annie also states that *"that also affects how I see queerness"*. This statement implies she has internalized the idea of queerness and whiteness being inseparable, thus BIPOC identity and queer identity forming a contradiction. According to Verkuyten, (2018) psychological essentialism, when thinking about social groups, is not only a process that occurs in terms of majority identities leading to, for example, racism, but also an emancipatory practice of ethnic minority groups. Essentialist group beliefs can function as practices which authenticate group identities in terms of "real" and "less real" group members, whilst challenging assimilation to the ethnic majority. (Verkuyten, 2018, p. 144.) By positioning queerness as a feature that does not align with the authentic cultural identity at hand, as a feature of being white, it is implied that queerness is a form of unwanted assimilation to the majority culture.

Given these points, the generalized and internalized idea of queerness being white by nature has exposed the participants to a great deal of identity conflict (Sacharin et al., 2009) in the forms of having to negotiate and defend their BIPOC and queer identities due to exoticization, sexualization and other forms of prejudice within the white Finn dominated queer communities as well as, within the heteronormative and white narrative dominated Finnish society. In addition to having to defend their identities, the participants described experiencing difficulties exploring their identities as BIPOC people and queer people, due to a lack of representation and internalized ideas of white queerness, stemming from the attitudes of both white Finn's and the BIPOC communities in their lives. These findings are in line with previously conducted research by Kehl (2020) which suggests that the intersecting identities of BIPOC:ness and queerness do pose challenges in belonging to white queer communities, and thus in constructing harmonious identities (Kehl, 2020).

Furthermore, the previously discussed results of Boland (2020) & Karachaliou et al.'s (2018) studies on hybrid identity construction might elaborate also queer BIPOC people's needs to gain recognition of their hybrid identities, of which queerness is an inseparable part of (Boland, 2020; Karachaliou et al., 2018).

6.4 Theme 3: Hybrid identity is inherently queer

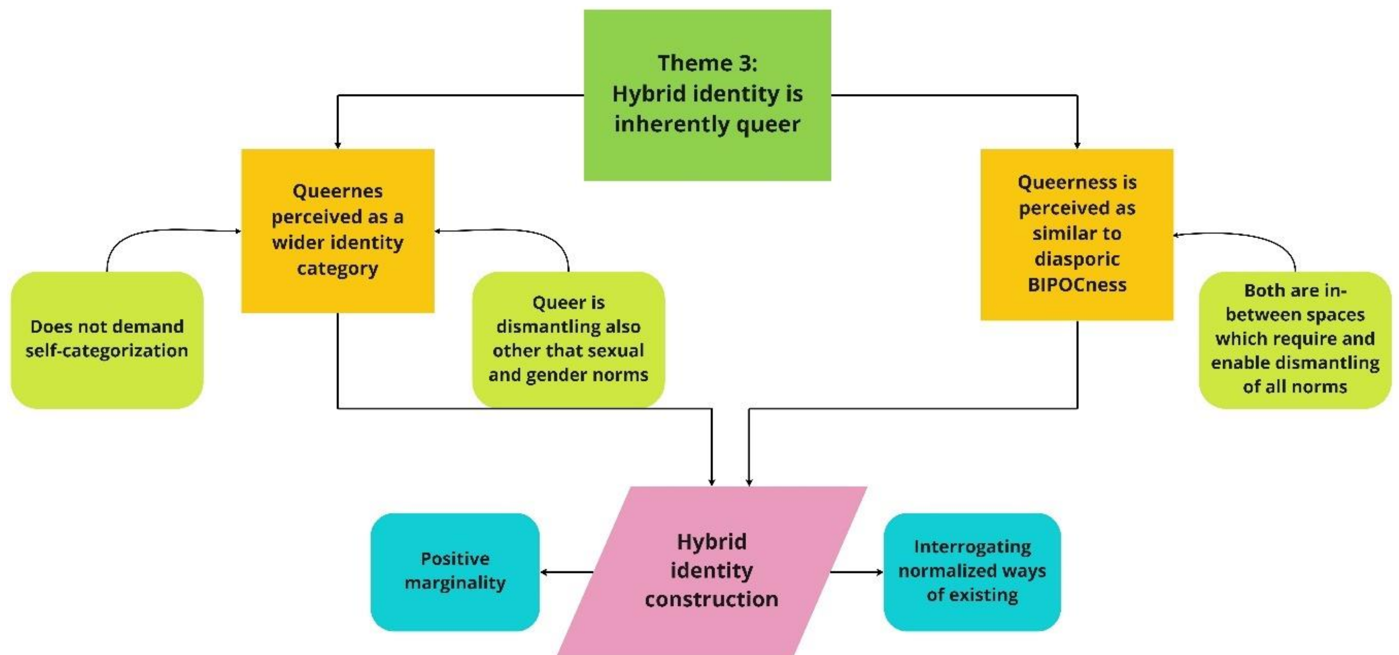


Figure 3. The thematic map of the theme: Hybrid identity is inherently queer

The third theme generated from the data is: Hybrid identity is inherently queer. Whilst the two previous themes suggest that queer BIPOC people struggled in their identity construction processes due to difficulties in belonging either to the available cultural or ethnic communities or white Finn dominated queer communities, the third theme suggests that in a suitable environment, BIPOC identity can be perceived as inherently queer.

The third theme was generated based on two major dimensions. First, in the interviews queer identity was negotiated in terms of a wider understanding of queer identity. Instead of constructing queer identity around individuals, who interrogate and deconstruct sexual and gender norms, the participants perceived it to enable the deconstruction of other normative

ways of existing. In these discussions, queer identity was tightly tied to spaces and events, in which such deconstruction was manifested in BIPOC people's terms. I will address the first dimension of the theme by discussing excerpts 1-3 and briefly introducing the Ballroom culture, as its events were often referred to in the data when discussing safe spaces. Finally, I will proceed to the second major dimension of the theme, which was the discovery of the participants conceptualising BIPOC:ness and queerness as similar identity categories, which were both negotiated in terms of dismantling normative ways of existing. I will further elaborate on these notions by discussing excerpts 4-5.

As mentioned, in the data, many participants referred to queer BIPOC spaces, which were often tied to Ballroom culture. Furthermore, in these contexts queerness was negotiated in terms of a wider understanding of queer identity enabling the deconstruction of not only sexual and gender norms, but also other normative ways of existing. As excerpt 1 demonstrates, "the essence of queerness" was perceived as a way of living or existing.

Excerpt 1.

> *"Yeah, I think the essence of queerness is more like a lifestyle or energy (laughter) that doesn't make any sense. I have to say with the BIPOC queerness like there is this feeling that you can be whatever you want and it's more inclusive than just the BIPOC communities. There are sometimes suppressive spaces in the BIPOC communities and queer spaces are more open for everyone to be whatever they want to be."*
>
> (Kit, 28, she/they, queer)

Consequently, in excerpt 2 Sarah applies similar logic to her experiences in the Ballroom scene, stating that instead of everyone having to identify as queer or BIPOC Ballroom invites people with different kinds of identities by giving everyone space to connect

Excerpt 2.

> *"[--] but I also feel like maybe Ballroom is also one of the spaces that I understand as a community in a different way because they give space [short pause] or it isn't*

tied to OK, we're all queer or we're all BIPOC. But there's like multiple identities and it gives more space to like [short pause] come and connect."

(Sarah 27, she/her queer)

When discussing BIPOC:ness, queerness and communities that are perceived as safe, the participants continuously referred to the highly U.S. influenced Ballroom culture, which has set foot in Helsinki in recent years. The Ballroom originated as a subculture created by queer people of colour, in the U.S. more than fifty years ago. The Balls often include performances of competing houses, which are not mere "teams", but rather family-like structured communities, which are usually led by a "mother" of the house, who do not only provide guidance in terms of the Ballroom culture, but also life skills, to their "ballroom children". Thus, an important characteristic of Ballroom is its tendency to interrogate dominant notions and discourses of gender, sexuality, family and community, by providing a so-called "chosen family" to its members. The Ballroom remains dominated by Black and Latino queer persons in the big cities of The U.S. (Bailey, 2011, pp. 366-368; Bailey, 2005.) In Helsinki, the Ballroom also is a space that lifts non-white narratives and emphasises safe space policies in its events.

Furthermore, in excerpt 1. Kit makes a distinction between queer BIPOC communities, and other BIPOC communities, which they describe as suppressive. Therefore, queer BIPOC spaces seem to be perceived as safer spaces for anyone to explore and do identity work in. Similar results of BIPOC and queer people being involved with strictly BIPOC queer spaces have been reported in other studies. These spaces are perceived as the only spaces which allow the people to escape racism occurring in primarily white spaces, as well as, hetero sexism, which might occur in other BIPOC communities (see e.g. Ghabrial, 2017).

Furthermore, excerpt 3 implies, that queer BIPOC communities are not taken for granted or perceived as naturally emerging communities, but instead they are perceived as a result of an active effort of certain queer BIPOC actors.

Excerpt 3.

> *"I feel like some collectives have made a big effort to create queer BIPOC communities, and it's come very naturally to me to find those communities. Maybe because there hasn't been that much representation in Finland so people have found their way there and come together while trying to find people to relate to."*
>
> (Esi, 28, she/her, queer)

During the interview, the participants shared a perception of the BIPOC spaces they have access to being inherently queer in a sense that the spaces and events have a strong emphasis on following safe space policies which guide the crowd to respect the self-determination of everyone's own identities in terms of, for example, ethnic and cultural identity, as well as sexuality and gender. Hence, the queer BIPOC spaces differed greatly from the BIPOC spaces that were accessible for many of the participants through family and cultural ties, because those spaces were dominated by an older generation, which adhered to a different set of values and norms. Despite being open to people with varying identities, such communities also attract people by offering desired representation and possibly a space in which especially queer and BIPOC people can explore their identities safely. Thus, queer BIPOC spaces reduce the experienced intersectional cultural invisibility, in which those, who belong to multiple marginalized groups are poorly or scarcely represented (see e.g. Kehl, 2020; Settles & Buchanan, 2014).

By discussing excerpts 1-3 I aimed to demonstrate the first major dimension of the theme Hybrid identity is inherently queer. By having access to BIPOC dominated queer spaces, the participants had a chance to explore, not only their sexual and gender identities but also their cultural identities. The abundance of representation and the experience of having a safe community around them enabled them to freely express and explore their identities in whichever form they wanted to construct them. The attraction of such spaces was strongly tied to the freedom of not having to self-categorize in terms of cultural or any other identities, which was seen as very different from and safer than, for example, other BIPOC communities, or white normative Finn-dominated spaces.

Moreover, the second dimension of this theme was the way the participants conceptualised BIPOC:ness and queerness as similar identity categories, which were both negotiated in terms of dismantling normative ways of existing. I will further elaborate on these notions by discussing excerpts 4-5. Sarah states in excerpts 4 and 5 that her generation's understanding of diasporic BIPOC:ness might be strongly comprehended as a similar process to forming a queer identity. It could be stated, that Sarah implies that diasporic BIPOC:ness is queer by nature.

Excerpt 4.

> *"I think that if we like hmmm living in this world as like a racialized person you have to like dismantle a lot of that to create your environments and also like queerness is dismantling whatever is considered normal and what you have been thought that is normal. So understanding a racialized identity is also dismantling that so I feel like there's this very sweet coordinate of queerness and BIPOC:ness so it's like letting go of a lot of the structures and considering how to reconstruct ourselves as [short pause] human beings."*
>
> (Sarah 27, she/her queer)

Excerpt 5.

> *"And also like for me to understand that queerness is very like [short pause] it's not only tied to sexual orientation but also to a way of life, kind of like an ethos and I feel like being BIPOC or like mixed-race affects that a lot because there's a lot of like intersections and it breaks a lot of this understanding of being one or the other. So as someone who is moving like in the in-between space it is also quite a lot about being queer."*
>
> (Sarah 27, she/her queer)

Excerpt 5 echoes a wider understanding of what queerness is, which was also demonstrated in excerpt 1. Queer, as well as diasporic BIPOC identity, are considered as an intersection of

identities that forces, but also enables individuals to interrogate the normalized ways of existing and create new ways to structure their identities and ways of belonging to the society. As Sarah puts it in excerpt 5, BIPOC:ness and queerness have a coordinate, that invites individuals who move in the in-between states, to dismantle norms and recreate themselves in new ways.

Given these points, it seems that some participants have rejected the notion of queerness being white and acquired a postcolonial notion of what it means to be queer and implement a wider, more hybrid understanding of queerness similarly to how critical queer theorists suggest and what was discussed earlier in this research paper (see e.g. Gopinath, 2005; Ilmonen, 2011; Jagose, 1996; Sedgwick, 1993). In other words, they have "queered" queerness by in addition to interrogating and challenging normative ways of performing gender and sexuality, they also challenge normative ways of forming cultural and diasporic identities. The position of in-between-ness and third space, which can be perceived as inherent to both queer and diasporic BIPOC identities, is taken advantage of by resisting the assigned categories coming from the outsiders, as well as the otherwise internalized pressure to form a solid cultural identity for themselves (Ang, 2001, pp. 34 – 35; Bhaba, 1990, pp. 211). Thus, the theoretical notions of hybridity and queerness intersect not only in a theoretical sense but also in lived experiences of queer and BIPOC people, enabling them to harmonize their multiple identities as singular queer BIPOC identities.

Similar outcomes of multiple marginalized identities have been found in other studies (Ghabrial, 2017; Meyer et al., 2011). Ghabrial's (2017) qualitative research on racialized sexual minorities in the Canadian context suggests, that despite often having negative consequences, multiple marginalization can also lead to so-called "positive intersectionality", in which individuals find ways to identify in a manner that their marginalized identities support each other, leading to empowerment and self-acceptance. However, in Ghabrial's (2017) study, only a few of the participants expressed experiencing positive intersectionality, since many described that racism and exclusion resulted in withdrawing from the white queer communities. Furthermore, the participants also

experienced that queer culture formed a contradiction with their ethnic culture and many were disconnected from their BIPOC communities as well. Ghabrial's study's result is well in line with this research's results, since both the participants made efforts to connect and construct their cultural identities, despite the difficulties their environments posed (Ghabrial, 2017).

To conclude the key points in the third theme: Hybrid identity is inherently queer, two major dimensions were interpreted from the data. First, queer identity was negotiated as a wider category than non-normative sexual and gender identity. Instead, queerness was perceived as a lifestyle of interrogating all normative ways of existing, thus providing a safe identity categorization for those, who wanted to reject essentialist self-categorizations also in terms of cultural and ethnic identity. Therefore, queerness as an identity enabled the participants to explore and construct hybrid identities, in which their cultural and other identities were in a harmonious, but constantly shifting state. The freedom of acquiring such hybrid identity was strongly tied to BIPOC dominated queer spaces, such as the Ballroom scene, which offered the participants representation, freedom and safety. Moreover, the second major interpretation from the data was, that BIPOC:ness and queerness were perceived as similar identity categories, which were both located in the "in-between-ness" of not being one or the other, which is inherent to hybridity. Therefore, the two identity categories were perceived as naturally similar, thus enabling and forcing the participants to self-construct non-normative and completely new ways of existing and identifying.

6 DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to shed light on how queer and BIPOC identities are constructed in the Finnish context. Hybrid identity theory, intersectionality and queer theory were used as a theoretical framework in terms of research design and analysis. The data constituted of three focus group interviews. The question posed by this research is: what kind of possibilities and challenges of identity construction do queer and BIPOC people face in the Finnish context? Additionally, I aimed to examine how the intersections of the

participants' identities were negotiated and how hybridity figured in their identity negotiations.

Based on this research the construction of queer and BIPOC identity was both, challenging and rewarding. The process of identity construction was done in relation to meaningful available communities, which this research identified to be: the Finnish society, available BIPOC communities and available queer communities. The experiences of identity construction depended on how the different communities enabled or challenged exploring and constructing both, the participants' BIPOC and queer identities. The challenges and possibilities all resulted in hybrid identity constructions, in which queerness was inherently or through effort combined with BIPOC identity. The experiences of exclusion and inclusion from the surrounding communities resulted in differences of whether the hybrid identity constructions were described as processes in which the participants had a lot or little room to manoeuvre their identities in, and in which they felt they gained support and recognition.

In this chapter, I will first further introduce the findings of this study, which consist of three themes, that were generated by using Braun & Clarke's (2006) Reflexive thematic Analysis (RTA) as an analytical framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Second, I will proceed to discuss how this research has contributed to the social psychology scholarship. Third, I shall address the limitations of this research and further discuss how my position as a researcher has affected the research design and the interpretation of the data. Finally, I will make suggestions for further research and present concluding thoughts.

6.1 Findings of this study

By using Braun & Clarke's (2006) take on Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) as an analytical method, three distinctive themes were generated from the data; 1) Hybrid identity as a necessity, 2) Queerness is white and 3) Hybrid identity is inherently queer.

The first theme: Hybrid identity as a necessity was based on the participants' descriptions of experiencing challenges in their identity construction processes, due to the intersection of queer and BIPOC identities and sometimes gender and religion as well. The challenges stemmed from their experiences of being excluded from both, BIPOC communities and the Finnish society in a general sense. The exclusion from the Finnish society was based on their BIPOC identities and it manifested through being racialized and othered by white Finns, as well as having been forced to defend their Finnish identities.

Furthermore, the exclusion from the BIPOC communities was tied to the participants' queer identities, which led to norm and identity contradictions within the communities. Since the participants were not able to explore and construct their identities freely and fully in either community, they expressed feeling forced to create hybrid identities by picking meaningful elements from the available BIPOC communities, queerness and the Finnish culture. The meaningful elements from the Finnish culture were often norms and values. Similar notions were discovered by previously discussed Karachaliou et al.'s (2018) qualitative study, in which they examined Greek immigrants' identity constructions in Canada. Instead of constructing their identities in the framework of dualism as Greek-Canadians, the majority of the individuals build hybrid "stranger" identities for themselves. The discovered self-positionings were very complex and the individuals used creative ways to combine Greekness and Canadian-ness whilst negotiating their attachment and detachment to both countries. Similarly to the present research's results, Karachaliou et al.'s study suggested that the Greek immigrants were not quite comfortable with such hybridity, since they expressed the need to justify and negotiate their identities. (Karachaliou et al., 2018.)

The hybrid nature of the present research's participants' identity construction was evident in the participants' descriptions of longing for a sense of belonging, which they did not find either in the BIPOC communities or in the Finnish society. Instead, they were hoping to find a community which would share their sense of in-between-ness in terms of cultural identity, as well as their queer identity. Similarly, to Boland's (2020) previously discussed research on hybrid identities of Muslim youth in Madrid, the participants in this research too were

longing for recognition for their mixed or plural identities. Furthermore, similar shifting negotiations of cultural identity occurred in the data, as the participants described how their self-categorisations were highly situated and dependent on the context (Boland, 2020.) The participants described having a shifting and changing identity or identities, which they found difficult to integrate due to exclusion from the Finnish and BIPOC communities. Similar dynamics have been examined by socio-cognitive social psychologist studies. In terms of such articulations, it could be stated that othering in the Finnish society and norm and value contradictions in the BIPOC communities resulted in identity conflict (see e.g. Sacharin et al., 2009). To conclude the first theme: Hybrid identity as a necessity, the hybridity of the participants' identities figured as a need to construct their identities in the state of in-betweenness in terms of multiple contradicting expectations from surrounding communities. Furthermore, both the BIPOC communities and the Finnish society were perceived as exclusive of the participants' identities, leaving them to construct their own versions of queerness and BIPOC:ness in a manner that was perceived as lonely and unsatisfactory.

The second theme generated from the data is: Queerness is white. In addition to the identity conflict that was described in the preceding theme, which resulted from exclusion from the Finnish society and the BIPOC communities, the data suggests that queer spaces in Finland do not necessarily provide support for identity construction for BIPOC people either. Similarly to the results of a Swedish research (Kehl, 2020) on queer and BIPOC peoples' experiences in the Swedish queer spaces, the Finnish queer spaces too were perceived by some participants, as spaces which tend to treat BIPOC people as tokens or exoticized and hypersexualised "others". The participants described that the issue with queer spaces in Finland is their overwhelming whiteness, which became evident due to lack of representation and notions of white queer spaces being prejudiced and unsafe spaces, in which the BIPOC people were forced to constantly negotiate, prove and defend their identities. Therefore, Finnish queer spaces did not provide a community in which BIPOC people could explore both sides of their identities in terms of BIPOC:ness and queerness.

Furthermore, the complete lack of representation of BIPOC people within the queer communities resulted in internalized notions of queerness being white and that BIPOC identity and queer identity are contradicting and impossible to integrate. The lack of representation was also evident in Kehl's (2020) research in the Swedish context. Lack of representation in terms of queer BIPOC people can be articulated as cultural invisibility, which refers to the experiences of individuals who belong to intersecting marginalized groups, and who are scarcely or poorly represented in representations or cultural schemas (Settles & Buchanan, 2014). Thus, queer, BIPOC and especially non-binary and/or Muslim people, suffer from a lack of representation, resulting in poor resources in constructing their identities, or in the experience of identity conflict, as the data suggests. This identity conflict was enhanced by the experiences of BIPOC communities sharing the notion of queerness being white. This notion was evident in the ways the participants' BIPOC communities explained and did meaning-making in terms of the queerness of BIPOC community members. It was explained through being too "white" and seen as assimilation to Finnishness of Westerness. Consequently, identity conflict was a result of the way queerness was made intelligible by all the available communities, which implied that queer and BIPOC identities are incompatible. Thus, similarly to the previous theme, the identity construction process was challenged by experiences of exclusion thus leading to a forceful hybrid identity construction process which included longing for a suitable community to conduct the process in and longing for recognition for the hybrid identity from the surrounding communities. The research results of Boland's (2020) and Karachaliou et al.'s (2018) studies on cultural hybrid identity constructions might also shed light on queer and BIPOC peoples' needs to gain recognition for their hybrid identities, of which queerness is an inseparable part of (Boland, 2020; Karachaliou et al., 2018).

The third theme that was generated from the data was rather different from the previous two themes. The theme: Diasporic BIPOC identity is inherently queer, suggests that queer and BIPOC identity can facilitate each other and thus, or as scholars from socio-cognitive traditions might articulate: create identity harmony (Brook et al., 2008). This theme included two notable issues. First, the participants constructed queer identity as a wider notion of

resistance and deconstruction, which was not only tied to sexual and gender identity but rather a lifestyle of dismantling and interrogating all normative ways of existing. It was perceived as an attractive identity category, because it does not demand clear-cut self-determination of any kind, even in terms of cultural identity.

Second, forming a queer identity was perceived as a similar process to hybrid identity construction, since diasporic identity was perceived as a very similar space of in-between-ness to queerness. Both required and enabled the participants to defy normative ways of self-categorisation and to create new ways of existing and belonging to the surrounding communities. This result is very similar to Ghabrial's (2017) research on racialized sexual minorities in the Canadian context; despite often having negative consequences, multiple marginalization can also lead to so-called "positive intersectionality", in which individuals find ways to identify in a manner that their marginalized identities support each other, leading to empowerment and self-acceptance (Ghabrial, 2017).

This theme was generated from those sections of the data, in which participants discussed queer spaces that were inclusive and welcoming. Many brought up the Ballroom scene in Helsinki, which originates from the U.S. influenced Ballroom culture. The Ballroom originated as a subculture created by queer people of colour in the U.S. more than fifty years ago. It remains dominated by Black and Latino queer persons in the big cities of The U.S. (Bailey, 2005). In Helsinki, the Ballroom also is a space that lifts non-white narratives and emphasises safe space policies in its events. The participants described such queer BIPOC spaces as the only environments in which they could freely explore and construct their hybrid identities in without having the pressure to defend and negotiate their queerness or BIPOC:ness or ensure the authenticity of their identities.

Furthermore, in this theme, the participants rejected the notion of queerness being white and acquired a postcolonial notion of what it means to be queer (Ilmonen, 2011). By "queering" queerness they interrogated and challenged the normative ways of performing gender and sexuality, whilst also challenging normative ways of forming cultural and diasporic identities. The position of in-between-ness and third space, which are inherent to both queer

and diasporic BIPOC identities, were taken advantage of by resisting the assigned categories coming from the outsiders as well as the otherwise internalized pressure to form a solid cultural identity for themselves (Ang, 2001, pp. 34 – 35; Bhaba, 1990, pp. 211). In the aforementioned Ghabrial's study, only a few of the participants expressed experiencing positive intersectionality, since for many the experienced racism and exclusion resulted in withdrawing from the white queer communities. (Ghabrial, 2017). This result is in line with this research since only a few of the participants described experiencing positive intersectionality and feeling empowered by the state of in-between-ness of their identities.

To conclude the results: diasporic BIPOC:ness, especially within the younger generations creates a unique state of in-between-ness in terms of cultural, sexual and gender identity. Thus, the intersection of queerness and BIPOC identities challenges and enables multiple ways of constructing a hybrid identity. Hybrid identity construction is done in relation to the Finnish society and available BIPOC and queer communities. Identity work results in identities, which are not to be traced back to "being queer + half-Finnish and half something else", instead, multiple states of in-between-ness challenge and enable the creation of unique hybrid identities, which the participants described being a continuous work in process. The workings of these identities were bound to multiple intersections of the participants' identities, and for example, the experiences of migrated participants and those who were born in Finland varied greatly. In addition, other dimensions of class, non-binary-ness and religion played a role in what kinds of possibilities of identity construction and exploration the participants described, however, my analytical focus was on the intersections of BIPOC, gender and queer identities. On all accounts, the participants' hybrid identities were questioned and negotiated by outsiders, due to normative notions of what it means to be BIPOC, Finnish and queer. These results are in line with previous research conducted on hybrid identity constructions of ethnic minorities (see e.g. Alitolppa-Niitamo & Väestöliitto, 2004; Boland, 2020; Brook et al., 2008; Cieslik & Verkuyten, 2006; Karachaliou et al., 2018; Young, 2009).

6.2 Contribution of this study

Despite scholars have made great efforts to research issues regarding queerness and cultural identities, there remains a great deal of issues that are unknown and under-researched within the intersections of these identities (Brook et al., 2008). The purpose of this study was to examine the challenges and possibilities of identity construction of queer and BIPOC people in the Finnish context and thus contribute to the rather scarce critical and intersectional research of identity construction within the field of social psychology (Bowleg, 2017, pp. 508-509). To my knowledge, similar social psychological research on queer and BIPOC identities has not been done in the European, or especially the Finnish context.

However, marginalized identities have been widely researched by scholars and BIPOC and queer identities are not an uncommon research issue, especially in the context of the U.S. (see e.g. Bailey, 2005; Bowleg et al., 2003; Ghabrial, 2017; Han, 2007; Meyer et al., 2011; Rosario et al., 2004; Somerville, 2000). However, I argue that the Finnish context is very different from the U.S. context, especially due to BIPOC peoples' specific socio-cultural history in the U.S, which creates a very different position for ethnic minorities in the country. In terms of migrancy, hybrid immigrant identities have a special place in the U.S. socio-historical context, due to the myths of the "American Dream" ,which are often based on ideals of immigrants finding a better life and adopting a new "American" identity (Young, 2009, p. 142). In addition, Finland has a specific historic setting in terms of racialization, due to Finnish people's history of having been racialized as subordinate to other folks in relation to neighboring nations, whilst exploiting and subjugating other folks, such as the indigenous Sami people. Finnish people's dual position has played a role in the need to differentiate from the other subordinate groups, and to have attained power in constructing beneficial racial hierarchies that benefitted the Finns. On the other hand, Finland among other Nordic countries has a long tradition of resorting to Nordic exceptionalism which refers to nations' unwillingness to view their histories as racist or colonialist, despite the fact that they are. (Keskinen, 2021, pp. 70, 76-78.)

In addition, queer people have a very different position in the U.S. possessing a widely known and rather organised history of queer liberation and, for example, the Ballroom culture which has functioned as a safe haven for queer and BIPOC people since the early twentieth century (Bailey, 2005, p. 368). Furthermore, it is likely that the Finnish context also differs from any other European country in terms of racialisation and attitudes towards queer people. In addition, the recognition of BIPOC peoples' need for inclusion in the queer communities is a rather recent issue in the Finnish context. Therefore, the first main contribution of this study is to my knowledge it is the only one or at least one of the few studies incorporating intersectional research of constructing both, BIPOC and queer identity in the Finnish social psychology scholarship.

The second contribution of this study is that it succeeded in identifying different forms of hybrid identity construction and in recognising which dynamics created challenges and which enhanced the process. Furthermore, this research managed to examine what communities or social environments are relevant to identity constructions in terms of queer and BIPOC identities, and how experiences of inclusion or exclusion shaped the process. The data suggests, that experiences of inclusion and exclusion play a significant role in the possibilities of identity construction, which is done in relation to the Finnish community, as well as to available queer and BIPOC communities.

Third, conducting this research in a qualitative manner and by using the inclusive terms of BIPOC and queer when describing the group of interest, the study enabled the participants to freely self-categorise and use their voices to express their lived experiences of identity construction from their unique positions. In addition, not framing the research as a study on marginalization, created space for examining the positive aspects of multiple marginalized identities. This led to unexpected results, which might have remained unnoticed or unresearched, had I defined the participants as, for example, sexual or ethnic minorities, as scholarship often does when conducting research on marginalized identities.

Fourth, this research managed to recognise the importance of inclusive communities, such as the Ballroom scene, which enabled the participants to gain support and safety for their identity construction. Instead of focusing on negative aspects of marginalized identities, positive aspects also deserve recognition in order to for us to develop more safe and inclusive spaces for marginalised groups.

The present research suggests that supporting queer BIPOC people's well-being is best improved by queer BIPOC people themselves. Therefore, instead of for example, merely developing and funding interventions or projects that aim to change the attitudes of the environments queer and BIPOC people do not perceive as safe, financial support should be allocated to the agents that have managed to create spaces that already are perceived as safe, such as the Ballroom events. Such safe environments are best created by queer and BIPOC people themselves, and not by actors who come from the outside of the community and their experiences. Furthermore, more effort and funding should be targeted for queer and BIPOC actors to create safe environments, in which queer BIPOC narratives are made central. On the other hand, the present research also emphasises the non-inclusiveness of mainstream queer spaces and actors, thus calling for more effort and inclusive courses of action in those environments.

6.3 Limitations

Despite this research providing many contributions to social psychology scholarship, it also has limitations that should be noted. This research is based only on three focus group interviews with eleven participants and therefore has a very small sample. In addition, the recruitment was conducted via my own social media networks and through snowball sampling, thus likely creating a sample that only captures the experiences of a select group. In terms of this research, it seemed that many of the participants were either highly educated or otherwise engaged in activism in terms of BIPOC and queer rights. Quite a few of the participants were also engaged in artistic pursuits.

Furthermore, recruiting the participants by stating that I was looking for BIPOC people living in Finland, I ended up recruiting both, individuals who had migrated to Finland and who have been born in Finland. They all were included in the research. Such a sample resulted in very rich data, but it also poses a question of whether their experiences can be aligned. Migrants, who do not speak Finnish, for example, face very different kinds of othering and discrimination, than those who have been born in Finland and are native speakers (Peltola, 2017, p. 280). Such a factor also plays a role in identity construction in terms of Finnish cultural identity.

Furthermore, a similar difficulty results from the fact, that despite the participants all categorised themselves as members of visible ethnic minorities, they still maintained very different positions in terms of BIPOC:ness, since some had ties to India, and some to Latin-American and African countries, for example. Thus, different backgrounds create very different experiences of othering and racialization and result in different outcomes in different contexts (see e.g. Bavishi et al., 2010; Britton, 1999; Haritaworn, 2015; Rosario et al., 2004). Therefore, the issue with a wide scope and inclusiveness is, that it cannot grasp every group's unique experiences. However, I aimed to minimize the effect by focusing on those aspects of the data, which seemed to connect the migrated and the Finnish born participants' experiences, regardless of their cultural ties, and therefore this research is more focused on examining the construction of hybrid identity, instead of cultural identity per se.

Another similar issue is that by researching non-binary peoples' and women's experiences in the same study, there is a danger that the most marginalized group's experiences are not highlighted enough. The intersectional analysis in this research demonstrates, that nonbinary people's experiences do differ in a manner that implies that similar research focusing solely on non-binary peoples' experiences is needed. The data suggests, that the intersection of non-binary gender identity, queerness and BIPOC:ness create highly unique experiences, which were not shared by cis-gender participants in this study. Having a multiple minority identity within the queer minority, poses multiple jeopardy. Furthermore, it is notable that non-binary experiences are always unique in nature, and relatedness and representation is

often hard to find even withing non-binary peoples’ own communities, let alone in scholarship. (Knott-Fayle et al., 2022.)

Finally, when it comes to data gathering, some interviews were conducted in English and some in Finnish. The ones that were conducted in English, posed a challenge since English was mother tongue for very few of the participants, which might have posed difficulties in articulating their experiences as richly as they would have liked to.

6.5 Positionality

When conducting research based on critical and intersectional framework, the researcher must consider their own position in knowledge production, especially in terms of qualitative research (Hayfield & Huxley, 2015). In the data and method chapter, I positioned myself as an insider researcher in terms of BIPOC:ness and queerness, but also as an outsider in terms of, for example, not being non-binary and not having migrated to Finland. The practice of doing insider research is especially useful in cases, where the participants belong to marginalized groups which face prejudice, othering or racism, which unfortunately was the case also in this study (Hayfield & Huxley, 2015). Conducting insider research, particularly in a constructionist interview setting, the participants are enabled to share and construct notions, that might otherwise remain unmentioned due to the interviewees’ lack of trust and discouraged expectations for mutual understanding of the discussed themes (Bridges, 2001; Perry et al., 2004).

As mentioned, my position of being an insider does not apply in terms to the experiences that were addressed by non-binary and/or migrant participants in this research. This is important to consider since the suggested benefits of being an insider do not apply to the whole research. In addition, the researcher has an active role in the presentation of marginalized voices, and in this research, the voices of the participants who migrated to Finland and/or are non-binary, are more marginalized than my own (Hayfield & Huxley, 2015). Therefore, those voices are vulnerable to exploitation. When conducting research from the outsider position, there is always a risk that this work contributes to the reproduction of cis-genderism or otherwise

discriminatory presentation of the group of interest, or that the interview setting is perceived as uncomfortable or discriminatory by the participants, despite my efforts to make it safe and inclusive, by, for example, disclosing safer space policies (appendix 2) with the participants. (Knott-Fayle et al., 2022.)

Furthermore, my position has affected the way I have designed the research, conducted the interviews and interpreted the data. Often the researchers' interest and willingness to examine certain topics are related to their own experiences, as was the case in this research (Tang, 2007). However, my experiences as a person of colour turned out to be very different from the participants who had migrated to Finland, which made me question my initial research questions and areas of interest during the research process. For instance, when discussing queer and BIPOC communities, the notion of "different social bubbles" were brought up mostly by the migrated participants, who did not have a sense of belonging to the Finnish speaking BIPOC communities. That phenomenon had not occurred to me, due to my position of being able to belong to the English speaking and the Finnish speaking communities. On the other hand, the idea of "BIPOC communities" was also wider for the migrated participants, whose communities often crossed national borders and extended to their former home countries. These findings quickly resulted in me needing to adjust the research questions and the whole research design since the findings were contradicting to my assumptions, which had affected the research design.

Similarly, the migrated participants expressed experiencing discrimination and othering that stemmed from the intersecting positions of visible BIPOC:ness and a migrant, which I, as well as the Finnish speaking participants, knew little of. Furthermore, religion turned out to play a more significant role than I expected as Christianity turned to influence the dynamics within the BIPOC communities, whereas Muslim identity caused experiences of exclusion outside the BIPOC communities. For those reasons, I may not be the best person to present the voices of the migrated people, or people with religious backgrounds in Finland. In addition, the non-binary participants might also have experiences that remained unmentioned or unnoticed by this research, due to my own position as a cis-gendered researcher, and their position as a minority also within the interview settings. In addition, unfortunately, it is not

uncommon for non-binary folks to experience cis-genderism in Western research culture, despite the researchers' aims to avoid it (Knott-Fayle et al., 2022). Therefore, it is possible that cis-genderism was also present in this research, despite my commitment to inclusivity. Furthermore, it is noteworthy to say that the analysis of this research is influenced by my reflexive way interpreting the data, while however, aiming to respect the participants' subjectivity in expressing and constructing their notions and experiences of the issues at hand (Byrne, 2021).

6.5 Further research

In terms of further research, this study proposes multiple directions that could be examined further. First, as was mentioned in the earlier sections, women and non-binary people might have very different experiences in all the relevant communities, in which the identity construction is conducted. Therefore, it would be highly relevant to conduct research focusing on the intersection of non-binary, queer and BIPOC identities, putting more emphasis on the marginalized gender identity, than was put in this research. Furthermore, more research should be done in terms of different cultural backgrounds, because this research data suggests that experiences of, for example, Brazilian migrants have unique characteristics that differ from individuals that have been born in Finland and have one white Finnish and one migrated Namibian parent. It could be fruitful to conduct research on certain cultural groups, as well as for example, to further research the mixed BIPOC peoples' experiences more thoroughly, especially in terms of hybridity. On the other hand, this research demonstrates that more research on marginalized groups should be done from frameworks that distance themselves from examining discrimination as the starting point of exclusion. As this study shows, experiences of exclusion are complex and can be the result of many factors, such as lack of representation or community.

Furthermore, an interesting issue that was evident in the data, but which I chose not to address in this research due to lack of resources, was the issue of agency. In cases which were demonstrated by themes one and two, the participants seemed to experience a lack of agency in terms of constructing their hybrid identities. However, in the case of the third theme, the

participants expressed having more agency and feeling empowered by their hybrid identity constructions. Therefore, further research in the framework of agency theory might provide fruitful insights on identity constructions of marginalized groups.

Consequently, the most interesting and valuable future research proposal of this study is to further address the phenomenon of positive intersectionality, which was evident in the third theme (Meyer et al., 2011). By examining how and why some participants were able to find identity harmony and experience empowerment in terms of their marginalised identities, the produced knowledge could be harnessed to develop more environments and tools for queer and BIPOC people to explore and construct their identities in a manner which they possess agency and safety in.

6.6 Conclusion

In this research, I examined the possibilities and challenges of queer and BIPOC peoples' identity construction. As I have demonstrated, queerness and BIPOC:ness create an intersection of identities, which demand and enable hybrid construction of identities, not only in terms of cultural or BIPOC identity but also in terms of queerness. However, identity construction is done in relation to the available communities which either support and enable exploring and constructing such identities or challenge and limit the process. In environments and communities, in which the process was encouraged, queer and BIPOC people embraced the hybrid nature of their identities and felt safe and supported in the process of constructing them. However, among communities that challenged either their BIPOC or queer identities, the participants lacked representation, support and recognition for their identities as a whole. Thus, they expressed being forced to create hybrid identities on their own terms, whilst longing for a like-minded community in which to explore all dimensions of their identities and their experiences of in-between-ness.

Based on this research, the constructions of queer and BIPOC identities as well as the well-being of the group, could best be supported by enhancing the maintenance and further

development of environments which are organized by queer and BIPOC people themselves, in their own terms, hence offering a safe space to explore their identities in.

REFERENCE LIST

Ali, A., Jay, Z. C., & Mataix Ferrándiz, E. (2021). Belonging, Community and Solidarity: Queer Experiences of Migration. https://www2.helsinki.fi/en/news/society-economy/episode-8-belonging-community-and-solidarity-queer-experiences-of-migration

Alitolppa-Niitamo, A., & Väestöliitto. (2004). *The icebreakers: Somali-speaking youth in metropolitan Helsinki with a focus on the context of formal education* [Family Federation of Finland]. Helsinki. https://finna.fi/Record/vaari.1088466

Anderson, B. (2006). *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism.* Verso books.

Ang, I. (2001). *On not speaking Chinese: living between Asia and the West*. Routledge.

Ashmore, R. D., Deaux, K., & McLaughlin-Volpe, T. (2004). An organizing framework for collective identity: articulation and significance of multidimensionality. *Psychology Bulletin*, *130*(1), 80-114. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.130.1.80

Bailey, M. M. (2011). Gender/Racial Realness: Theorizing the Gender System in Ballroom Culture. *Feminist Studies*, *37*(2), 365-386. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23069907

Bailey, M. M. (2005). *The labor of diaspora: Ballroom culture and the making of a Black queer community.* University of California, Berkeley.

Bavishi, A., Madera, J., & Hebl, M. (2010). The Effect of Professor Ethnicity and Gender on Student Evaluations: Judged Before Met. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, *3*, 245-256. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0020763

Bell, D., & Valentine, G. (1995). Introduction: orientations. *Mapping desire: Geographies of sexualities*, 1-27.

Berg, P., & Kokkonen, M. (2022). Heteronormativity meets queering in physical education: the views of PE teachers and LGBTIQ+ students. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, *27*(4), 368-381. https://doi.org/10.1080/17408989.2021.1891213

Boland, C. (2020). Hybrid identity and practices to negotiate belonging: Madrid's Muslim youth of migrant origin. *Comparative Migration Studies*, *8*(1), 1-17.

Bowleg, L. (2008). When Black + Lesbian + Woman ≠ Black Lesbian Woman: The Methodological Challenges of Qualitative and Quantitative Intersectionality Research. *Sex Roles*, *59*, 312-325. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-008-9400-z

Bowleg, L. (2017). Intersectionality: An underutilized but essential theoretical framework for social psychology. In *The Palgrave handbook of critical social psychology* (pp. 507-529). Springer.

Bowleg, L., Huang, J., Brooks, K., Black, A., & Burkholder, G. (2003). Triple jeopardy and beyond: multiple minority stress and resilience among black lesbians. *J Lesbian Stud*, *7*(4), 87-108. https://doi.org/10.1300/J155v07n04_06

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77-101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2019). Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, *11*(4), 589-597. https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2019.1628806

Brewer, M. B., & Lui, L. (1989). The primacy of age and sex in the structure of person categories. *Social Cognition*, *7*, 262-274.

Bridges, D. (2001). The ethics of outsider research. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, *35*(3), 371-386.

Britton, N. J. (1999). Racialized Identity and the Term 'Black'. In S. Roseneil & J. Seymour (Eds.), *Practising Identities: Power and Resistance* (pp. 134-154). Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-27653-0_7

Brook, A. T., Garcia, J., & Fleming, M. A. (2008). The Effects of Multiple Identities on Psychological Well-Being. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *34*(12), 1588-1600. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167208324629

Burr, V., & Dick, P. (2017). Social constructionism. In *The Palgrave handbook of critical social psychology* (pp. 59-80). Springer.

Byrne, D. (2021). A worked example of Braun and Clarke's approach to reflexive thematic analysis. *Quality & Quantity*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-021-01182-y

Cauce, A. M. (2011). Is multicultural psychology a-scientific?: Diverse methods for diversity research. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *17*(3), 228.

Cheryan, S., & Monin, B. (2005). Where Are You Really From?: Asian Americans and Identity Denial. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, *89*, 717-730. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.89.5.717

Chikwira, L. (2021). Contested narratives of belonging: Zimbabwean women migrants in Britain. *Women's Studies International Forum*, *87*, 102481. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2021.102481

Cieslik, A., & Verkuyten, M. (2006). National, Ethnic and Religious Identities: Hybridity and the case of the Polish Tatars. *National Identities*, *8*(2), 77-93.

Collins, P. H. (2002). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. Routledge.

Collins, P. H. (2015). Intersectionality's definitional dilemmas. *Annual review of sociology*, *41*, 1-20.

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *u. Chi. Legal f.*, 139.

Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review*, *43*(6), 1241-1299. https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039

Fanon, F. (1986). *Black skin, white masks*. Pluto Press.

Finlay, L. (2002). “Outing” the Researcher: The Provenance, Process, and Practice of Reflexivity. *Qualitative Health Research*, *12*(4), 531-545. https://doi.org/10.1177/104973202129120052

Fish, J. (2008). Navigating Queer Street: Researching the Intersections of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT) Identities in Health Research. *Sociological Research Online*, *13*(1), 12. http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/1/12.html

Gergen, K. (1985). The Social Constructivist Movement in Modern Psychology. *American Psychologist*, *40*. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.40.3.266

Ghabrial, M. A. (2017). “Trying to Figure Out Where We Belong”: Narratives of Racialized Sexual Minorities on Community, Identity, Discrimination, and Health. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, *14*(1), 42-55. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13178-016-0229-x

Gobo, G. (2004). Sampling, representativeness and generalizability. *Qualitative research practice*, *405*, 426.

Gopinath, G. (2002). 8. Local Sites/Global Contexts: The Transnational Trajectories of Deepa Mehta’s Fire. In C.-M. Arnaldo & F. M. Martin (Eds.), *Queer Globalizations: Citizenship and the Afterlife of Colonialism* (pp. 149-161). New York University Press. https://doi.org/doi:10.18574/9780814790182-010

Gopinath, G. (2005). Local Sites/Global Contexts: The Transnational Trajectories of Fire and “The Quilt”. In *Impossible Desires: Queer Diasporas and South Asian Public*

Cultures (pp. 0). Duke University Press. https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822386537-005

Hall, S. (2011). Questions of Cultural Identity. In. SAGE Publications Ltd. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446221907

Hall, S., Gilmore, R. W., & Gilroy, P. (2021). *Selected writings on race and difference*. Duke University Press.

Hall, S., Herkman, J., & Lehtonen, M. (1999). *Identiteetti*. Vastapaino.

Hallituksen tasa-arvo-ohjelma. (2020-2023). Retrieved from https://stm.fi/tasa-arvo-ohjelma

Han, C. S. (2007). They don't want to cruise your type: Gay men of color and the racial politics of exclusion. *Social Identities, 13*(1), 51-67.

Haritaworn, J. (2015). *Queer lovers and hateful others: regenerating violent times and places*. Pluto Press.

Haritaworn, J., Erdem, E., & Tatchell, P. (2008). Gay Imperialism: Gender and Sexuality Discourse in the War on Terror'. In Kuntsman, A., Miyake, E., Puar, J., Haritaworn, J., Tauqir, T., Erdem, E., ... & Klesse, C. (Eds.) *Out of place: interrogating silences in queerness/raciality.* (pp. 71-95). (1 ed.) Raw Nerve Books .

Hawley, J. C., & Altman, D. (2001). *Postcolonial, Queer: Theoretical Intersections*. SUNY Press.

Hayfield, N., & Huxley, C. (2015). Insider and Outsider Perspectives: Reflections on Researcher Identities in Research with Lesbian and Bisexual Women. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *12*(2), 91-106. https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2014.918224

Heilman, M. E. (1995). Sex stereotypes and their effects in the workplace: What we know and what we don't know. *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality*, *10*(4), 3.

Heilman, M. E. (2001). Description and Prescription: How Gender Stereotypes Prevent Women's Ascent Up the Organizational Ladder. *Journal of Social Issues*, *57*(4), 657-674. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/0022-4537.00234

Helsingin kaupunki käyttää progressiivista Pride-lippua kaupungintalon liputuksessa. (2020). Helsingin Kaupunki. https://www.hel.fi/uutiset/fi/kaupunginkanslia/helsingin-kaupunki-kayttaa-progressiivista-pride-lippua-kaupungintalon-liputuksessa

Hennessy, R. (1993). Queer Theory: A Review of the "Differences" Special Issue and Wittig's "The Straight Mind". *Signs*, *18*(4), 964-973. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3174918

Hervik, P. (2004). Anthropological perspectives on the new racism in Europe. *Ethnos*, *69*(2), 149-155. https://doi.org/10.1080/0014184042000212830

Hogg, M. A., & Reid, S. A. (2006). Social identity, self-categorization, and the communication of group norms. *Communication theory*, *16*(1), 7-30.

Holma, J., Järvenpää, V., Tervonen, K., Anttonen, P., Lust, K., Miettinen, A. P., & Halonen, T. (2018). *Näkymätön sukupuoli: ei-binäärisiä ihmisiä*. Into.

Hudson, K. D. (2015). Toward a Conceptual Framework for Understanding Community Belonging and Well-Being: Insights from a Queer-Mixed Perspective. *Journal of Community Practice*, *23*(1), 27-50. https://doi.org/10.1080/10705422.2014.986595

Ilmonen, K. (2011). Intersektionaalisen queer-tutkimuksen kytkentöjä: Pohdintoja postkoloniaalisen ja intersektionaalisen seksuaalisuudentutkimuksen lähtökohdista ja keskeisistä kysymyksistä. 1–16. *SQS – Suomen Queer-tutkimuksen Seuran lehti*, *5*(2). https://journal.fi/sqs/article/view/50863

Intersektionaalinen feminismi on hallituksen uuden tasa-arvo-ohjelman kantava ajatus, sanoo Maria Ohisalo – ja ihmettelee, miksi se pelottaa osaa. (27.6.2020). *Helsingin Sanomat*. https://www.hs.fi/nyt/art-2000006554708.html

Jagose, A. (1996). *Queer theory: an introduction*. New York University Press.

Joffe, H. (2012). Thematic analysis. *Qualitative research methods in mental health and psychotherapy: A guide for students and practitioners*, *1*, 210-223.

Jungar, K., & Peltonen, S. (2015). 'Saving Muslim queer women from Muslim hetero-patriarchy'. Savior narratives in LGBTI youth work. *NORMA*, *10*(2), 136-149. https://doi.org/10.1080/18902138.2015.1050862

Juvonen, T. (2020). NIMEÄMISEN MAHTI Sukupuolta ja seksuaalisuutta kuvaavien termien suhteisuudesta. *SQS – Suomen Queer-tutkimuksen Seuran lehti*, *13*(1-2), 1-22. https://doi.org/10.23980/sqs.89126

Karachaliou, R., Tsakona, V., Archakis, A., & Ralli, A. (2018). Constructing the Hybrid Identity of the 'Stranger': The Case of Greek Immigrants in Canada. *Półrocznik Językoznawczy Tertium*, *3*(1).

Kehl, K. (2020). 'Did queer Muslims even exist?' – racialised grids of intelligibility in Swedish LGBTQ contexts. *Social Identities*, *26*(2), 150-165. https://doi.org/10.1080/13504630.2019.1671183

Keskinen, S. (2021). Kolonialismin ja rasismin historiaa Suomesta käsin.

Keskinen, S. P., Näre, L. M., & Tuori, S. (2015). Valkoisuusnormi, rodullistamisen kritiikki ja sukupuoli.

Knott-Fayle, G., Peel, E., & Witcomb, G. L. (2022). Prejudice in "inclusive" spaces: Cisgenderist collusion in the interview context. *Feminism & Psychology*, *32*(2), 178-198. https://doi.org/10.1177/09593535211063263

LaSala, M. C. (2003). When interviewing "Family" maximizing the insider advantage in the qualitative study of lesbians and gay men. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services*, *15*(1-2), 15-30.

Laskar, P., & Oprea, A. (2015). The construction of "Swedish gender" through the g-other as a counter-image and threat. In (Vol. S. 138-159). Antiziganism: what's in a word?: proceedings from the Uppsala International Conference on the Discrimination, Marginalization and Persecution of Roma, 23-25 October 2013 / 2015.

Lehtonen, J. (2015). Muistot ja ajallisuus – Setan nuorten toiminta muutoksessa. 44–57. *SQS – Suomen Queer-tutkimuksen Seuran lehti*, *8*(1–2). https://journal.fi/sqs/article/view/49716

Lorde, A. (1984). *Sister outsider: essays and speeches*. Crossing Press.

McCallum, C., & McLaren, S. (2011). Sense of belonging and depressive symptoms among GLB adolescents. *J Homosex*, *58*(1), 83-96. https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2011.533629

Meyer, I. H., Ouellette, S. C., Haile, R., & McFarlane, T. A. (2011). "We'd Be Free": Narratives of Life Without Homophobia, Racism, or Sexism. *Sexuality research & social policy : journal of NSRC : SR & SP*, *8*(3), 204-214. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13178-011-0063-0

Miller, S. D., Taylor, V., & Rupp, L. J. (2016). Social movements and the construction of queer identity. In *New directions in identity theory and research.* (pp. 443-469). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190457532.003.0016

Moua, M., Mäki-Penttilä, S., Owen, A., & Sandberg, P. (2021). Afrosuomalaisen yhteisön voimaantumista ja hyvinvointia -Good Hair Day. In S. Keskinen, M. Seikkula, F. Mkwesha, U. Aghayeva, & A. Sinkkonen (Eds.), *Rasismi, valta ja vastarinta: rodullistaminen, valkoisuus ja koloniaalisuus Suomessa.* (pp. 89-93). (1 ed.). Gaudeamus.

O'Driscoll, S. (1996). Outlaw Readings: Beyond Queer Theory. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, *22*(1), 30-51. https://doi.org/10.1086/495135

Onko ns. progressiivinen pride-lippu oikeasti inklusiivisempi kuin perinteinen kuusiraitainen? (2020). Ranneliike.net. Retrieved 3.6.22 from https://ranneliike.net/blogit/sateenkaariluuppi/onko+ns+progressiivinen+pride-lippu+oikeasti+inklusiivisempi+kuin+perinteinen+kuusiraitainen/27679

Peltola, M. (2017). *Kunnollisia perheitä: maahanmuutto, sukupolvet ja yhteiskunnallinen asema* Nuorisotutkimusseura]. Helsinki.

Perry, C., Thurston, M., & Green, K. (2004). Involvement and detachment in researching sexuality: Reflections on the process of semistructured interviewing. *Qualitative Health Research*, *14*(1), 135-148.

Phoenix, A. (2021). Humanizing racialization: Social psychology in a time of unexpected transformational conjunctions. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, *61*(1), 1-18. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12517

Pietilä, I. (2017). Ryhmäkeskustelu. In Aho, Hyvärinen, M., Nikander, P., & Ruusuvuori, J. (Eds) (2017). *Tutkimushaastattelun käsikirja.* (pp. 111-127). Vastapaino.

Progressiivinen Pride-lippu valtaa alaa. (2020). QX Pohjoismainen sateenkaarimedia. Retrieved 3.6. from https://www.qx.fi/yhteiskunta/244701/progressiivinen-pride-lippu-valtaa-alaa/

Rastas, A. (2005). Rasismi@ oppeja, asenteita, toimintaa ja seurauksia.

Rastas, A., & Poelman, S. (2021). Suomalaisen sosiologian värisokea piste. *Artikkelit*, *58*(1), 3-20. https://kansalliskirjasto.finna.fi/Record/arto.017531769

Rosario, M., Schrimshaw, E. W., & Hunter, J. (2004). Ethnic/racial differences in the coming-out process of lesbian, gay, and bisexual youths: a comparison of sexual identity development over time. *Cultur Divers Ethnic Minor Psychol*, *10*(3), 215-228. https://doi.org/10.1037/1099-9809.10.3.215

Rosenthal, L. (2016). Incorporating intersectionality into psychology: An opportunity to promote social justice and equity. *American Psychologist*, *71*(6), 474.

Sacharin, V., Lee, F., & Gonzalez, R. (2009). Identities in Harmony: Gender—Work Identity Integration Moderates Frame Switching in Cognitive Processing. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *33*(3), 275-284. https://doi.org/10.1177/036168430903300303

Said. (1978). Orientalism. Pantheon Books.

Salih, R. (2013). *Gender in transnationalism: Home, longing and belonging among Moroccan migrant women*. Routledge.

Seaton, E. K., Scottham, K. M., & Sellers, R. M. (2006). The status model of racial identity development in African American adolescents: evidence of structure, trajectories, and well-being. *Child Dev*, *77*(5), 1416-1426. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2006.00944.x

Sedgwick, E. K. (1993). *Tendencies* (Repr. ed.). Duke University Press.

Seta. (2019). *Sateenkari-ihmisiin kohdistuvat viharikokset jäävät edelleen piiloon - vastuu ilmoituskynnyksen madaltamisesta on viranomaisilla.* Retrieved 3.6 from https://yhdenvertaisuus.fi/setan-blogi

Settles, I. H. (2006). Use of an Intersectional Framework to Understand Black Women's Racial and Gender Identities. *Sex Roles*, *54*(9), 589-601. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-006-9029-8

Settles, I. H., & Buchanan, N. T. (2014). Multiple groups, multiple identities, and intersectionality. In V. Benet-Martínez & Y.-Y. Hong (Eds.), The Oxford handbook of multicultural identity (pp. 160–180). Oxford University Press.

Simon, B., & Klandermans, P. (2001). Toward a social psychological analysis of politicized collective identity: Conceptualization, antecedents and consequences. *American Psychologist*, *56*, 319-331.

Somerville, S. B. (2000). *Queering the color line: race and the invention of homosexuality in American culture*. Duke University Press.

Sprott, R. A., & Benoit Hadcock, B. (2018). Bisexuality, pansexuality, queer identity, and kink identity. *Sexual and relationship therapy*, *33*(1-2), 214-232. https://doi.org/10.1080/14681994.2017.1347616

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (2004). The social identity theory of intergroup behavior.

Tang, D. T. S. (2007). The Research Pendulum. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, *10*(3-4), 11-27. https://doi.org/10.1300/J155v10n03_02

Taylor, S. (2015). Identity Construction. In *The International Encyclopedia of Language and Social Interaction* (pp. 1-9). https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118611463.wbielsi099

Terry, G., Hayfield, N., Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2017). Thematic analysis. *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research in psychology*, *2*, 17-37.

Valentine, G. (1993). (Hetero)Sexing Space: Lesbian Perceptions and Experiences of Everyday Spaces. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, *11*(4), 395-413. https://doi.org/10.1068/d110395

Verkuyten, M. (2018). *The social psychology of ethnic identity* (Second new edition ed.). Routledge.

Weeks, J. (1996). The idea of a sexual community. *Soundings*, *2*, 71-84.

Weston, K. (1995). Get Thee to a Big City: Sexual Imaginary and the Great Gay Migration. *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, *2*(3), 253-277. https://doi.org/10.1215/10642684-2-3-253

Whitesell, N. R., Mitchell, C. M., Kaufman, C. E., & Spicer, P. (2006). Developmental trajectories of personal and collective self-concept among American Indian adolescents. *Child Dev*, *77*(5), 1487-1503. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2006.00949.x

Wilkinson, C. E., Rees, C. E., & Knight, L. V. (2007). "From the Heart of My Bottom": Negotiating Humor in Focus Group Discussions. *Qualitative Health Research*, *17*(3), 411-422. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732306298375

Willig, C. (2008). *Introducing qualitative research in psychology : adventures in theory and method* (2nd ed.). McGraw-Hill Open University Press.

Wong, C. A., Eccles, J. S., & Sameroff, A. (2003). The influence of ethnic discrimination and ethnic identification on African American adolescents' school and socioemotional adjustment. *J Pers*, *71*(6), 1197-1232. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-6494.7106012

Young, S. L. (2009). Half and Half: An (Auto)ethnography of Hybrid Identities in a Korean American Mother-Daughter Relationship. *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication*, *2*(2), 139-167. https://doi.org/10.1080/17513050902759512

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: predeveloped interview guide

Community and solidarity

- Could you individually tell a bit about the communities that exist around you? Or BIPOC communities in Finland?
- Do you feel like you are a part of those communities?
- What does belonging to such communities mean to you?
- Is there something you get from these relationships, that you don't get from non-BIPOC relationships? (Are those relationships important?)
- Have you had a time in your life when you haven't had BIPOC people around you as friends? What was that like?
- Would you try to get BIPOC-friends or be a part of those communities if you did not have any at the moment?
- How do you think having BIPOC friends in your lives has affected your identities or who you are today?
- What is it that you have in common with the people in your community? (Do they share your cultural background?)

Cultural identity

- Is Finnish culture our culture? Should it be?
- Do you think that you have your own culture in your communities or is there our culture in a more general sense?
- Is there some kind of a culture that non-BIPOC people are not a part of or can't really understand?
- What does your cultural identity look like?
- Do you think that your cultural identity or culture is different from BIPOC guys or men's cultures in Finland?
- How is being BIPOC a part of your identities?
- How about being BIPOC women/non-binary?
- What do you think it's like being queer and BIPOC in Finland?
- If you could create a utopian BIPOC community what would that look like?

Appendix 2: The consent letter of the present research and safer space policies

The introduction and consent letter of this research

The following interview is a part of Eva Udeh's Master's Thesis of Social Psychology.

The goal of this study is to examine the need for solidarity and meaning-making processes of solidarity among persons who identify as BIPOC. Additionally, the study aims to examine how individuals' experiences of these solidarities have affected their identity construction process.

Taking part in this research is completely voluntary and the participants are allowed to decline at any stage of the research. A participant can also refuse to answer single questions during the interview.

Handling the data

As a researcher, I commit to handling and storing the data with care. I will in no way report the individuals that are mentioned in the data to outsiders of this research project. I commit to not using the data to insult or harm the interviewees, their close ones or other individuals mentioned in the data. I commit to not handing over the data or any parts of it to outsiders. I promise to dispose of the research data and copies of it immediately after the results of the research have been validated and the research has come to an end.

Quotes from the interviews will be used when reporting the data. I commit to anonymizing the interviews in a manner that ensures that no identification data or identities cannot be concluded.

This interview will be conducted as a group interview and all the participants are required to commit to safer space policies (attached).

In case you have any questions regarding this research, please contact me via email or my phone number.

This is a safe space

- This interview is a discrimination-free and harassment-free zone
- Please respect and listen to others. Give space to those who rarely speak. Be mindful of your privileges and ways in which you are used to taking space
- Please don't make assumptions about other people's gender, sexuality, nationality, religion or other personal matters
- Please present your views as your own thoughts and try not to speak on behalf of others
- Be open to discussion with others and to new perspectives
- Try to create a positive and respectful atmosphere in the discussion
- If the situation feels uncomfortable, please raise the issue, for example, by informing the interviewer privately