Racialization and sexualization of women of color

The Experiences of Women of Color in Norway

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Abstract

This study aims to research how women of color experience racialization and sexualization. The dissertation is a qualitative study that is based on empirical material that has been collected through semi-structured interviews. The empirical material is based on 13 women aged 18-30 with ancestry from East, Central, and West Africa, South America, and Southeast Asia. Additionally, the material is analyzed through a phenomenological-inspired analysis with a theme-centered approach. The findings of this study show that racialization exists in childhood through internalized oppression related to appearance, and several participants experience feeling less beautiful than White Norwegian girls. When the girls grow older, they often experience sexualized racism at work, in institutions, and in romantic relationships, though several participants experienced sexualized racism as children. This has left some women with insecurity when confronting both racism and sexism. They have, as adults, gained more confidence in that confrontation. At the same time, others do not confront racism and sexism. Contrary to what has often been assumed about Norway and racism, the findings indicate the need for more research on women of color and their experiences with different forms of racialization and sexualization.

Keywords: women of color, racialization, racism, sexualization, intersectionality, White beauty, gender, postcolonial, killjoy, anger.

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I also want to thank my supervisor Hilde Danielsen, professor at NLA College, for both encouragement and availability throughout the process of writing this dissertation. This was helpful and gave me further motivation to write up the dissertation.

However, I hope this dissertation contributes and helps acknowledge the experiences of women of color in Norway, as acknowledgment is the first step to healing.

Our backs

tell stories

no books have

the spine to

carry

Women of color- rupi kaur
(Kaur, 2015).

Table of contents

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

"She is strong because she can move through life, regardless of the disadvantages that this world holds against her."
(Sudan, 27).

A young woman I refer to as Sudan (27) was born in South Africa. She spent seven years of her childhood in the rainbow nation. A nation that is supposed to have harmonious race relations and democracy (Walker, 2005, p. 135), but neither racial justice nor equality has been achieved in South Africa or many other parts of the world (Matthews, 2012, p. 171). Arriving in Norway at nine years old, where most of the population thinks there is little racism (Andersson, 2022, p. 21), racism, discrimination, and everyday humiliation are part of the reality of people of color in Norway (Midtbøen, 2022, p. 25). Being a woman, as well as of color, brings both good and bad experiences. Experiencing and witnessing the nuances in different countries, Sudan (27) describes how women of color live their lives. She highlights that women of color have disadvantages that societies and the world hold against them. Regardless of these disadvantages and challenges, some of which will be presented in this dissertation, a woman of color stays strong.

Racialization is not an unknown phenomenon in Norwegian research, but the discussion about racialization being gendered is not very present. People of color can experience racism, but there is still a systematic difference in what men and women are exposed to. Men are exposed to and are characterized by ideas about their masculinity. Several of the ideas are that their nature is often linked to violence, unruly urges, and the oppression of "their " women (Lenz, 2022, p. 393). On the other hand, women are often met with disgust related to appearance when they are young, and many experiences being called ugly as children. However, according to a researcher within religion and majority and minority relations, Cora Alexa Døving, when the same women grow up, they experience sexualized racism (Dietrichson, 2023). Researcher within history awareness and politics, Claudia Lenz, points out that to understand this complex interaction of White and colored femininity and their bodies today and how this is part of systems of subordination, one must look into colonial stereotypes and history (Lenz, 2022, p. 394).

Colonial history has gotten more attention in the latest years, which has led to knowledge about racialization being more present than ever. Sociologist Mette Andersson points out that following the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis in 2020, Black Lives Matter was developed from an American movement into a global movement, which brought more awareness and attention to racism. The Western world began to protest police killings in the United States and against racism that existed locally in the countries or cities they lived in, such as in Norway (Andersson, 2022, p. 99). Together with the movement, concepts were introduced. Concepts such as White privilege, racialization, intersectionality, and racial differences, are concepts that were rarely explained and often countered as irrelevant in the Norwegian context (Døving, 2022, p. 14). Sociologist Arnfinn H. Midtbøen is also not surprised by how the movement resonates in Norway, as many young people of color experience racism and discrimination, especially in the labor market (Midtbøen, 2022, p. 25). Expanding the knowledge on racism, racialization, in addition to new concepts and language, accompanies new ways for individuals to understand and interpret their experiences. The main research question for this dissertation will be: *How do women of color experience racialization and sexualization in Norway?*

The main research question will also be threefold and divided into three sub-questions that will also form the structure of the analytical chapters, which are:

1. How has the White beauty standard impacted women of color?
2. How and when do women of color experience racialization and sexualization?
3. When do women of color confront racism and sexism, and how are their strategies encountered?

It is worth mentioning that I will have a social constructivist view in this study that emphasizes how the individual's reality is socially created in the sense that we understand reality based on various social factors. This can explain how different individuals perceive the "same" phenomenon (Tjora, 2012, p. 21). To be able to answer the research question and the associated sub-questions, it was appropriate to obtain empirical research concerning women of color in Norway. Moreover, the study will give insight into the experiences and thoughts of 13 women of color. The current chapter will first discuss the motivation and purpose of this dissertation. Additionally, I will present my interpretation of different concepts used in this dissertation. Finally, I will illustrate the structure of the dissertation.

Research motivation and purpose

My motivation for choosing this topic for my dissertation is established on my experience as a woman of color in Norway. As a woman of color in Norway, I have experienced multiple microaggressions and forms of racialization. I have tolerated more than I have confronted due to different reasons. Sometimes I was afraid that I was overthinking. Other times I could not label what happened. When I joined intercultural studies, I started to learn the theories and concepts about the different settings I have experienced and witnessed. When learning more about women of color throughout the years, it was more often about how women of color were a victim, and the man of color was the oppressor, like Spivak's famous quote states, "*saving brown women from brown men*" (Spivak, 1998, p. 92). Nor will I deny that oppression by husbands, families, and culture exists in some communities. However, I have felt that the stereotype of women of color was that they were oppressed by their families, good at school, or innocent. Fast forward to the first year of my master's studies, I read the book "Do Muslim women need saving?" by Lila Abu-Lughod, which provoked my thinking. Even though the book is about Muslim women, it still made me think about the perception that brown women need saving by White men, and how the oppression of brown women by the White men or a dominant White society was not as visible. After that, I started reading more about what has turned into my master's thesis. I found it even more exciting and essential to do this research due to not finding much research on racialization and sexualization of women of color in the Norwegian context.

This dissertation aims to contribute with more research to fill the gap of missing knowledge in the Norwegian context. The study is meant to understand better the experiences of the participants with different ancestries in Norway regarding racialization and sexualization. The study is based on participants with ancestries from East, Central, and West Africa, South America, and Southeast Asia. They will also be referred to as "women of color." I want to note that there are other groups of color that are not part of the dissertation, such as women with Middle Eastern ancestry. I had to delineate as it would have been too much to cover in the maximum number of pages allowed. Not least, it is essential to mention that my intention with the dissertation is not to generalize the experiences of all women of color. Women of color can share similar experiences of racialization. However, all the experiences are shaped differently by their different and multiple positionalities within a matrix of domination

(Calafell, 2012, p.116) in the form of gender, race, and the ability to express their experiences through language and concepts.

Explanation of concepts

The critical thinking of concepts was initiated by cultural creator Michael W. Opara in his podcast *MoftMinds*, standing for "meeting of the minds ". The podcast was about an open conversation about racism in Norway, that now turned into a conversation about creativity, passion, and art. In one of the episodes, Opara was critical of the concept of "minority" (Litteraturhuset I Bergen, 2021, 2:22), which sparked my critical thinking about different concepts used in a Norwegian context about people of color. Journalist Ruby Hamad states, *"Writing about race is a fraught business, as is writing about gender"* (Hamad, 2021, p. 1). Therefore, this section is meant to clarify how I use this dissertation's main concepts. This is to give the reader an understanding of how I have chosen to interpret the concepts and to avoid misrepresentations.

Different Concepts in a Norwegian context

Mette Andersson presents different concepts used in research in a Norwegian context. "Immigrant" means an individual who moves to another country intending to stay in that country. "Descendants" refer to children of immigrants who were born in Norway. "Visible minority" is used as a substitute for the American-British term "racial minority." The challenge with using the latter term is that it needs to be operationalized. That is to say, a "recipe" must be given for who is to be categorized as a "visible minority." The term is typically used as a common catchphrase for people with a background from Africa, Asia, South, and Latin America. On the other hand, the criticism of this term has been that invisibility and visibility can be about variations in skin color within countries and regions, in addition to place and participants in the interaction. Clothing and religious symbols can be an essential function for those who are considered a visible minority as well (Andersson, 2022, p. 25).

"Immigrants" and "foreigners" are not just words in the dictionary but also rhetorically powerful concepts and charged words in many contexts. There has been a change in the words' meaning and value over time. The media has caricatured "immigrants" and "foreigners" as troublemakers, especially within crime and violence, which has given the

words an even more negative load (Gullestad, 2002, p. 89). The concepts refer to all people outside of Norway in the dictionary, including Europeans like Swedes and Germans. In practice, on the other hand, there is often an implied meaning that limits it to people who are perceived as "visibly different." Being visibly different in Norway can mean having darker skin, being non-White, and having a "strange name." Therefore, applying the words to those visibly different, but not other White Western immigrants, does not make the word neutral (Gullestad, 2002, p. 89). Even descendants of immigrants who are born in Norway, or have a White Norwegian parent, are often not considered ordinary Norwegians if they are "visibly different" (Gullestad, 2002, p. 93). Being "Norwegian" seems at most to be an innate quality that cannot be achieved (Gullestad, 2002, p. 98) unless you are identified as the "right type" of White.

I am skeptical of these concepts as they can be negatively loaded for several people (Gullestad, 2002, p. 43). Additionally, all of the participants of this dissertation have different stories. Some are born in Norway, others came to Norway as either a child or teen, and some have White Norwegian parent/s. Therefore, it is hard to find a term among the mentioned which is currently used in the Norwegian context, that fits all of the participants.

People of color

In my dissertation, I have decided to use people/women/men of color when referring to participants or individuals not identified as White, as the dissertation leans more on phenotypes and appearance rather than identity. The term "people/women/men of color" is a term that is primarily used in Canada and in The United States to describe an individual who is not identified as White (Moses, 2016). It is not easy to find a specific definition for the term. However, it is constantly used, especially when addressing issues that regard more than one group of people (as seen in Moraga & Anzaldúa, 2021; Hernandez & Rehman, 2019). Anthropologists Yolanda Moses (2016) refers to the Oxford English dictionary when stating that the term derived from the French Colonial era in the Caribbean and North America. It traditionally referred to people of mixed African and European ancestry freed from slavery or born into freedom. The term was adopted in the late 20th century and was a preferable replacement for "non-White." It could also replace the term "minority," which had come to have a negative meaning attached to it in a North American context. Moses argues that the term "people of color" may have an essential role since it includes different racial or ethnic

groups and makes it easier for the groups to have the potential to form solidarities with each other. Therefore, the term is proper when discussing social justice and civil or human rights contexts (Moses, 2016). People have been conditioned to illustrate race as Black or White (Al-Yagout, 2017, p. 5), and the term "people of color" is supposed to be an umbrella term for different groups and ethnicities who do not identify as racially White (Al-Yagout, 2017, p. 6).

Different researchers use the concepts differently. Hamad has opted to use the term "brown" for all people who do not qualify as "White" (Hamad, 2021, p.1). The scholar Sara Ahmed, whose areas of study are topics like feminism and queer theory, reflects further on the concepts. For instance, she uses the figure of "the angry Black woman" for all women of color but reflects that words can fail to capture the complexities of history. Such as, in the UK context, "Black feminism" would refer to work by all feminists of color, but in the United States, this would not be the case (Ahmed, 2010, p. 245). Even though her book is mainly directed at women, she also uses the term "feminist of color" when referring to feminists who are not identified as White (Ahmed, 2010, p. 245). Additionally, activist and author Audre Lorde uses the same term when speaking about women of different ancestries. She says.

> "*When I speak of women of color, I do not only mean Black women. We are also Asian American, Caribbean, Chicana, Latina, Hispanic, Native American, and we have a right to each of our names*" (Lorde, 1981, p. 8).

I find the term "women of color" to fit the participants of this study the best, as the criteria to participate is to have phenotypes that are non-White. Even though, as Hamad discusses in her book, who is White and who is not, it is not as simple as it once was. It was often used to denote the skin color of Europeans concerning Native Americans and Africans, so "White" can be better understood as an indication of racial privilege. Therefore, who is considered "White" is now less about how pale they are. Instead, it is more about whether they are the "right kind" of pale, even though paleness has privileges that will soon be discussed. For instance, several individuals with ancestry from the Middle East have pale skin (Hamad, 2021, p. 1). The same goes for my participants with ancestry from Southeast Asia and South America. On the other hand, other participants from the same areas also have more olive or brown skin. Besides, people of color with pale skin can also have other phenotypes that distinguish them from White people, such as hair texture. Consequently, being "of color" and

"White" are not descriptive. They are rather political. Talking about "White" people is more about those who benefit from Whiteness than their skin color (Hamad, 2021, p. 2).

Colorism

It is essential to underline that even though there are participants who are not identified as "White" but still go under the category "person of color," it does not mean that colorism is not present. Colorism is a form of discrimination where people with light or lighter complexions are advantaged over those with dark or darker complexions (Strmic-Pawl et al., 2021, p. 289). As mentioned above, some individuals with pale skin fall under the "people of color" category. Nevertheless, racialization can be experienced differently, even with pale skin. This can vary depending on their ethnic and racial mix and the contextual situations in which they live (Törngren, 2022, p. 63). On the other hand, it is essential to acknowledge that paler skin will come with privilege. People with paler skin can have the opportunity to "pass" as White if they make adjustments to their appearance, such as color and straightening their hair or changing their names. People with darker skin, on the other hand, will not have this opportunity.

Moreover, colorism is not only present among individuals with White and dark skin. Within the continent of Africa itself, colorism and the shades of Blackness are perceived as authentic racial differentiations. For instance, a light-skinned individual in Sudan can identify as Arab and not Black (Hāshim, 2019, p. 33). Despite that, they can still be identified as Black in a Norwegian context, even if they identify as Arab in an African context. In short, even though all the participants of this study go under the category "women of color," all participants experience different forms of racialization. However, lighter complexions are also advantaged over dark or darker complexions (Strmic-Pawl et al., 2021, p. 289).

Race and racialization

The central dilemma in Scandinavia is whether it is possible to use the concept of "race" in sociological analysis without perpetuating the notion that there are separate races (Andersson, 2022b, p. 65). The political and ethical challenges arising from using the term related to specific histories make using the concepts more complicated, primarily because Scandinavia has previously been influenced by phrenology, eugenics, and social Darwinism, which today's Scandinavian authorities want to distance themselves from (Andersson, 2022b, p. 66).

On the other hand, the advantage of using the term "race" is a concept with a higher degree of precision, that one can examine categorization and exclusion based on skin color or/and phenotypes. Since "ethnicity" only refers implicitly and, in some cases, to bodily markers or differences, the category ethnicity will not be the starting point when analyzing people adopted from abroad (Andersson, 2022b, p. 67). This is because, even if there is a common origin or border-drawing practices between groups, which can be prominent in both examples, both skin color and phenotype will have a more significant role in both others' emphasis on differences and their self-identification. Therefore, "race," in contrast to "ethnicity," will point more closely to physical markers of difference. Another advantage is that the further one goes into the past, where European and North American powers developed systematic racial hierarchies to dominate people worldwide, the easier it is to dismiss the lasting effects this has had (Ponce, 2022, p. 74). Sociologist Aaron Ponce also underlines that it is challenging to study ideas about "race" in a society that denies the concept's relevance, especially within the European context (Ponce, 2022, p. 74).

If the term race is to be avoided in Scandinavian sociology and context, there is a need for other concepts that point towards phenotypes and color as categories of distinction. The term "racialization" has its roots in postcolonial theory and critical race and Whiteness studies. In a Norwegian context, to research people of color, it has been more common to refer to the concept of "ethnicity". However, researchers claim that "ethnicity" can be problematic, as it can hide inequality linked to appearance (Mathisen, 2020, p. 127). Therefore, concepts such as "race" and "racialization" are preferred to clarify discrimination that can be linked to appearance (Mathisen, 2020, p. 128). Racialization is a process in which racial thinking is used consciously and unconsciously to classify individuals or groups based on their "assumed ethnicity" (Giddes & Sutton, 2017 in Massao, 2022, p. 107). The term is more based on the idea that the object of study is not a specific ethnicity or race in itself but rather forms part of processes and relationships where categories such as race and ideas about the origin of the object of study are made meaningful (Garner, 2009, in Massao, 2022, p. 107). The term, therefore, shows how racism is embedded in social practice, and the focus has been moved from single individuals and groups to social structural conditions (Rogstad & Midtbøen, 2010, in Bangstad, 2017, p. 234).

The racialization perspective has also been highlighted as applicable to several more groups that are not considered an ethnicity but still face discrimination, such as Muslims. This fallacy

proposes that "race" exists in a biological sense (Bangstad, 2021, p. 13). From the Norwegian context, it has been documented that individuals with Muslim backgrounds are exposed to a higher degree of negative prejudice than individuals who are not Muslim. They also experience more discrimination in the housing and labor market and are not least overrepresented as victims of hate crimes in Norway (Oslopolitet 2020 in Bangstad, 2021, p. 13). Therefore, I have chosen to use the term "racialization" in this dissertation as it can apply to more groups who get racialized differently.

Intersectionality

The concept of intersectionality was first used by civil rights advocate and scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw when she referred to the existing discrimination legislation and social-political measures in the USA that could not meet Black women's needs and rights. Crenshaw claims that it is only when we recognize how gender, race, and class work together that we can create effective laws and social measures (Orupabo, 2014, p.332). Though sexism and racism intersect in people's lives, they seldom do in anti-racist or feminist practices, Crenshaw argues. Therefore, when the practices expound an identity either as a woman or a person of color, one relegates the identity of women of color to a location that resists telling (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1242). The term started appearing during the Black feminist criticism against feminism from the 1970s-1980s when the Black feminists argued that feminism was a White middle-class feminism struggle. They pointed out that, over a long time, Black women had worked as servants under White women and thus were subordinate in both class and racial positions. Based on this, they stated that Black women had been oppressed concerning gender, race, and class. Therefore, several dimensions of power worked together, which led to more potent and complicated forms of oppression (Andersson, 2022, p. 71).

Another example can be people who are underprivileged and exposed to racism, but men will nevertheless be privileged regarding gender. This means anti-racism does not necessarily harmonize with the conditions set for gender justice. Therefore, to avoid reinforcing only one social problem in an analysis, a concept and analysis tool must grasp the interplay between the specific contexts (Gressgård, 2022, p. 121). Over time, several scholars have developed other concepts, such as "the matrix of domination" (Collins, 1991) and the "interlocking system of oppression" (Razack, 1998), to mention a few. These concepts can also be claimed to be closely related to intersectionality (Lykke, 2003 in Gullikstad, 2013, p. 69).

9

There are two main approaches to this perspective. The first one is the structure-oriented approach which is more dominant in the US context, and the post-structuralist approach which is dominant in the European and Nordic contexts. The structure-oriented approach is focused on the different power structures in society and how they work together. On the other hand, the post-structuralist approach distances itself from that "absolute" understanding of power. In the Swedish context, de los Reyes & Mulinari (2005) argues that the selection of relevant powers is context dependent. Power is understood as a fluid positioning. For instance, in social difference, gender does not need to have a meaning or interact with other categories in a given context (in Orupabo, 2014, p. 332). Another argument in this approach is that gender, class, or ethnicity is not something you are. It is something you do. In a Danish context, Staunæs (2004) argues that gender and ethnicity have come into being through discourses and language. They are sociocultural constructions that do not have an ontological reality. Therefore, being a majority or minority, for instance, is not something you are but is made possible through discourses and interaction with others (in Orupabo, 2014, p. 333).

I stand with both approaches. With the structured-oriented approach, I agree that both sexism and racism intersect in people's lives (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1242), such as in the lives of the participants of the study. When participants of the study experience being sexually racialized, not only are they sexualized as a woman, but they are often sexualized based on stereotypes. On the other hand, I also agree with the post-structuralist approach about race and ethnicity being made through discourses and language (Orupabo, 2014, p. 333), as it did not exist as a form of group discrimination that was based on "racial differences." Instead, it became an exclusive identity only with colonialism (Mamdani, 2012).

Dissertation structure

The dissertation will be divided into seven chapters. Following chapter two, I will present the theoretical framework used in the analysis. Chapter three will describe the methodological approaches, such as the approach for the dissertation, data collection and analysis, credibility, and ethical consideration. In the following chapters, I will present an empirical analysis of how women of color get racialized and sexualized, given the participant's experienced reality. The chapters will dive deeper into the participants' understanding of their self-perception as children, internalized oppression, racialization, confrontation, and ignorance, among other subjects. Additionally, I look into how the participants' experiences from their childhood and

teenage years have affected the transition into adulthood and their current thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes regarding gender, race, and discrimination.

The sub-questions will form the structure of the chapters. The analytic chapters will be in chronological order of the participants' lives. The fourth chapter will start with their childhood, where the experiences will be in a retrospective view, and analyze the "internalization of White beauty standard." The fifth chapter will analyze the experiences the participants have had with "racialization and sexualization," where the stories are based primarily on their teenage and young adult years. The sixth and last analytical chapter, "Killjoy," will be based on the participants' standpoint in the present moment and how the experiences from the previous chapters have shaped their stance when deciding to go from not confronting racism and sexism in the past, to now confronting both, or not to confront them, and how they are encountered as "sensitive and aggressive women." Finally, chapter seven will present the final concluding discussions.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter will present the theoretical framework for the dissertation, which builds upon postcolonial and feminist theories that are relevant to topics for how women of color get both racialized and sexualized. Before diving into the views for the analysis, I will present previous research and how the concepts "race" and "ethnicity" have been used in different times and contexts. Even though I explained how I interpret the concepts earlier in the introduction, I find it essential to give historical background and how they are used in different contexts. The further use of the concepts has resulted in Norway having less data and research on people of color compared to countries like the UK and the US. In addition, because of the lack of research in Norway, I will also present previous research from the neighboring country Sweden.

Previous research

Previous research on women of color from other countries, such as the US, statistically refers to different struggles. The numbers show, for instance, that rape rates for Black women are higher than White women's rates (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1252), in addition to police brutality (Crenshaw et al., 2015). Research on topics like sexual violations against women of color in Norway is minimal. Researchers Bjørnholt, Bredal & Ruud underline in their NOVA report that minimal research in Norway and the North touches upon or deals with sexual offenses against people with an immigrant background, which I assume also includes people of color in general. The report mentions the anthology "Rape in the Nordic Countries" from 2019, which different researchers from the North have contributed to, but with no contributions dealing specifically with people of color (Bjørnoholt et al., 2021, p. 15). One of the reasons for this could be the use of the concept of "race." According to Journalist Jakob S. Aasmundsen, Norway does not record an individual's skin color, resulting in fewer statistics on people of color (Aasmundsen, 2021, p. 73).

Although, some research on women of color in different arenas has been published recently. There have been a few studies, such as discrimination against women of color in the healthcare sector (Lindheim, 2022) and racism against individuals with origin from East Asia in Norway, which also mentions the sexualized image of the Asian woman (Hessaa-Szwinto, 2023), in addition to other research (Lenz, 2022). On the other hand, research on the same

topics arrived earlier in the neighboring country Sweden, as they were early on research regarding migration, race, and racism (Andersson, 2022, p. 121). Studies on how Latinas are racially sexualized and how gender and ethnicity or/and race intersect in a sexualized world are shown in early studies that go back almost two decades (Lundström, 2006, p. 203), in addition to more recent studies on how racialization intersects with gender (Törngren, 2022, p. 63).

Race and Ethnicity through time

Research shows that the word "race" was first used in the English language in the 16th century when the European states began colonizing countries in both America and Asia (Andersson, 2022, p. 39). To control the societies, the colonizers divided people into defined castes (Bull, 2015, p. 37) based on phenotypes and skin color. An individual's placement within the system would determine her or his privilege within the colonies (Chavez-Dueñas et al., 2014, p. 7). One can still see the aftereffects of history when people were divided into different castes and racial hierarchies. For instance, White superiority flourished in post-colonial America (Chavez-Dueñas et al., 2014, p.8). Another example is different sayings in the post-colonial period of different countries in Asia, such as Japan. A Japanese proverb says 「のいはす」 ('iro no shiroiwa shichinan kakusu') translated into English, "White skin hides seven defects" (Ushijima, 2013, in Soliño, 2020, p.80), meaning, that even though an individual has defects, the White skin puts these defects out of sight.

Did race exist before modern colonialism, or was it constructed during this period? According to the literary scholar Tzvetan Todorov, there were differences in pigmentation, and the physical differences could determine cultural differences (Todorov, 2000, p. 69). Historical records, such as the Old and New Testaments of the Bible, show how ethnic groups have always existed in the sense that people's lifestyles and languages distinguished them from others. However, people of the ancient world understood that cultural characteristics were external, such as "barbarians" could learn the Greek language and participate in that culture (Smedley, 1998, p. 691). According to social researcher Mahmood Mamdani on the other hand, race did not exist as a form of group discrimination that was based on "racial differences." Races and tribes became an exclusive identity only with colonialism (Mamdani, 2012). Ethnicities, differences in pigmentation, and physical differences that could distinguish people from one another have existed since ancient times. Slavery was present in ancient

times, such as in Ancient Greece. However, Greeks also enslaved one another Europeans, and their submission to slavery was not primarily justified along racial lines (Forsdyke, 2021, p. 6). Therefore, I agree with race not existing as a form of group discrimination based on "racial differences" before colonialism. Only when "race" appeared in human history did it transform the global perceptions of human differences and impose social meanings on physical variations among human groups (Smedley, 1998, p. 693). Not least, if one human group discriminated against another based on "racial differences" in ancient times, it would be a conflict among specific groups. With colonialism, discrimination, and stigmatization spread globally, and White superiority is present in several societies worldwide.

After the Holocaust, the UN organized several conferences on race, where biologists determined that there was no basis for the concept of race in natural science. Sociologists kept the term but now understand it as a social, not a biological, term. In the middle of the 20th century, the debate about the concept of race was about whether one should continue to use this concept, which has no scientific legitimacy and also caused the holocaust. In both American and British social research, the term is still used, but in the sense of social race, i.e., of group affiliations to categorize people in, for example, politics and public debate (Andersson, 2022, p. 41).

Post colonial theory concerning oppression

The postcolonial theory emphasizes the historical, global, and, therefore, colonial dimensions of race relations and how imperialism is based upon racial stratification and racial thought. There can be many things that need to be clarified about postcolonial theory. For instance, "post" in postcolonial means "after colonialism," as if postcolonial theory implies that colonialism is over. Instead, one of the premises of postcolonial theory is that colonialism and its correlates carry on in various guises today (Go, 2018, p. 1). Some of the most known intellectuals within postcolonial theory are Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, and Homi Bhabha, among others (Go, 2018, p. 2).

On the other hand, I will primarily focus on the earlier incarnations with anti-colonial thoughts (Go, 2018, p. 2) of writers and scholars such as Frantz Fanon, Albert Memmi, and Paulo Freire. They focus on colonialism's effects on the self-perception of the former colonized and could also be described as the "first wave" of postcolonial thought (Go, 2018,

p. 2). Sociologist researcher Julian Go claims that historicizing current race relations through a stronger appreciation of colonial theory help to transcend "racial prejudice," reductionism, and racism's presentism. In addition, it helps us map the signifying systems that give meaning to race by recapturing the colonial histories that generated those systems in the first place. One example he mentions is that it is typically assumed that the racialization of Muslims began after 9/11. However, several scholars show how presentism overlooks the history of Orientalist discourse that goes back centuries to European Imperialism (Go, 2018, p. 5).

Psychiatrist and political philosopher Frantz Fanon reflects on the cultural assimilation that the formerly colonized have taken upon them (Fanon, 1986, p. 37). He shows how colonialism has prevented the colonized from having an independent identity and instead wished to be White (Fanon, 1986, p. 16). He pointed out two kinds of people: those who forget who they are and those who remember where they came from (Fanon, 1986, p. 37). Forgetting who they are results in the formerly colonized being caught in an impossible bind. They cannot have their indigenous culture because they try assimilating into the former colonizers by wearing European clothes (Fanon, 1986, p. 25). He argues that when dominated communities have been subjected to a hierarchy of power for a long time, they do not see the value of their native culture. Instead, they want to embody the oppressor's culture (Fanon, 1963, in Kohli, 2014, p. 370). Even when trying to assimilate, they still cannot achieve equality within the colonial culture because of their physical appearance, leading to identity confusion and self-doubt (Fanon, 1986, p. 60).

In his last book, "The Wretched of the Earth," Fanon argues how mental disorders in the colonized world arose from colonialism and how these mental disorders will prevail (Fanon, 1963, p. 249) not only through violence but also through the different ideas that were hammered into the natives' minds (Fanon, 1963, p.47). Such as before colonialism, their history was dominated by barbarism (Fanon, 1963, p.213). Fanon points out, "*We will have to bind up for years to come to the many, sometimes ineffaceable, wounds that the colonialist onslaught has inflicted on our people*" (Fanon, 1963, p. 200). He stated that the wounds inflicted on the former colonized could take many years to recover from and could be passed down through generations (Fanon, 1963, in Kohli, p. 370). Even though Fanon's work is based on the Antilles, he also mentions that the same behavior patterns can be obtained in every group that has been subjected and victim to colonization (Fanon, 1952, p. 25).

Frantz Fanon discusses mental disorders and assimilation (1963, 1986). Sociologist Albert Memmi, on the other hand, discusses the formerly colonized belief in the inferiority of their indigenous identity (David & Derthick, 2014, p.8). He describes the colonized as hardly human beings but rather how rapidly they became an object (Memmi, 1965, p. 86). Furthermore, he underlines that the echo in the former colonized themselves is more harmful than being viewed as an object by others. When the colonized are constantly confronted with a negative image of themselves, not only by some but an image imposed on all institutions and in every human contact, how could the colonized avoid reacting to that portrait? With time, the colonized ended up recognizing it as one would detest a nickname that has become a familiar description (Memmi, 1965, p. 87). Similar to Fanon's reflection on assimilation (Fanon, 1986, p. 25). The formerly colonized starts asking questions like "Is he not partially right?" Alternatively, "Are we not all a little guilty of it all? Lazy because we have such similar idlers? or timid because we let ourselves be oppressed?". Eventually, the mythical and degrading portrait of the former colonized, created and spread by the former colonizer, ends up being accepted by the former colonized and lives with them to a certain extent (Memmi, 1965, p. 87).

The formerly colonized accepting the degrading portrait was essential to the relationship between the colonizer and colonized. For the colonizer to be a "master," it was not enough for the colonizer to be so. The former colonized had to believe in its legitimacy (Memmi, 1965, p.88). For this legitimacy to be complete, it was not enough for the colonized to be enslaved but to accept his role (Memmi, 1965, p. 89). This has led to some of the formerly colonized becoming their "sub-oppressors," meaning that the fact that the oppressed will, at a certain moment in their lives, adopt a feeling of "adhesion" to their oppressor (Freire, 2018, p.45).

Pedagogist Paulo Freire argues that the oppressed suffer from the duality that has been established. They have discovered that without freedom, they cannot exist sincerely. On the other hand, even if they desire this freedom, they fear it. This conflict lies between choosing to be their whole selves, or being divided, to be in human solidarity or alienation (Freire, 2018, p.48). Moreover, he argues that the first stage of dealing with the oppressed and oppressors' consciousness is to consider their behavior, ethics, and worldviews into account (Freire, 2018, p. 55). How can this change? Freire underlines that it is the job of the oppressed

to be free. This is because by freeing themselves, they will also free their oppressors. The oppressors can neither free themselves nor the oppressed. Therefore, the oppressed must conduct the struggle to resolve the contradiction in which they are caught. This can be resolved with the appearance of the new man, neither oppressor nor oppressed, but a man of liberation. If the goal is to become human, the oppressed will not achieve this by changing poles and becoming the oppressor. Because when the oppressor dehumanizes others, they also become dehumanized. If the oppressed remove the oppressor's power of domination, they can also restore the humanity the oppressors had lost in the exercise of oppression (Freire, 2018, p. 56).

Postcolonial feminist theory and objectification of women

Postcolonial feminist theory is primarily concerned with the representation of women in once-colonized countries and Western locations. While postcolonial theorists struggle against the maiden colonial discourse that aims at misrepresenting him as inferior, the task of a postcolonial feminist is far more complicated. She suffers from double colonization as she simultaneously experiences the oppression of colonialism and patriarchy. She must resist the control of colonial power as a colonized subject and as a woman (Ritu, 2014, p. 46). Postcolonialism and feminism have come to share a tense relationship as some feminist critics point out that postcolonial theory is a male-centered field that has not only excluded the concerns of women but also exploited them (Ritu, 2014, p. 46).

An example of this is Frantz Fanon. Though his reflections are a classic in postcolonial theory, his writings are still criticized for not including the struggle of Black women. In "Black Skin, White masks," he initially frames his arguments regarding the experiences of Black men and women to be similar (Wahl, 2021, p. 43). When Fanon examined Capecia's writings, she described how her Black father pushed her to find a White partner. Rather than engaging in the layer of sexism, Fanon overlooked this part in his examination. On the contrary, he blamed the search for a White partner on Capecia herself, implying that she chose her oppression (Wahl, 2021, p. 47).

There are several theorists in postcolonial feminism, such as one of the most influential figures Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. She is known for her texts on those marginalized by Western culture, "third world women " and western feminism, among other subjects (Morton,

2003). For this dissertation, on the other hand, I will use Fredrickson & Robert's (1997) objectification theory and Sara Ahmed's (2010) killjoy theory. Both theories look into women and their representation in forms of sexuality and anger. However, both theories also have arguments specific to women of color that can be traced to colonialism. I have used several more theorists in the analysis, such as feminists and activists bell hooks (1992) and Audre Lorde (1981), and philosopher of race Myisha Cherry (2021). Though all of these theorists are relevant to this chapter, I have chosen to reduce the extent to present the most dominant theories in the dissertation.

Psychology researchers Fredrickson & Robert's (1997) theoretical framework places the female body in a sociocultural context, aiming to illuminate the experiences and mental health risks of girls and women who encounter sexual objectification. Sexual objectification is a form of gender oppression, which also influence other oppressions that women face, such as workplace discrimination and sexual violence. The common thread that runs through all forms of sexual objectification is the experience of the woman being treated as "a body" valued predominantly for its use to others than herself. Feminists have for a long time identified how objectifying treatment is harmful to women. However, on the other hand, the micro-level components of the harm it causes have rarely been specified (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p. 174). Fredrickson & Roberts (1997) also clarifies that not all women experience and respond to sexual objectification the same. There are unique combinations of ethnicity, sexuality, age, class, and other personal and physical attributes that create a unique set of experiences for women and experiences that are shared by particular subgroups of women (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p. 174). Yet, having a female body may create a shared social experience and a vulnerability to sexual objectification, which will again create a shared set of psychological experiences (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p. 175)

Sexualization may occur in different forms, from sexual violence to sexual evaluation. The most subtle and deniable way sexual evaluation is enacted and ubiquitous is through gaze, the visual inspection of the body (Kaschak, 1992, in Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p. 175). The psychological repercussions of sexual violence have gotten the research attention. However, more subtle everyday practices, such as sexualized gazing, have less attention and research. In the context of sexual gazing, a potential for sexual objectification arises. Sexual objectification occurs whenever a body, body parts, or other sexual functions are separated from the individual's personality and regarded as representing the individual (Bartky, 1990, in

Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p. 175). When a woman is objectified, she is treated as a body that exists for the use and pleasure of others. Even though not all men sexually objectify women (Stoltenberg, 1989, in Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p. 175), the sexually objectifying gaze is not under women's control. Therefore, few women can avoid potentially objectifying contexts (Kaschak, 1992, in Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p. 176).

Scholar Sara Ahmed discusses how feminism has been perceived through history and anger. The history of feminism can be seen as a history of making trouble, a history of women not wanting only to become a good woman who keeps their family together. It is a history of women who refuse to make others happy (Ahmed, 2010, p.60). Somewhere in this history, the killjoy or troublemaker was created. The reason that a female troublemaker causes trouble for others might be because she gets in the way of others' happiness. Happiness might keep a woman out of trouble, but only by evoking the unhappiness of getting into trouble (Ahmed, 2010, p.60). A feminist might kill the joy by simply not finding the object that is supposed to promise happiness to not be quite promising after all. Therefore, a feminist, just by declaring herself as one, can already be read as destroying something that is happiness. It can even be seen as a spoilsport because the feminist refuses to assemble or to up over happiness. Therefore, in society today, a feminist can be attributed as the origin of bad feelings, as the ones who ruin the atmosphere. Opening her mouth, she can be met with others already rolling their eyes as if to say, "Oh, here she goes again" (Ahmed, 2010, p. 65). To be recognized as a feminist is already being assigned to a complicated category. One is already presumed as an individual "who is not easy to get along with," and the situations of conflict are read as about the unhappiness of the feminist rather than being concentrated on what the unhappiness is about (Ahmed, 2010, p. 67).

Furthermore, Ahmed also applies the figure of a feminist killjoy alongside the figure of the "angry Black woman," also described as a killjoy. The "angry Black woman" may even be the killjoy of the feminist killjoy, pointing out the racism within feminist politics. As bell hooks described, a group of White feminist activists may bond over shared womanhood, but the atmosphere will noticeably change when a woman of color enters the room. They become tense, no longer relaxed, and no longer celebratory (hooks, 2000, in Ahmed, 2010, p. 67). The reasonable arguments of a woman of color are often dismissed as anger, which might make one angry. The response becomes read as the confirmation of evidence that one is both angry and unreasonable. The feminist of color may be angry about how racism and

sexism diminish her life. Anger is a judgment that something is wrong. Nevertheless, when being heard as angry, their speech is read as if it was motivated by anger. It is read as if one is against X because one is angry rather than being angry because one is against X (Ahmed, 2010, p. 68). What is intriguing is that the violence of what was said usually goes unnoticed, but when the feminist speaks, she is usually the one who is "causing the argument," the one that is disturbing the fragility of peace. Sara Ahmed therefore asks, does the feminist kill other people's joy by pointing out the moments of sexism? Or does the feminist expose the bad feelings hidden under public signs of joy? (Ahmed, 2010, p. 65).

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

In the methodology chapter, I will present and discuss the methodological choices that have been made during the creation of the dissertation. The dissertation is a qualitative study based on empirical material collected through semi-structured interviews during the summer and fall of 2022. The chapter will present the epistemology and position and the data collection process, then continue with the data analysis and discuss the credibility of the empirical data collection. After that, I will be presenting the ethical considerations. Finally, the chapter will explain the four phases of analysis strategy that have been followed and the use of thematic analysis, and end with how I will interpret the data from the participant's point of view.

This study is based on a qualitative research approach. This approach is best fitted for my study as it is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning of both individuals and groups ascribed to a social or human problem. The analysis for this dissertation explores the importance of the "women of color" group explained to a social problem in Norway concerning racialization and sexualization. This approach involves emerging questions and interviews, collecting empirical data in the participants setting, and finally, building the data analysis from particulars to general themes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 4).

I have chosen phenomenology as an inspiration for my study, as the phenomenological approach means to explore and describe individuals who have all experienced the same phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 13). This method is used to study reality as individuals perceive it. This study aims to precisely describe the participants' perspectives, experiences, and horizons of understanding. What is important to note is that the same phenomenon is experienced individually and is based on several factors, like each individual's interest, background, and understanding of the phenomenon (Johannessen et al., 2016, p. 78). I also chose a social constructivist view, as it emphasizes the individual's reality.

Epistemology

"*Epistemology is the philosophical theory of knowledge*" (Brinkmann, 2017, p. 10). It is essential to stress epistemology, as all qualitative research projects embody different ideas about what knowledge is and how it is obtained (Brinkmann, 2017, p. 10).

This dissertation will use the social constructivist view, as it combines well with the inspiration of phenomenology, even though it distances itself from the idea that society can be regarded as a socially independent dimension. Instead, social constructivism considers reality socially created because we understand reality based on various social factors. Therefore, different people can have different perceptions of the same phenomenon. Social constructivists are therefore concerned with what lies in a concept or word, such as "woman". How is the concept understood in different historical eras and cultures, and at the same time, how specific meanings and inequalities are produced by various social conditions (Tjora, 2018, pp. 33-34).

Moreover, it is also typically seen as an approach to qualitative research. It often centralizes the lives and lived experiences of diverse groups that have been marginalized and how the oppressor has constrained their lives as the importance of the study. The diverse groups could be groups that experience inequities based on gender, race, ethnicity, disability, socioeconomic class, and sexual orientation, that result in asymmetric power relationships. This study will focus on groups that experience inequities based on gender and race, as well as on how they have used strategies to resist, challenge and subvert these constraints (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 10).

Qualification and recruitment of participants

Kvale & Brinkmann (2015) state that the answer to "How many informants do I need?" is simple. Their solution is to interview as many individuals as necessary to determine what you need to know. In an interview survey, there may be 15 + - 10 informants. It depends on how much time and resources you have for the survey (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 148).

The qualification to participate in this study was to be between the ages of 18-45 and a woman of color who has ancestry from Southeast Asia, South America, and East, Central, and West Africa. I chose to aim for participants that were young adults. I still put the age to 45 in case I found participants from a different generation and still qualified for the study. The criteria are to be of color and with the backgrounds mentioned above. South America, a settler colony, has different ethnicities, including individuals who can be defined as typically White since they can be descendants of European settlers. Therefore, I will focus on individuals from South America with a mix of African, Indigenous and European heritage (Chavez-

Dueñas et al., 2014, p. 8). I chose these ancestries simply to delimitate the dissertation, and I had more accessible access to participants with the mentioned ancestries through acquaintances.

I started by recruiting participants from a cultural organization. This organization has meetings where they discuss topics concerning women of color. I have attended some meetings via. Zoom as they have that option for those who cannot attend physically but are still interested to hear the conversation. I started to participate in the meetings because of my interest in 2021. When I began my research proposal, I saw that there could be potential participants, as they were engaged in these topics. All of the participants were contacted through social media such as Facebook.

Initially, the plan was to recruit all the participants from the organization and have 12 participants, four from each ancestry category. Getting all the participants from the cultural organization was challenging due to the time limitation for several individuals. This led to creating of two groups: the "politically engaged" and the "less politically engaged." Where the politically engaged group started with the participants from the cultural organization. I used the snowball method to acquire more politically engaged and less engaged participants. I did contact 28 potential participants, and 13 participated and answered the invitation. I did have one extra participant in the category of African ancestry, which I decided to keep as all the interviews contained experiences that could be used in the analysis.

The participants of the study

Participant Category	Number of participants	South American ancestry	African ancestry	Southeast Asian ancestry
Politically engaged	6	2	3	1

Less politically engaged	7	2	2	3
Cultural Organization	4	2	2	0
Snowball Method	7	2	2	3
Total participants				13

Table 1. The participants of the study

The overview of the participants can be seen in Table One. I have put East, Central, and West Africa into one category. The phenotypes can differ in different parts of the continent, such as East Africa, where an individual can be mixed, and West Africa. Being aware of that, I have decided to put them into one category because when women from East, Central, and West Africa experience racialization in a Norwegian context, it is mainly for their skin color.

Otherwise, the participants have similarities and dissimilarities in their education, upbringing, and work. I will not be concrete with this information because of anonymity, which will be discussed in the "Research Ethics" section. However, the workplace that dominated the most among the participants was within the medicine and health sector. Four out of 13 participants worked within the health sector, and two have an education in this field. One more participant is not working within this field yet but is studying within the area. Elsewise, three out of 13 participants work within the nightlife and service, one out of 13 works as an artist, one in a kindergarten, two at different stores, and one works within a dominant male business.

In summary, most of them work within women-dominated sectors. Eight out of 13 participants have or are in the process of completing their education. The health and medicine sector dominates, or there is one participant with education within business, one within arts and two within psychology, and two 5-year professional education.

Most of the participants are grown up in Norway. Five out of 13 participants were born in Norway. Five came when they were under six, two were between eight and 12, and one when she was 18. Additionally, nine out of 13 participants grew up in "multicultural" environments, but four out of 13 participants grew up in White-dominated environments. The two participants grew up in the countryside, where the population had few people of color. One participant grew up in a city, but in the part where there are fewer people of color, resulting in only having White Norwegian friends growing up. At last, one participant was adopted by two White Norwegian parents and grew up in a city with fewer people of color. Though she was not the only participant with Norwegian parents, two more participants had a White Norwegian mother and mixed ancestries.

Two groups: Politically engaged and "less" politically engaged.

As mentioned above, it did not work out to only have participants from the cultural organization who were politically engaged, resulting in having two groups. Even though it was not planned, it made the analysis more interesting. This gave the opportunity to see if there was any difference in the experiences of the participants of the different groups. When politically engaged, you will gain knowledge and expand your language by learning new concepts and concepts. These concepts can help to identify patterns when interpreting a situation (Wu & Dunning, 2017, p. 2). Conceptual horizons are a pervasive and powerful constraint for how an individual makes sense of the world. The horizon can represent the boundaries of individuals' possible interpretation of their circumstances (Wu & Dunning, 2017, p. 1). The notion of hypo cognition was introduced to modern behavioral science by Robert Levy (1973) in his classic field study of the Society Islands in Tahiti in anthropology. For example, in his research, Levy noticed the expression of emotion from suffering painful loss among the Tahitians. What he noticed was that they did not express any long-term grief. They neither articulated any conception of the emotion of loss. Instead, they described their sorrow as "feeling strange" or as a "sickness" (Wu & Dunning, 2017, p. 2). That being the case, it would be interesting if the politically engaged group interpreted their experiences

differently to the "less" politically engaged as they most likely knew concepts regarding the topic.

Semi-structured Interview (strengths and weaknesses)

I chose to collect my empirical data in the form of semi-structured interviews. This type of interview includes both questions that are written beforehand, but also questions that come during the interview. Therefore, not all interviews will have identical questions (Gibson & Hua, 2016, p. 182). I find it to be a strength for this research, as it allows me to explain some questions further and turn to other questions if needed. My research is based on individuals with different ancestries, meaning they inhabit different experiences. At the same time, I also had a guide of the questions that I asked all the participants to see their answers' similarities and differences.

The weakness of this method can, among other things, be the participants' openness. Face-to-face interviews can impact the participant's willingness to answer questions honestly and openly (Gibson & Hua, 2016, p. 185), especially on sensitive topics. Factors could be embarrassment or emotional discomfort about their experiences, as some of the questions can include sexual harassment and situations that involve their family. The participants may also want to present themselves or, in the cases which involved their family, in a good light. These topics can be uncomfortable to talk about, so exploring this anonymously through other methods could have been more effective (Gibson & Hua, 2016, p. 185). I chose not to do that, as I wanted to have the possibility to dive deeper into questions and have a more personal connection with the participants. Not least, to emphasize, they feel comfortable with me and trust me with their stories. It can still be challenging to know if the participant is answering honestly. Goffman refers to the front stage as "*where the performance is given*" (Goffman, 1959, p.110) and the stage where the individual is giving a performance that highlights the shared values of the society (Goffman, 1959, p. 23). In this case, there is a risk that the participant will tell me what I want to hear or hide behind certain norms or society's shared values.

The backstage is where the suppressed facts appear (Goffman, 1959, p. 114). Backstage is where the performer can relax and drop their front (Goffman, 1959, p.70). This is where the participants are comfortable and relaxed. However, it can also be interesting to study the participants' front stage to see what the participant considers to be shared values.

Another weakness is time limitations. Taking time to have an interview that could last one hour can impact the participant's willingness to participate (Gibson & Hua, 2016, p.185). All the participants had either work or studies, which led me to do the interviews in the summer when many usually have summer breaks. Some participants who were supposed to participate had to postpone the interview several times due to their busy schedules, which also sometimes resulted in not participating. This weakness also made me change the group categories of the participants.

Conducting the interviews

When the participants were invited to participate, they received information about the topic and a copy of the consent form to read further if they wanted to. The interviews mostly took place in different cafes of the informant's choosing. Three participants preferred to do it at home. The participants chose where they would feel the most comfortable being interviewed, and an uncrowded cafe was a relaxing setting for most of them. Sharing a coffee or meal at a cafe made the environment more comfortable and informal. Before the interview started, we went through the consent form, and I explained their rights and underlined that they could withdraw at any time, even after the interview. I also noticed that they do not have to answer all the questions if they feel uncomfortable answering, as some of the questions could be sensitive. This was also the case for one participant, as she did not want to answer which experiences, she had with sexual harassment in Norway, which was fine, so the question was skipped, and the interview continued. From my point of view as a researcher, I felt that the conversation flowed naturally. The participants seemed comfortable and engaged in telling their stories. The reason for this will be discussed more in the section on my position as a researcher. The participants with political knowledge were more engaged than those less politically engaged, resulting in more extended interviews. Nevertheless, as mentioned earlier, I would argue this had to do with the knowledge of concepts and the topic when interpreting their experiences.

The interviews lasted from 35 minutes to 1 hour. I recorded the interviews, which the participants were aware of. The advantage of using a recorder was that I could be more present and focus on the conversation instead of taking notes and risking forgetting what the participant said or misquoting them in the thesis.

Data analysis

The process consists of analyzing and interpreting the data collected through the project (Johannessen et al., 2016, p. 161). It aims to make it possible for the reader to gain knowledge about the subject area that is being researched without having to go through the data that has been generated themselves (Tjora, 2012, p. 174). To analyze means dividing into elements and pieces and uncovering a message or finding a pattern in the data material. Interpretation, on the other hand, is about looking at the analysis and conclusion of the consequences of what the researcher is investigating and looking at findings against relevant theory (Johannesen et al., 2016, p. 162). In this part of the chapter, I will explain how I carried out the analysis process for this study.

Transcribing

I did all transcripts without a transcriber. This is because many participants switched their language between English and Norwegian, and I felt more the atmosphere of the interview when writing it myself and knowing where to add pauses or write down specific body movements, which are essential to analyze their emotions when answering each question of the interview. Since the interview is a direct social interaction, the different tone of voice or use of body language will not always be as accessible to the reader when it is in written form. Especially, for example, irony or several emotions can be lost in transcription (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 205). Therefore, I recognized the importance of investing time in transcribing myself and having the conversation in a written form, where this is as accessible as possible.

Credibility

When discussing the quality of the data that has been collected, we must look at its credibility. Credibility catches the participant, researcher, and reader's experiences of what is being studied (Thagaard, 2018, p. 189). To evaluate the research quality based on credibility, one has to reflect on reliability and validity, which according to Silverman, are essential ways of evaluating research (2014, p.20).

Reliability and validity

Reliability usually refers to which degree the study findings depend on their circumstances (Kirk and Miller, 1986, in Silverman, 2014, p. 72). It also deals with replicability, which means that if another researcher applied the same method, would the researcher come up with the same results, interpretations, and claims? To make our research more reliable, according to Silverman, we have to make the research process as transparent as possible. This means describing our research strategies and methods used in data analysis in detail in the methodology chapter (Silverman, 2014, p. 72). However, according to sociologist Tove Thagaard, consistency between different research situations would also not be relevant in qualitative research. Even if the researcher studies the same problem several times, various factors will affect the researcher to not act in the same way and receive the same results every time (Thagaard, 2018, p. 188). For instance, will the researcher react differently to different participants or act differently to the same participant at other times (Thagaard, 2018, p. 189). However, she does agree with the importance of transparency. Thaagard argues that reliability must be tied to the researcher giving an account of the procedures in the research process, which is done earlier in this chapter. The argument for reliability implies that the researcher reflects on the data collection context or how the relationship between the researcher and participant influenced the data the researcher received (Thagaard, 2018, p. 189). Therefore, it is crucial to describe the collection of the data accurately.

On the other hand, validity is tied to the interpretation of the data and the validity of the understanding that the researcher landed on. I had to evaluate the validity of the research by asking myself if the research results represented the reality of what I have studied (Silverman 2006 in Thagaard, 2018, p. 189). Validity is checked by examining the sources of error (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 279). This is why I discussed both the strengths and weaknesses of using an interview as a method for the collection of data.

A way to confirm that you are on the right track, eliminating sources for error and arguing for validity, can be by actively incorporating validity strategies. Another strategy can be comparing results from our study with results from other studies. Suppose the interpretations from different studies confirm each other. We strengthen the validity (Thagaard, 2018, p. 191). In that case, we also explain the researcher's choices when connecting theory to the analysis (Tjora, 2012, p. 207).

My positionality as a researcher

The researcher's role as a person and integrity is decisive for the quality of scientific knowledge and the ethical decisions made in qualitative research. Having morally responsible research behavior is more than having abstract ethical knowledge and cognitive choices. It is associated with the researcher's moral integrity, empathy, sensitivity, and commitment to moral issues and actions. However, the researcher's integrity, knowledge, experience, honesty, and fairness are decisive factors when deciding where ethical considerations are weighed against scientific considerations (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 108).

The basis for interpretation can be different depending on whether the researcher is inside or outside the environment (Thagaard, 2018, p. 190). Therefore, we must present our point of view so the critical reader can assess the interpretations based on our standpoint as a researcher (Thagaard, 2018, p. 191). The basis for the understanding we develop throughout the research is determined by the connection to the environment we are studying or whether we represent outsiders. When we know the environment from before, we have a starting point for developing an understanding from within, that we can provide a basis for recognizing the experiences from the environment. We develop the interpretation of the phenomena we study based on our own experiences and concerning new knowledge.

On the other hand, the attachment to the known environment lead us to overlook what differs from our experience. Consequently, we may become less open to nuances in our study situations. Therefore, knowledge of the environment can be both a strength and a limitation. Our experiences can help us confirm the understanding we develop or overlook nuances not in line with our experiences (Thagaard, 2018, p. 190). When interviewing women of color, especially the participants with ancestry from South America, I could recognize myself in the stories that the participants described. At the same time, a lot was also unknown to me. As I interviewed women living in Norway with different ancestries, there were cultural or religious differences that I was not familiar with.

As someone that can be considered an insider to the target group of the dissertation, as I am both born in and have Chilean ancestry, it could have been an advantage in producing the data that I have gathered, in addition to having an impact on shaping the data. This is because when discussing subjects involving race and White supremacy, my gender and ancestry could have contributed to their openness, compared to if I was White or male. Comments under the

interview like "you know how it is…" emphasizes that community of togetherness (Thagaard, 2018, p. 108). Those comments or unfinished phrases represent the "knowing" (Kanuha, 2000, p. 443), which can also lead to the participants "knowing" that I understood the specific parts without it being verbalized and being difficult to read in the transcripts for "outsiders." It could also lead to misinterpretation. Though we are from the same "target group," we are still individuals and can have different perceptions of our shared experiences.

Researchers of color have been accused of bias in their approaches when working within their communities (Serrant-Green, 2002, p. 35). Researcher Serrant-Green refers to May's (1997) argument of how being an "outsider" is the best position. Her argument is that reason and emotion must be separated, and she suggests that if the researcher becomes too closely associated with her research, it can face consequences of invalidating the study (Serrant-Green, 2002, p. 35).

On the other hand, Serrant-Green argues that the community members might feel more at ease discussing issues when the researcher shares that common experience (Serrant-Green, 2002, p. 39). However, it is also important to mention that based primarily on racial identity, White researchers working within their community do not face the same accusations of bias in their approaches or advice on being objective, maintaining professionalism, or showing "visible" distance from their community (Serrant-Green, 2002, p. 35). A key concern of being an "insider" is, for the most part, that one has to be aware of one's perspectives and personal biases and not mix reason and emotions, as May argues (1997 in Serrant-Green, 2002, p. 35).

Therefore, I have underlined in the dissertation that I will analyze the data from the participants' reality and not judge whether or not a situation was a microaggression, for instance. Not least, there are different ancestries within the target group, "women of color." I can mirror my experiences with several participants, but some experiences are far away from my reality. This resulted in having the experience of both being an "insider" and an "outsider" in this research.

Research Ethics

Ethical tensions are part of the practice of doing research (Gordon, 2019, p. 542). As shortly explained, research ethics concerns principles, rules, and guidelines for assessing right or wrong actions. It primarily concerns the relationship between people and what we can or

cannot do to each other. However, it is not limited to concrete action but rather how humans directly or indirectly influence each other (Johannessen, 2016, p. 83). The guidelines I have followed are from the national research ethics committee for social sciences and Humanities, also known as NESH, an independent advisory organ responsible for drawing up national research ethical guidelines (NESH, 2019). They highlight and clarify the basic research ethic norms that are essential when doing research.

Before interviewing the participants, I had to obtain written consent, which will be voluntary, informed, unequivocally, and documentable (NESH, 2019). The participant and I went through the consent form, and I explained what it contained before they signed. Their consent also seemed unequivocal, meaning the participant gave a positive impression of participating and signed the document voluntarily.

My study can also be qualified as sensitive research as it can contain sensitive stories regarding sexual assaults and racism. These experiences can result in trauma and mental health issues (Liamputtong, 2007, p. 5). Therefore, due to the sensitive topics, it was important for the researcher to let the participants know they did not have to answer a question they were uncomfortable with. This was both for making them feel comfortable and not triggering heavy emotions related to the experience. Despite all the precautions, several participants showed different emotions during the interviews, such as anger and sadness. Therefore, I also decided to check on them to see if they were doing okay a few days later.

According to the public administration act, all information that can be traced back to the participants has to be confidential, and the result has to be communicated in an anonymized form (Johannessen, 2016, p. 91). This is not only to keep the participants anonymous but also for other people that were involved in their stories. To anonymize as much as possible, I have chosen to change the age of the participants. Some are represented as older, and others as younger than their actual age. Additionally, when mentioning the participants' jobs or education, I have not given the specific field of work or studies but something similar. Finally, I have also chosen to state that the dissertation's fieldwork was done in Norway rather than mentioning the city it was in. However, the first step in the anonymization procedure is to eliminate proper names from the documents (Kolankiewicz, 2021, p. 116), but how should the participants be renamed?

Renaming the participants

As feminist researcher Rebecca Gordon sees it, anonymity is worthy of critical reflection, especially when the researcher is committed to giving a voice to groups, mainly women, who experience inequality and oppression. In feminist and postcolonial research, anonymity can be crucial for women, as they may be placed at risk due to their participation, which is informed by a critique of gender power relations (Gordon, 2019, p. 543). On the other hand, a core feminist argument against renaming participants in feminist and postcolonial studies is that naming is an act of power. Some have argued that anonymization of the name can feel like a form of erasure of personhood. As feminist researcher Niamh Moore points out, anonymity can even lead to disempowering women and render them vulnerable (Gordon, 2019, p. 544).

> "*For much of history, anonymity did not protect the vulnerable, but excluded women and others from authorship and ownership of their own words, erasing them from the archive, even from history and in the process creating vulnerability through rendering people nameless*" (Moore, 2012, p. 332).

I have still chosen to rename the participants, considering that their experiences also involve other individuals, to keep their anonymity. Choosing a name has been challenging, as it has to suggest a particular ancestry background. This is because the fact that the participants could be perceived as East, Central, West African, South American, or Southeast Asian was central to my study on racialization. The name was not a trigger for the microaggressions presented in the stories of the analysis. Nevertheless, names are still considered one of the most important signifiers of microaggression and stigmatization (Kolankiewicz, 2021, p. 121), such as in the labor market (Midtbøen, 2022, p. 25). Therefore, when renaming the participants, retaining the possibility for a reader to identify the participants by their ancestry was still necessary, resulting in being unable to pick random names (Kolankiewicz, 2021, p. 121).

I was skeptical to look for names that could be "read as" any of the ancestries mentioned. To give them names that could be "read as" felt like mimicking those that made a "Juan" of every Latino or "Muhammad" of every Muslim (Kolankiewicz, 2021, p. 122). Therefore, renaming them could risk mimicking racist practices when anonymizing, as it could be connected to shameful cultural literacy in the name's significance and connotations (Kolankiewicz, 2021, p. 124). While considering what to name the participants in the study, I decided to ask three participants about their opinion. All three participants mentioned that it would be generalizing and racist to name them a name that could be "read as" any of their ancestries. Evaluating the

situation, I decided to replace the participant's name with their country of ancestry. There was still a continuing conversation about whether it would be better to anonymize the country by choosing a "similar" or neighboring country to maximize their anonymity. The three participants did not like that, because it was like saying that all Africans are "the same" for instance, when there are big differences in ethnicities, cultures and appearance, even between the neighboring countries.

After pondering for a long time before deciding, I concluded by naming the participants the countries of their ancestries. To clarify, the names are only their ancestry, and not which country they identify with. How much the participants identify with their ancestry country varies. One participant is adopted and has two White Norwegian parents. Some are mixed, others are born in Norway and have never been to their ancestry country, while others visit their ancestry countries regularly. If the name is presented with "X/Norway," it means that the participant has a parent from both X and Norway, resulting in mixed ancestry but still phenotypes from X that result in racialization. For the participant Philippine/Europe, I have decided to put the continent instead of the country of ancestry to one of the parents. This is to keep her more anonymous, as the combinations of the countries could make her recognizable to potential readers who may know the participant.

Thematic analysis

The empirical material gathered is analyzed through an inspired phenomenological analysis with a theme-centered approach. I followed Malterud's (2011, in Johannessen et al. 2016) four main phases of analyzing meaning content.

Phase one considers the overall impression and summary of the meaning of the content. I read the material several times to look for a central theme and general impression of how the participants experience being a woman of color in Norway. Phase two is about codes, categories, and concepts. I searched for meaning-bearing elements in the material and tried to separate what was relevant to the research questions. This process is called coding and means putting labels or names on text sections (Johannessen et al., 2016, p. 173). I started to mark some parts of the text with code words like "Internalized oppression", "Anger," "Sexualization," and "White beauty standards," which are central themes in this thesis. The third phase is condensation, which also is based on coding. The intention is to abstract the meaning contained in the codes, so here I wrote what the codes were about (Johannessen et

al., 2016, p. 176), such as "White beauty standards," where several informants talked about how they tried to change their appearance to look Whiter in different phases of their lives. The last step involves using the material to design new concepts and descriptions (Johannessen et al., 2016, p. 176).

I chose thematic analysis because I could compare data across all the participants, such as where they grew up and their environments. This was to develop a deeper understanding of each topic and see the similarities or differences between the participants. Thematic analysis is described as a method to systematically identify and organize patterns of themes across a data set. This will allow the researcher to make sense of shared meanings and experiences. The focus is not just on finding experiences. Instead, it is a method to identify common topics repeated throughout the empirical material (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 57). The main overarching topics that were common that I have found in my data and theory that I have chosen to use as themes for my dissertation are "Internalized White standard," "Racialization," and "Being a killjoy." After I have found the themes, it is also important to review them. When analyzing the themes, I discovered that the themes had empirical data that went chronologically by age. Therefore, it was organized as such, with the intention to present their development in their thoughts and behavior from childhood to adulthood.

At last, it is helpful to ask questions like "What is the quality of this theme"? Does it tell me something valuable about the research question? Or is there enough empirical material to support the theme? (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 65). For the last question, I had to answer no. As I discovered, I missed empirical material on "Killjoy." I had some, but not enough, in my opinion. I did find this theme interesting. Therefore, I decided to have a follow-up interview with two participants to gather empirical material by asking specific questions about emotions and confrontation.

The participant's point of view.

It is important to mention that the analysis will be from the participant's point of view, as the dissertation topics include what can be interpreted as harassment, racism, and microaggressions. Especially since cases like these often come with the dilemma of two different understandings of reality (Sue et al. in Andersson, 2022, p. 134). Harlap (2022) refers to Fleras (2016) and his arguments about whether a microaggression counts as racism. She argues that it does not depend on the intention of the person who carries it out, the

performer, but instead on how the recipient's lived experience in the particular circumstances of the given situation (Fleras, 2016, in Harlap, 2022, p. 146).

On the other hand, Harlap refers to Willaims (2020b, p. 40), who argues that the default response should be the belief in both individuals' experiences. Just as we would believe the recipient's experience, we should also consider the performer if the performer said they had mistakenly mispronounced the recipient's name (William, 2020b, p. 40 in Herlap, 2022, p. 148). The discussion could continue, but in this dissertation, I will focus on the reality of the participants, who are the recipients in this study, and how they perceived their experience. I will also give my interpretations of the empirical data, which will be my interpretation as a researcher. I will not state that my interpretation is the truth or reality, as all realities are individual.

CHAPTER 4: THE INTERNALIZATION OF WHITE BEAUTY STANDARD

" I was looked at and treated differently just because I looked different… So I remember, I tried to be Whiter."

(Chile, 23)

When humans were divided into defined groups around the 16th century (Bull, 2015, p. 29), it was based on phenotypes and skin color, where White people were placed at the top of the pyramid. The individual's placement within the caste pyramid would determine the individual's privilege within the colonies (Chavez-Dueñas et al., 2014, p. 7). We can see how Whiteness is still seen as the ideal in different parts of the world and how it affects women of color concerning discrimination, racialization, and internalized oppression. As one can see from Chile's (23) quote above, one of the ways it affected her was that she was perceived as different for not being White, leading her to take measures to be Whiter. The White beauty standard seems to be part of several of the participants' identity construction. The standard is that the more an individual is associated with White features, the more attractive she or he will be considered. The features related to Whiteness can be straight hair, light skin, thin lips and nose, and blue eyes (Bryant, 2013, p. 80). If women of color stand in contrast to the White standard, which society sees as beauty, it can be difficult to accept themselves as beautiful (Hunter, 1998, in Bryant, 2013, p. 81).

In this chapter, I will analyze how the White beauty standard has impacted the participants' lives growing up, resulting in them becoming their own "sub-oppressors" (Freire, 2018, p.45) when they are children or young teenagers. Internalized racist oppression can be defined as *"the individual inculcation of the racist stereotypes, values, images, and ideologies perpetuated by the White dominant society about one's racial group, leading to feelings of self-doubt, disgust, and disrespect for one's race and/or oneself"* (Pyke, 2010, p. 553). The participants tell their stories about the past in a way shaped by the present. I will start the chapter by presenting how the parents of two participants wanted and intended to protect their daughters, continuing with the effects on self-perception and how it was affected by the White beauty standard. The White beauty standard gave some participants a complicated self-perception, and some even took measures to look Whiter. Therefore, I will present how three

participants changed their hair to look Whiter. Finally, the last section will illustrate how internalized oppression as children has affected two of the participants when adults, where both are consciously and actively trying to decolonize their former knowledge that they have been taught.

To discuss these topics, I have chosen mainly three postcolonial scholars to show the connections between colonial history and its psychological effects on women of color. Effects like identity confusion (Fanon, 1963), believing their inferiority (Memmi, 1965), and the desire to get rid of their innate identity and become sub-oppressors (Freire, 2018). Based on the topics and theories, I aim to answer the first sub-question: How has the White beauty standard impacted women of color?

Protecting their daughters

Experiencing oppression over generations can lead to the internalization of inferiority at a young age (David & Derthick, 2014, p. 8). This is because the parents may teach the kids from a young age how they are perceived by the world or specifically by White people. Two of the participants from the politically engaged category shared experiences where they were already taught at home by their parents how men will perceive them sexually because they are women of color.

One of the participants who experienced this was Chile (23), born in Chile but came to Norway at four years old. She grew up in a small town in Norway before moving to a larger city. She is politically engaged and both a feminist and anti-racist, but she explains that she is not part of a political party. Chile (23) shares

> **Chile (23):** My mother was like, "Sex is the devil ". If you have sex, it is not like the Norwegian girls who have sex, they will look at you differently because you are brown, and they will look at you as a whore, so it traumatized me. She was not wrong, but it felt like she called me a whore. If I wanted to do something of my own will, it would be me who was the devil. It was sincere and realistic advice, but it fucked up my relationship with sexualization.

The mother of Chile (23) appeared to want to protect her daughter. Her mother seems to have been conscious of the stereotypes that Latinas are attributed to, which are being exotic and sexual (Törngren, 2022, p. 59, Lundström, 2006, p. 211). Though she intended to protect her daughter, it also contributed to a complicated relationship between the participant and her sexualized self. Interpreting her story creates an impression of the participant not knowing if she was doing something wrong. Or if she was constantly worried about how she would be perceived if she did something out of her own will.

Sudan (27) received similar warnings from her parents as well. Sudan (27) is a politically engaged woman who participates in both protests and political events of interest. Now she studies a professional degree in medicine.

> **Sudan (27):** My mother and my dad always were extra, on me having to cover more, and I asked my mother, like, you guys have big butts too, so it is not only me. She said, "But you have a bit more," so it will make the men look at you a bit more, especially our type of women. Our type will just gain more attention even if we do not want to. So, we have to cover up more not to receive that attention. As a child, I did not know if it derived from religion or race. My belief says I have to cover up as a woman, but my race says I have to cover up because men will just want me either way. I will be looked at as more adult-like with my curves.

The participant starts her story by sharing how she was compared to her sister body-wise and was told to cover up more. Her mother said that "our type of woman" would gain more attention, even if undesirable. Furthermore, she explains that she does not know if this is derived from belief or race. She and her family identify as Muslim and therefore point out that her belief can tell her to cover up as a woman. On the other hand, she points out it can be derived from race because she would be looked at as more adult-like when she was younger because of her body type. In the American study, "Girlhood Interrupted: The Erasure of Black Girls' Childhood " the researchers Epistein, Blake, and Gonzalez (2017) build on a previous study of adult perceptions of Black boys. The research was revealed at the beginning of age 10. Black boys are likelier to be perceived as older than their White peers. Consequently, they were more likely to be considered guilty of suspected crimes and face police violence (Goff, 2014 in Epstein et al., 2017, p. 1). The current study, on the other hand, has similar results that show how Black girls are viewed as less innocent and more adult-like than their White peers,

especially in the age range of 5-14 years old. The survey participants perceived that the girls need less protection, less comfort, and are more independent, and also perceived that Black girls know more about sex (Epstein et al., 2017, p. 1). The aspect of adultification of Black girls lies in culturally rooted fantasies of Black girls' sexualization. The commonly held stereotype of Black girls being hyper-sexualized has a long history and is. Therefore, society's attribution of sex being a part of "the natural role" of both Black women and girls (Epstein et al., 2017, p. 5).

Self-perception among the participants

People are subjected to constant messages about the White ideal of beauty through media, family, and peers. If women stand in contrast to what society sees as beauty, they can find it challenging to find themselves beautiful (Hunter, 1998, in Bryant, 2013, p. 81). A study from Norway has also shown that youth, in general, are concerned with having a good appearance and find it important to resemble the current body ideal (Aasen & Fjellstad, 2007).

Nevertheless, women of color are further exposed to the White standard and other beauty ideals that all women are exposed to. American psychologists Kenneth and Mamie Clark (1947) have shown that internalization can start from a young age. Their study is one of the earliest studies on self-perception among Black children. It is known as the "Doll test," and it illustrates how Black children were affected by White beauty standards (in Bryant, 2013, p. 80). The children were shown two identical dolls, one White and one Black doll. According to the experiment results, two-thirds of the children liked the White doll better (Bryant, 2013, p. 81).

One of the participants had an experience she now interpreted as the internalization of the White beauty standard when she was around six years old. It is the earliest experience for all the participants. Gambia/Norway (29) was born in Norway and is the most politically engaged participant. She is engaged in several projects involving feminism, women of color, and human rights and sees herself as an activist. Today she is attending higher education in college, working on a degree in a field of study that she can use to continue her activism. Based on these fields of interest, the participant reflects on her previous experiences regarding racism. She tells

Gambia/Norway (29): I had a mask, which was made in kindergarten? or no, it was in 1st grade, then we made a face mask with pottery, and then I had made my mask with afro hair, but I had given it White skin and blue eyes, and there are some things that I did not realize when I was a kid, such as what internalized racism is. I did not have that knowledge when I was a kid. It was a combination of the fact that my mother looked like that, my mother had blue eyes, and my mother had White skin, so it was a combination of a daughter's innocent way to like... ehm.. that you look up to your mother right," oh I want to look like mommy, mom is pretty" right, but also because society literally put what my mother looked like at the highest ideal of beauty, so, of course, it reinforced that. So, when I sit, painting my literal mask, with White skin and blue eyes, but I still have afro hair, you become like hmm [...]. I subconsciously picked up that I was "uglier" in quotation marks than my White peers, regardless of actual beauty, but that I was automatically uglier because I was brown.

Though there is no doubt that the media has maintained the White beauty standard, it is also important to point out, like she does herself, that her mother is a White Norwegian. It is not unusual for young girls to want to look like their mother. Chile/Norway (25) is another mixed participant with a White Norwegian parent. She works within the service industry and is not politically engaged. She mentioned wanting blue eyes and blond hair because her mother had these traits. However, she is now happy with her phenotypes and has no more reflections on wanting to look like her mother.

Gambia/Norway (29) mentions that she had subconsciously picked up that her White peers were more beautiful, regardless of actual beauty, because of her skin color. This reminds me of the Japanese proverb 「のいはす」 ('iro no shiroiwa shichinan kakusu') translated into English, "White skin hides seven defects" (Ushijima, 2013, in Soliño, 2020, p.80). Meaning that even though an individual has defects, the White skin puts these defects out of sight. Interestingly, she already felt like that at such a young age. Activist bell hooks claims that White supremacy is reinforced among Black people because one is most likely to see images of Black people that will strengthen White supremacy through television, magazines, and books. Moreover, she points out that these images may be constructed by both White people who have not divested racism and by people of color. People of color may see the world through White supremacy, meaning they have internalized racism (hooks, 1992, p. 1).

Furthermore, hooks claim that there is a connection between the maintenance of White supremacist patriarchy via mass media of specific images and how these represent race and Blackness. These images support oppression, exploitation, and domination over all Black people (hooks, 1992, p. 2). As filmmaker Pratibha Parmar states, the imagery does not only determine how other people think of people but how the people also think about themselves (hooks, 1992, p. 5).

Several participants felt the influence of the White ideal standard of beauty. Thailand (21) is a participant who came to Norway at eight years old. She studies design with a part-time job as a waitress. She is partly interested in politics, and though she is not politically active in any form of group, she does care about human rights and follows what others share through social media or the news. Thailand (21) is one of the participants that felt the effect of the ideal White standard through school.

> **Thailand (21):** I felt it more at school because it was people in general. I wanted more White traits because I thought I would be more beautiful [...]. It was White guys who made me feel that I was not beautiful.
> **Interviewer:** What do you mean that they made you feel not beautiful?
> **Thailand (21):** It was more that I got bullied for how I looked, and (they) chose people who looked more like them.
> **Interviewer:** So, choosing White girls?
> **Thailand (21):** Yes

The participant first claims that White guys made her feel like she was "ugly" by bullying her. More precisely, they bullied her for her nose and forehead. Moreover, she mentions that the White guys "picked" people who look more like them. This could be interpreted differently, such as picking other White Norwegian girls in romantic relationships or other White people for platonic friendships. Other participants, like Philippine (26) and Guinea (24), felt that boys would not be interested in them because of their phenotypes in romantic relationships. Philippine (26) is the only Norwegian-Adopted participant in this study and was adopted at an early age.

Guinea (24) came to Norway at 14 years old from Guinea through family reunification. She is now a nurse and one of the participants that can be regarded as more politically engaged by

voting in elections and keeping up with news and issues about people of color. She explains in depth that she perceives that she is always the last choice if guys are going to pick which girl to go for

> **Guinea (24):** I feel like I am always the last choice. I am never picked first. I see it in Norway… I am not the dating type? or I am not the type… people look after in Norway, if you understand… Everybody thinks about their dream girl… and I am far away from the dream girl a (White) Norwegian thinks about.

This internalized oppression of the participants' thoughts of not being beautiful enough or already assuming others will not find them beautiful is shown in the Clark & Clark study (1947). The experiment was recreated in 2005 by a 16 year old student and filmmaker Kiri Davis. Davis showed how most preschool-aged Black children still chose the White doll (Bryant, 2013, p. 81). This indicates that the findings of the same study did not change between 1947 and 2005, which suggests that internalization of self-hate among Black children based on White beauty standards still exists, and from a very young age (Robinsons-Moore, 2008, in Bryant, 2013, p. 82).

From my interpretation of the participants' verbal and physical language, it was not as if they specifically thought of themselves as "uglier" than White women. It could be the same feeling as Gambia/Norway (29) had, that they just "knew" that Whiteness was the highest ideal of beauty. Philippine/Europe (27) was the only participant that commented in the interview that she never heard explicitly "you are ugly" when she was younger, but pointed out that it was the beauty standard in society and the media that influenced her self-perception of feeling less pretty than White Norwegian girls.

The White beauty standard in the world after colonization has been seen throughout history in different ways, such as through art and propaganda. Historian Michael D. Harris shows how in the 19th and 20th centuries, the idealized female in art history was White, slender, girlish, young, innocent, and submissive (Harris, 2003, p. 100). On the other hand, Black women were represented as older and aggressive, which was seen as a masculine characteristic (Harris, 2003, p. 101). Harris claims that the images still do their work silently at some level. Art is a form of propaganda, an aesthetic, and an approach to life (Harris, 2003, p. 252). Visual representations have created and documented racial definitions and boundaries and

maintained them (Harris, 2003, p. 252). On the other hand, with the type of representation that Black women have gotten, one can turn to sociologist Albert Memmi's theory. Being presented with this type of image, one might end up believing some of the images that have been imposed and recognizing it as one would a detested nickname (Memmi, 1965, p. 87). This can lead to insecurity, which can lead to actions.

Changing their hair

Three out of 13 participants told stories of how they, in their childhood and youth, took measures to look Whiter in their appearance. These measures involved particularly in changing their hair. Albert Memmi discussed how someone could admire their oppressor. When the formerly colonized are constantly confronted with a negative image of themselves, they ask how the colonized could avoid reacting to that portrait? Accusations held by those imposing the images can result in both disturbances and worry for the people affected by them. This is because, at some point, the people imposed by the images can admire and fear his accuser. They ask questions such as "Is he not partially right?". Eventually, the mythical and degrading portrait of the formerly colonized people ends up being accepted by the formerly colonized and even living with them to a certain extent (Memmi, 1965, p. 87).

bell hooks also tells a story about her visiting a once colonized Black island. She met a little girl who was reaching the stage of preadolescent life, where one becomes obsessed with how we look and how others see us. She described her skin as dark, but her hair as chemically straightened. The little girl was convinced that straightened hair was more beautiful than her curly and natural hair. Not only that, but lighter skin makes one more worthy and valuable in others' eyes (hooks, 1992, p. 13). Chile (23) was likewise born with curly hair and tried to straighten it.

> **Chile (23):** Growing up, I felt I had to do anything that could make me fit in more. I grew up with much racism in a small town, and I was looked at and got treated differently just because I looked different. So, I remember I tried to get Whiter. I feel like that was at its worst in secondary school when I was 14 years old because I have very curly hair and am hairy. I just remember I was so busy removing my hair and straightening my hair every day like I killed my hair every day.

Frantz Fanon refers to how cultural assimilation has affected the former colonized (Fanon, 1986, p. 37) and how the effects of colonialism have prevented the former colonized from having an independent identity and wishing to be White (Fanon, 1986, p. 16). Assimilation is usually more understood as making a minority group as similar as possible to the majority population. This includes the minority groups must change their fundamental cultural values, language, and even appearance to the extreme (Wæhle & Tjora, 2021). In a Norwegian context, "assimilation" is associated with the past coercive state policies and suppression of minority culture and identity (Friberg & Midtbøen, 2017, p. 6). On the other hand, in American migration sociology, it has been a core concept since the 20th century, compared to Europe, where the term is often associated with state oppression of minority groups (Midtbøen & Kitterød, 2019, p. 354). According to Midtbøen & Kitterød, in Norway and other Western countries, a gradual process of assimilation is undoubtedly taking place. They argue that descendants of immigrants perform better in the education system and the labor market. As a result, they will also experience less discrimination since the descendants of immigrants have adapted to the norms and culture of the majority society (Midtbøen & Kitterød, 2019, p. 354). Still, how far does one have to assimilate into the majority culture to avoid discrimination? Chile (23) came to Norway at four years old and grew up in Norway. She spoke fluent Norwegian and most likely adapted to the Norwegian norms, whatever that is defined as. Regardless, she did not feel accepted because of her appearance. Jessica Schimmel's article about Aboriginal assimilation policy as genocide has an intriguing title, Killing without Murder (2005). When assimilation occurs, it can be interpreted as killing the culture of the group being assimilated. As Chile (23) mentions, she was killing her hair every day, trying to fit into or be accepted by the environment that she was in. Not only was she killing her hair, but in attempting to remove the parts that made her "different," she killed part of her identity trying to assimilate into the majority society.

By actively changing her appearance to look Whiter, in the sense of straightening her hair, which is one of the attributes related to Whiteness (Bryant, 2013, p. 80), Chile (23) became her oppressor. Freire's theory, often used in pedagogy, is based on the oppressed becoming oppressors or "sub-oppressors" (Freire, 2018, p. 45). The inferiority attached to their innate identity has made the oppressed desire to rid themselves of that identity and emulate the oppressors' identity because their ways are seen as superior (David & Derthick, 2014, p.8). She also describes Freire's conflict between choosing to be their authentic selves or being

divided (Freire, 2018, p.48). In the participant's case, it would be her whole self, including having curly hair or being seen as different and alienated due to her phenotypes.

Philippine/Europe (27) came to Norway when she was four. Europe is not part of the countries that qualified for the study, but she still has Philippine phenotypes. Furthermore, she works full-time within a male-dominated business. She is engaged in topics regarding racism, especially after the Black Lives Matter movement. Even though she is an anti-racist today, she also had a period in her life where she took action to change her appearance to look Whiter.

> **Interviewer:** Have you ever felt less pretty than Norwegian or White girls in general?
> **Philippine/Europe (27):** Yeah, a lot, even to this day, but... like, I remember receiving comments from my friend like, "Ah, do you have hair on your stomach?!" and when you are foreign, you have more hair everywhere than (White) Norwegians, today I am still trying to get rid of my stomach hairs, but after I got more foreign friends who also have them, it's like… it is nothing to stress about! [...].
> **Interviewer:** Did you ever color your hair and stuff like that?
> **Philippine/Europe (27):** Yeah, I did. In elementary school, I got one blond hair stripe, and then a few years back, I actually cut my hair and colored it blonde, so yeah, I will not be doing that again, haha.
> **Interviewer:** Did you ever feel well in that look?
> **Philippine/Europe (27):** In the beginning, it was like, oh, this is cool, but it was also the same period I actually wore blue lenses, so it was evident that I wanted to hide my darker traits since I colored my hair and everything (lenses). What was the question again?
> **Interviewer:** If you felt less pretty than the Norwegian girls?
> **Philippine/Europe (27):** Well yeah, I think that is the reason I colored my hair and wore blue lenses and everything, but that is what I saw. I never heard like, "You are ugly," but it was more what was around, like in the media, like nobody talked about how pretty Rihanna was, only about Megan Fox and the blond girls, and then I was like... I also want to look like that, haha. They only talked about pretty blonde girls at school, so I am not their type, I guess (slight laugh).

Philippine/Europe (27) mentions the lack of representation of women of color in the media and the White beauty standard the media had when she was younger. Both lack representation, and colorism is seen in media representation. However, as she mentioned, there is no denial of successful people of color in the media, like Rihanna. Moreover, what is common for the three participants, is that they all changed their hair, additionally to Philippine/Europe (27) wearing blue lenses.

Chile (23) straightened her hair, but both Philippine/Europe (27) and Philippine (26), who had pretty much straight hair, changed their hair color from dark to blonde. What is also common for them is that they mostly grew up in a White environment. Chile (23) mentions that she was from a small town with much racism, which I interpret was dominated by White Norwegians. Philippine (26) is Norwegian Adopted with two White Norwegian parents and mostly White Norwegian friends. Lastly, Philippine/Europe (27) also mentioned in the interview that she grew up with primarily Norwegian friends. Therefore, the action taken to change their appearance might also be fitting into a friend or acquaintance group in the White society they grew up in, not only because of the general White beauty standard.

Both Chile (23) and Philippine/Europe (27) express how they started to accept more of their appearance and their phenotypes when they spent more time with people of color, Chile (23) when she moved to a larger city and for Philippine/Europe (27) when she got more friends of color who shared the same physical traits. For both of them, it started at the beginning of adulthood and late teens. Philippine (26) did not mention when she began to accept her phenotypes but mentioned that she is happy today with her hair and skin color, but she has also gained two close Asian friends with whom she shares experiences. In addition to growing up in a White environment, as Philippine/Europe (27) mentioned, she grew up with a lack of representation of women who looked like her in the media. This could apply to the other participants as well. Not having representation, or positive representation in several aspects of your life, could influence individuals to want to take action to look more like the individuals that are both represented and praised.

To change physical features is not uncommon among women of color when trying to fit into the White beauty standard. In Dasol Kim's study, he refers to Brady et al., that both social stigma and stereotyping of physical features have led Asian American women to have plastic surgery (Brady et al., 2917, in Kim, 2021, p. 3). Other drastic measures are using chemicals or

thermal tools to achieve straight-looking hair among Black women (Rosette & Dumas, 2007, p. 411) and skin lightening. The brand *Fair and Lovely* is a Whitening product and cream that was developed in 1975. It is available in 30 countries across Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. The brand has been targeted by many social activists that accuse the brand of being racist, as they show unconfident, depressed dark skinned girls that are disappointed with their lives, transforming into confident girls after using their product and becoming pale-skinned (Khan & Khan, 2012, p. 104). After the Black Lives Matter movement, the cream also faced backlash on social media for the beauty standards and stereotyping of skin tones. As a result, the brand re-branded its name from *Fair and Lovely* to *Glow and Lovely*, but the positioning remains the same (Sharma, 2020).

The reason for people of color making changes in their appearance to look Whiter is because of the stigma that people of color meet (Goffman, 1963, p.14). A stigma may be visible or not. Social scientist Erving Goffman defined the visibility of stigma as how readily visible the stigma is adapted to the individual to show that the individual possesses the stigma (Goffman, 1963, p. 64). To avoid visible stigma, people of color can try to cover. Covering can be associated with the stigmatized individual that tries to reduce the obviousness of a known negative attribute. Some people of color tend to adjust their accents, change names, and even their appearance to fit in better and to receive better feedback through interactions with the local population (Valenta, 2009, p. 360). Fanon's discussion on the former colonized being assimilated (Fanon, 1986, p. 37), in this case by changing their appearance, could be a combination of Memmi's (1965) theory of believing their inferiority and the fear of the visible stigma discussed by Goffman (1963).

Not being identified as White does not mean colorism is not present, and one can have privilege compared to other groups identifying as people of color (Strmic-Pawl. et al., 2021, p. 289). If Chile (23) had straightened her hair and colored her hair blond, she may even have "passed" as a White Norwegian because she has pale skin. In comparison, both Philippine/Europe (27) and Philippine (26) colored their hair blond and had straight hair but have darker skin. Therefore, it would be harder for them to "pass" as White Norwegians, even though they modified their appearance.

Internalized Oppression in adulthood

Mette Andersson claims that the research into the self-perception of people of color from childhood to adulthood has shown how the entrance to the 20s is characterized by identifying with other people of color (Andersson, 2022, p. 170). In addition to identifying with other people of color, research has also shown that they feel ashamed of their previous ignorance and insensitivity to racism. This could be racism against others, but also racism towards themselves. Often during childhood and adolescence, one is most concerned with fitting in and being counted as Norwegian. On the other hand, the transition to adulthood is characterized by a moral and emotional settlement with previous thoughts and growing solidarity with other individuals who have also been exposed to racism (Andersson, 2022, p. 170). Now that the participants are adults and know more about internalized oppression, how has it affected them in the present?

Chile (23) is one of the participants that mentions that she has actively tried to decolonize her knowledge, as she noticed that there are several things that she has been told to think about, either directly or indirectly.

> **Chile (23)**: I have gone through a very open process and tried to decolonize my mind, which is work that never ends, because I just notice more and more stuff that I have internalized and have taken for granted, where I think that this is not something I think, it is something that I have been told that I have to think, either directly or indirectly. When I came to the city, I started trying to get out of all those frames forced on me.

The participant explains how she has gone through a process of liberation of her mind. Her process started with moving from her small town, where most of the population were White Norwegians and few people of color, to a bigger city. Interpreting her story creates an impression of her environment playing an essential role in her oppression, as she was one of the participants who took action to look Whiter by straightening her hair. Additionally, the debates of decolonization and racism have been more present around the same time she moved to a bigger city, such as the Black Lives Matter movement and #Meetoo movement. Media researcher Taina Bucher claims that decolonization is about questioning Western and Eurocentric knowledge or challenging the White man's hegemony in the definition of valid

knowledge (Bucher, 2020, p. 1). Schools in Norway came to a turning point with the introduction of the new curriculum "Kunnskapsløftet 2020". The curriculum emphasizes Sami rights and the Sami indigenous status with stronger requirements for what the schools should teach about the Sami social life, history, rights, and culture (Olsen & Andreassen, 2018, in Evju & Olsen, 2022, p. 220). This is because it is relevant to understand the history of the assimilation policy that the state once led toward the Sami people and include them in the curriculum (Evju & Olsen, 2022, p. 220).

Even though Chile (23) is more conscious of her experiences, she still experiences the consequences of the previous frames in her mental health due to the White beauty standard.

> **Chile (23):** I would say it is still pretty fucked. I have had many years with a psychologist, and I have had an eating disorder, and it is not something you ever get rid of. You always have it in the back of your mind, but you try to keep it in check.
> **Interviewer:** So, would you say then that the reason for your eating disorder was the White beauty standard?
> **Chile (23)**: Yes

As Chile (23) describes, it has affected her and is still a work in progress to decolonize the White beauty standard. So, even though she embraces her natural phenotypes, the White beauty standard still exists in her mind. Frantz Fanon also argues that mental disorders in the colonized world arose from colonialism and that mental disorders will continue (Fanon, 1963, p.249) not only through violence but also when colonists hammered ideas into the natives' minds (Fanon, 1963, p. 47). Such as that having White traits makes one more worthy and valuable in others' eyes (hooks, 1992, p. 13).

At last, internalized oppression can be unconscious (David & Derthick, 2014, p.8). Gambia/Norway (29) is an activist today but still struggles with impulses that come unconsciously, such as tucking in her afro hair.

> **Gambia/Norway (29):** I looked in the mirror, and then I saw that some of my afro hair was sticking out, and then I just thought, "Am I going to hide it? the afro hair?" i.e., tuck it in to make it nicer, and that is because I know I would not want to be "too African" somehow, but then I just think, no! And on principle, I just let the afro hair

stick out, if you understand, so these little automatic changes that I feel have to be made to be as inoffensive as possible. I have to tone down my otherness as much as possible to be treated equally and as a human being, right... Sometimes it is not said directly, or sometimes it is said exclusively, but it is just in the atmosphere. I really have to... I become sad when I feel it because I am, after all, an adult. I am, after all, 29 years old, I am, after all, an activist, and I am really passionate about these things here, and I understand all these things intellectually, I know it, blah blah blah, you know, but still, it comes automatically anyway. It just pops up, right? Like hell, maybe I should tuck in this afro hair; perhaps I should not sit like that, talk like that or dress like that.

Gambia/Norway (29) explains that although she is an adult, an activist, and conscious of these concepts intellectually, she still struggles with internalized oppression. As Freire points out, the oppressed must choose between being in human solidarity or being alienated (Freire, 2018, p. 48). In this context, to fit into the White-dominated society or stay "different." Either way, one experiences consequences. Thailand (21) did not take measures to change her appearance but got bullied. Chile (23) took measures to kill her hair but still struggles today with her self-image. One can be caught in an impossible bind (Fanon, 1986, p. 25). Additionally, even if Gambia/Norway (29) had chosen to hide her afro hair, she would still be unable to achieve full inclusion in the dominant White culture because of her appearance and other phenotypes that she cannot change as her skin color. Even though Gambia/Norway (29) is conscious of the internalized oppression, the wounds that the colonialism will have to bind up for years to recover (Fanon, 1963, in Kohli, 2014, p. 370). Not only because it is internalized but mostly because one is reminded of it in everyday life through racialization.

Summary

The participants in this study already from their younger years just "knew" that Whiteness was the "highest ideal of beauty." This could be because parents already warned the participants of how they would be perceived, in addition to mainstream media and bullying at school, such as in Thailand's (21) case. Additionally, several participants said they felt they were picked last or not picked by potential boyfriends or friends because of their race-related appearance. This led to some of the participants taking action to look "Whiter" by both straightening or coloring their hair blond. These experiences may be understood as a

consequence of the general White beauty standard and a consequence of growing up in a White-dominated environment.

Moreover, this chapter indicates that the internalized oppression experienced as children or young teenagers, as elaborated in this chapter, still has an effect today. Several participants are conscious of why they experienced what they experienced intellectually and have actively tried to decolonize their knowledge and be more mindful of their experiences. Even though they have this knowledge, the many years of internalized oppression have still resulted in mental health issues and involuntary responses that can be interpreted as unconscious oppression.

CHAPTER 5: RACIALIZATION AND SEXUALIZATION

"Is that how you see us, just because I am Asian and he is an older man?"
(Philippine, 26)

When being racialized as a woman of color, the intersection of race and gender plays a significant role in how the woman will be racialized. Such as, Philippine (26) mentions in the quote above that just because she is Asian and is seen with an older (White) man, she is already perceived as a gold digger due to the stereotypes that women with ancestry from Southeast Asia are given. As mentioned in the introduction, racialization is a process where the process is used both consciously and unconsciously to classify individuals based on their "assumed ethnicity" (Giddes & Sutton, 2017 in Massao, 2022, p. 107). This process thus implies that a set of characteristics is inherent to group members due to their cultural or physical characteristics (Garner & Selod, 2015, in Massao, 2022, p. 107).

However, when being oppressed for both gender and race, several dimensions of power work together and therefore lead to more concrete and more complicated forms of oppression (Andersson, 2022, p. 71). Intersectionality is about different forms of social inequality that interact in complex and contradictory ways. Individuals who are underprivileged and exposed to racism will nevertheless be privileged when it comes to, for example, gender. As anti-racism does not necessarily harmonize with the conditions set for gender justice. Therefore, to avoid reinforcing only one social problem, a tool that grasps the interplay between the specific contexts is necessary (Gressgård, 2022, p. 121). Men of color are exposed to and are characterized by ideas about their masculinity, and women are often characterized by femininity. Women of color experiencing sexism is also a form of oppression for all women. Objectification of women's bodies does not only happen to women of color. It can happen regardless of color. However, systematic differences exist between the cultural-historical representations of White and non-White gendered bodies, making the experiences different (Lenz, 2022, p. 393).

I will start this subchapter by presenting how some participants experienced racialized sexualization as children, after that, in interracial relationships. Moreover, I will show some of the experiences that participants have had with racialization in the health and care sector. I

will end the subchapter with racialization examples when being the "only one" in a White-dominated setting and a summary.

The main scholars used in this subchapter will be Fredrickson & Robert's (1997) objectification theory and historian Michael D. Harris (2003), who discusses the visual representation of Black people during the 19th and 20th centuries. In addition, I will also mention other scholars like Lenz (2022) and her observations on sexualized racialization, Lindheim's (2022) study on discrimination in the health and care sector, and bell hooks (1992) reflections on being the "only one" in an all-White setting. The second sub-question will be centered on: how and when women of color experience racialization and sexualization?

Racialized sexualization as children

The racialization of women of color is mainly connected to sexism and sexualization. Five out of 13 participants have experienced sexualization at a young age. The psychology professors Fredrickson & Robert's (1997) study has pointed out that objectification of girls can start as early as puberty. They reference K. Martin's (1996) study, where his participants conveyed that both men and boys noticed and commented on the participant's breasts as they developed. The girls also felt that the men and boys assessed the girl's sexuality by breast size, so "bigger the breast" would mean that a girl is more sexually available (K.Martin, 1996, in Beneke, 1982, in Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p. 194). For some, this is the phase in which a girl can be evaluated by others as a body, not herself (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p. 194).

Sudan (27) shares her vulnerable story of being sexually assaulted at 12 years old by a dentist, who was described as an adult White male. Sexual assault is a collective term for a wide range of unwanted sexual acts. This could be attempted penetration, touching, and groping (NHI, 2022). The Legal definitions in Norway also state that all sexual contact with children under the age of 16 is prohibited (NHI, 2021).

> **Sudan (27):** The earliest physical assault that I can remember in Norway was when I went to the dentist, and I had braces and everything, so I was a kid... he was going to tighten something, I do not remember what, and it hurt, but I did not react. So he was

going to say "Good job," and I was lying down right, and then he just did this "Good job" (touches her breasts and shakes them).

Interviewer: He touched your breasts?

Sudan (27): Yeah, both of them, and shook them a bit, and then I was like... 12.

In Sudan's (27) case, they were in an institutional context which could have severe consequences for the assaulter if she had notified the institution. Nevertheless, this is something hard to require from a young girl. It is not easy to say in what background this sexual assault happened. Was it because she was a young girl? Would it have taken place if she was a White girl? Either way, it could be because of racialization, even though the assaulter has the answers to the questions. As mentioned in the previous analytical chapter, Black girls are more likely to be viewed as more adult-like than White girls (Epstein et al., 2017, p. 1).

Additionally, Black women have been accorded as not representing beauty during colonial times. Rather the Black woman represents sexuality, and feminine beauty is instead constructed around Whiteness. The sexuality is dark, mysterious, and Black (Sharpley-Whiting, 1999, p. 47). This history can be traced back to Saartjie, a Khoikhoi woman born in South Africa approximately in 1788 but was renamed Saartjie Baartman under Dutch colonial rule (Sharpley-Whiting, 1999, p. 17). She was then exhibited to England to perform domestic duties, and her small frame was focused on her body (Sharpley-Whiting, 1999, p. 18). Even after her death, the scientist Georges Cuvier obtained permission to study and dissect her body. He made a report, but his preoccupation with the sexual characteristics is striking, as over half of his report dealt with Saartjie's genitalia, breasts, bottom, and pelvis (Tobias, 2002, p. 108).

Michael D. Harris (2003) also claims that it was not unusual for women of color to be associated with nature, promiscuity, and uncontrolled passion, especially within the literature in the 19th century. In British literature, Harris refers to Hammond & Jablow and how they stereotyped Black women as "*creatures that are all body, without mind or soul*" (in Harris, 2003, p. 126). Furthermore, the authors describe the African woman as "Never that whole of a woman," The literature reduces her to only her physical organs (Harris, 2003, p. 126). One can also see a similar representation of the Black woman that Harris mentions in an advertising campaign from the Norwegian food chain "Coop" and its coffee range from 2014,

where different types of coffee were "personified" with individuals of different genders and different skin colors. For example, in the coffee variety "Dark and Continental," a Black woman is presented with a top with a large neckline, and her whole picture has an erotic undertone (Lenz, 2022, p. 397). In the same advertisement, another coffee variety," organic," presents a White woman with blond hair dressed in a typical wool sweater. The choice of clothing means that the attention of the White woman is not directed at her body but at attributes associated with Norwegianness and nature (Lenz, 2022, p. 398). The sexualized representation of the Black woman throughout history can explain why some experience assault, like in the case of Sudan (27).

Democratic Republic of (DR) Congo (22) came to Norway when she was three years old through FN with her family and has some political interest through her father. Today she works at a kindergarten. She had an experience at school involving her breasts. At 13, she was asked to "cover-up" on a warm summer day at school, where she and other girls in her class were dressed in the same way, but because of the size of her breasts, she was the only one corrected by a teacher. **DR Congo (22):** One summer, we were with my class outside. All the girls were dressed the same, but I was told to cover up because of my breasts.

Compared to the other kids, one may assume she was looked at more as an adult. This relates to K. Martin's studies (1996), where he claims that bigger breasts can mean a girl is more sexually available (K. Martin, 1996, in Beneke, 1982, in Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p. 194). The teacher could have told her to cover up for her safety, so she would not be sexually objectified by others, such as her male classmates or adults.

Being conscious of the study going back almost two decades, the researcher's Wu, Mendola, and Buck had interesting findings in their study. Their results show that both Black and Mexican American girls had achieved breast development at younger ages than White girls. 49,4 % of Black girls aged 9 had breast development, compared to Mexican American girls with 24, 5% and at last White girls scoring 15,8 %, concluding that Black girls, on average, enter puberty first, followed by Mexican American girls, and final the White girls (Wu et al., 2002, p. 752). This study could refer to the experience of DR Congo (22) being the only one told to cover up, as she was probably the only one who had developed her breasts compared to her female classmates. Therefore, the focus could be more on the body than her skin color.

Being viewed as more adult-like could also apply to participant Chile (23), as a close adult told her that she was too sexy in a dress when she was only 14 years old.

Lastly, Philippine (26) had an experience of being sexualized as a child, not necessarily for her body, but for Southeast Asian stereotypes. Scholar Sunny Woan, who has multiple articles regarding race and gender, claims that earlier studies from the 1990s showed how several tourists from the West visited Thailand. Many of the men visited specifically for its sex industry. A study from 1995 reported that 65% of the tourists were single men on vacation. Woan, therefore, arrives at the White conquest of Asia as being far from something of the past. Nonetheless, it is a lived experience for many (Woan, 2008, p. 284). In Norway, it is also normalized that Norwegian men find their wives from both Thailand and the Philippines (Aamundsen, 2021, p. 75). Philippine (26) experienced being sexualized in public while spending time with her White Norwegian father at a cafe.

> **Philippine (26):** I remember once in this cafe, I was very young, and there was an older woman so that I could see that, but she asked my dad, "Is that your wife?" and I was a kid… and I was like (thinking) ... are you joking? Is that how you see us just because I am Asian and he is an older man?

As Philippine (26) describes in this quote, she was mistaken for being her father's wife, though she was a kid. Also, Thailand (21) experienced an unpleasant situation as a kid. She explained that she was followed by an old White man when she was a child. She was with the family of her White Norwegian friend, so the mother of her friend protected her. Claudia Lenz (2022) points out that sexualized stereotypes for women with Asian ancestry can even be found on dating sites that "specialize" in Asian women. On these websites, some men discuss Thai women like they were cars or consumer goods (Goskøyr, in Lenz, 2022, p. 401). This stereotype in Scandinavia is because of the socio-economic dimension that often mixes up ideas about Asian women in Norway (Lenz, 2022, p. 401). There is no denying that structural and socioeconomic conditions contribute to Asian women coming to Norway through marriage (Hestnes, 2013). However, this can still stigmatize Asian women seen together with White men. I followed up her story with a question concerning the consequences of the incident.

As a result of her experiences, Philippine (26) explains that she now actively points out that her father is her father so that others will not mistake him for her husband. Now that she is a grown woman, similar experiences can happen more often than when she was younger. The roots of the stereotype of Asian women being perceived as passive and unresisting, as well as exotified, originates in Orientalism. These performances were also reproduced in popular culture, especially in movies about the Vietnam War (Lenz, 2022, p. 400). The theory of Orientalism is presented by Edward Said (1979), a postcolonial intellectual who describes how the West establishes the East as the exotic other (1979, p. 51). The stereotype that has remained among Southeast Asian women and girls could consequently cause a complex relationship between White Norwegian fathers and their mixed daughter, or in the participants' case, Norwegian-Adopted daughter, in addition to causing difficult circumstances in romantic relationships.

Racialized sexualization in interracial relationships

There is a lack of research on interracial couples in Norway for various reasons. First of all, Norway does not have a direct translation for the word "interracial couples." This is because of the debate on the concept of "race" and how it is used. In Norway, most people see this term as outdated. Some, therefore, call interracial couples "Crusader couples" or "multicultural couples." Journalist Jakob S, Aasmundsen refers to couples as "melanin-varied" (Aasmundsen, 2021, p. 72). Aasmundsen tried to acquire statistics on interracial couples in Norway but claims that there is lacking statistics on romantic relationships at SSB due to the Norwegian debate on the concept of "race" results in not recording individual ancestries, compared to US statistics (Aasmundsen, 2021, p. 73). After a whole process, Aasmundsen got some information from the SSB. The results show increased marriages between White Norwegians and people of color from 2000 to 2010. Until 2020, the proportion has also increased somewhat but has remained relatively stable (Aasmundsen, 2021, p. 74). In addition, ethnic Norwegian men are married to a woman of color, then men of color to ethnic Norwegian women. At last, it is also interesting that from 2000 to 2010, the number of White Norwegian men marrying a woman of color almost tripled. On the other hand, White Norwegian women marrying men of color had an increase, but not as drastically as the men.

A possible reason for this increase could be what is termed "sexual racism." Author Sonu S. Bedi argues that prejudices and stereotypes can govern both sexual and romantic preferences,

which means that our desire is partly characterized by the culture one live in (Aasmundsen, 2021, p. 75). According to researchers, "sexual racism" can also promote the fetishization of minorities. Social anthropologist Gloria Wekker argues that the West has, through centuries of colonialism, created a cultural and sexual image of people outside the West. The fetishizing stereotypes can include the submissive Asian woman, the hypersexualized dark woman, or the Black man with the big "gear" (Aasmundsen, 2021, p. 76).

In addition to Philippine (26) being sexualized by her father as a child, she again experienced being perceived as the stereotypical Asian woman with her White Norwegian boyfriend. They have been in a romantic relationship for several years.

> **Philippine (26)**: I remember my neighbor. He asked my boyfriend if he had picked me up from somewhere! Then I remember I got pissed off. Because everyone made excuses for the man since he was old, but that has nothing to do with it, we always have to adapt to society today, and it should count for everyone, to a certain degree of course, but to say something like that is not okay at all.

The participant is portrayed as a gold digger, or maybe even a prostitute, as the neighbor asked her Norwegian boyfriend if he "picked her up" from somewhere. Their neighbor immediately suggested that the intention for the couple to be together was other than love. Her boyfriend and friends excuse the neighbor because he is an older man.

Chile (23) has also been racialized and sexualized when being with her ex-boyfriend, a White Norwegian, by her ex-boyfriend and others. She starts telling her story of how she was sexualized by two other males, who most likely were both White.

> **Chile (23):** When I was with my shitty ex, we were walking in town after a night out dancing, we were going to take the bus, and I had on a costume since we had been at a costume party. A guy walked by and commented on my costume, and my costume was like a ladybug, which was so innocent, haha. He just talked to my ex and said, "Are you going home to bang her? I would also bang her," and 5 minutes after, a White male crossed the street and came to us at the bus stop, and talked to my ex, and said, "you can do better, do not do it, just go home" and I realized after, it was because of race. Then I stood up against him and said he could just shit and go, this is not his business, but he never talked to me, just to my ex. I am not a person. I am a woman.

Chile (23) got treated like an object, and when the woman is objectified, she just gets treated like a body that exists for the use and pleasure of others (Stoltenberg, 1989, in Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p. 175). Chile (23) describes that she did not even dress "provocatively" when pointing out that her costume as a ladybug was innocent, yet she got sexualized. This can support the argument that the sexually objectifying gaze is not under women's control, making it difficult for women to avoid potentially objectifying contexts (Kaschak, 1992, in Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p. 176). The sexual gaze can also be accompanied by sexually evaluative commentary (Gardner, 1980, in Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p. 176), as it did when the individual points out wanting sex with her. This experience may show the intersectionality of being a woman and of color. The comments did not express her race, phenotypes, or ethnicity. However, Latinas are often associated with the stereotype of being exotic and ascribed as being "sexual" (Törngren, 2022, p. 59, Lundström, 2006, p. 211), which can relate to the comment of the male wanting to have sex with her. For the other male commenting that her ex-boyfriend "could do better," it is hard to specifically know why he meant that the ex-boyfriend could do better and if it was precise because she was Latina. What is certain is that he treated her like an object. Even when she confronted the man, the man did not answer her and only talked to her ex-boyfriend. She did not feel like a person but just like a woman, which I interpret as she meant that women are seen as objects and someone who is dehumanized.

She continues her story by also sharing how her ex-boyfriend also both sexualized and fetishized her because of her being Latina.

> **Chile (23):** One of the things that he (ex-boyfriend) bragged about me to his friends was that "If they watch Latina porn and they will see how well my woman is…" and he just fetishized me to receive credits from his friends, so very very disgusting.

In her story, her ex-boyfriend racialized the participant in a racist way. The process of racialization implies that the set of characteristics is seen as inherent to the members of the group that is being racialized (Garner & Selod, 2015 in Massao, 2022, p. 107). Her ex-boyfriend telling his friend to watch "Latina porn" to see how his girlfriend is in bed implies that she is how she is because she is Latina. It seems like it is inherited in Latinas to be a way in bed. It is also sexual objectification as the sexual functions of her and other Latinas are separated from the person. Instead, the sexual functions seem to represent the individual (Bartky, 1990, in Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p. 175). Chile (23) is also being fetishized. A racial fetish is often considered positive or harmless (Zheng, 2016, p.401). Nevertheless, the

racial fetish is always dependent on racial stereotypes rather than just the aesthetic features (Zheng, 2016, p.405), which in Chile's (23) case is that Latinas are "sexual" (Törngren, 2022, p. 59). Porn can also generally contain stereotypes of women of color, where a massive part is violent pornography. Asian women are often depicted in torture scenes, and Black women are often found bound. This shows the legacy of colonial constructions of White women and women of color (Benard, 2016, p. 4).

Women of color being sexualized in interracial relationships with White men can make it harder for women of color to enter an interracial relationship even though there are more women of color married to White men than men of color married to White women (Aasmundsen, 2021, p. 74). Vietnam (20) was born and raised in Norway and finished her studies in medicine. She is not politically engaged but mentions that she likes to follow what happens outside of Norway on the news and social media. Furthermore, she is the participant that has described concerns about dating outside of her race.

> **Vietnam (20):** Sometimes I feel it is hard to date because I do not know if they like ME or it is just that they have a thing for Asians… and I have been skeptical…sometimes when I have dated, it is very related to Asian culture… so I have to divide between those who like me for me or the Asian culture.
> **Interviewer:** How have you noticed that the guys like you for your culture? Have you had any uncomfortable feelings?
> **Vietnam (20):** Not an uncomfortable feeling, but I have felt it could be uncomfortable over time. It is okay that they like (Asian) food and stuff, but when they also have different interests in the culture. Then I start to wonder if they like me or the idea of the Asian culture, and I have not dated people for too long, so I can never know. However, it is difficult to divide between them.

Vietnam (20) expresses that she is skeptical of dating because she does not know if the men are interested because of her personality or because they racially fetishize her. She explains that it can be too much if the individual has too many interests in Asian culture. That is when she gets skeptical of where the interest is. Even though she does admit her former dating experience or relationships have not lasted long, therefore she does not know if it is the case that she has gotten fetishized before. Additionally, participants from the African category have expressed that they do not date White Norwegian men. Vietnam's (20) doubts can be

based on the increase of "sexual racism," where sexual preference is governed by stereotypes (Aasmundsen, 2021, p. 75). This can lead to a certain expectation in romantic relationships based on fantasies, which merges the participant's skeptical attitudes when dating other men (Aasmundsen, 2021, p. 76).

Racialization in the health and care sector

Previous studies shed light on how managers and employees handle incidents of discrimination and the employee's right to protection in the health and care sector while considering the resident's right to health care and determination (Lindheim, 2022, p. 90). We already know that employees with an immigrant background, or people of color in general, experience harassment, racism, and discrimination at work. Furthermore, she also points out that the manager must safeguard both patients' right to health care and the employee's right to protection against harassment, discrimination, and racism (Lindheim, 2022, p. 91). The employees of Lindheim's study were reluctant to report incidents because they considered that it was in line with their professional occupational role to not react to such incidents, in addition to not wanting to be perceived as problematic in fear of not receiving working shifts (Lindheim, 2022, p. 102).

Several participants had experienced racism at work, which aligns with the mentioned study (Lindheim, 2022). Guinea (24) shares that, among other things, patients have told her that they do not want help from her and comments about "foreigners just being in Norway to take their money." She has also experienced microaggressions where she has gotten comments about how she speaks Norwegian too well to be a foreigner. Furthermore, she explains that this has affected her way of working.

> **Guinea (24):** If we have a patient that is known for being mean with other foreigners, and I come to work, I will be notified that, ok, maybe you should not go into that patient because that patient has been "unpleasant" towards another nurse that is a foreigner, I get notified. So, usually, I try not to talk to them, but if they talk to me, I talk to them, but if they do not, then I do not. But I notice the consequences of this because it makes me feel like I have to be extra nice. I have to smile all the time, and then I receive the comment, "No, but you foreigners are so kind, nice, and cheerful," from patients… and it stems from that if we do not act like that, then we will … we will be perceived differently.

Guinea's (24) description shows that the workplace does take action and notify her beforehand when a patient is racist to prevent a further situation. What stands out when she gets notified is that the workplace does not use the word racist or other words like "discriminating" but instead uses the word "unpleasant." The workplace does not use stronger or negatively loaded words. Andersson claims that the Norwegian debate shows that Norwegians generally do not think Norway has much or severe racism, especially compared to other countries (Andersson, 2022, p.21). This also leads to when you point out that someone is being racist or doing a racist action. In Norway, he or she would be violated in the worst way, making it difficult to combat such expressions and actions because pointing out that someone is racist arouses a strong opposition and is not least taken very personally. The racist action or discourse, on the other hand, is not taken seriously. Therefore, the underlying problem is that the term "racism" can hardly even be used in Norway since Norwegians see themselves as non-racists (Helland, 2015, p. 108). This can explain why the workplace defines the patient's actions as "unpleasant" rather than racist.

Furthermore, Guinea (24) describes the consequences of the treatment she gets from her patients. She describes that she must always be "extra" friendly and smile. From my interpretation, this action towards her patients seems forced. Like she is trying to demonstrate that African Black women are nice or disprove the patients' assumptions of African Black women, it is not unusual for Black women to want to represent other Black women in the best light possible (Cherry, 2020, p. 7).

Somalia (25) was both born and raised in Norway. She is not politically engaged but is familiar with many issues regarding racism. Moreover, as this section presents, she works within the health and care sector. She had a similar experience, where she was called the n-word by multiple patients and was denied to do her work to take care of the patients, as they did not want to be taken care of by "a Black person." Additionally, she experienced that her colleagues have called her the n-word. Even though Somalia (25) says in the interview that she did not take too much offense to the racism by the patients.

> **Somalia (25):** But the thing about racism when it comes to caring for the elders, it is sort of a "gray area." The patients are 70-80 years older than me and have experienced and grown up in a completely different time than me. Some do not realize that in 2022 we do not do that. So, some are still left with the mindset they had in the old days.

Somalia (25) excuses the racism she experiences due to the patients being older and because some may have illnesses like dementia. I asked her if the workplace acknowledges that she experiences racism. She answers.

> **Somalia (25):** No, it is not seen as racism at all. We often hear that it was not polite and that it was not pleasant. Since they are from the older generation, the bosses say that they are not used to how it is today and do not necessarily mean it the way we think they do.

The stories of Somalia (25) and Guinea (24), working within the health and care sector, are almost identical. Their experiences with the patients and how the situations are treated in the workplace. Their experiences are not seen as racism by their workplace, but rather as an unpleasant experience, though at Somalia's (25) workplace, they used the word "rude." However, the patient is excused from the workplace because the patient is older or sick, and the participant also excused the behavior for the same reasons. By law, the employers and leaders of organizations have the duty to prevent their employees from experiencing racism. Whether the racism is between colleagues, or from patients, and others they meet at work (Likestillings- og diskrimineringsloven, 2017). Again, the experiences are similar to Lindheim's study, which showed that the elderly patients' racist statements were excused. The situation was not much addressed as discrimination or racism by White Norwegians (Lindheim, 2022, p. 103).

When women of color are exposed to racism or racialization, it is often characterized by sexism (Lenz, 2022, p. 393). Within the racialization that the participants have experienced at work, they have also experienced sexual harassment, which is unwanted sexual attention. That can have the effect of being offensive, intimidating, humiliating, or distressing, among other feelings. It can be physical, verbal, and non-verbal. The manager is also legally obligated to lead and arrange work so that no employees are exposed to sexual harassment in the context of work (Arbeidstilsynet).

Chile (22) and Somalia (25) shared experiences with being sexualized at their workplace. This seemed to be a problem in the elderly sector, where older men, most often individuals with cognitive decline, would treat their healthcare staff disrespectfully and even harass them sexually. Chile (22) and Somalia (25) had experienced almost identical situations. Somalia (25) was asked if she had experienced unpleasant comments from older men.

Somalia (25): Well, I work at a nursing home and often receive comments on my butt and my nice form, and they say things like, "Can you come to lay down in bed?" But I do not think about it because it is older people, and when I say they cannot say stuff like that, they stop.

Somalia (25) mentions that she received specific comments on her bottom and body form, which sexually objectified her. Additionally, she receives comments that may indicate doing something physical with the patients, as she has been asked if she could come and lay down in bed with them. It is hard to know if the situation occurred because of the intersection of her race and gender or because she was sexualized for just being a woman. Therefore, I ask her.

Interviewer: Do you feel like White colleagues have the same experience?

Somalia (25): Not that I know of. I do not feel like they have these types of stories as I and other coworkers who are of color.

I ask the same question to Chile (22), and both point out that it is not something that they have heard of from their White co-workers, so it is hard to know if they have experienced the same or something similar. On the other hand, they know their female co-workers of color have experienced similar situations. The reason that women of color share their experiences may be that they can feel more togetherness, as they also can experience similar events at work. Women of color potentially experience these events more than White women can because of how women of color have been reduced to be associated with nature and uncontrolled passion (Harris, 2003, p. 126). Even though being objectified as a woman can be a reality for both White women and women of color, objectification of women of color is often infused with racial stereotypes (Root, 1995, in Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p. 176).

The "only one" in a White-dominated setting.

Accordion to hooks, every individual of color who has been the "only one" in an all-White setting knows that in such a position, the person can be called upon to lend an ear to racist narratives, undergo various forms of racism, or even laugh at corny race jokes (hooks, 1992, p. 16). According to bell hooks, it has also become "cool" for White people to hang out with Black people and express pleasure in Black culture. Despite that, most White people do not link this to unlearning racism. As Jonathan Rutherford claims, cultural difference sells (hooks, 1992, p. 17). Therefore, for bell hooks, it makes sense that people of color often self-

segregate to protect themselves from that kind of objectifying interaction (hooks, 1992, p. 17).

Several participants have experienced microaggressions when being the "only one" in an all-White setting. Some stories are in work settings and public places, and others are even among friends. Philippine (26), for instance, has experienced being racialized by her White Norwegian friends.

> **Philippine (26):** Once at a party, we had this drinking game, and the question was, "Who is the poorest in the room?" One said, you just look at the skin color and laughed. Another one just told me not to take it on my cape, and I am like, do you mean that? You are White. ALL of you are White. I am the only dark one. Not like the darkest, but you know… So, you should watch what you say, and you are my friend. You cannot tell me what to feel just because you do not feel it.

Philippine (26) experienced a racist joke that also could be extra hurtful because it came from her friends. Not only was the joke made, but she was also told not to be too sensitive, and her feelings were neglected. She has not only had bad experiences with her friends, but she mentioned during the interview that there have been times her friends have stood up for her against racism too. However, there is a particular difficulty with being the only person of color in a friend group or an all-White setting. As bell hooks mention, it is a feeling of being in a position of having to tolerate microaggressions as one outnumbered. This could lead to women of color even self-segregating. Like in the case of Sudan (27)

> **Sudan (27):** Well, if you put me in a room with only White girls, I would say I am leaving after 2 hours (laughs), but yeah. But it is not that we do not try. People must know that we try so hard and bite our tongue through most of it, but we do not receive the same respect. And the conversation is always about us and how different WE are... as I said, it is like being interviewed. And the questions are like, hmm. What do you think about the situation in your home country? So, how is this setting where you ask me about the situation in my home country? Because I know you do not ask because you are politically active, I know you are asking because you want to feel that... you know the feeling White people get when they hear about foreigners coming out of a

bad situation? Is it like they like hearing it? I do not know what it is. What I want to add to this, too, is that it is not something to cry about, or for my part, I do not cry over being excluded by White people because it is in our nature that it would happen. We are very different people. It is a whole experience that does not make us connect, so it is not always a bad thing to feel excluded. White people cannot see that you are excluded because they are always the center of attention.

Interviewer: So, you have accepted the situation?
Sudan (27): Yeah yeah, I feel that White and people of color will not, not get along, but will not comprehend each other.

Sudan (27) explains why she self-segregates and points out that she has tried to be in all-White settings, but the conversation is often about her "difference" and political situations in her home country. She is offended because a party is not a setting to discuss other non-western countries' problems. Secondly, because she feels the intention of the question, they do not ask because they are politically engaged or care about politics. However, she has accepted the situation and claims that it is not that people of color and White people will not ever get along. Despite the different negative experiences that all the participants have had at least once with White Norwegians, all the participants do have a White Norwegian friend/s. Nevertheless, it can come with uncomfortable situations, or they do not discuss race. As well as White Norwegians standing up for them. Of course, not all occasions are bad.

Feeling excluded is not an unusual setting for people of color when most of the people in the room are White Norwegians. Guinea (24) found it hard to adapt to Norwegian culture initially.

> **Guinea (24):** Yes, yes, I felt excluded. I was the only foreigner in my class in my first and second years of college, and I noticed that very well. If I had friends from high school there, it would be easier for me to make friends because people were in groups, and the groups were so divided. Here is the Norwegian group, and here is the foreign group. I also had that experience in junior high school, then I had enough, and I even went to the…. I do not know what the name is… not the principal… the school nurse? Crying and to the school advisor. They were the ones I spent my time with. This was the first year I lived in Norway. I could speak a bit of Norwegian enough to have a

conversation, but I did not receive a response. In gym class, I was always the last to be picked, so in Norwegian society, I have not felt very included, but of course, I have also met very nice people.

Guinea (24) felt excluded in college and junior high school. From junior high school, she also felt excluded and did not receive a response from others and was the last to be picked in gym class. In college, she mentions that if she did not have friends from high school with whom she went to the same school, she imagens it would be hard to make friends. She observed that people were divided between White Norwegian groups and groups of people of color. Philippine (26) also felt unfit in college.

> **Philippine (26):** I know this is simply my thoughts, but I go to college, I have been in sub-groups, and then I feel like, there are not that many that want to talk to me... [...] but it can also be that I am very calm and shy, but I also think often… I am not like them. I am Asian... [...] But one time, I was playing volleyball, and then I got to know another Asian, and we got close, but no other boys talked to me on the team, but he did because we both are Asian.

Both participants have felt exclusion, especially in education settings. Philippine/Romania (27) also mentions her experience of feeling unfit when starting a handball team with only Norwegian girls but points out that she did not know if it was because of her ethnicity. Guinea (24) points out that the reason for being excluded is the "cold" Norwegian culture. None of the participants claims that it is precisely because of their race or ethnicity that they have been excluded. Philippine (26) seems to suggest that when she got a friend, it was because they both were Asian. On the other hand, Gambia/Norway (29) has felt that she was excluded because of her difference in college.

> **Gambia/Norway (29)**: After I started my studies again, I immediately experienced that someone in my (college) group "targeted" me. She used to make faces when I spoke, mock herself, try to get others to join in the ridicule, make condescending comments, actively exclude, and freeze me out, and was very clear in her discrimination of me versus others in the group. This was literally from day one. As for the other group, two others began to become downright hostile in their communication with me. Both in body language, how I was spoken to, what was said,

68

and how they generally ignored me. The rest of the group, I would not say necessarily, had any particularly personal negative attitudes towards me. Several of them were nice and friendly if we talked [...]. Everyone else in the group, regardless of personality and character, was included, but not me. It was highly striking. Additionally, this is a randomized group consisting of people with different personalities, so what is the probability that I, of all, will be the one that EVERYONE in the group, for whatever reason, does not hit it off with? [...]. So, what is left? What does the rest of the group have in common? They are around the same age and are all White.

Gambia/Norway (29) feels excluded because of race. She experienced both mockery and, in addition to that, being frozen out. She points out that she has tried to come up with every possible reason for her exclusion just because of how easily others dismiss it. Furthermore, the group also does meet outside of school, and both socialize and do schoolwork together, and she was, according to her knowledge, the only one who was not invited. When discussing events like a Christmas party, the group was aware of her not participating in the conversation. She felt no one cared. She felt invisible and unimportant. The examples mentioned where the participants have felt excluded can be a microaggression. Pedagog Yael Haralp (2022) refers to an example where she takes an informant named Akemi, who shares his experience as a student. She describes that it was the first time that everyone was a stranger to each other, yet White Norwegian students sat with each other, while no one sat next to Akemi. Haralp points out that we, as readers, can quickly think that there could be many explanations for why Akemi felt isolated and come up with questions like "What about White students who sat alone?" or "How do we know this was a microaggression?" (Harlap, 2022, p. 141). It is hard to say specifically if these types of situations are racist. Yet, what is typical with microaggressions is that it raises questions like "Did he or she mean that?", "am I imagining it?" or "Did she mean something negative by that?" (Harlap, 2022, p. 140).

These are questions that most of the participants have or indicate that they had thought of when both were experiencing a microaggression and telling their stories. For that reason, it could be necessary that the weight of the microaggression is put on how the recipient's lived experience in the particular circumstances of the given situation rather than the intention of the person that carried it out (Harlap, 2022, p. 146). That could make it easier for the participants and other people of color to confront situations where they are being racialized.

Summary

Four out of 13 participants have experienced being racially sexualized as children, where three stories were shared. The participants from the African category experienced being racialized because of the aspect of adultification for Black girls, and it took place within an institutional context. Philippine (26) was racialized due to the stereotypes of Asian women ascribed when being with White men, but she was racialized as a child in the public sphere with her father. Moreover, several of the participants had experienced being racialized in interracial relationships by both others and by their romantic partners. Several participants expressed that this brings suspicions when looking for a romantic relationship because one does not know if stereotypes govern the sexual preference of the partner.

Furthermore, several of the participants of the study work within the health and care sector. Two out of three participants that work within the sector expressed being racially sexualized. What is common for the participants is that the workplace does not acknowledge this as a racist experience but instead uses words such as "unpleasant." This could be for several reasons, such as that the leaders do not take the situation too seriously, even though they have the duty by law, to work towards preventing their employees from experiencing racism in their workplace. At last, this chapter shows how various the participants experienced microaggressions when being in an all-White setting. This could be in settings of being with White Norwegian friends, at parties, and in academics.

CHAPTER 6: KILLJOY: SENSITIVE AND AGGRESSIVE WOMEN

" They want you to be like a silent minority, you know (laughs). They are like, yeah, I do not have anything against you being a minority [...]. Whereas when you start talking about it and problematize how it is, they are like, "nooow, you are starting to annoy me (laughs)"

(Gambia/Norway, 29)

When people of color transition from childhood to adulthood, self-perception and opinions likely change (Andersson, 2022, p. 170). This transition for people of color could, among other things, involve confronting racism and sexism and sharing their experiences (Ellefsen et al., 2022, p. 435). Though problematizing how it is to be a woman of color in a Norwegian context, as Gambia/Norway (29) says in her quote above, people want you to be silent. Both racism and sexism are considered trigger topics. A trigger topic is a topic that quickly causes emotions to flare up, it is not only emotional on the part of the sender, but the topic also fires up others and is an arsenal every time they are brought up. These include racism, immigration, Islam, and feminism (Hagen, 2015, in Abdel-Fadil, 2022, p. 254). Confronting trigger topics can bring different outcomes, triggering different emotions for both parties. The one exposed to racism can experience emotions like confusion, shame, and anger. On the other hand, those accused of racism can likewise react with similar feelings (Andersson, 2022, p. 170). I would argue that this can also apply to sexism, as it is also considered a trigger topic.

The chapter will interrogate the stories of the politically engaged participants. First, it will present "the process of confrontation and ignorance." Moreover, I will analyze the participant's experience of "Confronting racism." After that, I will analyze how the participants are perceived as "sensitive and aggressive women ". At last, I will analyze the experiences when the participants do not confront racism and sexism. To analyze and discuss these chapters, I will mainly use Sara Ahmed's theory of "killjoy" (2010), but I will also use Myshia Cherry's philosophy when discussing anger (2021), Erving Goffman's front and backstage theory (1959), and both Charles W. Mills (2015) and Nancy Tuana (2006)

philosophical reflections about ignorance. This third and last analytical chapter will answer the sub-question: When do women of color confront racism and sexism, and how are their strategies encountered?

The process of confrontation and ignorance

Sara Ahmed states that the history of feminism can be seen as a history of making trouble and a history of women who refuse to make others happy (Ahmed, 2010, p.60). Therefore, in society today, a feminist can be attributed as the origin of bad feelings or as individuals who ruin the atmosphere. For instance, for a group to get along, the individuals must participate in solidarity. This means that the individuals must laugh at the right points at a party to be included in solidarity (Ahmed, 2010, p. 65). Brazil (24) came to Norway in her late teens and is politically engaged. She has participated in different political events of interest regarding feminism and women of color. She is both a feminist and an anti-racist and works as an artist. She has witnessed someone expressing their feelings about feminists at a party, which she disagreed with and decided to confront them.

> **Brazil (24):** I was at a Norwegian party, and this guy was talking about how feminism makes women care about things that they should not care about, and they would be happier if they did not care about those things. I remember, like, I got heated… I do not think much before I speak, ehm. It took me a long time to formulate my words and thoughts so that when I address it, I address it straight forward, so I do not think much. I just do it, and after, I feel very scared. Because then you feel like... did I overstep? Was I aggressive? Was I too offensive? Then it is the whole anxiety kicking in, and you feel ashamed. I consider a lot of everyone's perspective and Angeles, and then I am like, "Oh, did I embarrass that person?" Or maybe the person is struggling themselves, you know, or when they said that they did not mean any harm.

Brazil (24) explains that the individual at the party gives the impression of believing that feminists are aggressive and unhappy. This can be used to argue how feminists are pictured before providing an opinion. By just being a feminist, you are represented as grumpy and do not even have to speak to be killing the joy in the room (Ahmed, 2010, p. 65). To be recognized as a feminist is to be already assigned to a difficult category (Ahmed, 2010, p. 66). I would argue that being a feminist can also be a stigma because of stereotypes. However, as

Goffman (1963) explains, a stigma can be visible or not, and being a feminist is not readily visible, and one can choose not to declare oneself as one (Goffman, 1963, p. 65).

On the other hand, it can make feminists not want to express themselves as a feminist due to the stigma and stereotypes that category has. As the individual from the quote said at the party, "Feminists would be happier if they did not care about those things." This sentence also shows how feminists are read as if they are against X because they are angry rather than being mad because you are against X (Ahmed, 2010, p. 68). Ahmed argues that the violence of what others say often goes unnoticed, but when the feminists confront it, she is disturbing the fragility of peace (Ahmed, 2010, p. 65). The individual quoted in the story above also seemed to believe that feminists are often unhappy, and the situations of conflict are read as about the unhappiness of the feminist rather than being focused on what the unhappiness is about (Ahmed, 2010, p. 67). Brazil (24) continues with her story.

> **Brazil (24):** Many people were sitting on the couch watching and not saying anything, and my ex at that time, my partner at the party, did not have my back. He agreed with the guy. So, I felt even lonelier. Then there is at some point one girl who was like saying, "Oh my god, you should give these talks" ... what is it called... motivational talks. So, then I was like, oh, okay! But then the next day in the morning, the hangover makes you feel nauseous because you feel like maybe you spoke too much and exposed yourself too much. So, I was feeling guilty for so long and embarrassed about all that. Then I sent a message to this guy and told him, "Hey, it was nice to discuss those things. I think it is okay for people to have different opinions, but it is very nice to be able to talk about them, ehm... I am sorry if I was at any point aggressive" I was even apologizing. That fucker answers, "Yeah, I see. Maybe it is better to have the conversation when people are not drinking". I was like, ok. So, to him, it was all about me, me being drunk.

When asked how people reacted when Brazil (24) decided to confront the individual from the story, she first pointed out how her partner did not have her back then. It is also part of the context that he found it difficult to discuss such topics with her before this event happened. Furthermore, Brazil (24) felt more support when the girl approached her and gave positive feedback after the discussion. Still, she felt guilty and embarrassed the morning after. Due to this, she apologized for herself, but as she implies, she felt like his response was just

about her being drunk. As mentioned earlier, feminists and anti-racists can be ascribed to a problematic category (Ahmed, 2010, p. 66). As a result, being ascribed to a problematic category can cause a "stereotype threat" to the individual trying to fight against sexism and racism. Stereotype threat is the fear that one's behavior may confirm or be understood regarding the negative stereotypes associated with the group the individual is categorized as (Steele, 1997, in Guyll et al., 2010, p. 120). Individuals that may experience stereotype threat may come to devalue their performance. In this situation, their performance can be their anger, knowledge, and confidence instead of gaining self-esteem for their understanding (Steele, 1997, in Guyll et al., 2010, p. 120). It can also be conveyed to psychological stress responses (Schmader, Johns, & Forbes, 2008, in Guyll et al., 2010, p. 120) such as anxiety, like in Brazil's (24) experience. Therefore, it can be challenging to speak about such issues as racism and sexism confidently, as there is a constant fear of being ascribed as problematic. Furthermore, she points out how her feeling bad about arguing with others happens outside her control.

> **Brazil (24):** It happens on a very unconscious level too ... Like, I was dating this guy who to me was the most handsome guy I have ever seen in my life, and he was perfect on so many levels, right, and then there I am just creating trouble by disagreeing, or by like… One thing I am aware of is that I have been reading a lot in my life and informing myself. I am not just taking my opinions out of the streets and being like. Now this is my opinion! I was building them up, and then to have those people who have watched one Jordan. B. Peterson's YouTube video, and then they are like, "No, this, this, this." I am like, Okay, maybe you should read other books about people who think differently and then have an opinion?

Brazil (24) appeared to have been feeling pressure not to cause disturbance when being with her ex-boyfriend at the time. It tried to show that she was not problematic by displaying happiness (Ahmed, 2010, p. 66), meeting people in the middle ground, and apologizing. Because she is conscious that her arguments are based on research and the knowledge, that she has gained by reading and informing herself, she should be more confident in her statements, but still, she feels the pressure of not making trouble for her ex-boyfriend. It seems like. For a long time, she was putting "on a character," as Goffman (1959) concepts it. Being at the party can be pictured as the front stage, where she tries to follow society's shared values or her group (Goffman, 1959, p. 23). Ahmed refers to feminist Marilyn Frye, who

argues that oppression involves the requirement of the individual to show signs of being happy with the situation they find themselves in. To be oppressed includes showing signs of happiness and signs of being adjusted (Frye, 1983; Ahmed, 2010, p. 66). When asked why Brazil (26) was so nice in the past, she says.

> **Brazil (24):** It was a time in my life when I was trying to meet people in the middle. I was trying to redeem myself from being so aggressive. I tried to see things through their eyes and watch the videos they liked to try to understand. And in that conversation, I even remember telling him like, "Sorry if I am interrupting you. I am sorry if I am sounding confrontational by disagreeing with you about this." Then I remember him saying, "Do not apologize when you apologize. You show weakness; you are weak, saying that your point does not matter…." It was just so sick. It was very, very sick. So nowadays, I feel like it is different. I feel way more secure that what I believe in matters, and I do not need to have those people like me anymore. I think breaking up with my ex was the most important thing because I was afraid of being liked.

In the past, Brazil (24) seemed to have been very concerned with not being too confrontational or aggressive, fearing not being liked. This can explain why Brazil (24) excused herself often not to make the situation more heated than it already is, in addition to the stereotype threat. From my interpretation, the people she felt insecure discussing with were her ex-boyfriend's friends, as her situation started to change after breaking up with him and then not needing those people to like her anymore. Now the situation has changed.

> **Brazil (24):** What I think is like I am not thinking this because I want to be important. No, it is because people are suffering, and I do not think it is okay to do, think, or make jokes about these topics. Now it is so much easier for me to say, "No, what you are saying is shit. You should do more research". I no longer have the patience to say, "Let us have a dialogue because you have so much to learn, and I will find a way to teach you." No, that is not my responsibility.

Sociologst Randi Gressgård refers to the philosopher Charles W. Mills to shed light on White people's blindness or ignorance of the oppressive conditions of racialized groups (Mills, 1997, 2007, in Gressgård, 2022, p. 126). Mills' concept of White ignorance was meant to

denote ignorance among Whites. He furthermore underlines that his use of "Whiteness" has no biological connections; instead, it is being used in the sense that it has become standard within critical Whiteness studies to refer to individuals that are socially categorized as White within a racialized social system (Mills, 2015, p. 217). He first coined the concept for the United States but realized that the idea is much broader, as the modern world has been created by European colonialism and imperialism. Therefore, racist assumptions, frameworks, and norms are central to the theories that justify White Western conquest and domination of the world, so White ignorance can be expected to be global (Mills, 2015, p. 217). Another participant of the study, Sudan (27), agrees with Brazil (24) that ignorance is one of the core problems of racism, as elaborated in the following.

> **Sudan (27):** The problem is more than race. The problem is ignorance. The problem is that we live in a globalized world where we depend on each other. You choose to live in the world without being grateful for the sacrifices made, and one person has only made those sacrifices. People of color. They are the ones who drive the money. They are the ones keeping the stock market up! They are the ones taking on environmental issues, and they do not complain because they do not have the choice to complain. So that is how the world works, so if you are unaware of that, you are a terrible person. I am sorry, but you are a bad person. Educate yourself. That is all we ask from you. We are not asking for you to go out and protest for us. Just educate yourself! Please educate yourself about the problems that 80% of the world is going through because White people are the minority in this world.

Feminist researcher Nancy Tuana has also identified different types of ignorance within the women's health movement (2006, p. 1). The main ones are "knowing that we do not know, but not caring to know" (p.5), "they did not know that they did not know" (p.7), and "they do not know, and they do not want to know" (p.10). Regarding the last type of ignorance, Tuana refers to Frye, who argues that the critical component of racism is ignorance because those in the positions of privilege in such oppressive contexts as racism exhibit a "determined ignorance" of both the histories and lives of the people being oppressed. She even insists that this ignorance is not passive but a result of many acts and negligence (Frye, 1983, p. 119, in Tuana, 2006, p. 10).

Brazil (24) has decided that " teaching" others is not her responsibility anymore, but she will not stay silent when hearing something provocative. Just as Audre Lorde, the famous writer and radical feminist, describes, she cannot hide her anger to spare someone's guilt or hurt their feelings (Lorde, 1981, p. 9). Even though some individuals may fall under the type of ignorance, "they did not know that they did not know," does it make it the oppressed individual's responsibility to ensure they do know? Lorde also points out that oppressed people are constantly being asked to stretch more to bridge the gap between humanity and blindness (Lorde, 1981, p. 9) instead of the individuals lacking the knowledge to try to gain the missing knowledge. Instead, the work for peace is put on the oppressed to not be too aggressive or too confrontational when reacting to the oppressor, in fear of the focus being on the reaction rather than the action that took place. The "willful ignorance," as Tuana concepts, "they do not know, and they do not want to know" (Tuana, 2006, p. 10), can be relevant to today's ignorance. It can also be the type of ignorance that people of color think people who are perceived as ignorant have, which makes individuals like Brazil (24) less motivated to explain and have a discussion regarding topics like racism and feminism, or as Sudan (27) sees as the main problem.

Confronting racism

It is difficult to talk about racism in general in Norway because it has become a blind spot. Andersson shows some typical statements from Norwegian debates about why the population does not speak about racism, like *"We have so little, and not as serious, racism in this country compared to the USA, and it becomes a bad atmosphere if someone starts talking about racism"* (Andersson, 2022, p. 21). The use of the statements from the debates trivializes racism in Norway and does this to a more significant extent when comparing racism to other countries as less severe racism.

The last subchapter referred to an experience that Gambia/Norway (29) shared where her peers excluded her. The participant explained this to the manager. Gambia/Norway (29) continues her story of the same situation.

> **Gambia/Norway (29):** When I was to have a conversation with the manager a few
> weeks ago, I chose to bring up how I felt left out. To my surprise, but at the same time,
> hope the group leader recognized this. She had observed that I was kept outside and

that I had been bullied. She had hoped I would bring it up because she did not think this was right. She ultimately agreed with everything I told her and how I had thought about handling it as best as possible. We "bonded" over being women who stood out, she as someone closest to Elle Woods in reality, and I as a distinctly urban and relatively masculine woman in style and behavior. We were two sides of the same coin. We also "bonded" over our experiences of being women in a male-dominated, patriarchal world, shared experiences, and frustrations, and had a really good tone. She impressed me, and I praised her, and she, me. She was full of kind words, and so was I. We were proud of EACH OTHER. It was so nice. She was observant, sharp, compassionate, supportive, and fair. She made it clear that she thought this treatment of me was unacceptable, said straight out that she was my ally, and she would make sure I did not have to go through hell like that for the rest of my time here.

At first, the manager acknowledged that Gambia/Norway (29) was excluded and bullied and had even hoped that Gambia/Norway (29) would bring this up. The two bonded over what she interpreted as feminism and womanhood, the experiences of being a woman in a male-dominated, patriarchal world. Being a feminist can unite women as they share the same experience of being stigmatized. On the other hand, as bell hooks described, a group of White feminist activists may bond over shared womanhood, but the atmosphere will noticeably change when a woman of color enters the room (hooks, 2000, in Ahmed, 2010, p. 67). The manager was, in the beginning, supportive of Gambia/Norway (29), but when the subject of racism and the participants' apparent differences arose, the conversation took a turn.

> **Gambia/Norway (29):** I think it must be when I bring up, and for the first time say outright what I thought had been quite clear and obvious all along, and an agreement about, that I feel the discrimination concerns my visible difference. My difference is because of my ethnicity. This did something to her. She asks, "Do you really think they do this because of skin color?" I was blown away [...]. "Do you really think they don't?" I ask. We look at each other in silence, and I do not remember if that is when she shuts down and says no. She thinks we should end this conversation and start packing to go. She did this several times from this point. I remember her saying she thinks this is a group of "nice" people. She says it defensively. I was blown away. I say, "You think this is a group of 'nice people'?" She has started to become irritated and angry. Yes, she finds them friendly, she says. I was genuinely speechless [....].

"No, I think we should end this conversation because nothing good will come of this."
[...]. I look at her, pointing to my face to illustrate that I am reading her expression.
"Why are you so angry?" I ask carefully and compassionately. Fortunately, she does
not deny the anger that is so evident. She admits it. She says that she feels I am
unwilling to accept that she does not want to say that what is being done is racist. [...].
She could agree that I was bullied and excluded. That was a fact she could
acknowledge, but indeed not that this should be rooted in unconscious or conscious
racist attitudes. For her, it was far worse than I now accused them of being racist than
that I was possibly exposed to racism [...]. I do not remember when I started crying. I
only remember that it was then that she AGAIN, which she did several times
throughout this conversation, said that we had to end the conversation and that I could
instead pass it on to the study advisor. She started to get ready to leave. What hurt was
that she did not BELIEVE it or me at all. Then she said, "I BELIEVE you BELIEVE
this is racism." Again, I was put out.

Once the subject of skin color and racism was out there, the atmosphere of the conversation
changed. As mentioned, talking about race in Norway can be difficult for those exposed to
racism and others. One of the claims for why the Norwegian population does not talk about
racism is because it becomes a bad atmosphere. This claim is also precisely what happened
with the conversation that once had a good atmosphere and turned sour after Gambia/Norway
(29) said outright that she read as discrimination. The discussion of racism arouses guilt,
anger, and shame. The accusation of racism became worse than the subject of the participant
being bullied and excluded. The manager did not even consider whether exclusion and
bullying were racism.

Furthermore, the manager said, "I believe you believe this is racism." This accusation is
similar to why people of color do not want to confront racism, such as "*I have been told I am
pulling the racism card"* (Andersson, 2022, p. 21). It is hard, in general, to point out that
someone is being racist because of the huge backlash one can receive, as the individual who
gets accused of the action could be so violated that the act of racism will not be the discussion
anymore (Helland, 2015, p. 108). When Gambia/Norway (29) explained her experience, she
was sure that her experience was racist. She argues.

> **Gambia/Norway (29):** Contrary to what racism deniers often think, we minorities actually tend to think through all possible logical explanations for discrimination before we draw the conclusion that it could possibly have something to do with racism. Because we know how easily this is dismissed by others, and we do not even dare to claim something like this against someone who is White if we are not quite sure of it. We learned the hard way because God KNOWS the last thing a White person wants to admit is that White people can be racist. Today it is worse to call someone racist than actually to be racist or to call something racist than to think or act like that.

She then continues going through possible explanations of why she could have gotten excluded by the college group. For instance, she did not participate in the introduction week, and her age and personality, to mention a few. At the same time, she argued against these possible explanations. For instance, she has never been to the introduction week on other studies but still managed to gain some friends, or people never notice her age, and she has many younger friends. At last, she argues that she quickly gets friends, and the college group consists of a very random group of people with different personalities. This group, in her opinion, would not naturally have chosen each other as friends if the setting had not made it so. Therefore, what is the probability that she, who manages well socially and goes out of her way to be friendly, is the only one excluded and everyone else included?

When the manager accused Gambia/Norway (29) of imagining racism, this could also be what Andersson calls a micro rejection, which refers to communication that excludes, invalidates, or denies the thoughts, feelings, and reality of the individual experiencing a microaggression (Andersson, 2022, p. 133). Another term for this process can be racial gaslighting, which is when an individual who calls out racism is told that they are, for instance, overthinking it or being criticized for how they brought up the issue (Meldrum, 2021, p.1). Gaslighting is also a term that more and more people are using in their everyday life. According to the Norwegian newspaper VG, the term has been the word of the year in 2022. In contrast, according to the American dictionary publisher Merriam-Webster, the searches for the word have increased by 1740 % in 2022 compared to the previous year, 2021 (Elgaaen, 2022). The participant might also be familiar with this concept as she continued to stand up for herself.

> **Gambia/Norway (29):** When I started to cry, I said how upsetting and painful it was. How tired I was of everything. And I said that I had never treated anyone like this. That I was an inclusive person who acted the opposite of this. If I had seen any of them left out, I would have made a point of including them. In fact, I had even done so, taking extra care of those I saw struggling more socially. But it was not mutual. She said she understood how "upset and aggressive I was" and how it was not her/the group I was mad at but the system. I could not believe what I heard. "Aggressive"? Was I "aggressive"? Where and when had I been aggressive? [...]. So, I calmly but firmly said, "Not aggressive." Correcting herself at once, she said, "Upset or committed."

Gambia/Norway (29) was also crying while being called aggressive for speaking passionately and using swear words, which she points out that both she and the manager do in everyday speech, but now it is seen as a form of aggression. The manager corrected herself and switched the word aggressive to committed. Ahmed applies the figure of being a feminist killjoy alongside the formation of the "angry Black woman," also described as a killjoy. The "angry Black woman" may even be the killjoy of the feminist killjoy, pointing out racism (Ahmed, 2010, p. 67). When a woman of color articulates reasonable arguments, it can often be dismissed as anger, which might make the woman angry. This response can then easily be read as the confirmation of evidence that the woman of color is both angry and unreasonable (Ahmed, 2010, p. 68). When a woman of color shouts to be heard when speaking of racism, in calling, she will be the one who becomes the origin of the bad feeling rather than the action that puts her in anger (Ahmed, 2010, p. 86). This only became visible, as mentioned, when the subject of race arose, as they bonded in the beginning over womanhood.

Sensitive and aggressive women

A feminist killjoy "spoils" the happiness of others and can even be seen as a spoilsport because the feminist refuses to assemble or to up over happiness. So, in society today, a feminist can be attributed as the origin of bad feelings, as the ones who ruin the atmosphere. Feminists can typically be represented as grumpy or humorless and do not have to say anything to be read as she is killing the joy in the room. Just by opening her mouth, she can be met with others already rolling their eyes as if to say, "Oh, here she goes again" (Ahmed, 2010, p. 65). Additionally, women of color have been portrayed as more emotional for several

centuries and thus less rational and "civilized" than people with White skin (Abdel-Fadil, 2022, p. 251).

For instance, Philippine/Europe (27) have experienced unpleasant moments when acting anti-racist and has been confronted with ironic/mocking comments at her workplace. She says.

> **Philippine/Europe (27):** I work at X, and you can imagine how the men who have lived out on X are and how they think. When I am at work, I am surrounded by them. You notice that they are kind of homophobic and racist and say comments, and then I am very proud that I have enough bones to speak against them and tell them that "you do not say that ". I am very strict there, so I notice that they say, "I cannot say that word (N-word) now because she is here" (ironic/mocking tone), but you can never say that word…

Philippine/Europe (27) speaks up against racist comments at work. From how I interpret her story, her co-workers stop the conversation or shift how they talk because "she" is there in an ironic or mocking tone. Portraying her either as killing joy or as sensitive. Whereas Ahmed asks, do feminists or anti-racists kill others' happiness by pointing out the moments of sexism and racism? Or does the individual expose the bad feelings hidden under the public sign of happiness? As she also points out, the violence of what was said go unnoticed, but when a feminist or anti-racist point out the violence, they are the ones causing the argument (Ahmed, 2010, p. 65). Philippine/Europe (27) is neither the only participant portrayed as sensitive nor a killjoy. Brazil (24) has had the same experience with her ex-boyfriend.

> **Brazil (24):** My ex has already apologized for this, a year after we had broken up. But he told me twice that talking to me about racism was like walking on a minefield. And I also had a friend of his sent him a joke, like a meme, and he wrote, "This is a joke that is not safe to make in front of her, haha" (mocking tone).

Brazil (24) is also portrayed as sensitive when her ex-boyfriend comments that talking to her about the subjects is like walking on a minefield. This could be interpreted as her being aggressive or too sensitive when discussing topics. However, women of color have been portrayed as more emotional for several centuries and less rational as it is seen as an idea of being the opposite of emotion (Abdel-Fadil, 2022, p. 251). Brazil (24) has also been in

Norway for about eight years. According to Ahmed (2010), migrants and immigrants are increasingly bound by the happiness duty, meaning to not speak about racism in the present and not speak of the unhappiness of colonial histories. The happiness duty for migrants, or descendants of migrants, means telling stories about your arrival or being in this country as something good. It is like one has a positive duty to speak of what is good and not speak of what is not good. As if one should let go of the pain of racism as if you must not be hurt by violence that can be directed towards you and not even notice the violence, instead just let it pass by. Speaking out on such histories and being aware of racism can lead to becoming an alien (Ahmed, 2010, p. 158).

Moreover, compared to the previous answers, where the participants have experienced a form of mockery, Sudan (27) feels that she is perceived as aggressive.

> **Sudan (27):** Yeah, it is like, argh… Why do you always have to… But again, because it is a negative topic (racism) that people do not want to discuss, why bring it up? And when you are bringing it up, it seems like you are doing it too, as I said in the other question, ruin the vibe… So, you seem aggressive and always angry, but we should always be angry about these things. People are literally fucking dying over these things, so we should be mad. We should be aggressive. All the rights we have gotten now, and all the things we have right to do now and all that shit, it is because of a person who was mad and aggressive and did some shit, and I am not saying that every conversation you have to be angry, and every conversation you have to say fuck ... like no. I get that, but to portray like it when you bring it up, maybe yeah, if you bring it up all the fucking time, sorry, I should not curse... but to be seen like it every time you bring it up, then you are aggressive... is it me that is aggressive or is it you that is being put in place and are afraid of it?

Sudan (27) explains that people I interpret as acquaintances or people from her university from the interview react when she speaks about feminism or anti-racism. She gets comments like "Why do you always have to..." and in her opinion, it is because the topic is harmful, and people do not want to talk about it because of the bad atmosphere it potentially can create (Andersson, 2022, p. 21). Therefore, she also feels people think you want to ruin the vibe intentionally. She admits that when talking about such topics, one can seem angry and aggressive, especially when the intersection of being a woman and of color can be more

stigmatizing when confronting something. First, because women have the stereotype of being emotional when they speak up against an issue (Shields, 2002, p. 14), and second, for being a Black woman, who is connected with the stereotype of the "angry Black woman" (Ahmed, 2010, p. 67).

Furthermore, Sudan (27) underlines that anger is significant. Anger is productive as she thinks it leads to action and change. Myisha Cherry, a moral psychologist and philosopher of race (Cherry, 2021, p. 7), claims that anger can be generalized as one thing. The one portrait that we paint of anger is as a villain (Cherry, 2021, p. 11). When on the other hand, it can be helpful. The idea that rationality is the opposite of emotion is also misogynistic. It has a racist background. In addition, women with darker skin and indigenous peoples have been portrayed as less rational and "civilized" than people with White skin (Abdel-Fadil, 2022, p. 251). Therefore, it is hard in general to point out that someone is being racist without receiving a massive backlash as the individual who gets accused of the action would be violated in the worst way, and the act of racism will not be taken seriously (Helland, 2015, p. 108).

"The Medusa trope" is based on the Greek story of a woman named Medusa, the story is of her being punished for being a victim of Poseidon's violence. Cherry claims the story gives valuable insight into a certain perception and treatment of women today. The story depicts women who are angry as having no real reason for being angry since they are not victims (Cherry, 2020, p. 1). She claims there are different perceptions of judging women as blameworthy for mistreatment. For instance, the perception can be racialized, where a society or an individual can struggle to view Black women as victims, given the stereotypes about their inability to experience pain. On the other hand, other judgments can depend on the crime and predator, but in many cases, the women are not often perceived as victims. She argues that this might be due to the over-sympathy for men and the over-sexualization of women (Cherry, 2020, p. 2). Although anger is a fitting response to wrongdoing, women's anger is judged to be inappropriate. It is not viewed as problematic because it is anger but because it belongs to and defends women (Cherry, 2020, p. 3).

Therefore, the Medusa trope operates to control women, and it is a way for women to police themselves so they will not be a threat (Cherry, 2020, p. 7). This form of control does not just operate within the Medusa trope. Still, it can also be in the stereotypes of "the angry Black woman" and "the sassy Latina woman," which are distinctive types of the Medusa formula.

For instance, if a situation calls for anger, a Black woman, given the stereotype, can be less prone to express her anger for various reasons, such as fear of giving in to the stereotype. She may want to represent Black women in the best light possible, or she does not want to satisfy the hostile and racist perceptions that White people have of Black women. Not least, she may want to be an individual and not a stereotype. Cherry is sympathetic to these reasons. However, she also argues that a woman risks not expressing her perceptions, feelings, desires, and judgments by doing so. In addition, suppressed anger is unlikely to challenge injustice, hold people accountable, and make claims of respect (Cherry, 2020, p. 7). Therefore, anger can be seen as a helpful tool in racial justice. As Sudan (27) mentions, all the liberties that people of color have today are precisely because of a person who was mad and aggressive and acted.

When do they not confront racism and sexism?

Though most of the participants interviewed about these topics were mainly motivated and engaged, there are times when they do not confront racism or sexism. The participants who have confronted racism and sexism through this chapter have been from the politically engaged category. People of color frequently experience and are negatively impacted by discrimination and racism in different contexts. One would expect them to be less tolerant of racism than White people. Otherwise, the participants that were perceived as "less" politically engaged often had responses like "I do not care" or "I just say it is not okay." The politically engaged participants had more stories, and their answers were supplementary to why they did not confront racism. The primary setting where participants have tolerated racism is the workplace. Sudan (27) explains.

> **Sudan (27):** I am very embarrassed to admit it because I am very outspoken, but I must admit how society is set up to not be on my side, so it gets more challenging to bring it up, even though it should be brought up all the time. For instance, at work, when my boss has been racist and has said racist stuff, it has always been with the pretense that she is not a racist. She means the best, then it is tough to correct a person, especially when it is my boss, and she can easily lock me out of certain things just because she can be embarrassed by me pointing it out. It has happened many times that she has been racist towards customers with a racist undertone. So, it has happened

when I do not want to step over someone higher than you or not ruin a friendship or a vibe when talking about something so serious and depressing.

Sudan (27) points out that in settings that include social consequences and economic consequences, it is harder to confront racism. In these situations, one can feel vulnerable and decide not to confront the opinions one disagrees with. Brazil (24) handles the same way, but she is additionally in a male-dominated workplace, compared to Sudan (27), who works in a woman-dominated environment.

> **Brazil (24):** They have many comments about women, racist comments sometimes and sexist comments sometimes. At my workplace, I know I am outnumbered, and they just like... first of all, they will not understand, and second of all, they are just going to team up against me, and it is my workplace. I do not want that stress like when I still have to do my work at the same time.

When dealing with racism at your workplace, the theory of Goffman's frontstage and backstage behavior can be relevant. Women might have to put on a character that does not react to racist and sexist comments to fit in with the values of the workplace (Goffman, 1959, p. 23). The workplaces for both participants are different, yet similar. White women mostly dominate Sudan's (27) workplace, but if she speaks up against racism, she can be perceived as the "angry Black woman." On the other hand, Brazil's (24) workplace is dominated by men, but if she speaks up against sexism, she can be perceived as a killjoy.

Not wanting to confront issues because of power relations can likewise be relevant to Guinea's (24) reaction to an experience of sexual harassment. She experienced sexual harassment at her college by a teacher. She was going to give a hug to say goodbye, but instead, the teacher grabbed her bottom. The participant explains that she did not confront the situation because she thought she would not be believed. She explained that this was because he was a likable White man. Various reasons decrease the chances of being believed. It could be the intersection of gender, race, and power. Sexual harassment and assault can often be linked to hierarchies and structural power. They can exploit the hierarchical relationship between the individuals, authority relations, and power inequality (Borchorst & Augustin, 2017, in Bråten, 2020, p. 25).

Nevertheless, it also intersects with gender, as it is not only the relationship between authorities that makes sexual harassment or assault possible but is the fact that the victim of assault is a woman. An example that Bråten cites is that women in leadership positions also experience sexual harassment. Therefore, the power of gender is highlighted as more substantial than the organizational or hierarchical power (McLaughlin, Uggen, & Blackstone, 2012, in Bråten, 2020, p. 25).

Lorde (1981) furthermore points out that oppressed peoples are always expected and asked to stretch more between humanity and blindness (Lorde, 1981, p. 9). The participants must adapt to their situation, not be seen as too aggressive, or let things go to remain at peace between the individuals involved. The woman of color has to control how her reaction will be received. Meanwhile, the actor of violence does not often get consequences, which can result in people of color not constantly confronting sexism and racism.

> **Chile (23):** I am a feminist and try to be as anti-racist as possible vocally. But, like, you meet people who think that things you say are very radical, like you can say, "These people deserve human rights," and they make an expression. But I also choose my battles. People say stupid (racist and sexist) stuff every day.

People of color can have been taught to pick their battles since they were kids by their parents or to ignore acts of bias rather than challenging every racist encounter. Research has then shown that majority and minority members rarely challenge racism and discrimination, even though they disapprove of those acts or experience it themselves (Hunt et al., 2020, p. 3). The same applies to sexism, as the #MeToo movement showed many stories of women who had silently tolerated sexism for years. That pattern is also consistent with social psychological research that shows that women often tolerate, minimize or ignore sexism, although it goes against their self-interest (Mallett et al., 2021, p. 913).

Not everybody can pick their battles. As shown in the examples of Sudan (27), Brazil (24), and Guinea (24), when power relations are involved, there is less possibility of choosing whether they can confront racism or sexism. For Sudan (27) and Brazil (24), it could have impacted their economy, and for Guinea (24), it could have affected her education. Therefore, the findings of not challenging acts of racism and discrimination suggest that people of color often take a strategic approach to confronting racism, depending on the characteristics of the

actions, the situation, and potential outcomes, such as if it involves power relations (Hunt et al., 2021, p. 3). Besides power relations, some people do not have tools like knowing the concepts of racism and sexism. The same could be applied to people who do not have concepts about racism and sexism. They may not know when they are being racialized or discriminated against. Concepts such as "sexual racism," where sexual and romantic preferences can be governed by prejudices and stereotypes (Aasmundsen, 2021, p. 75). Therefore, not knowing the concepts can also give less possibility of identifying instances when interpreting a situation (Wu & Dunning, 2017, p. 2), resulting in having no alternative but to not confront racism or sexism rather than having a personal choice if one wants to confront it or not.

For the individuals who have a choice, it is not unusual that they go about different ways of reacting and adapt their reactions according to the situation and their mood. On the other hand, researchers like Browne, Bakshi & Lim (2011) claim that it can be problematic to ignore racism as it might normalize racist incidents (in Ellefsen et al., 2022, p. 443) or as Cherry argues that it does not hold people accountable and make claims of respect, nor challenges injustice (Cherry, 2020, p. 7). As a form of resistance, it can be important if it makes their own life easier by reducing the negative impact of racism in their lives. Ignoring racism, or at least microaggressions not seen as severe behaviors, is a technique to reduce the stress of experiencing racism. It can even reduce the negative impact by giving it less attention and space in both the personal and public sphere, at least concerning racism meant to provoke a reaction from the individuals discriminated against (in Ellefsen et al., 2022, p. 443). This can even be seen as an essential strategy to navigate regular exposure to racism without constant conflict and confrontation's immediate social and interpersonal costs. Although, it can also come with severe psychological and physical costs over time (e.g., Krieger & Sidney, 1996, in Hunt et al., 2020, p. 3). Other ways of resisting racism found in their study were confronting, sharing experiences about, reporting, and protesting racism (Ellefsen et al., 2022, p. 435). So, although some participants have not confronted racism in the heat of the situation where others or themselves are being discriminated against, they still resist racism in other ways. Several participants have attended protests, and just sharing their experiences and participating in an interview for this dissertation is a form of resistance. Not only because they share their experiences, but it becomes a part of the Norwegian research on women of color, research that is lacking in this area.

Summary

The chapter starts with displaying the emotional process of confrontation. Brazil (24) begins with being insecure after the confrontation. She went through a process where she now feels confident in her arguments. Furthermore, the chapter shows how Gambia/Norway (29) confronted racism and how she was encountered. There can be several reasons for facing resistance against confrontation of racism in the Norwegian context, such as arguments that Norway does not have racism compared to the United States. Alternatively, it could also be because of ignorance. This could be a key component of racism because those in positions of privilege in such oppressive contexts as racism exhibit a "determined ignorance" of the oppressed people's histories and lives (Frye, 1983, p. 119 in Tuana, 2006, p. 10).

However, the participants are perceived as sensitive and angry women because of their standpoint on racism. This is especially relevant for women of color as they have been portrayed as more emotional for several centuries and thus less rational and "civilized" than people with White skin (Abdel-Fadil, 2022, p. 251). How the participants are perceived can additionally be connected to "The Medusa trope." The term depicts women who are angry as having no real reason for being angry since they are not victims (Cherry, 2020, p. 1).

The chapter ended with presenting when participants did not confront racism. For some, it was at work and college, which involves power relations. Others do not have a choice to confront it or not due to not knowing the concepts, which results in less possibility of identifying instances when interpreting a situation (Wu & Dunning, 2017, p. 2). Additionally, some choose to ignore racism or behaviors that are not considered as severe, as it can function as a technique to reduce the stress of experiencing racism, and it can even reduce the negative impact by giving it less attention (in Ellefsen et al., 2022, p. 443). As Chile (23) said, "People say stupid stuff every day," so to challenge racism every time it happens could be both exhausting and unhealthy for mental health in the long run.

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

The dissertation was motivated by bringing more attention to the challenges women of color experience in Norway. Women of color's oppression are often discussed within how their men and cultures oppress them. Still, the oppression women of color experience within a White society is not concerned as much. To discuss the different challenges, I have done a thematic analysis divided into three analytical chapters chronologically by age to present their experiences, thoughts, and behavior from child to adult. The first challenge was how the White beauty standard impacted the participants' self-perception in their childhood. The second challenge was how the participants experienced racialization in their young adulthood. The third challenge is in the present and is how some participants decide to confront racism and sexism.

I have used a phenomenology-inspired qualitative design and combined it with a social constructivist view emphasizing how the individual's reality is socially created in the sense that we understand reality based on various social factors (Tjora, 2012, p. 21). Simultaneously, the goal is to identify similar patterns in the participant's experiences. I have used semi-structured interviews with 13 participants to collect this empirical material.

Main findings

Internalization of White beauty standard

One of the significant findings in the chapter on how White beauty standards have impacted women of color is that it has been present in several of the participants of this study's self-identity construct from an early age. The standard is based on when an individual is associated with White features, the more attractive she will be considered (Bryant, 2013, p. 80). Gambia/Norway (29) is the participant that had the earliest memory around 5-6 years old of Whiteness as the standard of beauty. This was a surprising finding, as the experience dates back to a young age. Several participants thought that they were not considered beautiful by their peers. It was not as they specifically thought of themselves as "uglier" than White women. Instead, it seemed to be the feeling that they just "knew" that Whiteness was the highest ideal of beauty. Philippine/Europe (27) was the only participant that commented on the interview. She was never told, "You are ugly," but pointed out that the beauty standard in

society and the media influenced her self-perception of her being less pretty than White Norwegian girls. Three out of 13 participants took measures to look Whiter. Chile (23) straightened her hair, while Philippine (26) and Philippine/Europe (27) colored their hair blond, in addition to wearing blue lenses. An interesting finding about this material is that the participants who took these measures mostly grew up in a White environment, either in a small village, having White Norwegian parents, or growing up with mostly White Norwegian friends and environment.

Internalized oppression is still present in their adult lives, even though therapy and new knowledge are included in their healing process. The reason for this could be that it is unconscious. This chapter's significant findings are that internalization of the White beauty standard is present from a surprisingly young age. Additionally, it can make such an impact that it is not guaranteed to be gone as an adult. Even if one goes to therapy, educates oneself on decolonization, and knows all the concepts intellectually.

Racialization and sexualization

The findings from this chapter that significantly impacted me as a researcher are that five out of 13 participants experienced racialization as children in the form of sexualization. Two participants were from the African category, two were from the Southeast Asian category, and one was from the South American category. The aspect of adultification for Black girls lies in the commonly held stereotype of Black girls being hyper-sexualized (Epstein et al., 2017, p. 5). Being viewed more as an adult could also apply to Chile (23) from the South America category. The sexualization of the participants from the Southeast Asian category, on the other hand, can primarily be based on being perceived as both passive and unresisting, as well as exotified (Lenz, 2022, p. 400). This stereotype can be found on dating sites that "specialize" in Asian women. Some men on these websites discuss women like they were cars, consumer goods, or objects (Goskøyr, in Lenz, 2022, p. 401).

Moreover, two participants experienced being racialized and sexualized in romantic relationships. Philippines (26) experienced this with her boyfriend, but instead of being perceived as his girlfriend, she was perceived as a gold digger. Chile (23) mentions that her ex-boyfriend sexually racialized her. He bragged about her to his friends to watch "Latina porn" to see how she was in bed. This has led to skepticism for several participants to date

interracially as they might experience "sexual racism " where the sexual preference is governed by stereotypes (Aasmundsen, 2021, p. 75), as five out of 13 participants did mention that they do not date White Norwegian men. Four participants were from the African category, and one was from the Southeast Asian category.

One of the settings where racialization occurred because of skin color was within the health and care sector, where two participants from the African category experienced racism. One participant from the South American category experienced sexualized racialization within the health and care sector. The racism and sexualization were performed by older men, probably sick men with dementia. It is not surprising that they had experienced racialization at work. On the contrary, it was somewhat how the workplace and leaders responded to their experiences. They do not seem to acknowledge what the participants experienced. Instead, they respond with the situation being unpleasant.

The last finding within this chapter is that five out of 13 participants have commented on racialization within a White-dominated setting. Four participants mentioned being excluded, and why somebody is excluded can be debatable. Still, the participants were "the only ones" of color in that setting and then the only ones who got excluded. On the other hand, if there were two people of color in a White-dominated setting, it would be the two people of color who became friends. This can lead to situations where women choose to self-segregate because of the uncomfortable problems that may occur.

Killjoy: Sensitive and aggressive women

The significant findings for the last chapter were interesting. It was interesting to see the process of confrontation from one of the participants' perspectives. It started with insecurity and self-doubt. Towards the end of the process, she was secure and figured it was not her responsibility to meet people halfway. This was accurate for another participant, as she explained that the problem is not race. The problem is ignorance.

Another finding from this analysis chapter is that people find it hard to acknowledge racism. Gambia/Norway (29) experienced a problematic experience at college, where she was excluded and bullied in a group assignment. Her manager acknowledged this and was glad the participant brought it up. Once the subject of skin color and racism was out there, the

atmosphere of the conversation took a different turn. The accusation of racism became worse than the subject of her being both bullied and excluded and even possibly being exposed to racism.

Additionally, the participants had experienced being addressed as both sensitive and aggressive. Due to how most people are encountered when confronting racism and sexism, participants do not always face them. The setting common for three out of 13 participants not to confront racism or sexism was when power was involved, such as work and education settings. At last, as one participant mentions, "people say stupid stuff every day," and she chooses her battles. This can be relevant for some participants, as not everybody has the power to choose their battles. This could be because of power relations, which gives individuals less possibility to decide if they want to confront it or not, or not being able to identify instances of racism and sexism when interpreting a situation.

The study's limitations and strengths

This study has potential limitations, impacted by various factors. As mentioned in the methodology chapter, I did not have enough empirical material for the "Killjoy: Sensitive and aggressive women" chapter. Only two participants had the time for a second interview. Due to time limits for the dissertation, I did not have the chance to delay the interviews any longer. An ideal situation would be conducting new interviews with a new interview guide, as the themes occurred after the interviews. I followed a timeline of the participants' lives through the analysis. This could have been presented more effortlessly and well-ordered if I had known beforehand that the dissertation would follow a timeline. Additionally, I could have had fewer participants and followed their stories more deeply in a narrative analysis.

On the other hand, the strength of this study is that several women participated from different ancestries. The study demonstrated how all these women of color had experienced various forms of racialization and how it also depended on the stereotype associated with their ancestry. Finally, the last and most important strength of this study is that more women of color in Norway have been able to share their experiences. This study, therefore, contributes to being part of filling the gap of missing knowledge in the Norwegian context about women of color and racialization.

Discussion

Comparison of the groups: politically engaged and "less" politically engaged

It has been interesting to see the differences, yet similarities, between the politically engaged and the "less" politically engaged categories of participants. I would argue that language was the main difference between the groups, affecting their interpretation of their own experiences and how they presented them. First, I will start by mentioning the similarities. All participants from both categories had experienced a form of racialization, and several participants from both categories had experienced internalized oppression. The only difference was in the last analysis chapter, "Killjoy." In this topic, it was the participants from the politically engaged category that had confronted both racism and sexism. Otherwise, their experiences are similar. This indicates that even though participants are "less" politically engaged and less interested in politics about race, they still have almost identical experiences to those who are politically engaged. Additionally, the politically engaged participants were more reflective and felt more secure when stating they were sexualized or racialized.

The conceptual horizons are a pervasive and powerful constraint for how an individual makes sense of the world. The horizon can represent the boundaries of individuals' possible interpretation of their circumstances (Wu & Dunning, 2017, p. 1). For the participants who are "less" politically engaged, they were careful with how they presented their experience. They often started with "maybe it is just in my head," or as one participant commented that a drunk man touched her inappropriately at her thigh but said in the interview that she had not experienced any forms of sexualization. This could be termed false consciousness. The term is often associated with German philosopher and political thinker Karl Marx. Even though he never used the term, there are many allusions to the term in his work. It is commonly encountered in analyses of class consciousness (Allahar, 2004, p. 101). Social psychologist John T. Jost defines the concept as holding false beliefs contrary to one's social interest, contributing to the disadvantageous position of oneself or the group (Jost, 1995, p. 397).

Moreover, he proposes six types of false consciousness, such as: "not being able to perceive injustice and disadvantage" (Jost, 1995, p. 397). Alternatively, be in a state of hypo cognition, which refers to not having a cognitive representation of a concept (Wu & Dunning, 2017, p. 1). This can result in less possibility of identifying instances when interpreting a situation (Wu

& Dunning, 2017, p. 2). However, this could also apply to all the participants, as none of the politically engaged participants used the term "sexual racism" when talking about not wanting to date White Norwegian men because of the doubts about their intentions. Not least, I, as a researcher, did neither know this term before writing the dissertation.

The journey from childhood to adulthood

One thing that I found surprising is that racialization and sexualization started early. The reasons for it to be created so early could be several. Growing up with a White Norwegian parent/s could have an influence. Two participants with White Norwegian mothers wanted to look like their mothers when they were younger. A White environment at home or socially can influence their self-perception. Three out of 13 participants took action to look Whiter by coloring their hair blonder or straightening their hair. The one similarity participants had is that they are all grown up in a White environment. They did not grow up with many people of color due to their home environment, White Norwegian parents, and geographical location.

Another reason could be how representation in the mainstream media was when the participants were young. Several participants mentioned they lacked representation in the mainstream media, resulting in not feeling as beautiful as White girls. The participants grew up in the years between the 1990s-2000s. One example of this is the Disney princess Pocahontas. It has been argued that she has become a symbol of reinforced White supremacy and colonialism (Wagman et al., 2017, p. 119). Her story and assimilation into the English culture take precedence over her Native American identity. The critical aspect of her story is her transformation from a good savage girl to a civilized Christian girl. From Native American to White (Wagman et al., 2017, p. 120). She was portrayed as a strong woman who defied her father, stood her ground, and simultaneously needed rescuing from John Smith (Wagman et al., 2017, p. 123). Additionally, movies such as Peter Pan's had an offensive portrayal of Native Americans, and the movie Aristocats, where the Siamese cats speak in an offensive stereotypical East Asian accent (Oxner, 2020). Growing up with a negative portrayal of people of color as kids might have internalized the oppression by thinking negatively about their appearance or being "less" pretty than Norwegian girls.

Furthermore, when the participants were racialized, it depended on the stereotypes associated with each ancestry. The participants under the African category were racialized for their

stereotypes of hypersexuality, but also their skin tone. Participants under the Southeast Asian category were racialized mostly for being associated with gold diggers. They were fetishized, and the participants who went under the South American category were associated with being hypersexualized. What all had in common was that they were sexualized.

Interestingly, when the participants were children, they went from feeling less pretty than Norwegian girls to growing up and suddenly being hypersexualized. This aligns with Core Alexa Døving's claim that girls are met with disgust related to appearance and experience being called ugly as children. However, when the same girls grow up, they experience sexualized racism (Dietrichson, 2023). The experience of sexualized racism has made several participants skeptical of romantic relationships. This led to one participant that goes under the Asian category feeling doubtful about her romantic relationships, in addition to one more participant who does not date White men. Four out of five participants under the African category do not date White men. One participant felt open to it but had to know his family background and upbringing. On the other hand, participants from the South American category have currently or have had White partners in the past. Additionally, it could be worth mentioning that all the participants who took measures to look Whiter are now with White partners and also have more White Norwegian friends than other participants.

Currently, several of the participants have chosen to confront racism and sexism. Many identify as anti-racists and feminists. On the other hand, women who confront these issues are likely to be perceived as "killjoys" (Ahmed, 2010, p. 65). Additionally, the "angry Black woman" may even be the killjoy of the feminist killjoy, pointing out the racism within feminist politics (Ahmed, 2010, p. 67). Anger is not always seen as positive coming from women of color. Myisha Cherry claims that anger is generalized as it is one thing, and the only portrait anger has is a villain (Cherry, 2021, p. 11).

On the other hand, Cherry argues that other emotions can be viewed differently. Such as love one form is "philia," which is brotherly love, and another is "agape," which is universal love. The different varieties have distinct targets and action tendencies. Cherry, therefore, argues that anger should be viewed in the same way, in its varieties. We can appreciate anger, particularly anger at racial injustice because that is not necessarily destructive. If it is destructive, then it is destructive to the oppressive systems, not life as we know it (Cherry, 2021, p. 12).

The reactions and ignorance mentioned in the section have led to some participants choosing their battles rather than challenging every racist encounter. As Chile (23) says, "people say stupid stuff every day." Although, it is also important to mention that not everybody can choose their battles. The settings where participants chose not to confront racism or sexism were at work and in education settings, meaning that there was a power relation involved, giving the participants less possibility to choose whether they wanted to confront the issues or not without having a consequence. Therefore, it is not unusual for individuals to go about different ways of reacting and adapt their reactions according to the situation and their mood (Ellefsen et al., 2022, p. 443) in addition to individuals who do not identify that she is being racialized or sexualized in the first place, resulting in having no alternative but not to confront racism or sexism.

Moreover, the participants and society generally know more about racism and sexism, especially after the Black Lives Matter demonstrations (Døving, 2022, p. 14) and the #Metoo movement (Gill & Orgad, 2018, p. 1318). Even so, one has to remember that all the participants are in their early and late 20s, meaning they were all young adults when these movements started. Even though these topics are central and present in Norwegian society, the participant still has to confront racism, and sexism.

White ignorance, woke culture, and talking about race and gender.
Two participants have underlined that understanding others is no longer their job because of their lack of knowledge and ignorance. Sudan (27) points out that ignorance is one of the core problems of racism. It is a problem as we both live in a globalized world where information is easier to access and not least because racism is an issue that applies to most of the world. On the other hand, the pedagogue Paulo Freire underlines that it is the job of the oppressed to be free. This is because by freeing themselves, they will also free their oppressors. Moreover, he claims that when the oppressors dehumanize and violate others' rights, the oppressor themselves become dehumanized. Therefore, when the oppressed fight to be human and take away the oppressor's power to suppress and dominate, they become free and restore the oppressors' humanity they had lost in the exercise of oppression (Freire, 2018, p. 56).

Interpreting the interviews, especially Brazil (24) and Sudan (27), they may have disagreed with Freire. This is because they mention in the interviews that it is not their job to educate

ignorant people and that it is people's work to educate themselves. As Audre Lorde mentions, it is the oppressed people who are constantly being asked to stretch more, to bridge the gap between humanity and blindness (Lorde, 1981, p. 9), or bridge the gap between humanity and White ignorance. The concept of White ignorance was meant to denote ignorance among Whites. Furthermore, it underlines that "Whiteness" has no biological connections. Somewhat, it has become standard within critical Whiteness studies to refer to individuals that are socially categorized as White within a racialized social system (Mills, 2015, p. 217). The concept was first used in the United States, but the modern world has been created by European colonialism and imperialism. Therefore, racist assumptions, frameworks, and norms are central to the theories that justify White Western conquest and domination of the world, so White ignorance can be expected to be global (Mills, 2015, p. 217).

Additionally, Nancy Tuana refers to Marilyn Frye, who argues that a critical component of racism is ignorance because those in positions of privilege in such oppressive contexts as racism exhibit a "determined ignorance" of the histories and lives of the oppressed. As mentioned in the dissertation, Nancy Tuana mentions different types of ignorance. One could argue that most ignorant people would go under the ignorance of "they did not know that they did not know." Some may think that racism and sexism do not apply to them, resulting in not having an interest in reading and learning about others' struggles. On the other hand, that type of ignorance could also apply to "knowing that we do not know, but not caring to know" (p.5) or "they do not know, and they do not want to know" (Tuana, 2006, p. 10). Considering that knowledge of racism and sexism is available and present in social debate.

It is important to address that more mainstream movies and media today represent people of color compared to two decades ago. Examples of this can be famous movies such as the sequel of Black Panther (2018), Black Panther: Wakanda Forever (2022), The Woman King (2022), and Crazy Rich Asians (2018). The sequel to the first movie Black Panther (2018), represents African and Meso-American culture. Buying a ticket for this movie also took on the character of a political act, making it one of the most successful solo superhero movies (D'Agostino, 2019, p.1). The second movie represents Black African women warriors that are protecting present-day Benin. At last, there is a romantic comedy and the first Hollywood movie to have an all-Asian-American cast and lead in 25 years (Ho, 2018). Compared to the era when the participants grew up, one can see a clear difference between 20 years ago and today in representation on kids' television.

This present-day Disney acknowledges their history with offensive portrayals of people of color and claims today on their website that they are committed to diversity and inclusion, in addition to reviewing its library and adding advisories to content that includes negative deceptions or mistreatment of both people and cultures. Furthermore, their website states that rather than removing the content, they see it as an opportunity to spark conversation and open dialogue on the history that has affected us all. The intention is to show that they cannot change the past, but they can acknowledge and learn from it (Disney). The knowledge of the issues has affected the mainstream media. Norway has also reached a turning point by introducing the new curriculum, "Kunnskapsløftet 2020". The curriculum emphasizes Sami rights and the Sami indigenous status with stronger requirements for what the schools should teach about the Sami social life, history, rights, and culture (Olsen & Andreassen, 2018, in Evju & Olsen, 2022, p. 220). This change in both television and curriculums can also have something to do with the "woke" movement.

First, I will consider the genealogy of "woke." The concept is tied to Black consciousness and anti-racist struggles. Staying "woke" or being "aware" of racism gained more viral popularity with the Black Lives Matter movement (Cammaerts, 2022, p. 734). At the same time, the term was weaponized by the right, deturning it from its original meaning in the struggle for civil rights into an insult against people who fight racism and other forms of injustice to signify a supposed progressive over-reaction (Cammaerts, 2022, p. 735), and arguments such as the vigilance on the left have gone too far (Pang, 2023b). Due to the uprising of being "woke," there has been a rise in the opposite, such as being "anti-woke." Being anti-woke is defined as reactions to what many perceive as a distorted and exaggerated focus on identity and recognition, especially on topics regarding race and gender identity by researcher Torkel Brekke at OsloMet. There is an increasing number of people identifying as anti-woke. The Norwegian newspaper VG has also invited several researchers to be interviewed on this topic. Several have declined due to the themes surrounding "anti-woke" and "woke" being so inflamed that they fear social reprisals if they speak (Pang, 2023a).

The cultural debate could also make it more difficult to talk about topics regarding race and gender. Not only do women of color have the stigma of being both a killjoy for being a woman, but they also have the stigma of "the angry Black woman." The heated cultural debate could contribute to another stigma of being "woke" and overreacting if one should point out racism or sexism. On the other hand, the cultural debate has also contributed to fear

in young Norwegian society in general. The Opinions UNG2022-Report shows that 52% of young people no longer want to express their opinions for fear of being "canceled" (Pang, 2023a). Being "canceled" or "cancel culture" is related to people being frozen out or scrutinized because of "wrong" or controversial opinions (Flåtten, 2021), leaving less room to bring up the topics of race and gender for society in general and for those being oppressed, as one side fears either being "racist" or "canceled," and the other side fears being labeled as "woke" in the sense of an insult. Nevertheless, women of color have been labeled killjoys, angry, sensitive, and over-reactors for several years.

Pointing out that someone is being racist can also receive a huge backlash, as the individual who gets accused of the action would be violated in the worst way, and the action of racism will not be taken seriously (Helland, 2015, p. 108). The focus is instead on the individual being accused of racism than the action. Even though people with controversial opinions can fear being canceled for their opinions, I would still argue that it has fewer consequences than actually performing racist acts. An example can be one of the recent cases in Norway, where Norwegian comic and actor Atle Antonsen got reported for hate speech against debater and author Sumaya Jirde Ali. The state attorney then dropped the case, and then dropped again by the attorney general. The attorney general described his decision as "a poorly successful attempt at satire on racism." The incident took place in November 2022. Three months later, in January 2023, he was back as a host of a Norwegian radio program, "Misjonen." In March, he was back as the host of a Norwegian series, "Kongen befaler" (Norli et al., 2023). However, he has asked for forgiveness, and was in fact forgiven by the production leaders, but is now applying for support for his new movie called "Blackface." Several consider the name of his project tasteless, and it does not appear that he has gained a greater understanding of the issue he was reported for in the first place (Norli et al., 2023).

In conclusion, the cultural debate about "woke," "anti-woke," and "cancel culture" stands strong in giving less room to talk about gender and race. However, it is not as strong as the trivialization of racism and the urge to forgive racist acts against women of color.

Further research

This dissertation and study have discussed interesting findings, which can be explored further. What is important to underline is that people of color experience racialization, but there are

systematic differences in what men and women are exposed to. Racialization towards women of color is often characterized by sexism, but for men, it is characterized by the ideas of their masculinity (Lenz, 2022, p. 393). For further research, it could be interesting to see how the ideas of men's masculinity impact men of color. Men of color were also sexually abused and assaulted by both White men and women during colonial times (Ellis, in Foster, 2011, p. 447), which also could have resulted in stereotypes. Such as Black men being sexualized and being stereotyped for having a big "gear" (Aasmundsen, 2021, p. 76). Making it interesting to study sexualization and stereotypes of men of color as well.

The Black lives matter, and #Meetoo movements have made huge impacts. The movements have impacted both televisions for children (Disney) and curriculums (Evju & Olsen, 2022, p. 220). Therefore, it would be interesting to implement the same study and compare groups who grew up with the impacts of these movements and groups who did not grow up with them and compare the generational differences. Is the internalization of the White beauty standard still present? How often will the new generation experience racism and sexism? Furthermore, how will they be encountered if they confront them?

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: CONSENT FORM

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Appendix 1: Consent form

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet
"Sexualization of women of color"
?

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å finne ut sammenhengen mellom identitet og seksualisering hos fargede kvinner i Norge. I dette skrivet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

Formål

Formålet med dette prosjektet er som tidligere nevnt å finne ut av sammenhengen mellom identitet og seksualisering hos fargede kvinner i Norge. Dette prosjektet vil se nærmere på hvordan seksuelle stereotypier påvirker identiteten hos fargede kvinner i Norge.

Forskningsspørsmålet vil derfor være
- Hvordan påvirker seksuelle stereotypier og seksualisering identiteten, og måten fargede kvinner representerer seg selv i en norsk kontekst?»

Dette er et prosjekt til master studiet «intercultural studies» ved NLA høgskolen og opplysningene vil kun bli brukt til masteroppgaven, og eventuelt forskningsartikkel.

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?
Tiara Fernanda Aros Olmedo er ansvarlig for prosjektet.

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?
Utvalget blir trukket i forhold til utvalgskriterier. Disse utvalgskriteriene er at man er en farget kvinne i Norge som har en etnisk bakgrunn og utseende som er synlig forskjellig fra det som vanligvis defineres som typisk hvit i aldersgruppen 18-50 år.

Jeg mener med dette at du som får et informasjonsskriv passer denne beskrivelsen og jeg

gjerne vil høre dine opplevelser med tanke på å bli seksualisert som en farget kvinne i Norge.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?

Metodene som vil tas i bruk under prosjektet vil være intervju og eventuelt kan du bli kalt inn på en gruppe intervju om det er ønskelig og komfortabelt å delta på dette. Opplysningene som samles inn vil være hovedsakelig dine opplevelser, men også etnisk bakgrunn, alder og kjønn. Opplysningene vil også samles inn via. lydopptak og notater. Opplysningene vil også ved endt masterstudie bli oppbevart anonymt for en eventuell forskningsartikkel.

Tiden som vil bli brukt på hvert intervju vil variere fra samtale til samtale. Men tidslengden vil eventuelt være fra ca. 45 min. opptil 1,5 time om samtalen går så langt.
Ved et eventuelt gruppe intervju vil det vare fra 1 time – 2 timer..

Det er frivillig å delta!

Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke samtykket tilbake uten å oppgi noen grunn. Alle dine personopplysninger vil da bli slettet. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg.

Du kan trekke deg tilbake ved å enten gi beskjed til prosjektansvarlig og veileder via. telefon eller e-post.

Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger

Vi vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene vi har fortalt om i dette skrivet. Vi behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket. Det er prosjektansvarlig og eventuelt veileder som vil ha tilgang til dine opplysninger.

Til master oppgaven og intervju vil du kunne velge et valgfritt navn som blir tatt i bruk for å forholde deg anonym. Dine kontaktopplysninger vil ikke være lagret sammen med datainnsamlingen, disse to vil være separert og lagret på forskjellige dokumenter

Hva skjer med opplysningene dine når vi avslutter forskningsprosjektet?

Opplysningene anonymiseres når prosjektet avsluttes/oppgaven er godkjent, noe som etter planen er ved ca. 31.Mai 2023. Opplysningene fra intervju vil foreløpig lagres anonymt til en

eventuell forskningsartikkel.

Dine rettigheter

Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:

- innsyn i hvilke personopplysninger som er registrert om deg, og å få utlevert en kopi av opplysningene,
- å få rettet personopplysninger om deg,
- å få slettet personopplysninger om deg, og
- å sende klage til Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra NLA HØGSKOLEN har NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Hvor kan jeg finne ut mer?

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med: NLA HØGSKOLEN – Hilde Danielsen prosjekt veileder.
e-post: Hilde.Danielsen@nla.no
Telefon: 48069393

Vårt personvernombud:

Inger-Johanne Gamlem Njau
Telefon: 55540749
E-post: Inger-Johanne.Njau@nla.no

NLA høgskolen, Sandviken.

Hvis du har spørsmål knyttet til NSD sin vurdering av prosjektet, kan du ta kontakt med:

- NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS på epost (personverntjenester@nsd.no) eller på telefon: 55 58 21 17.

Med vennlig hilsen

Hilde Danielsen.   Tiara Fernanda Aros Olmedo

(Forsker/veiled)

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet [*Sexualization of women of color*] og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

☐ å delta i Intervju
☐ å delta i eventuelt gruppe intervju

Jeg samtykker til at mine opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet

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(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

Appendix 2: Interview Guide

Dette intervjuet vil ha noen spørsmål som er forhåndsbestemt, og noen av disse spørsmålene vil også bli stilt til andre deltakere av prosjektet. Derimot vil det kunne komme noen oppfølgingsspørsmål ut ifra det deltaker forteller, og intervjuet kan følge deltakerens svar på spørsmål. Hovedsakelig da masteren vil ha med forskjellige opphav å gjøre, og erfaringer og stereotypier kan da være forskjellig. Også vil hver og ens opplevelse som kvinne også være unik for den kvinnen det gjelder.

Fokuset vil være deres erfaringer, refleksjoner og synspunkter om tema.

Praktisk informasjon

- Takk dem for å stille opp
- Presenter hva prosjektet går utpå.
- Få frivillig samtykke til lydopptak
- Informasjon om deres rettigheter (at informant kan trekke seg, taushetsplikt, anonymisering etc.)
- Informer om at de kan ta pauser når de ønsker, spesielt ved eventuelt vanskelige tema.
- Intervjuet kan varer alt fra 45 min til 1 timer etter flyten av samtalen.
- Informere at jeg skal notere underveis.
- Spørre om de vil ta intervjuet på norsk eller engelsk. Da masteren vil bli skrevet på engelsk.

Theme: Background
- Can you first tell me a little about yourself? (Studies, work).
- Are your family very political?
- What is your parents' occupation? (Academic, work)
- What is your ethical background?
- How did you or your family come to Norway?
- Are you politically active? Any feminist groups etc.?
- How would you describe a typical woman from your ethical background?

Theme: Culture

- Do you feel your culture gets respected? in general? Media, social settings, etc.
- Do you feel that you balance living with two cultures?
- Is religion a part of your life and culture?
- What is the reason that you have kept in touch with the non-Norwegian side? (Parents were extra engaged, or was it your initiative).
- Do you consciously think about what ethnicity you want to date?

Theme: Identity

- What connection do you have to your non-Norwegian side of yourself?
- Do you feel that you are different compared to ethnically Norwegian girls?
- How included or excluded, do you feel in social settings?
- Do you spend more time with people of color or Norwegians?
- Does this have an impact on your identity?
- Have you been told that you are not Norwegian/your ethnical background? Does this affect your identity?
- Have you felt pressured to look/act like one of the sides?

Theme: Stereotypes and body

- Are you aware of the stereotypes that women from your ethnic background have?
- Which are the stereotypes you know of?
- When did you become aware of these stereotypes?
- From which age did you start to have a more mature vision of the body?
- Do you feel that was an appropriate age?
- Do you think the Age of Explosion has something to do with your ethnicity or culture?
- Do you get many comments on your body? (Big hips, breasts, etc.)
- Do you think you get more comments than ethnic Norwegian girls?
- Have you gotten comments from adults when you were younger? (NB! SENSITIVE)
- How is your relationship with your body? Are you proud? Shy?
- How do you dress for a party?
- Suppose you go out on a first date, for instance. Are you conscious about how you will dress and represent yourself?

Theme: Sexualization

- Do you feel that you or women of your ethnicity are over-sexualized?
- In what ways? In social settings and social media. etc.?
- How do you feel that women of your ethnicity are represented?
- Have you experienced uncomfortable situations or sexual harassment?
- Do you think this has a connection with your ethnicity?
- Do you experience it often?
- Whom do you feel has sexualized you more? Men of color or White men? Both?
- Have you ever felt shame when you experienced it?
- Has it affected the way you look at yourself or your body?
- Has it affected your identity?
- How have you reacted to the situations?
- Do you feel like you have to change yourself to avoid these situations?
- What is your opinion about that?

Ending

- Is there something I should have asked? Or is there something you want to add?