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The value of home narratives in shaping identities and making sense of experiences in a host culture

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Abstract

Since the late 1990s Finland had experienced an influx of foreign students and workforce from African countries. The demographic scene of so far homogenous and predominantly white Finland had changed. Finland became a lot more diversified culturally than it was when I first arrived in 1990. With this diversification, the cultural scene of predominantly white Finland created not only opportunities, but also challenges. Finns as well as foreigners experienced multiculturalism first-hand, both within organisations and in everyday life. The foreigners from African countries brought with them their cultures, but also had to adapt to the demands of their new host culture in Finland.

In addition, Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends report of 2019 calls for the need to reinvent business concepts with the focus on organisations shifting their focus and the need to develop social enterprise, encompassing such matters as diversity leadership, diversified work force, flexibility, teamwork, and mobility both within organisations and geographical locations. These developments called for developing strategies that tap the skilled intellectual and cultural capital they wished to attract and create multicultural working environments that retain the talent.

In view of the above-mentioned demographic changes in Finland, as well as the global demographic trends, my qualitative, exploratory research investigates 1) How do black educated professionals, from selected African countries, experience their life and work in a foreign host culture in Finland? 2) To what extent do their native cultures inform their understanding of their experiences of the host culture? 3) How do their experiences influence their cultural identities?

The study adopted Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and incorporated elements of Narrative Analysis (NA) as its methodological underpinning. By using IPA, through the voices of ten participants (five females and five males) the study attempted to understand the experiences of educated professionals of African origin in the Finnish host culture. By providing the insights into the experiences of the participants, the study provides a basis for new hybrid epistemologies through reconceptualisation of the Western working cultures and discourses that render some people worthier than others. It also questions the prevailing western ontological perception of the 'other'.

The data was collected through semi-structured life-story interviews. The data was analysed first by identifying themes of the interviews. This was followed by an analysis using elements of interpretative poetics to gain access to deeper levels by identifying story threads, forms of address, and the positioning of the narrator.

The findings of the study showed that the sensemaking in the foreign host culture of the participants was informed by the values and the influence of their role models of their respective home cultures. Females drew from strong native female identity archetypes rooted in their home cultures, which resulted in a reinforcement of their strong sense of black woman identity in the host culture. Males drew from an identity of an educated man who excels and achieves his goals, informed by the values of fairness and justice, which resulted in the development of a compromised sense of identity in the host culture, especially in the work environment.

The study contributes to Jack et al.'s (2011) and Frenkel and Shenhav's (2006) discussion on postcolonial interrogative space as well as postcolonial identity by proposing such concepts as *duality of being*, *belonging ambivalence, validation ambiguity, free colonial woman*. It also expands the contextual landscape of the previous studies (see Chapter 2) by providing insights into the cultural context of Finland, a country relatively new to cultural diversity.

The study makes a contribution to the conceptualisation of the positive identity validation within the Social Identity Theory. Contrary to SIT's claim, that through negotiations of the tensions people might experience difficulties with self-categorisation, thus leading to diminished self-esteem, the findings of the study suggest the opposite to take place. Drawing on Strong Black Woman schema, the findings show evidence of self-categorisations as sources of positive validation, enhanced self-esteem, and reaffirmation of sense of self, what I coined as *positive identity validation*.

In addition, the study contends SIT's premise, that people's self-esteem is enhanced by self-categorisation within social groups to which they belong. It proposes that self-categorisation can create an accentuation of the perceived differences between people's selves (black) and the other (white) in-group members. Therefore, contrary to SIT, people's group belonging does not produce enhancement to their self- esteem, nor does it strengthen their self-efficacy.

Methodologically, the study widens the application of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis, primarily used in psychology. By combining IPA with elements of interpretive poetics (Narrative Analysis) it shows how researchers from other fields, not only practitioners of psychology, can apply IPA in their studies.

The study also disrupts the epistemic colonisation and cultural imperialism, which, according to Jack et al. (2011) is at the heart of MOS. By combining the cultural background of the researcher (not purely western, sharing socio-historical commonalities with the participants) the study offers an account which does not fall strictly into western classifications. It provides a qualitative, interpretive investigation which provides insights into the cultural values of the participants, and it draws from sources published not exclusively within the US or western contexts.

Within Weick's (1995) framework of sensemaking, my study contests the claim that individuals change and adopt various identities according to the demands of situations. It introduces interrelatedness of the sense of self, performance and representation of the identity as influenced by power, which makes changes of identities limited in the case of individuals with black skin.

The study is ideographic, thus giving attention to individual cases. It focuses on the value of individuals who form the basis of each culture and organisation. The knowledge of the cultural values that drive peoples' behaviour creates a platform where successful and conflict-free communication can develop. In Finland, where the demographic structure has become more culturally diverse, the issues of cultural inclusion and participation are of great importance.

Finally, the study also provides a deeper understanding of the meaning and value of diversified cultural identities. This knowledge creates a platform for understanding and acknowledging the value of cultural diversity. This acknowledgment itself helps reformulate the 'other' and 'subaltern' in Western discourse. It creates a discourse through which the analytical dualisms of tradition/modernity and development/underdevelopment will be rendered obsolete and substituted by a new hybrid epistemology (Frenkel and Shenhav, 2006). It suggests ways in which concepts such as lower level of material consumption, strong kinship ties, and social commitment (Zein-Elabdin, 2009) will be viewed as serviceable ethics. This will help reconceptualise working cultures of Western organisations, as well as understand non-Western ways.

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Acknowledgments

My PhD journey would not have been accomplished without my close friends and my family. I am blessed with a group of friends whose frequent enquiries about my research propelled my motivation and enthusiasm. My dear life-long friends Ela, Izabela and Hanna who were always there when I most needed them. Thank you for the conversations, spiritual support and sharing my conviction in the importance of my research. My adult children Natalia who supported me with wonderful cooking, and inspiring conversations. Tomasz who edited the entire thesis, and whose IT support, when I thought I lost it all, proved invaluable. Dominika who proofread the thesis when it was completed and amended. You are the love and pride of my life, and sources of constant meaning and purpose. Nigel, who proofread my papers at the beginning of my research process. Thank you. I hope my Mom and Dad can share the joy of my accomplishment, wherever they are.

Author's declaration

I declare that all the material in this thesis is my own work.

Dedication

I dedicate this study to the participants of my study and all the people who experience feelings of alienation and loneliness in places which they learned to call their homes, surrounded by people they would like to call their friends.

Chapter 1: Introduction

A word, a sentence, a story

Never told, never written, never shared.

Who cares?

A sound, a song, music

Heard, sung, danced together.

Shared.   (Anna Kimberley, London, November 2018)

Beginnings

In January 2006, I was teaching an evening course in business communication. The classes began at 5.30 pm and ended at 8.30 pm. The group of students was international, and, among the many Europeans, there were three African students from Kenya, Ghana, and Nigeria. I remember them all, but one of them in particular. His name was Jacob (not his real name). He was Ghanaian, had impeccable manners, was very respectful towards me, and helpful towards his fellow students. In Finland, a country where everyone is on a first-name basis, Jacob insisted on addressing me as Madam. In a country where hardly anyone offers small gestures of courtesy towards women, Jacob held the door for me and stood up when speaking to me. In a country where most students do not rely on others and work individually, especially in the closed darkness of winter, Jacob was very helpful towards his fellow students, conveying messages for absent fellow students and sharing materials. He was a diligent student, always present and prepared, albeit sometimes late for classes.

Like many students in Finland, being an evening student, he combined work and studies. But unlike many students, Jacob's job was at a post office during the nights. This meant that after the evening classes he went to work.

I began wondering what his life had been before came to Finland, I was curious and wanted to get to know his "story": where he had lived, what school he had gone to, what his childhood had been like, what experiences of life he had. I also wondered what his life was like, having had just arrived

from sub-Saharan Africa, in a country with a climate where temperatures could drop to -20 C in January, and where one often did not see the sun for weeks at a time.

This was the beginning of an interest that remained with me for several years. Following my initial interests and inspired by the stories of my students, I began completing my MA studies at Helsinki University where I specialised in literary postcolonial studies.

Previous Studies

I specialised in postcolonial rewritings of canonic English literature. My MA thesis was a literary analysis of postcolonial themes in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and their further exploration in its postcolonial rewriting in the novel *Indigo* by Marina Warner. The title of my thesis was *Ambiguous Visions of Motherland, Exilic Identities, and Diasporic Belongings in Marina Warmer's Indigo*. The characters of both *The Tempest* and *Indigo* inspired my continuous interest in the predicament of people who, for one reason or another, left their homelands and made lives in different foreign cultures. In the literary analysis, I focused on the text of the novel and its postcolonial underpinnings, as well as selected characters. I was primarily interested in the identities of characters who experienced a sense of marooned, diasporic belongings. I also investigated the development of their identities as a result of being marooned and disconnected from the roots of their native cultures. Additionally, I realised that the relevance of the themes of Shakespearian human nature, predicament and exiled existence, rewritten by Warner, still resonated in the contemporary global world and its challenges. Shakespearian Sycorax and Miranda embodied the challenges of black and mixed race people living in the western world in the 21st century, whereas Ariel and Caliban represented the different 'others' who struggle to be accepted.

In my subsequent MBA studies focusing on International Management Communication, my interests were in communication, but set in corporate and organisational contexts. Looking at different aspects of organisational structures, their internal and external communications, I could not help noticing the connections of communications with the identities of the members of the organisations. I discovered that in many cases, internal and external communication strategies in multinational organisations were designed with little or no regard for the individuals who, after all, formed the mesh of organisations, especially the international ones. I also became aware of the detrimental influence corporate communications might have on people's identities. Here my MA thesis was on *Communicating Identities and Identifications in the Context of International*

Organisations. The focus of my investigation was how, if at all, internal communications in Finnish international companies create space of acknowledgment for culturally diverse employees, how their cultural identities are regarded, acknowledged and valued. I completed the study at the time when Finland had changed demographically. The latter part of this chapter describes the Finnish context in more detail.

The findings of the MA thesis, which was based on focus group interviews with communications practitioners, showed that the participants recognised the inadequacies of the internal communications strategies they used in their everyday work but were not able to change them, foreign employees and their identities remain marginalised, silenced and with no power to influence the environment (Kimberley, 2020).

Having completed the studies in 2006 and 2020, respectively, I wondered what trajectories people with African origins follow after completing their studies in Finland. Since the late 1990s, Finland had experienced an influx of foreign students and workforce from African countries. It was at that time that I encountered many African students in my classroom. The demographic scene of so far homogenous, predominantly white Finland had changed. Finland became a lot more diversified culturally than it was when I had first arrived.

According to demographic statistics from 2020 based on immigrants' countries of origin, around 20,000 people have moved from Africa to Finland. This influx began in the late 1990s when Finnish excellent and free education attracted students from African countries. As a result, the demographic scene of so far homogenous, predominantly white educational institutions throughout Finland changed. It became a lot more diversified culturally than it was when I had first arrived in 1990 to take a position as an English teacher at a British language school.

I wrote the short poem that opens the introductory chapter when asked to convey the essence of my study in one of the writing workshops at the University of Westminster. The two stanzas were inspired by the themes I found in the narratives of the participants. The first one expresses the untold narratives of people, whose histories were marginalised and told by others. The second one proposes a shared approach to acknowledging common histories by bringing them to light through the voices of people who own them.

My contributions

In my study, I investigated how black educated professionals, who arrived in Finland in the 1990s, from selected African countries, experience their life and work in a foreign host culture in Finland. I was further interested in the extent their native cultures inform their understanding of their experiences of the host culture. And finally, I was investigating the way their experiences influence their cultural identities.

My study contributes to Jack et al.'s (2011) and Shanhav and Frenkel's (2006) discussion on postcolonial interrogative space as well as identity by proposing such concepts as *duality of being*, *belonging ambivalence, validation ambiguity.* It also expands the contextual landscape of the previous studies (see Chapter 2) by providing insights into the cultural context of Finland, a country relatively new to cultural diversity.

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The study also disrupts the epistemic colonisation and cultural imperialism, which, according to Jack et al. (2011) is at the heart of MOS. My background as a researcher is not purely western. I

am not an indigenous researcher either, but I share socio-historical commonalities with the participants. In this respect, my study offers an account which does not fall strictly into western classifications. It provides a qualitative, interpretive investigation which provides insights into the cultural values of the participants, and it draws from sources published not exclusively within US or western contexts.

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Finally, the study also provides a deeper understanding of the meaning and the value of diversified cultural identities. This knowledge creates a platform for understanding and acknowledging the value of cultural diversity. This acknowledgment itself helps reformulate the 'other' and 'subaltern' in Western discourse. It creates a discourse through which the analytical dualisms of tradition/modernity and development/underdevelopment will be rendered obsolete and substituted by a new hybrid epistemology (Frenkel and Shenhav, 2006). It suggests ways in which concepts such as lower level of material consumption, strong kinship ties and social commitment (Zein-Elabdin, 2009) will be viewed as serviceable ethics. This will help reconceptualise the working cultures of Western organisations, as well as understand non-Western ways.

Personal reflections

Erika Apfelbaum's (2001, p 32) claim that "the issue of communicating across cultural boundaries is a major challenge to the very foundations of our dominant theoretical frameworks" raises questions concerning cultural identities and the sense of self of both the researcher and the participant. Individuals have a sense of self which is determined and defined by the existence of

the other. It is also safe to say that individuals learn to believe in the moral superiority of their own positions. With this in mind, I became aware of the need to consider, when listening to and analysing the narratives in a cross-cultural context, how easy or difficult it might be to understand stories that belong to a cultural domain different to my own. How is my own sense of identity affected by being opened to understanding other people's worlds narrated in their stories? I found Molly Andrews' (2007, p 489) claim that "a cross-cultural research is predicated on narrative imagination" especially helpful. She describes it as a willingness to see another person's world in order to access the frameworks of their meanings. I would expand this understanding by adding that through my attempts to access the way the participants created meanings and understanding of the world I also became aware of my own world.

I was born and educated (at primary and secondary level) in Poland. Having completed 3 years of university education at the age of 22, I moved to the UK where I continued my university studies. During that time, I also spent a year in Sweden as a scholarship student. After 7 years, I moved to Finland where I have lived and worked ever since. One can say I have gone through a process of, what Bhabha (1994) calls cultural hybridisation. By that Bhabha means that one becomes a cultural hybrid as a result of movement across boundaries of cultural difference with psychic uncertainty. I have wandered between several cultures and became a product of all of them. I often wonder what my cultural identity became, and I do not have clear-cut answers. In that respect, I saw my own sense of in-between, diasporic and unclear sense of cultural identity as a helpful tool in understanding my respondents.

I also wondered about what the term "colonised" meant to me. If I follow a British Dictionary's definition, introduced into the English language in the 1790s, which states: to colonise is "to make another place into a national dependency" without regard for settlement there (British Dictionary, 2016), I can conclude that Poland was once a colonised country. In the years 1772, 1793, and 1795, three territorial divisions of Poland took place. They were perpetrated by Russia, Prussia, and Austria. As a result of the first two partitions, the size of Poland was reduced until finally, after the third partition in 1795, the state of Poland ceased to exist (Encyclopaedia Britannica.com).

Poland regained its territory as well as independence after the First World War in 1918. It was independent and prosperous for about 20 years, until 1939 when the Second World War broke out. Right after the Second World War, extensive territorial changes of Poland took place once

again. In 1945, after the defeat of Nazi Germany, Poland's borders were redrawn in accordance with the decisions made first by the Allies at the Teheran Conference in 1943. Two more meetings took place after that: in February 1945 at the Yalta Conference, where Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin met to discuss the Polish predicament. Later the same year in August, a third meeting of the Allies, in Potsdam (The Polish government-in-exile was not invited) took place and then the final Polish borders were ratified (U.S. Department of State). Thus, Poland lost almost 180,000 km^2 of its pre-war eastern territories, including 12 million citizens. The lost territories in the western parts of the country were repopulated with the people expelled from the east. (Encyclopaedia Britannica.com)

Between 1945 and 1989, Poland was a communist state under political and economic dominance of the Soviet Union. As a consequence of several attempts to reclaim its independence (1958, 1968, 1989), in 1989 Poland finally became an independent democratic state. (Encyclopaedia Britannica.com)

This short and very simplified overview of a part of Polish history outlines the type of country and its history that shaped and located my understanding of history and my own sense of belonging. I can say that that my historical location and mindset were shaped by a history of the dominated, and not by a history of the dominating. This acknowledgment does not presuppose that my mindset is bias-free, but it makes me sensitive and tuned into the "narrative imagination" (Andrews, 2007) of the oppressed rather than that of the oppressor. This potentially biased position can be seen as a limitation to my impartiality, but the awareness of it also serves as potentially precluding that bias.

Overview of the chapters

This doctoral study contains seven chapters.

In Chapter 1 (Introduction) I outline my personal interests and my previous studies that explain the rationale for the study. I also provide a short reflection on my cultural background and show its relevance for the study.

I describe the context of the study, Finland with its changing demographics, and the need for new innovative ways of encompassing cultural diversity. In the outline of research literature, I highlight existing gaps which this study addresses. Finally, I summarise the contributions this study makes to existing knowledge.

In Chapter 2 (Background) I provide brief descriptions of the native countries of the participants. I first outline Africa as a whole in order to demonstrate the richness and vastness of the continent: its resources, its cultures, and its peoples. I then continue by describing each country separately to show their similarities and their differences. I considered it vital to get to know and to better understand what the lives of the participants might have been in their respective countries before they came to Finland. I was interested in the 'stories' of their lives in their native cultures, or what I call their *native narratives*.

In the latter part of the chapter I introduce Finland. I briefly describe the aspects of Finnish culture and history which provide a background understanding of the country which shaped the cultural values Finns live by, and especially those that are crucial to understanding the Finnish attitude towards cultural and ethnic diversity. This introduction helps understand why Finns have often been described in essentialist ways, as a culturally homogenous country, and a nation with very little or no experience when it comes to dealing with different cultures.

Chapter 3 (Literature Review) is divided into two main sections which present existing research on the concepts of identity and sensemaking. In the first part I define identity and self-concept. I show the interconnectedness of culture, identity and representation, and incorporate the concepts of colour and narrative identity. I discuss the concept of identity salience, activation and threats in view of the key theories: social identity theory and identity theory. In the second part, I discuss sensemaking in view of Weick's model of sensemaking, make connections between sensemaking and identity, and finally show how identity impacts the process of sensemaking.

In Chapter 4 (Methodology) I explain my rationale for adopting a qualitative paradigm in general, and describe the justifications for adopting IPA as my methodology, with selected elements of NA. I explain the philosophical fundamentals of phenomenology, its ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions, as well as its major concepts. Next, I move on to describing the value and importance of stories and narratives as a medium of transmitting data. I also provide my own reflections on my position as a researcher. Finally, I explain the procedures (participants and sampling, inclusion and exclusion criteria, recruitment, methods of data collection), and I describe in more detail the life story interview with its protocol.

Chapter 5 (Analysis) is divided into two parts preceded by an overview of the approach I adopted in my analysis. In the first part I introduce interpretive poetics and its selected elements that I chose in my analysis: the story threads, the divided "I", and the forms of address. I also explain the method of analysis in general and the rationale behind the parts I selected for my analysis. I also introduce the participants of the study with short narratives outlining their background stories in accordance with the phenomenological underpinnings of IPA which give focus to the way people give meaning to their lives through stories.

In the second part I elicit the main themes that run through the narratives of the participants. I grouped the superordinate themes and connected the subordinate themes to show connections between them. I also show connections between the past and the present to demonstrate how the values and the upbringing in the native home culture informed the sensemaking of the participants in the foreign host culture, which is the focus of my second research question.

In Chapter 6 (Discussion) I outline the findings of my study which show that the sensemaking in the foreign host culture of the participants was informed by the values and the influence of their role models of their respective home cultures. In the discussion I focus on understanding the reasons behind the differences in the sensemaking between males and females. I first discuss the findings related to the female participants, followed by the discussion on the findings related to the male participants.

Motivated by the cross-cultural nature of my study, I consider it vital to acknowledge the role of my cultural background and the impact it might have had on the research process (data collection and analysis as well as my interpretation of the findings). Therefore, throughout the discussion I provide a critical reflection on my cultural background and discuss its implications on the research process.

In Chapter 7 (Conclusions) I provide answers to the research questions. I show how, through sensemaking the participants connect and draw from in the way they understand their experiences in the host culture. By drawing parallels between Finnish cultural values and African cultural values, I conclude that more focus should be placed on the similarities than differences in cross-cultural and diversity management. I show how the salience of cultural identities of the study participants becomes their silent identity. I also discuss the study's limitations. Finally, I set out possible avenues for further research.

Chapter 2: Background

Overview

My study investigated the experiences of black professionals of their life and work in Finnish culture. Using Clifford's (1997) terms, the native roots are always connected with, and shape migratory routes. Therefore, I considered it vital to get to know and understand what the lives of the participants might have been in their respective countries before they came to Finland. I was interested in the 'stories' of their lives in their native cultures, or what I call their *native narratives.* Therefore, in this chapter I provide brief descriptions of the native countries of the participants. I first outline Africa as a whole in order to demonstrate the richness and vastness of the continent: its resources, its cultures and its peoples. I then continue by describing each country separately to show their similarities and their differences.

In the latter part of the chapter, I introduce Finland. I briefly describe the aspects of Finnish culture and history which provide a background understanding of the country which shaped the cultural values Finns live by, and especially those that are crucial to understanding the Finnish attitude towards cultural and ethnic diversity. This introduction will help understand why Finns have often been described in essentialist ways, as a culturally homogenous country, and a nation with very little or no experience when it comes to dealing with different cultures.

The native countries of the participants of my study are situated in different parts of the continent: Kenya in the eastern part, Nigeria and Ghana in the west, Zambia and Zimbabwe in the south. Although sharing the geographical location as belonging to one continent, the histories and the cultures differ. In the descriptions that follow I tried to highlight those differences and similarities to outline a contextual background for the trajectories prior to leaving their respective native countries and subsequently moving to Finland. As the participants were born between the years 1960 and 1980, in my descriptions I focused on the factors that were most likely influential in the everyday lives and the decision making of the study participants and their families. These were: the economies of the respective countries, the opportunities and levels of education, and the standard of living.

What is worth pointing out is the fact that the international migration of Africans has seldom been studied, apart from occasional references to the brain drain and alien expulsion exercises (Peil, 1995). Summaries of the literature on emigration have covered the stories of Asians and

Caribbean people, but not emigrants from tropical Africa, even though African emigrants are found in large numbers in many industrialised countries (i.e., as taxi drivers, restaurateurs, factory workers, sportsmen, entertainers and professionals). The reasons for this scarcity of information, according to Peil (1995) was partly because (aside from Algerians in France) the number of Africans in most European countries, the Middle East and North America was relatively small compared to emigrants from Mexico, the Philippines, Turkey or India/Pakistan, and because their frequent lack of official papers, formal employment, and permanent settlement made them hard to count and study. Few of them applied for citizenship, and some moved from one country to another or spent time at home rather than settling permanently in a host country.

The situation since then has changed, but only slightly. The studies have been carried out into the relevance of taboos among African diasporas and their implications for the press in the UK (Ogunyemi, 2007), negative messages and images of blacks in Japan (Hughes, 2003), trans local and transnational mobility and migration of African immigrants in Finland (Ndukwe, 2016), social and economic diversity within the African American community in particular cities at the beginning stage of the Great Migration (Tuckel et al., 2007). A recent study by Caarls, Bilgili and Fransen (2021) describes the role of social networks in the lives of migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa to Europe, focusing on the associations between transnational social networks and individual migration trajectories over the course of migrants' lives. Their study does not, however, include immigrants into Finland. Within migration studies, Schapendonk, Bolay and Dahinden (2021) explore the conceptual limits of the migration journey literature. The authors challenge the notion that the migration journey is fundamentally different from pre- and post-migratory mobilities and combine two empirical research projects that have followed the im/mobility trajectories of West Africans. The first project focuses on the trajectories of itinerant gold miners within West Africa, the second concentrates on the im/mobility of West Africans within Europe.

In contribution to and development of the above-mentioned research, I see my study as bringing a fresh perspective on the subject as it describes people whose migratory routes and motivations were driven by obtaining higher education and by the desire to belong to a culture where opportunities for a better standard of living were available. The migrants my study investigates

settled in Finland, often obtained Finnish citizenship, thus becoming an integral part of Finnish society.

Source: Businessresearcher. Sagepub.com

Understanding Africa

It is evident that one does not do it justice when referring to Africa one views it as one and the same area of land with no diverse parts. I use the term here in the same way as I would refer to Europe or America, as a category that points me to a particular geographical location. That location is a set of countries that share the same type of identity if only on a superficial level

determined by the geographical location. I view sharing an identity as sharing both similarities and differences. For example, I share a common belonging to Europe with a French person, but there is also a plethora of characteristics that makes us different.

However, when referring to the African continent as a category "Africa" can lead to stereotyping and evoking the colonial image of Africa as a playground for other nations to dominate, cut up and divide. If I neglect the complexity of nations and ethnicity and merely refer to "Africa" as one, to some extent I uphold the colonial imagery. This is not my aim. I use the term Africa as one that characterises the home and the belonging of the participants in my study in contrast to their belonging to Europe.

When attempting to understand Africa, it is important to realise the variety and diversity within the African continent, with regards to its peoples, the vastness of the land, and its rich resources. For example, the African people are the most diverse race on earth, measured by DNA or its 2100 languages. Africa, where humankind originated, covers an area as big as India, China, the US and most of Europe combined. Africa's blue economy is even bigger than its landmass. The maritime zones under Africa's jurisdiction alone totals about 13 million square km including territorial seas and approximately 6.5 million square km of the continental shelf (Economic Report on Africa, 2016a). A single African jungle in the Congo is twice the size of Western Europe. A quarter of all the countries in the world (49) are in Africa, and the Sahara is the size of the USA. On top of that, the continent is rich in natural resources, having 42 % of the world's gold reserves, 80 % of its platinum reserves, half of its diamond production, and 60 % of its arable land (Encyclopeadia Britannica.com.)

Despite its vastness, Africa's positioning on the global scene has seldom been devoid of controversy (Hirsh and Lopez, 2020). A study conducted by Berkowitz et al. in 1992 that tested the way people viewed the world suggested a diminished view of the size and importance of Africa (Meffe, 2013). These perceptions, based on risk, levels of conflict, political instability, as well as governance are associated with the continent's history (Hirsh and Lopez, 2020), linked to the colonial legacy of dividing Africa between black and white.

Negative perceptions persist and suggest an accumulation of obsessions undermining the understanding of the diversity of a continent that has experienced remarkable changes since the start of the twenty-first century. Africa's vastness of space, and its abundance of natural

resources and its peoples made the continent rich, but at the same time became a factor detrimental to its urban development (Perry, 2015). Its large area and small population (twentieth of global population by 1900), disease, slavery and foreign oppression conspired to slow down the development of cities, where development and progress was taking place in the rest of the world. As Johnson, Ostry and Submrananian (2007) put it: 'There is no doubt that Africa has done badly, on average, for the most part, not just over the past 20–40 years, but in fact since the beginning of economic growth in the 19th century.' The colonial period impacted African economic development, and regaining independence did not change the economic trajectory significantly.

In the period between the start of decolonisation in the late 1950s and the mid-1970s, African growth was strong. Per capita growth between 1960 and 1975, at 1.5 % to 2 % annually, was similar to or better than most other global regions (Atardi and Saia-i-Martin 2003, cited in Hirsh and Lopez, 2020). However, much of sub-Saharan Africa suffered major economic decline from the mid-1970s onwards. African urban poor were already in the majority and their livelihoods were often very vulnerable by the end of the 1970s and early 1980s. In the 1980s and 1990s, economic and social conditions in the urban areas were negatively affected (Potts, 2010). As African economies liberalised massive redundancies throughout the public and private sector occurred. This resulted in an increase in the prices of all necessities, from food to accommodation to travel to education and health. The incomes were not aligned with the price increase, and as a result it seemed impossible for poor urban families to survive (Jamal and Weeks, 1993; Potts, 2000). This illustrates potential challenges the families of the participants in my study experienced.

Years following independence

During the first decade of independence, the economies of many African countries grew rapidly, even though preparations for the transfer of power were slow and "shallow at best" (Cheru 2013, p 1271). At the same time, infrastructures were improved, especially within health care, education and communication. New universities, agricultural research centres, national transport networks and local government structures were established to facilitate the national development project (Cheru 2013, p 1271). Giovanni Arrighi (2002) noted that 'up to 1975, the African performance was not much worse than that of the world average and better than that of South Asia and even of the wealthiest among First World regions (North America)'. Following Sylwester (2005) it can be

concluded that the removal of colonial control and 'external power' had a positive impact on growth; independent countries grew faster than did the existing colonies. In the period between the start of decolonisation in the late 1950s and the mid-1970s, African growth was strong. Per capita growth between 1960 and 1975, at 1.5 % to 2 % annually, was similar to or better than most other global regions (Atardi and Saia-i-Martin 2003, in Hirsh and Lopez, 2020).

On the other hand, African countries have shown a strong pressure from an increasingly educated youth for transformation and change. These processes of transformation were different in different countries; some were responding faster, but many were struggling to adjust to the social demands and a shifting global environment that did not offer the same opportunities as before to the commodities traditionally driving African economies (Hirsh and Lopez, 2020). When trying to understand the African continent, I found a typology suggested by Hirsh and Lopez (2020) particularly helpful. The authors suggest applying a typology based on how fast countries are structurally transforming and the role that industrialisation is playing in such change. Should such a typology exist it would demonstrate commonalities between North African and other countries in the continent and would also graphically demonstrate their dissonance with a distinction between 'Arab' and 'Black Africa'. It would further demonstrate commonalities between North African and other countries in the continent and would also graphically demonstrate their dissonance with the Gulf Region in economic terms.

The historical description of the socio-political situation in Kenya from that time provides context to the time and place where the participants grew up and where their values and the understanding of the world was shaped. This part of the Background chapter provides short descriptions of the native countries of the participants of the study. As the participants were born in the years between 1960 and 1980, describing their countries during the time of their childhood and early adulthood provides a contextual background and positions the participants on their trajectories prior to leaving their respective native countries and subsequently moving to Finland. In my descriptions I focused on the factors that were most likely influential in the everyday lives and the decision making of the study participants and their families. These were: the economies of the respective countries, the opportunities and levels of education, and the standard of living. I also attempted to rely as much as it was possible on sources (academic articles, business reports) authored by African scholars as I considered their insights particularly valuable.

African development after decolonisation

In the period between the start of decolonisation in the late 1950s and the mid-1970s, African growth was strong. The growth per capita between 1960 and 1975, was at 1.5 % to 2 % annually. It was in line with the growth observed in most other global regions (Atardi and Saia-i-Martin 2003, in Hirsh and Lopez, 2020). Hirsh and Lopez (2020) describe the time between 1975 and 1995 as Africa's lost decades. Most of Africa's per capita income was stagnant or negative over this entire period. The reasons for this stagnation were investments in infrastructure, infrastructural services and human capital (Lopes and Amaral, 2013) whilst losing the capacity to support industrial development.

Kenya

After Kenya regained its independence in 1963, the Kenyan government adopted policies supporting market-driven economic development. Implementation of various regulatory policies was aimed at achieving economic growth and stability, generating employment, and increasing foreign earnings. Despite initial economic growth, Kenya's economy did not create and maintain a good balance of trade while addressing the problems of chronic poverty and growing unemployment. The limited purchasing power slowed the country's ability to industrialise. This also resulted in shrinking government budgets and increasing external and internal debts. Growing unemployment and poverty contributed to violence, governmental corruption and mismanagement (Encyclopaedia Britannica.com). Despite attempts to control political violence, according to Anderson and Githongo (2009) the environment for potential investment suffered, thus making it difficult for Kenya to realise its potential for development. The authors further suggest that the complexity of Kenya's ethnic structure played a vital role in the country's economic development. They argued that creation of an appropriate (i.e. federal) constitution capable of accommodating diversity and harnessing it to collective objectives was necessary. Kenyan jurisdiction should consider ethnicity as relevant in the creation of a modern state in Kenya, where investment should be focused on large black-African ownership and management stake (Booth et al., 2014). A study carried out by Daniels (1999) supports the above approach, and shows that in the late 1990s micro and small enterprises (MSEs) constituted an integral part of Kenya's economy. As a whole, the MSE sector, employing one-third of the working population, contributed substantially to employment and national income (13% of the GDP).

Despite these attempts in 1995, Kenya has been classified by The World Bank's Participatory Poverty Assessment (1995) as a country where 25 % of the 44mln population was categorised as very poor. There were nearly twice as many female-headed households (44 %) as male-headed households (21 %) in that category. The remaining 35 % represented male-headed households with no wife present. Until 2019, 42 % of the population lived below the poverty line (UNICEF, 2019).

In my study, three participants, John, Nora and Anna, all Kenyans, were born in the early 1960s, just a few years after Kenya's independence. John and Anna grew up in a suburb of Nairobi, whereas Nora grew up in a village. John grew up in a family whose descriptions lead me to conclusions (see Chapter 4) that the family was not at all well off. I drew similar conclusions about Anna, who was the eldest of ten siblings, her father being the only breadwinner. Nora's mother was the only breadwinner after the family was abandoned by the father, and Nora clearly described the family as poor. John, Anna, and Nora grew up in a country where the level of poverty, between 1997 and 2000 rose compared to other developing nations (UN data, 2019). The percentage of people living below the poverty line rose to 50 % in 2000 (UN data, 2019) implying that half the population in Kenya was living below the poverty line in 2001. This indicates that during the years of John, Anna, and Nora's adolescence life for most of the Kenyan population was challenging, especially with only one parent supporting large families with many siblings.

In view of the above, the push towards education, mentioned especially strongly in the narratives of the male participants, is understandable. According to Kiriti and Tisdell (2003) females in Kenya generally had lower levels of education compared to males. Moreover, between the years 1970 and 2000 74 % of females were illiterate, compared to 44 % of males. Education, therefore, was seen as a means to securing good jobs, thus improving the quality of life, and male members of the family were pushed to pursue studies.

At present Kenya is still characterised as one of the most unequal countries in the sub-Saharan region (UNICEF), where access to basic services such as health care, education, clean water, and sanitation is often a luxury for many people. Children below 18 years make up 49 % of the population of Kenya, and 62 % of the population is below 24 years old. Over 75 % of children and adolescents experience one or more deprivations of their rights, including limited access to safe water and improved sanitation, education and health and nutrition services.

The developmental trajectories in Ghana and Zambia were different. Both countries adopted similar policies broadly known as African socialism (Hirsh and Lopez, 2020). Key common characteristics of African socialism were state ownership of larger organisations and a drift towards one-partyism, continued to outpace their neighbours in economic growth terms, had diversified economies compared with their regional neighbours, and both, for different reasons, had relatively substantial domestic farming classes and relatively sizeable urban middle classes. In contrast, the indigenous middle class in the countries pursuing African socialism was small.

Ghana

Ghana was the first country in Western Africa to gain its independence from the British in 1957. Before independence Ghana was the richest country in Africa south of the Equator. Shortly after independence, the government set out to extend its control over the economy by establishing a large number of state-owned enterprises in agriculture and industry. In order to make up for the local shortage of capital and entrepreneurial skills, measures were adopted to attract foreign investors to operate independently or in partnership with the government. These policies, however, did not achieve the desired results because of poor planning and corrupt administration. Seven years after Ghana gained independence, it became one of the poorest countries, and its democracy was substituted by a one-party government. In the 1960s the country's economy declined (Encyclopaedia Britannica.com). It was the time when Paul was growing up and described his memories of his family experiencing poverty.

The reasons for the poverty experienced by most of the population was the structure of the economy: before independence Ghana's government was responsible for the provision of basic utilities: water, electricity, railways, roads, and postal services. However, agriculture, commerce, banking, and industry were almost entirely in private hands, with foreign interests controlling the greater share in all of them except agriculture. In addition, between 1957 and the early 1890s, Ghana's economic development was impacted by political instability. As a result, the industrial contribution to real GDP decreased in 1975–82, and by 1983, it was at its lowest level since independence (Leith, 1996).

Most Ghanaians faced very difficult economic conditions as any urban working adults needed two jobs to survive, as the prices of food increased as a result of the shortage of farm workers as well as droughts. In addition, work opportunities declined, and large numbers of people preferred to

work where the wages were higher. Because of these difficulties in the 1970s, the exodus of Ghanaians began. In addition, rising educational levels and a desire for a better standard of living have increased the pressure for both men and women to leave home. Ghana has become a major exporter of educated people.

Peil (1995) claims that West Africans have a long history of migration. People have traditionally moved to improve their lives either as groups or, when travelling alone became safer, as individuals. Originally people emigrated to neighbouring countries, but as transport has become more efficient and the standard of living has risen, it is now possible to move long distances beyond neighbouring countries to the industrialised world (Peil, 1995).

Between the mid-1970s to the early 1980s, according to Rado's (1986) estimation, between half and two-thirds of Ghana's experienced, top-level professional manpower' went abroad. As a result, Ghana lost about 14,000 qualified teachers, including nearly 3,000 university graduates, and the exodus was expected to continue. Two of the participates of my study, Paul and Megan left Ghana at that time.

In 1988-9 Ghana undertook one of the most comprehensive decentralisation programmes on the African continent. The decentralisation programme, launched by the then military government of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC), was meant to 'give power to the people' and bring 'democracy to the doorstep' of the people' (Ayee, 2008a, 2008b). Even though the creation of separate districts brought about improvements, the process was incomplete (Ayee and Dickovick, 2010). According to the authors, the process of district creation was done hastily without adequate consultation of key stakeholders, and its legal framework was not firm enough. This resulted in the distribution and division of governmental power which led to political struggle among politicians.

Zambia

In 1964, when Zambia became independent the country had a strong economy, with the highest per capita income in Southern Africa, primarily based on copper mining, making the country the world's third largest producer of copper (Phiri et al., 2020). Over-reliance on exporting copper, lack of efficient management thereof, as well as lack of diversification (Auty, cited in Phiri, et al., 2020) combined with global recession, declining copper prices, as well as the oil price shocks of the 1970s, subsequently threw the Zambian economy into crisis. ''The decline in mining leading up to the 1990s

and subsequent reforms caused the collapse of the country's industrial core and worsened urban poverty" (Thurlow and Wobst, 2006, p 622).

In the years following independence, also considerable investment was made in the hospital system, in response to the widely spread HIV/AIDS: with more than one-sixth of the adult population living with HIV/AIDS, Zambia is among the world's countries most severely affected by the disease. Early deaths from HIV/AIDS-related illnesses create a growing number of orphaned children and deprive the country of expensively trained skilled professionals. Malnutrition, caused by poverty, is widespread, particularly in the rural areas, and is a major cause of death among children. The World Bank (2004) also estimated that HIV/AIDS reduces economic growth by about 1% a year and increases poverty substantially. Nora trained and qualified to be a midwife at that time. In 1978 Zambia adopted Primary Health Care, a preventive and curative health programme with the goal of achieving health care for all. Nevertheless, the number of available facilities remains far short of demand.

As far as education is concerned, at independence Zambia had one of the most poorly developed education systems of Britain's former colonies, with just 109 university graduates and less than 0.5 % of the population estimated to have completed primary education. Among these, African women were almost entirely absent (Encyclopeadia Britannica, com).
The country has since invested heavily in education at all levels. Compulsory primary education begins at seven years of age and lasts for seven years. Secondary education is divided into two cycles, the first lasting two years and the second lasting three years. More than two-thirds of adult Zambians are literate, although the rates of literacy are significantly higher among men than among women. In addition, by the mid-1980s, when Nora left the country, Zambia had become one of the most indebted nations in the world relative to its GDP (The World Bank, 2004).

Nigeria

Modern Nigeria dates from 1914, when the British Protectorates of Northern and Southern Nigeria were joined. The country became independent on October 1, 1960, and in 1963 adopted a republican constitution, and like Kenya became a member of the British Commonwealth (Encyclopeadia Britannica.com).

The Nigerian economy is one of the largest in Africa. Since the late 1960s it has been based primarily on the petroleum industry. Like Kenya and Ghana, Nigeria, despite its wealth in natural resources remained desperately poor due to bad management of its wealth by successive corrupt governments. As a consequence, Nigeria is classified as one of the poorest countries in the world. Living conditions of its mostly impoverished population due to the high level of corruption in the system are difficult. The Corruption Perception Index (CPI) released annually by Transparency International has consistently listed Nigeria among the most corrupt nations of the world. Although the trend improved a little from the 2005 Corruption Perception Index ratings, Nigeria still languishes within it. According to Onifade et al. (2020) the Nigerian government played a significant role in the country's economic activities. For example, public expenditures have been growing continuously over the years and especially in the last two decades, increasing from ₦60.25 billion (about $7.49 bn) in 1990 to about ₦3.99 trillion ($39.07 bn) in 2010 (CBN 2017). The authors question the impact of these increments in public spending on desired economic growth and prosperity of the people. They further claim that cases of corruption and mismanagement of public funds have haltered possibilities for creating adequate budget and execution of capital projects. As a consequence, this has left the country in a state of huge infrastructural gaps, thus hampering the nation's economic growth. Furthermore, the demographic explosion and infant mortality rates that declined since the mid-20th century, created an increase in young population in Nigeria in the early 21st century, as almost three-fourths of the population was younger than age 30.

The above mentioned demographic changes created demands for public services thus generating more pressure on the available insufficient social provisions, creating problems with urbanisation efforts (Shelton, 2007).

Connected to the increase in population, and the lack of funding for social provisions was the increase of unemployment (Onifade et al., 2020a). The authors explored the link between trade and unemployment. Their study showed that the nation's terms of trade were insignificant to the unemployment rate, while trade openness and domestic investment, on the other hand, have significant opposing impacts on unemployment.

The results of their study recommend that concerted effort should be geared toward stimulating domestic investment by providing adequate financial and infrastructural facilities that will promote ease of doing business while utmost precautions are taken to ensure that the unemployment crisis is not exacerbated when combating inflation in the economy in the wake of dynamic trade relations.

Abdullateef et al. (2017) attribute the failure of economic development to the insufficient policies promoting Nigeria' s natural resources, particularly those in the rural areas of the country. In addition, the authors recommend that future plans to cure the economy should showcase Nigeria's rich culture, as well as its potential in tourist industry. They believe that rural areas are intricately tied with national development and rectification of trade balance.

Despite the high level of poverty and lack of social infrastructure, Nigeria's education system has developed since the 1960s. Maintaining its western style of education, introduced by Christian missionary bodies, Nigeria created a network of universities and colleges (more than 130) widely dispersed throughout the country, where the language of instruction is English (Abdullateef et al., 2017).

With its large proportion of young population and high poverty level, the development of widely available education provided a remedy to the country's ailing economy. It also created education possibilities which Mike described in his narrative. The motivation to gain an education as a means to build a more secure future became a motivational factor. <u>Mike left Nigeria at that time.</u>

Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe, previously Rhodesia, achieved internationally recognised independence on April 18, 1980, and remained a member of the British Commonwealth until 2003. After independence, priority in Zimbabwe was given to upgrading the country's school system. Many new schools were built in the drive toward free primary education for all. As a result, in the decade following independence, Zimbabwe achieved one of the highest primary school enrolment rates in Africa, with more than nine-tenths of all children of primary school age attending school, although this rate declined to about four-fifths in the early 21st century. (Encyclopaedia Britannica, com). As a result, Zimbabwe has one of the highest literacy rates in Africa, with nine-tenths of the population being able to read. The dismantling of Rhodesia's segregated system of schooling, described in Luke's narrative, began less than two years before independence. The minority government had concentrated upon providing compulsory (and virtually free) education for white children between the ages of 5 and 15 and had left the schooling of black children in the hands of missionaries. In 1950 there were only 12 government schools for blacks, compared with 2,230 mission and independent schools (Saungweme, 2013). It was at that time when Luke became a teacher and began his early teaching career.

The 1990s brought soaring inflation, a high level of unemployment, and social unrest (Saungweme, 2013). The health and wellbeing of Zimbabwe's population declined. At the turn of the century, Zimbabwe's infant mortality rate was higher than the world average, and AIDS continued to be a serious problem into the 21st century, with about one-fifth of the adult population infected. By 2010 the rate had dropped to about one-seventh, although this was still among the highest infection rates in the world.

Conclusions

The descriptions above outline the contextual backgrounds of the countries where the participants of my study came from, thus providing a better understanding of the circumstances that shaped their views and understanding of the world. As can be seen, Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, and Zambia, although distinct in some respects, share such similarities as: a high percentage (about 40 %) of young population, and low level of life expectancy (45-60 years on average), high infant mortality, diseases and epidemics, high poverty levels, and low standards of healthcare.

Unstable socio-economic situations, despite past and recent improvements, leave the countries lagging behind European economies. Most of the large populations live in urban areas, Ghana being an exception. Political instability, especially in Zimbabwe, is a factor that contributed to the overall poor standard of living.

Primary education became available to all, but not free of charge. Higher education was also developed but did not offer such possibilities as western countries did. In addition, according to the data provided by Human Development Reports (HDI) from 2018 on a list of 189 entries the countries are low on the list: Ghana (140), Kenya (141), Zambia (144), Zimbabwe (156) and Nigeria (157).

The human development perspective was developed by The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) which linked human development to levels of poverty. According to UNDP, poverty manifests itself in the deprivation of the lives people lead. It sees poverty as more than a lack of what people need to sustain material wellbeing. It formulated this as follows: "the denial of opportunities and choices most basic to human development – to lead a long healthy creative life and to enjoy a decent standard of living, freedom, dignity, self-esteem and the respect of others" (UNDP Human Development Report 1997). Although a promising step forward, the UNDP could

not guarantee a stable future for them and their future families at the time when the participants left their respective countries, in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

At about the same time, in 1995, Finland joined the EU, thus opening its doors to outsiders. As a country with a small population and well-developed welfare and healthcare system and an excellent free-of-charge education system it offered possibilities of a better future that Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, Zimbabwe and Zambia could not offer.

Finland

In the following parts of the chapter, I outline a short historical background of Finland. I also describe Finnish society, with its cultural intricacies, its language, and cultural values. These descriptions highlight some similarities, but primarily the differences between Finland's culture, language, and its people and the native countries of the participants. Finland and its people have often been described in essentialist ways, as a culturally homogenous country, and a nation with very little or no experience when it comes to dealing with different cultures.

In order to better understand the homogeneity of Finnish society and its culture, it is important to be familiar with parts of its history and cultural values that stemmed from it. The history shaped the cultural values Finns live by, which still today shape the attitudes society has towards cultural and ethnic diversity.

Beginnings

Finland is a 100-year-old republic, independent since 1917. Before that the country had been under foreign domination: until 1809 Finland had been a part of Sweden, and afterwards it became an autonomous part of Russia. It remained under Russian domination until 1917. Being dominated by foreign powers created a strong sense of national identity, which can be traced as far back as the 18th century (Manninen, 2000).

Finnish identity of an independent republic was shaped by a history of political domination and cultural imposition. It was also informed by the struggle to maintain its own unique Uralic language, communication style, and sovereignty. It is therefore understandable that the Finnish sense of national identity, regained independence and homogeneity of its small (5,5mln) population account for the Finnish reticence and reserve towards foreigners in general, but immigrants in particular.

With the fall of the Soviet Union in 1998 and Finland's accession to the European Union in 1995, the geo-political changes that occurred caused reconceptualisation of the previous conception of the Finnishness. Finland become a part of Western Europe, when in 1961 it joined EFTA (the European Free Trade Association), in 1973 it made a customs agreement with the Eastern European Community (EEC), in 1989 it became a member of the Council of Europe. Although not a full member of NATO, Finland acted as an observer at the North Atlantic Cooperation Council in 1992 and had belonged to the NATO Partnership for Peace since 1994 (Lewis, 2009). In 1995, Finland joined the Nordic Council and was accepted as a member of the United Nations in the same year.

Since its independence in 1917, Finland's socio-political development influenced the country's economy, having transformed it from an agrarian to a developed industrialised thriving economy. The socio-political developments meant not only that Finland became an active member of the world community, but it also became more open to foreign influence. The years after the country joined the EU witnessed an influx of foreigners especially from outside of the EU. That was the time when the participants of my study arrived in Finland.

Finland and its part in the world

Finland's geographical location, nature, and climate are crucial to understanding its people and the values they live by. The northern location between Russia, Sweden and Norway determines the climate which makes Finland distinctly different to Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Finland's severe climate determined, to a large extent, the Finnish national character with its ideals of a rudimentary way of living. The long winters and short summers with limited sunlight prove challenging not only to foreigners. Coming from African countries where the sun shines on average 3500 hours per year to Finland with half the amount of sunshine, and only about 27 hours in December (UnData, 2019) it can be difficult to adjust, both psychologically and culturally.

Finns and their self-image

Despite the transformation from the periphery of Europe to an open western democracy, in comparison to many countries in Western Europe, Finnish society has remained relatively separate from other nationalities and from the rest of the world (Löytty, 2004) and kept its homogenous

character. Understanding this 'open-close', in-between position in Europe is important to fully grasp the challenges foreigners in Finland might experience.

Finns are bonded in their sense of separateness, accompanied by a high degree of national self-consciousness, partly by their culture and the language, and partly by the geographical location. Despite its proximity with its Scandinavian neighbours, Finns are neither Scandinavians nor are they Slavs. In addition, they communicate using a unique and distinctive language, very difficult to understand unless previously studied. Communicating with a language with a "poor semiosphere" resulted in the development of a low-context culture "where messages do not need to be interpreted in depth" (Löytty, 2004, p 112), and verbosity is distrusted. This is yet another cultural difference that helps understand the challenges a foreigner from a high-context African communication culture might face in Finland.

This strong Finnish national unity was especially evident in the wake of Finnish independence in 1918. The creation of Finland as a single homogenous society and country necessitated an attitude where internal differences had to be ignored. Whatever national minorities, geographical differences, political positions there were in Finland, they were hidden, and their existence ignored. Linguistic differences that existed between regions have been depreciated, to the extent that people who spoke different dialects have been regarded as conveying a "comic and stupid image" of themselves (Alasuutari et al., 1998, p 171).

This pressure for similarity and construction of a common culture was so strong that it ignored, if not wiped out any possible demographic differences. This presented challenges not only to a small population of foreigners, but also to some Finns themselves (Lepola, 2000), especially those of foreign origins, as they faced difficulties in becoming Finnish nationals (Huttunen et al., 2005).

Apart from promoting a common culture, an image of being ordinary was implemented as a part of the national project which functioned as a quality control mechanism (Löytty, 2004). Being ordinary meant not standing out, as well as masking and ignoring differences. This was supposed to guarantee fitting into what was understood as homogeneous. The result and consequence of fitting in and being ordinary developed a homogenous society, but it also contributed to a low level of tolerance for differences. These images were dictated and determined by elite groups of society, who saw themselves as the Finnish nation's constructing groups. Thus, Finns have learned

and adopted a self-image of being a deficient, inferior forest folk, uncivilised and underdeveloped, with limited communication and social skills.

Finnish education

The approach to education within Finland combined with the reputation it developed have contributed to its worldwide popularity.

According to Pär Stenbäck (2015), Finnish education is based on a principle that learning must be a respected part of a country's culture. "Finland built and secured its national identity in the 19th century through investing in education for all and when independence was achieved, the base was there to develop further" (Stenbäck, 2015). A slogan "leave no child behind" that also entered US schools was adopted in Finnish schools long before. This universality and accessibility of education was an attractive possibility for the participants of my study, for whom getting an education (see Chapter 4) was of particular importance.

In the PISA study results Finland has consistently ranked high. In the 2012 study, Finland ranked sixth in reading, twelfth in mathematics and fifth in science, while back in the 2003 study Finland was first in both science and reading and second in mathematics. Moreover, Finland's tertiary education has been ranked first by the World Economic Forum.

Apart from developing and expanding the network of universities of applied sciences, thus opening education possibilities for foreigners as well as Finns, Finland developed schemes to export the Finnish education system abroad, one of them implemented also in Haaga-Helia UAS. This expanded the reputation Finnish education has been enjoying for several years, and attracted many applicants, the participants of my study being among of them.

Linked to its education system is Finland's ranking in the Human Capital Index. A nation's human capital "skills and capabilities that reside in people and are put to productive use can be a more important determinant of its long-term economic success than virtually any other source" (World Economic Forum, 2015). This study measures countries' capabilities to nurture talent through education, skills development and deployment at all stages of the human life cycle. In 2015 Finland ranked number one, having developed and deployed 86% of its human capital potential. I see this development as offering attractive possibilities of education available to people of all ages

and cultural backgrounds. It also sheds light on Finnish openness towards developing human talent and potential.

Images of Other

The common culture of being separate and ordinary, nationally self-conscious, together with its geographical location had a limiting impact on Finnish connections with the colonised world. Understanding this is important as it reveals how Finns were introduced to the notion of otherness, especially to the otherness embodied in people with black skin.

The most important encounters with the colonised world were documented by missionaries in Africa. The memoires they created, as well as press articles of that time were a source of knowledge about culture and societies in Africa available to the Finnish society. According to Kaartinen (2004) and Löytty (2006) the missionaries' writings reproduced the dominant Western colonial understanding of Africans. The Other, against which the Finns constructed their image of themselves were not present in their society, they were only represented in textual and visual materials. In these materials the western conception of the colonised Other was present. Still in 2009 (Rossi) images of exoticised, primitive images of black people were dominant in TV commercials, placed against the technologically advanced Finns. Some product names and commercials carried racially laden messages and had to be changed or modified (see Appendix 1).

School books and educational material have played an influential role in the creation of this collective understanding. Paasi (1998), in his study of geography schoolbooks used in Finnish primary schools, found that until the 1960's the world was divided horizontally and value-laden. The Western Europeans were represented as intelligent, hardworking and clean. In contrast, Eastern and Southern Europeans as well as regions outside of Europe were depicted as the opposite. Black people were described negatively with regards to their race, as childish and underdeveloped. As these images and representations were uncritically conveyed and taught to generations of Finns before the 1960's a large part of Finnish society today has grown up in a context where differences in behaviour and capability were constructed around racial differences.

Minorities in Finland

Despite the existence of several minority groups recognised by the state (Swedish speaking Finns, the Sami, the Roma, the Jews and the Tatars) Finland's demographic structure is still homogenous.

According to Statistics Finland (2020), there were 402,619 persons with a foreign background living in Finland at the end of 2018, 7.3 % of the entire population. There were 335,414 persons of first generation with foreign background, i.e., born abroad, and 67,205 persons of second generation with foreign background, i.e., born in Finland. The number of children with a foreign background has doubled in ten years.

The immigrant population has steadily grown since the beginning of the 1990s. At the end of 2018, the share of persons with a European background among first-generation immigrants was over 55%. The share of persons with an Asian background was 29 % and 11 % for persons with an African background.

The share of Europeans among persons with a foreign background born in Finland was 48 %, persons with an Asian background 27 %, and 22 % for persons with an African background. The share of persons with an African background among those with a foreign background is double in the second generation. (See Figure 1)
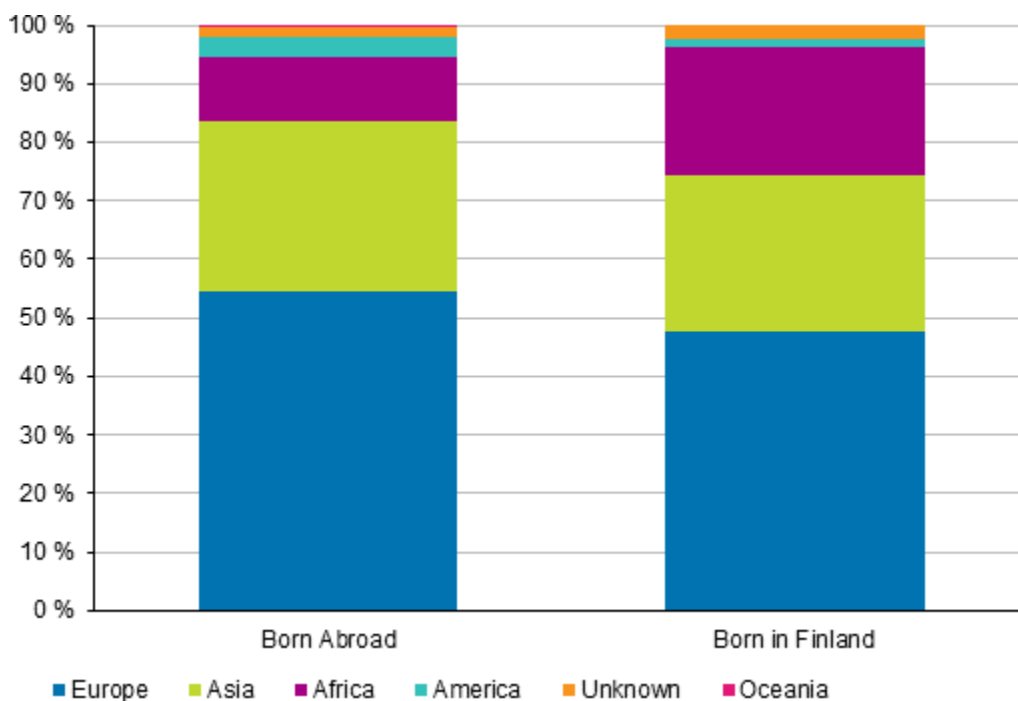
Figure 6. Persons of foreign background by continent in 2018

The tables and figure below illustrate other aspects of Finnish society in terms of different groups of non-Finns who reside in Finland. They demonstrate the demographic changes that took place in the last thirty years; Finnish society has become culturally diverse.

Table 1. Finnish population by language in 2021

Finnish population by language					
Mother language	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**%**
Domestic languages in total	5 139 805	5 126 173	5 112 648	5 100 946	92,0
Finnish	4 848 761	4 835 778	4 822 690	4 811 067	86,9
Swedish	289 052	288 400	287 954	287 871	5,2
Sami	1 992	1 995	2 004	2 008	0,0
Foreign languages	373 325	391 746	412 644	432 847	7,8
Russian	77 177	79 225	81 606	84 190	1,5
Estonian	49 590	49 691	49 427	49 551	0,9
Arabic	26 467	29 462	31 920	34 282	0,6
English	19 626	20 713	22 052	23 433	0,4
Somalian	20 007	20 944	21 920	22 794	0,4
Kurdish	13 327	14 054	14 803	15 368	0,3
Persian, Farsi	12 090	13 017	14 118	15 105	0,3
Chinese	11 825	12 407	13 064	13 778	0,2
Albanian	10 391	10 990	11 806	12 664	0,2
Vietnamese	9 872	10 440	11 094	11 562	0,2
Total	**5 513 130**	**5 517 919**	**5 525 292**	**5 533 793**	**100**
Source: Statistics Finland, Population structure					

Table 2. Finnish population by citizenship in 2021

Finnish population by citizenship					
Nationality	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**Increase in population 2019–2020, %**
Finnish	5 263 678	5 260 347	5 257 663	5 254 876	-0,1
Foreigners in total	249 452	257 572	267 629	278 917	4,2
Estonia	51 539	51 456	50 860	50 866	0,0
Russia	29 183	28 747	28 528	28 866	1,2
Irak	11 729	13 078	13 943	14 708	5,5
China	8 742	9 230	9 825	10 458	6,4
Sweden	8 018	7 996	7 983	8 041	0,7
Thailand	7 533	7 632	7 772	7 851	1,0
India	5 159	5 730	6 751	7 237	7,2
Afghanistan	5 792	6 198	6 666	7 059	5,9
Syria	5 290	6 016	6 579	6 915	5,1
Vietnam	5 603	5 941	6 350	6 630	4,4
Others	110 864	115 548	122 372	130 286	6,5
Total	**5 513 130**	**5 517 919**	**5 525 292**	**5 533 793**	**0,2**
Source: Statistics Finland, Population structure					
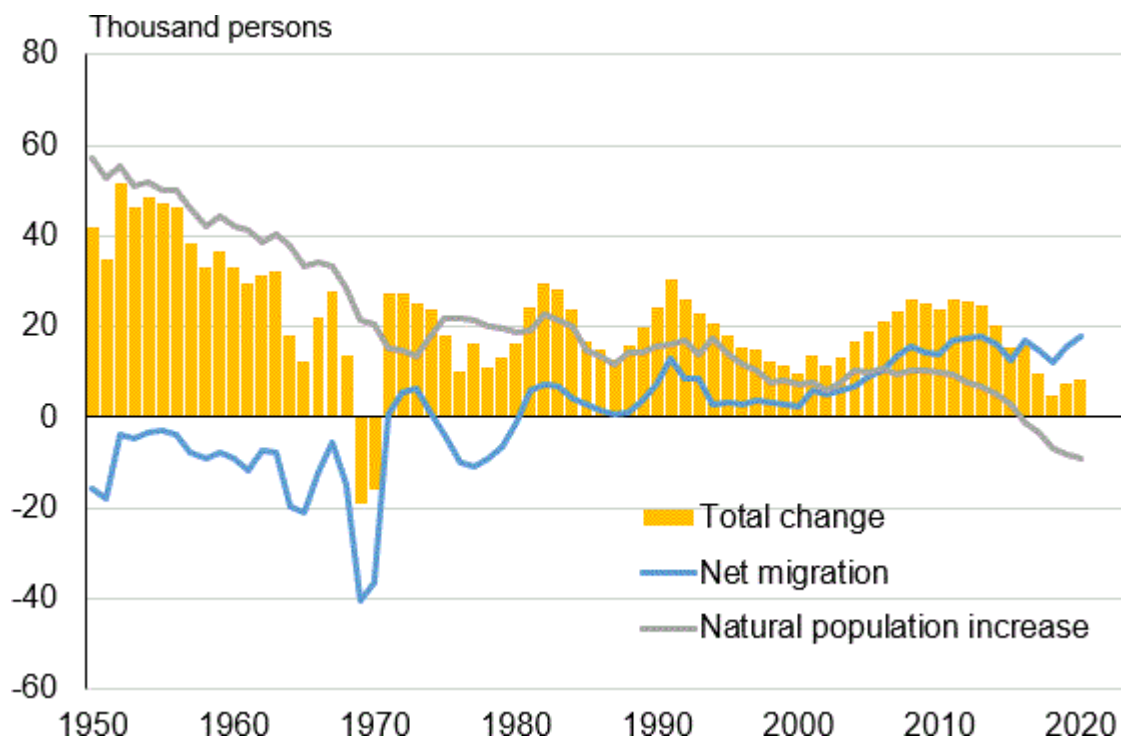
Source: Statistics Finland.

Figure 7. Changes in Finnish population, updated in April 2021

Diversity and differences at work

As mentioned above, the ethnic composition of the Finnish workforce has been experiencing important changes. In addition, during the second decade of the third millennium the number of people who retire had doubled the quota of 2000. It is predicted that by the year 2025 the healthcare and the service sector will lose as much as half of its workforce. In agriculture up to 60% of its workforce will retire (Ministry of Employment and the Economy, 2009). One of the suggested solutions to the shortage of labour force was recruitment of foreign work force.

In response to these changes, the Finnish Migration Policy Programme of 2018 highlighted the promotion of work-related migration as a central objective. Active measures of recruitment of employees from abroad for the sectors that are most affected by the shortage has been undertaken by private employment agencies. The Finnish Government Migration Policy (2018) emphasises the importance of good relations between population groups as a means to ensure a place for migrant workers in Finnish society. "A positive climate of attitudes and friction-free relations between population groups will make Finland more attractive to talents migrating for

work, support the internationalisation of the labour market and secure Finland a stronger position in the competition for labour" (The Finnish Government Migration Programme 2018).

The programme also highlights maintaining good relations between population groups to encourage interaction between different groups and influence people's sense of security, attitudes, and social inclusion. The Government Integration Programme (2016–2019) undertakes to promote good relations between population groups in addition to other integration measures.

Immigration into Finland increased in the 1990s, and in 2009 there were 26 300 foreign nationals living in Finland compared to only 155 705 in 1990. In 2015 close to 100 000 foreign nationals were granted Finnish nationality compared to about 18 000 in 2000 (Statistics Finland, 2020). It is worth mentioning here that since June 1, 2003 Finland recognised dual citizenship. Consequently, foreigners obtaining Finnish citizenship no longer had to renounce their former citizenship.

Apart from the increasing workforce of foreign origin, also the number of students of foreign origin have increased. Increasing the number of foreign students has actually been a part of the governmental scheme. In 2020, 8% of university degrees were granted to foreigners, compared to 4 % granted in 2010. One in four of the doctorate degrees was completed by a foreign citizen (Statistics Finland, 2020).

Finnish work life thus became more heterogeneous in terms of nationalities and cultures. This increased diversity presented new challenges. Despite the official plans to promote diversity and employment of foreigners, foreigners face a lot of challenges when it comes to building careers as well as advancing in Finnish society. This is supported by the study's participants in their narratives describing their experiences in their workplaces (see Chapter 4).

For example, in an article published by YLE (Finnish equivalent to BBC) in November 2019, Michaela Moua, Senior Officer at the Office of the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman, claims that "awareness and understanding of the issue of racism in the Finnish workplace is still developing". In The Non-Discrimination Act, she describes racism in workplaces as something that happens at a structural level, for example in relation to pay, or to other benefits of the employment relationship or career advancement. Even if other factors, such as educational background and job performance, are the same, career advancement may still be more difficult and slower for an immigrant.

In the same article Barbara Bergbom (2019), a senior expert at the National Institute for Occupational Health, claims that racism typically occurs in indirect ways, and it is rarely experienced as a direct act such as racist harassment or bullying. Bergbom (2019) believes that the more distant the culture that a person comes from, the more likely he or she is to be experience racism in the Finnish workplace. People, especially from Africa, have reported the most incidents of experiencing unfair or unequal treatment at work. Bergbom (2019) says there is still very little research on the experiences of bias against employed immigrants in the workplace in Finland. However, it is known that there is discrimination in recruitment.

In addition, according to Castaneda (2018, cited in Karvonen and Kestilä 2018), a researcher at the National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL), indirect racism and discrimination are difficult to identify and therefore can be difficult to tackle. In general, they manifest themselves in the form of unfair or less respectful treatment of a person. "Discrimination has a lot to do with mental health, perceived health, social well-being and experiences of trust with other people. Indirect discrimination also has these same connections," (Castaneda, 2018, cited in Karvonen and Kestilä, 2018).

At the same time, other Scandinavian countries reacted strongly to an influx of non-white immigrants in the 1900s with the birth of the Nordic Resistance Movement, established in Stockholm, Sweden. The Finnish Resistance Movement is a branch of the Scandinavian movement. Between 2006 and 2016 there were at least nine incidents of violence directed at non-Finnish ethnic minorities, the latest took place on September 16, in the middle of Helsinki. During this incident, a 28-year-old man was beaten, and died a week later in hospital. He expressed his opposition to the FRM's anti non-white immigration demonstration by spitting.

In Finnish media, there is much evidence of racial assaults by ordinary citizens directed towards ethnic minorities. As much as this is a reality it is encouraging to note that there is legislation in the Finnish law that promotes and encourages integration and assimilation. There is also evidence of these activities implemented into culture, research, as well as employment. Finnish authorities and leading parties' representatives are responding to violation of these laws.

Diversity management and organisational practices

Diversity management in Finland faces challenges when addressing demands of multicultural organisations, which large Finnish companies have become. Understanding these challenges sheds light on the situation in the working environments in which the participants of the study work.

For example, several collaborative projects between business organisations, trade unions and public authorities have been carried out. Their aim was to promote multicultural work communities and good practices (Vänskä-Rajala, 2007; Ruhanen and Martikainen, 2006, cited in Fingeroos, 2009). Despite these attempts, the central question of how to manage a multicultural workforce in a way that best fosters and promotes relationships between organisational members in the best and most harmonious way is still unanswered.

Acknowledging the increasing presence of foreign employees, the government of Finland has been active in promoting cultural and racial diversity. The Non-Discrimination Act concerning age, racial and ethnic origin, citizenship, language, religion or belief, conviction, opinion, state of health, disability, sexual orientation, or other personal characteristics, came into force in 2004. This Act requires similar plans for promoting equality between persons with different ethnic backgrounds.

Based on research of ten organisations in Finland, Sippola and Leponiemi (2007) concluded that diversity management induced little or no changes to their HRM practices. Söderqvist (2005) found that diversification of employees is seldom considered in HRM practices. For example, the induction practices did not take into consideration the challenges that could take place when a foreigner enters an organisational environment, and its effects on the organisational culture and communication. Whereas work practices might seem self-evident and tacit for the Finns they might need to be clearly laid out when an individual with non-Finnish background enters the organisation. This lack of efficient communication was pointed out in several narratives of the study's participants. Söderqvist (2005) identified the need for more communication and leadership.

As a result, on rare occasion training and induction practices have been modified (Sippola and Leponiemi, 2007). Minority employees were provided with information about Finnish norms, practices, and rules of conduct. Finnish colleagues concluded that even more induction for their foreign counterparts is needed, but they also recognised that further development of these practices would necessitate more resources (Juuti, 2005). Finns, on the other hand, need more

information about different cultures as well as cross-cultural matters. Finnish managers are not knowledgeable enough in these matters and therefore are unable to fully acknowledge the value of their foreign employees. This can lead to not recognising the skills and competences that they bring into the organisations, as well as ignoring the talents both in the working practices band in the recruitment processes (Söderqvist, 2005). Civil service providers felt that they need more intercultural training as well as more language skills in order to perform their tasks better (Sippola and Leponiemi, 2007).

There seems to be little information about the type of multicultural training companies offer their employees. In 2010, Salo and Poutiainen conducted a study of the induction material including information on multiculturalism. Their findings indicate that the induction materials construct stereotyped understandings of Finns and immigrants, rather than challenge the division into Finns and immigrants. In other words, the manuals whose purpose and function are to promote multiculturalism, highlighted the division. Induction manuals, as well as diversity promoting reports from the EU and state authorities serve as a platform where norms and expected codes of conduct are laid out. Immigrant employees are expected to comply with these norms, thus making Finns suspicious of any deviant forms of behaviour legitimate. In 2009, the Ministry of labour and Foreign Affairs published a report in which it states: "Practicing religion during a working day, a regime diverging from Finnish traditions or different clothing rules, may bewilder Finnish co-workers and employees". (Ministry of Labour and Foreign Affairs 2009, p 22). This form of communication signals to the foreign employees that they should adjust their traditions to Finnish ways, and it also signals to the Finnish employees that they have a legitimate right to react to their foreign colleague's religious practices.

Ethnic differences at work

Ethnic minorities, to which the participants of my study belong, occupy a weak position in the Finnish labour market. They are often unemployed, work on short-time basis contracts, and are paid less than their Finnish counterparts (Alho, 2010; Forsander, 2002; Forsander and Alitolppa-Niitamo, 2000), or work in jobs that are unrelated to their education or qualifications (Rintata-Rasmus and Giorgiani, 2007). For instance, 12% of Finns work on a temporary contract basis, while 17 % of all immigrants work on a temporary contract basis. Out of the immigrants, 29% come from sub-Saharan Africa and the African horn and work on temporary basis (Vartia at al., 2007).

The initiatives and practices described above illustrate the situation that the participants of my study face in their workplaces: uncertain working conditions, relatively low familiarity with cultural diversity of their Finnish co-workers, lack of knowledge at a managerial level, and high expectations of adjusting to Finnish work practices.

African diaspora in Finland

To better understand the small part immigrants from African countries play in Finnish society, I outline the characteristics of the African diaspora in Finland. It demonstrates the cultural environment in which the participants of my study also play a part. The African diaspora consists of people from various countries of origin and diverse cultural backgrounds. Migrants from Africa and Finns of African descent form a small and relatively recent but rapidly growing visible minority. In a predominantly white Finnish society, they challenge the landscape of Finnishness. In recent years, however small, their presence has influenced the social and cultural life of Finnish society.

As shown earlier in Figure 1, according to the demographic statistics from 2018 (Statistics Finland, 2020) based on immigrants' countries of origin, around 20,000 people have moved from Africa to Finland. In their families there are already thousands of children born in Finland. Even though the African diaspora in Finland is composed mainly of first-generation immigrants, the rapid growth in the number of black children of mixed parentage can also be seen on the street and in every school yard in Finnish primary and secondary schools. Their presence cannot be statistically demonstrated, because official statistics in Finland do not specify ethnicity or "race".

Only a small number of Africans and other black people from the diaspora were living in Finland between the 1900s and the 1970s. Due to the civil war that started in Somalia in the early 1990s, thousands of Somalis moved to Finland as asylum seekers. Some of them had been living in Russia, others flew from Somalia to Russia and soon found themselves to be asylum seekers in a country that they knew nothing about. Today, Somalis constitute the biggest group of Africans in Finland. There are almost 20 000 (Figure 2) Somali-speaking people and in their families, there are thousands of Finnish-born children. It is predicted that the number of people with a Somali background will grow in the future due to family reunifications and because the majority of Finnish Somalis are either children or young adults. Today there are Finns with a Somali background in all bigger cities in the country (Finnish Somali League).

The presence of Africans and other black people in Finland has changed Finnish society dramatically, thus, questions of racism can no longer be ignored. Racist discourses and discriminative practices have become a topic of discussion not only in the media and among some politicians, but also in schools and public services. Immigrants from the former colonised countries and their non-white descendants whose everyday lives are overshadowed by the collective memory of subordination and its present-day implications have also questioned the earlier ideas of Finns' (and other Nordic countries') involvements in (post)colonial relations. Discourses emphasising "Finnish exceptionalism" are now also being questioned, and the colonial complicity of Finns, and its various consequences, have – although gradually – become a topic of research and public discussion (Rastas, 2012).

The first-generation immigrants, like the participants of my study, have strong social, cultural, economic and emotional links to their countries of origin, as is evident in their narratives (see Chapter 4). They are forced to pour their energy into learning a new language and surviving in a new society and culture which my study examines. As much as they try to assimilate and fit in, they also form associations and found their own churches, mainly in Helsinki. African immigrant associations and churches help immigrants to strengthen their own communities in Finland and to maintain ties to their countries of origin. People from Finnish African communities meet each other and other Finns with an immigrant background also in local community centres (Rastas, 2012).

Conclusions

Chapter 1 outlined a contextual background to the study. First, it provided brief descriptions of the native countries of the participants, and Africa as a whole. This helped understand the richness of the culture of the African continent, as well as the different aspects of the countries where the participants grew up and which shaped their cultural identities. Second, it introduced demographically homogenous Finland, with its culture and history. This provided a background understanding of the country which shaped the cultural values Finns live by, and especially those that are crucial to understanding the Finnish attitude towards cultural and ethnic diversity.

The ethnic composition of the Finnish workforce and society as a whole has been experiencing important changes by dealing with a large number of older people retiring thus diminishing the workforce. Therefore, incorporating foreigners into Finnish work life became a reality. To tackle

these changes, governmental programmes were introduced to promote work-related migration as a central objective.

Despite official plans to promote diversity and employment of foreigners, foreigners face a lot of challenges when it comes to building careers as well as advancing in Finnish society. Ethnic minorities still occupy a weak position in the Finnish labour market. On the other hand, they have strong cultural, economic and emotional links to their native countries. As much as they try to assimilate and fit in, they also form associations and found their own churches, mainly in Helsinki.

The examples of the presence of African diaspora in the Finnish culture demonstrates two streams in the way individuals of African origin experience living in a foreign host culture. On the one hand, they embed themselves into the host culture by actively participating in its manifestations, thus making it familiar to Finnish society. This creates a seeming inclusivity in Finnish culture. On the other hand, their celebration of their cultural attachments and rootedness in their native cultures, expressed through art, renders them distinct and different 'others', thus excluding them.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

Overview

In this chapter I review previous studies of the concepts that I considered important when I first began my research. I was interested in concepts such as identity and self-concept, culture, cultural identity, postcolonial identity, colour and race identity, as well as major relevant theories. I compiled the literature review based on these concepts. As I was investigating how black African professionals experience their life and work in a foreign host culture in Finland, I was interested in the meaning of experience itself, and the way people understand their experiences.

After conducting my data analysis, I revised the literature review and reviewed it on the basis of the findings that emerged from the analysis. The data analysis revealed that the participants applied sensemaking in the process of understanding of their experiences. Therefore, this chapter also looks at sensemaking as a concept. I was further interested in the way the cultural values of the participants influenced the way they understood their experiences and shaped their identities. Therefore, I was also interested in the concept of cultural identities. I categorised existing knowledge on the concepts, defined and addressed possible gaps in previous studies, and defined the ways my study attempts to bridge these gaps (Hart, 2014).

The literature review is divided into two main sections which present existing research on the concepts of postcoloniality. It continues by reviewing 1) identity, and 2) sensemaking. In the first part I define identity and self-concept, culture, cultural identity, postcolonial identity, colour and race identity, as well as major relevant theories. I show the interconnectedness of culture, identity, and representation. I also review narrative identity. I discuss the concept of identity salience, activation, and threats in view of the key theories: social identity theory and identity theory.

In the second part, I discuss sensemaking in view of Weick's model (1993), make connections between sensemaking and identity, and finally show how cultural identity impacts the process of sensemaking.

Postcolonial studies

I reviewed literature on the term 'postcolonial', on postcoloniality, and postcolonial criticism before I conducted the first interviews. As the participants of my study came from countries that

had been colonised, I considered postcoloniality and postcolonial theory as relevant. One of my research questions focused on the extent to which colonial past played a role in the way the participants experienced life and work in Finland. Therefore, in this section I first outline the concept of postcoloniality, its definitions, and its historical origins. Second, I place postcolonialism within the context of critical theory to give an overview of its major contributions within Management Organisation Studies (MOS). Finally, I locate my research within and in relation to postcolonial criticism.

Defining postcolonial

As the term 'postcolonial' is not clearly defined and is seen as a concept that can refer to several different domains, it raises ontological questions. For example, if it refers to geographical spaces one must be aware of ownership and authenticity. Questions such as: who is postcolonial, and who is not, what colonial experience meant for different people in different geographical locations, and who is speaking for/about these people need to be addressed. As I concur with Lunga's (2008, p 194) claim that "lumping postcolonial experiences in a single definition has a trivialising effect", and I am fully aware of the theorisations and different shades of the meaning of the postcolonial, I remain cautious, and refrain from labelling the experiences of my participants as postcolonial. Instead, I rely on the findings in the interview data and ground my understandings in the narratives themselves.

Lunga (2008) sees definitions of postcolonial as falling into three rather complex categories: postcolonial that describes experiences within specific geographical locations, postcolonial that denotes a specific time, and postcolonial as a critique of realities of oppression. As a geographical descriptor, postcolonial refers to a geographical location of countries that were colonised, such as Kenia, Zambia, and Nigeria, for example. This category also includes settler colonies such as Australia, Canada, and the Caribbean. Countries like Zimbabwe and South Africa, which were partially settled, are also described as postcolonial. As a temporal marker, postcolonial refers to a historical period that marks the point after which colonised countries regained independence. Finally, postcolonial as a critique or textual approach to realities of oppression looks at the way writers articulate their colonial experiences in terms of resistance and agency (Lunga, 2008). Despite having come from such different and distant geographical locations as Kenia, Nigeria, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Nigeria, the participants of my research share common colonial past that

shaped their understanding of themselves (self- identity). The question I am investigating and seeking answers to is the extent to which the colonial past impacted their sensemaking of their experiences of life in the Finnish host culture.

Postcolonial and postcolonial criticism, the origins of the term

"The most formidable allay of economic and political control had long been the business of 'knowing' other peoples because this 'knowing' underpinned imperial dominance and became the mode by which they were increasingly persuaded to know themselves: that is, as subordinate to Europe" (Ashcroft et al., 2006, p 1).

This process of knowing involved imposing the language, the culture, and modes of learning onto the colonised populations, thus suppressing their indigenous cultures. This process also triggered countercolonial resistance which resulted in the expression of self-determinism to resist and defy imperial influence. Banerjee and Prasad (2008) expand this theorisation adding a more radical view by claiming that postcolonial theory was driven from and by strong critiques of colonialism, imperialism and neocolonialism as well as modern Western colonialism. The movement drew its inspiration from the writings of political activists, freedom fighters as well as anti-colonial activists from Africa, India, and South America. These movements called for the nations emerging from colonialism to "decolonise their minds" (Ngugi wa Thiong'O, 1981).

The moment colonised people began to reflect on their experiences of what it meant to be colonised, and consequently became aware of the tension that ensued from this mixture of imperial language and culture and their own local culture, the term 'post-colonial criticism' was born. This was not manifested in any formal theoretical texts, but it was born as a social movement, present in the colonised societies long before the actual term 'postcolonial theory' was coined. Obtaining texts written by postcolonial theorists was difficult, as they were ignored or not available. On the other hand, it was relatively easy to access published works on colonial discourse theory in "metropolitan societies" (Ashcroft et al., 2006, p 2).

Postcolonial criticism became a major force within comparative literature and literary criticism, primarily in the US and Australia in the 1990s (Jack et al., 2011; Tyson, 2015). This institutional affiliation points to the importance of language, culture, and representation in the development of the body of work on postcolonial themes. It examines a wide range of social, political, cultural

questions that recognise and acknowledge the salience of colonial experience as well as its still salient aftermath.

As a domain within literary studies, postcolonial criticism was both a subject matter and a theoretical framework. As a subject matter, postcolonial criticism analyses literary works that were written mainly by writers from previously colonised societies, such as S. Selvon, V.S. Naipaul, G. Lamming, C. Phillips, and D. Adebayo. Some of the literary works were also written by colonisers. There were also postcolonial rewritings of canonical texts of English literature written by British writers; for example, Marina Warner's *Indigo* is a post-colonial rewriting of William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. As a theoretical framework, postcolonial criticism seeks to understand the operations of the colonialist and the anticolonialist ideologies. Postcolonial criticism is also concerned with the "decolonisation of representation; the decolonisation of the West's theory of the non-West" (Scott, 1999, p 12).

Since the late 1990s, postcolonial theory has expanded and diversified. It has been employed in a variety of fields of study and disciplines, such as politics and sociology, religious studies, environmental studies, migration theory, and economics. Postcolonial theory acknowledges forms of colonial and neo-colonial power salient in the global world of today. Therefore, it provides a methodology for such a wide range of disciplines.

In my study, I considered the term 'postcolonial' as one not referring to the time after colonisation. The time of colonisation has had a lasting impact on the political, economic and cultural spheres of postcolonial states and societies. The colonial period is still part of present time and is influencing the metropolis and former colonies (e.g. McClintock 1995; Castro, Varela and Dhawan 2009b; Hostettler and Vögele 2014). Or as Stuart Hall suggests, the concrete determination of the postcolonial includes both "after colonization" and "beyond colonization" and therefore both descriptions cannot be separated from each other (Hall 2002, p 236-237). To better understand the national heritage of the participants of my study it was a necessary concept, as it has had a lasting influence on their cultural and social values. I was interested in the extent to which these values were still salient in their understanding of who they were and how they understood the world, especially in the host culture in Finland. My study, therefore, addresses the meeting point of postcoloniality and Finnish culture where exposure to multiculturalism, let alone postcoloniality, is limited.

Postcolonialism, a brief historical overview

This brief historical overview helps understand the origins of division between the "Orient and the West", two distinct ontological zones, the creation of which determined the understanding of the divisions between the civilised and the underdeveloped, still salient today.

Jack et al. (2011) considers the publication of *Orientalism* by Edward Said in 1978 as a foundational moment for postcolonial studies. Said's book described and critically examined the discourse of European colonialism, looking at discursive forms, as well as their linguistic organizations. This discourse juxtaposed the West (Occident) and the non-West (Orient) as two opposite realities. The West embodied the developed, the civilised, the moral, the scientific, and therefore the superior. In contrast, the non-West embodied the underdeveloped, the uncivilised, the immoral, the superstitious, and therefore the inferior. Said's examination and the binary classification, as well as othering, although 40 years old, still resonates today. The colonial discourse proposed by Said introduces an ideology of Orientalism that is used to justify Empire with its mission to bring modernity to the underdeveloped world. The modernity was articulated by cultural imperialism, military power and dispossession.

Moreover, the European powers imagined "themselves as the theoretical subject of all historical knowledge" (Mufti, 2005, p 277), thus rendering non-Western knowledge and history significant.

Early interest in postcolonial criticism, decolonisation, and provincialisation was reflected in the works of, what Jack et al. (2011) call the Holy Trinity of postcolonial High Theory: Homi Bhabha, (1994) (concepts of ambivalence, hybridity and mimicry), Gayathri Spivak, (1987, 1999) (themes related to feminism, philosophy, culture and history), and Edward Said (binary concepts of the Orient and the West).

Banerjee and Prasad (2008) add Nandy to the pillars of postcolonial theory. Nandy's (1983, 1995) writings are mainly concerned with the psychological aspects of colonialism. Since the late 1970s, postcolonial theory has developed and diversified into several strands and become multifaceted as well as contested in three distinct respects. The first one is the provenance of the intellectual and theoretical resources offered by postcolonialism. These range from work by resistance leaders,

writers on racial issues, subaltern writers and speakers on decolonization and national independence, as well as transnational feminist writers, to name a few.

The second respect is concerned with the complication in the configuration of postcolonial studies at three moments, or three distinct significations: the postcolonial as epistemic critique or, as Lunga (2008, p 193) calls it "epistemic violence", the post-colonial as a historical portentous moment, and postcoloniality as a condition.

The third respect is the internal and external criticism of postcolonialism as a scholarly domain. Internal criticism is mainly concerned with different philosophical views; for example, Marxist scholars view theorisations about culture and writings as a distraction from the issues of power and social change. Concerning external criticism, historians make claims that studies had been made of colonial questions made long before Said (Jack et al., 2011).

The 1990s were a time marked by the concept of decentralising Eurocentric assumptions in organisation studies. In 1992, Jeffrey Pfeffer called for a paradigmatic shift within the field of organisational studies. He advocated for the inclusion of a different "original story", where multiplicity and fragmentation would enrich organisational analysis. The first exposure to postcolonial theory in organisational theory was offered by Radhakrishnan in 1993. More studies followed and brought to the forefront the idea that ground realities were different: more chaotic, heterogeneous and contested. By dignifying the actions of marginal actors in the academic realm, the authors of these articles were able to provide building blocks to alternative theories in organisations and organising (Mir and Mir, 2012). Postcolonial theory also found its applications in literature about globalisation (Appadurai, 1996), feminism (Lewis and Mills, 2003), indigenous matters (Banerjee, 2001), nationalism (Bhabha, 1990), and racial issues (Banerjee and Osuri, 2000; Gilroy, 2000), as well as later within management and organisation studies in the writings of Banerjee (2000; Frenkel and Shenhav, 2006; Mir and Mir, 2007; Prasad, 1997).

Deborah Litvin (2006) subjected the discourse of diversity to critical scrutiny and proposed its sociobiological assumptions. Lorbiecki and Jack (2000) suggested a postcolonial lens when examining how difference was identified in discourses within diversity management. In 1997, Arias wrote about Latin America as a region where unique organisational structures and knowledges were emerging.

Caldas and Wood (1997) brought to the forefront the idea that there is a coexistence of multiple forms of work and organisations in societies that struggle with power inflicted incursions of modernity into their lives. As a result, the traditional western organisational theory was challenged, and the studies carried out in other geographical regions gained legitimacy.

In summary, in its complexity postcoloniality has many significations that co-exist with other modes of critique. It shares commonalities with MOS in its commitment to questioning prevailing ontologies, epistemological approaches as well as methodologies of the academic centre. Jack et al. (2011) do not see postcolonialism as a theoretical discipline but as "interrogative space". There is not one definite and distinct postcolonial, limited and restricted to one specific school of thought. Instead, there is "interpretive sensibility", which is subject to different scholars and thinkers, and their distinctive positions.

Postcolonial within MOS, major conceptual contributions

According to Jack et al. (2011), the concept of postcolonial in MOS has not been explored to a great extent since it emerged in the 1990s, and therefore it needs to be voiced, deepened, and broadened.

More heterodox scenarios in global organisations, necessitated by recent development, require a legitimate intersection of postcolonialism and organisation studies. Jack et al. (2011) claim the postcolonial in OS does not speak for the themes and people involved in these scenarios. This research addresses this claim directly by giving voices to individuals and investigating their experience through their narratives.

Jack et al. (2011) distinguish three forms of parochialism within MOS: contextual (US focused), qualitative (US values and management cultural values), and quantitative. The studies were carried out primarily in US or western environments, and they draw mainly from sources published in the same locations. These forms of parochialism gesture towards an epistemic colonisation and cultural imperialism at the heart of MOS. Qualitative parochialism is underpinned by western concepts and the orthodoxy of management. Quantitative parochialism points out the relatively meagre research done by scholars from outside of the western domain. Jack and Westwood's review (2009) found that most research within MOS is predominantly carried out by US scholars.

In addition to this critique, there have been numerous attempts to articulate indigenous, non-western and context-sensitive accounts of management and organisation, but they are mostly located in the western context and constructed by western scholars. The contribution my research brings here stems from my own origins (non-western) as a researcher, which is further elaborated on in Chapter 3.

In the early 1990s, Critical Management Studies emerged (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992, 1996) which introduced multivocality and plurality into the orthodoxy of MOS. Postcolonial theory began to gather momentum within management in the late 1990s (Banerjee and Prasad, 2008).

The reasons why postcolonial critique was rather limited is attributable to scholars relying mainly on the Holy Trinity as resources to engage in textual/discourse-based critiques of the field. This reflected the fascination with language and its constitutive effects. Eurocentrism is still a notable feature, along with white, androcentric, and predominantly English-speaking, which mitigates against full realisation of the promise of a postcolonial interrogative space.

Orientalism

Frenkel and Shenhav (2006) explored Said's concept of Orientalism, integrating Bhabha's concept of hybridity. In the attempts to reconcile these two concepts, they paved a route forward within MOS. For example, they applied the concept of Bhahba's Third Space and used it to critically explore knowledge transfer within international corporations. Said's (1998) hierarchical binaries, embodied in the discourse of Orientalism, became a part of Western "common sense" understanding of their identities.

Notwithstanding, the concept of identity, which is "a dominant analytic focus within postcolonial theory, as well as critical organisational analysis" (Jack et al., 2011) and its readings within MOS, are just emergent and remain still unexplored. My study makes a direct contribution by addressing the concept of (postcolonial) identity within the western context.

Hybrid identity

Hybridised and diasporic identities under the conditions of postcoloniality have been a part of the literary works by such writers as Achebe, Naipaul, Rushdie, Ondaatje, Ellison, Morrison, Warner, Beatty, and Zadie Smith to name just a few, and recently by Hassan et al. (2021) in which the authors provide empirical evidence and logical analysis of how Europeans influence non-western

cultural identities, from a postcolonial perspective. Within MOS, these themes of identity have received some consideration, for example, Das (2017) who explored identity work in call centres in India. According to Jack et al. (2011), little research has addressed Bhabha's concept of hybridity, nor has any research been done on the psychic dimensions of colonial and postcolonial identity. My research expands the concepts of identity hybridity, thus contributing to previous studies.

Postcolonial and indigeneity

Despite its concerns with difference, identity and imperialism, postcolonial theory remains in tension between its interests and indigenous scholarship. The first area that creates resistance is the term postcolonial itself. Its epistemological approaches are Western-derived, marginalising indigenous sources of knowledge and worldviews. The epistemic space of the Holy Trinity of postcolonial critique is derived from European modernity found in Foucault, Derrida, Lacan, Gramsci. Another concern is the prefix 'post' that implies a significant moment when colonisation ended and decolonisation began.

Contrary to the above, transnational companies and knowledge transfer are still underpinned by unbalanced relationships within colonialism. The notion of transnational cooperation is problematised by Mir et al. (1999). They imply negative consequences of possible cooperation are anchored to traditions and practices and sources that are oppressive and repressive. Spivak raises the question and expresses concern for the continually silenced subaltern groups in MOS discourses, including those around cooperation, and the absence or failure of properly dialogical research practices.

The term 'indigenous' also presents challenges (Jack, 2014). Jackson (2013, p 16) identified a number of underpinnings of definitions of indigenousness. He describes it as "Indigenousness exists as a function of its connectedness to a global dynamic. In many ways it is also a function of who is telling a story: who is conceptualising indigenousness and for what purpose".

Resistive indigeneity is introduced here as the reaction of the indigenous scholars and researchers to the Eurocentric and western-dominated epistemologies that shape research about indigeneity.

Indigenous knowledge must be articulated and asserted (written back) to the centre in distinctive ways. The indigenous people's ways of naming and knowing the world should be named as they are (claiming, testimonies, etc.) and not labelled with westernised labels such as collaborative

research (Smith, 1999). My non-Western cultural identity contributes to knowledge creation outside of the western-dominated epistemologies.

Postcolonial as critical inquiry

Postcolonial theory, in contrast to earlier mainly western Eurocentric approaches, is committed to critiquing these approaches. It also pays attention to cultural, psychological, philosophical as well as epistemological aspects (Banerjee and Prasad, 2008). Postcolonial theory challenges epistemic violence (Lunga, 2008) by questioning the undervaluing of knowledge systems of colonised people, and by critiquing imperial knowledge systems as well as languages. It sees all narrative and discursive practices as tinted with self-interest. Therefore, postcolonial discourse is self-reflexive, questioning its own assumptions to avoid turning itself into a master narrative. Postcolonial perspective is also a critical theory of reflection, particularly interested in investigating the uneven and complex power relations that result from imperialism, colonialism, and other kinds of marginalisation (Waweru, 2020). Furthermore, trajectories of resistance and identity construction form a common thread in postcolonial studies (Lunga, 2008).

Connected to the discourse and language and implicated in knowledge construction and power are practices of representation. Speaking for and about other people, as well as writing their stories raises problems of representation. For example, Cooke (2003a) claims that American slavery has been excluded from the histories of management. He challenges this exclusion by claiming that slavery was included by some historians who include slavery within capitalism and see plantations as the sites where industrial discipline emerged. Antebellum slavery was managed according to classical management and Taylorian principles. Cooke (2003b) makes a clear claim that the identification of slavery has an intrinsic, yet denied, relevance to management. He points out that different "histories" create their own narratives and include or exclude some phenomena.

When looking at management and its different schools, different methodological approaches are visible: political, technical, and elite. In the political account (Braverman, 1974) management emerged from the drive to subject workers to the discipline required by capitalist accumulation. In the technical account (Chandler, 1990) the growth of capitalist enterprises required a new group of people to manage this growth. In the elite account (Burnham, 1942) management is a body of theory and practice which sustains advantageous status of a group of people who attain this status as a result of the separation of ownership from control.

None of the three main schools of management mentioned above see the management of people who were slaves as having anything to do with modern management, but they have one common element: a narrative in which the emergence of management as an activity and of managers as a group or class is a consequence of the growth and increasing industrial sophistication of a capitalist economy. Cooke (2003) claims that there is a relationship which links slavery to capitalism and its role in the emergence of industrial discipline.

This connection between capitalism, slavery, and the emergence of management is made by Blackburn (1997). He sees the plantation as a place that embodied some of the principles of productive rational organisation where modern managerial practices were implemented. For example, a systematic approach to the division of labour (large groups of workers controlled by small numbers of overseers), selecting the best person for the job, the monitoring of performance, development of the chain of command, development of organisational rules, creation of a distinctive managerial identity (white male), and finally the principle that separates the conception from execution (manager thinks and makes decisions, worker implements) is also evident in the way plantations were managed. Racism here is used to determine who the master is and therefore who rules. Racism also determined the consciousness of inferiority.

Emerging themes in organisational practices

Frenkel and Shenhav (2006) explored Said's concept of Orientalism, integrating historical scholarship shows two important themes for organisational scholars. First, certain managerial and accounting practices, as well as organisational forms developed. For example, Cooke (2003) reports on the development of tasking methods and the use of accounting measures used in British West Indies' slavery plantations. Neu (2000) shows how changing the form of annuity payments in 19th century Canada was aimed at civilising the natives and halting their nomadic lifestyles.

Bush and Maltby (2004) show how the introduction of taxation by the British in West Africa created a wage labour and monetary economy, thus taking the natives out of their traditional non-monetary economies and subjecting them to Western conceptions of time and exchange.

The second theme deals with the way history is told /re-told. Telling "histories from below" (Jack et al. 2011) has not received much attention from scholarship within MOS. Research that would give voice to the subaltern minorities, and through that voice interpret the reality and experience

has been rare. One example was a study carried out among workers in Pakistan by Khan et al. (2007). By giving voices to local groups of workers, the study became a reminder that western orthodoxy is founded on ontological and epistemological positions, and these cannot always be applied as valid. My research adds to previous studies by exploring the phenomenon of identity through the voices of native participants.

Development management

Development is viewed as a reconstitution mechanism for the continued domination by which developed countries manage and control, and even "create the third world" (Tucker, 1999, p 22). Cooke (1998) suggests that materialism imitates the colonising ideology and imposes it on developing nations, local knowledge systems, and through their development interventions. Encapsulated in his term 'necrocapitalism', Banerjee (2000) looks at sustainable development, and the Western conceptions of land ownership. He also sees three distinct forms of management: management of extraction (extracting natural resources), management of exclusion (exclusion of indigenous populations from debates), and management of expulsion (displacement of indigenous populations from their land).

Development, modernity, and management are also taken up by Parsons in Banerjee and Prasad (2008) as themes whose understanding by indigenous individuals is juxtaposed with modern management practices of stakeholder engagement. Parsons implies that indigenous understanding and respect for land ownership is fundamentally different to the one of western developers, and therefore plays a role in their conception of community stakeholder engagement.

Cooke (2003, 50) proposes a continuity and change in development administration and management and claims that "development management cannot define itself as historically separate from colonialism and colonial administration".

He explores participation, empowerment and engagement in MOS, and makes a connection to the models of administration that were prevalent 80 years or so ago. He claims that the managerial model of today and managerialist participation has its proponents in the First World-Third World's power relationships, with connections to the colonial power structure and concept of indirect rule. Indirect rule was a part of colonial administration. Its essential feature was inclusion of native chiefs in the administration. Obligation first, exploitation second, meant that there was a moral obligation to rule subordinate, inferior races. This involved education as well as training.

Development management and participation were a toolkit and a process. As a toolkit, it promoted the application of a range of management and analytical tools, whereas as a process it involved actors, and it built a process of consultation and organisation development (Cooke, 2003).

Within strategic communication, Munshi and Pal (2018, cited in The International Encyclopedia of Strategic Communication) argue that strategic communication practices are not power-neutral and are embedded in the bottom-line-driven, capitalist system that privileges stakeholders with considerable power in line with the neocolonial logic of neoliberalism. They challenge the Eurocentric assumptions that the world is viewed through the eyes of people historically marginalised people, and instead critique mainstream meanings of strategic communication, thus unearthing colonialist ideas of domination in a globalised world.

In summary, despite the contributions outlined above, postcolonial in MOS is still understood in a narrow way (Jack et al., 2011). Some of the areas that need more exploration as suggested by Jack et al. (2011) are more recognition of the historical control of formerly colonised locales through organisation, whether by present or absent powers; questions of postcolonial should be considered not as past, but as present in practices in colonial centres, and finally the postcolonial interrogative space should be broadened, and not thought of as a narrow and separated from a larger question. Moreover, Rabinow's (1986, cited in Banerjee and Prasad, 2000, p 96) call for "anthologising the West" and Chakrabarty's (2000, cited in Banerjee and Prasad, 2000, p 96) call for "provincialising Europe" imply that knowledge and organisational practices should be translated into universal categories despite their European origins, and human narratives should emerge to interrupt totalising and taken-for-granted discourses of management. My research contributes to expanding the scope of discourses by including previously marginalised narratives.

Economic imperialism and neo-colonialism

Economic imperialism, according to Jomo (2006) is a result of a contemporary geopolitical system, or in other words: US network hegemony. In other words, although the US is not a colonial power, it nevertheless imposes its hegemony within such domains as indirect foreign investment, international trade, and technology, as well as economic governance. With the recent changes and shifts in global power towards emerging markets, especially China, India and Brazil, the concept of such western hegemony, which accepts only one way to structure organisations and business

practices needs to be reconceptualised. In contrast to Jomo's (2006) conceptualisations of the US network hegemony, Hoogvelt (2001) sees contemporary economy as 'scattered hegemonies' and 'postcolonial formations.

Western colonialism was a historical phenomenon that lasted 500 years, and at one point covered 75% of the earth (Young, 2001). Banerjee and Prasad (2008) as well as Lunga (2008) claim that this process is by no means over, and it is continuing through a variety of forms as neo-colonialism. For example, Bhambra and Holmwood (2018) address the colonial and racial origins of welfare states. They argue that European colonialism constitutes an integral part of the development of welfare states and their forms of inclusion and exclusion which remain racialised, still in the twenty-first century.

Migration and Transnationalism

Literature in postcolonialism in MOS shows that scholars understand transnationalism in terms of differences within locales rather than between locales (Jack et al., 2011). Vertovec (1999, p 447) defines transnationalism as "multiple ties and interactions linking people and institutions across the borders of nation-states". The concept of nation-state is considered here as a symbolic resource in identity construction, as for many people it continues to be an important source of affiliation. The concept of nation-state was borne in the era of formal European colonial encounter. Fearherstone (1995) argues that attempts at expressing national cultures were indexed by political elites by imposing unified national cultural identities. The two notions of 'state' and 'nation' became separated and are in continuous tension. Another form of imposed unitary cultural understanding is state-sponsored multiculturalism. Banerjee (2001) sees this as practices of internal colonialism that mask underlying structures of differences. These practices, although seemingly unifying, also raise questions of belonging or not belonging.

An example of cultural affiliations, because of transnational flows of culture, is the globalisation of "primordia", defined by Appadurai (1990) as "essential characteristics of a cultural group: language, skin colour, neighbourhood, kinship". These flows of such cultural resources become a powerful force in attempts to express strong bonds and cultural affiliations, thus emphasising cultural identities, for some groups. Another example of cultural affiliations can be re-immersion in local cultures, rediscovery of ethnicity, and difficulties in acculturation into Western culture. People create these divergent cultural affiliations to enhance their identity positions, thus

strengthening their sense of belonging. My study addresses connections between identity positions within a different host culture and a sense of belonging.

The recent migration crisis in Europe spawned Eurocentric, populous discourses, which Gatt et al. (2016) described as 'postcolonial arrogance'. In an attempt to open up spaces for alternative narratives, the postcolonial theory deconstructs the state and its narrations of the nation (Bhabha, 1994) in order to expose the spatial, temporal and subjective imaginations (Kinnivall, 2015, cited in Odwyer, 2018), that have been imposed onto a non-European 'Other'. Odwyer (2018) identified the postcolonial dimensions and consequences of the recent migration situation in Europe, by examining the way the crisis the situation created entrenched existing postcolonial norms, narratives and asymmetries in Europe. The author also demonstrated how the crisis had destabilised the existing order, and in doing, so created new postcolonial landscapes. The participants of my study belong to a group of migrants, albeit not to the most recent arrivals. Nevertheless, the findings of my study bring a different dimension to the colonial articulations of the cultural domains. The presence of educated, professional migrants in Finland, as postcolonial subjects who radically contest the place assigned to them by political and legal boundaries', disrupts the European order and unearths the 'nefarious long term effects (Ponzanesi, 2016), that colonialism still has in shaping political and social structures, in a way that Europeans can no longer ignore.

Conclusions

My reading through the literature on postcolonial within MOS has led me to several conclusions, as well as further questions. For example, the prefix itself "post" poses problems in my understanding. If it is understood as relating to time, it suggests that postcolonialism is the time that happened after the time of colonialism had ended. On the other hand, Lunga (2008, p 194) posits that colonialism is still "at work in other various forms, such as neocolonialism and globalization". The findings of the preliminary analysis of the participants' interviews echoed this conviction. All participants referred to colonial times, and very clearly talked about it not as having ended, but as having taken on a different form.

To interrogate MOS via postcolonialism is not merely to shift the content boundaries, extend the range of issues or to query the method, it is to more radically problematise the ontological and epistemological ground upon which the field stands at the moment. The challenge in the field of

MOS from a postcolonial perspective is very acute as it needs decolonisation of theory and practice and the acceptance and equal standing of different and alternative ontologies, epistemologies and world views.

Within organisations, there still remain zones of organisation-related situations, relations, and persons that still have no voice within MOS, whose interests are not attended to, and whose life-worlds seem to be taken as non-consequential. MOS remains a field of study focused and concerned with the global North. It is a field researched by the privileged elite from the metropolitan centre, focusing on persons, organisations and systems from the centre, for and on behalf of audiences similarly located (Jack et al., 2011).

The interrogative postcolonial space needs to be created and explored more in MOS. The areas of psychoanalytic perspective that examine the psychological damages of postcoloniality call for more exploration. My research contributes to expanding knowledge on the consequences of the colonial past and the impact of the postcolonial present on the way the participants see and understand themselves and who they are, whilst experiencing life in the Finnish culture. It also seeks to understand the extent to which this colonial/postcolonial sense of self (identity) becomes a resource for making sense of this experience. It brings into fore the experiences through the voices of the participants, investigated by a non-western researcher, who shares a mindset and understanding of the world with the participants, thus creating knowledge outside of western-dominated epistemologies. It further addresses connections between identity positions within a different western host culture and a sense of belonging by expanding the concepts of identity hybridity, thus contributing to previous studies.

Identity and self concept

In view of my interests of the cultural values of the participants and their impact on their understanding of the world, Hall's (1996) concept of an individual sense of self was of particular relevance. Hall sees the individual sense of self as a collective construct and connects it to one's historical roots. He also proposes a definition of cultural identity as "collective or true selves hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed "selves" which a people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common" (Hall, 1996, p 30). This definition suggests that cultural identities are fragmented, subjected to constant changes and are contextually dependent.

Hall continues by saying that identities are subject to historization, thus debates on identities should be situated within historically specific developments.

Connected to my interests of one's connections to the native cultures, Hall further claims that identities invoke their origin in the historical past from which they stem and with which they are still connected. Therefore, as Hall further implies, identities are about using the resources of history, as well as language, to develop, evolve and become rather than simply be. This connection to the past is of particular interest to my study. I am interested in the way the values of their cultural identities of the participants (learned in their past) influence the way the participants understand their experiences in the present, in the foreign host culture.

Moreover, Hall's concept of representations is of interest, as it resonates in the narratives of the participants. Hall (1996) claims that identities are not so much about who we are, or where we come from, but more about how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves. Hall (1996) appropriated the term *identity* in the following way: identity refers to a meeting point, or the point of suture between the discourses and practices, which in turn produce subjectivities that can be spoken. What this means is that identities are points of contemporary attachment to the subject positions which discursive practices construct for people. Identities are positioning that people must take whilst knowing that these positions are representations. According to Hall representations are always constructed from the place of the *other and …"* are therefore constituted within, not outside representation" (Hall, 1996, p 4).

Here Hall equates identity construction with the process of representation and implies that individuals represent themselves according to the expectations (expressed in discourses) of the others. This conceptualisation resonates with Kumar's (2015) auto ethnographical research project that connected the critical cultural theories of Hall's frameworks of representation and Gramsci's concept of hegemony, and Conquergood's (1998, p 2913) concept of performance theories. "Performance is a way of knowing and experiencing culture through embodied everyday encounters, particularly in liminal spaces of marginalisation and silences" (Conquerood, 1998, p 2013). In my study, the participants not only experience the "spaces of marginalisation" but constitute a part of them (see Chapter 6) and therefore the silences do not occupy spaces of liminality, but they become normality (I discuss this in detail in Chapter 6).

Hall (1999, p 468) describes cultural hegemony as "about changing the dispositions and the configurations of cultural power, not getting out of it". People's identities are usually bound to mapped geographical points of origin. Perception of these origins involves hegemonies that sustain ideologies that are connected to these geographical points of origin. If one is asked where one is from, then it is a question of the geographical location of that person. The person asking implies that the person asked is from somewhere else than here ("your roots are not here"). Therefore, the person who asks must be from here ("my roots are from here"). This dialogue takes place in one location, which becomes an intersection of privilege and inequality, imposing a kind of identity supremacy.

This view is expanded by a post-structuralist perspective which implies that subjectivity, not identity, is subjugated. Thus, it implies that WHO WE ARE is entangled in power relationships created by discourses. For example, discourses create "normalizing standards of behaviour" (Fleming and Spicer, 2014 cited in Holck, 2014, 54) according to which individuals perform their identities. These normalising discourses produce certain standards to which individuals respond and according to which they behave. Under these conditions, from the post-structuralist perspective, identity is seen as changing and fragmented, by a variety of overlapping identities, external influences, as well as levels of consciousness. Mead (1934, cited in Holck, 2014, 54) describes individuals as a "parliament of selves". In this understanding, people face powerful discourses, and as a result they must constantly negotiate and renegotiate their identities. The self therefore emerges out of the reflexive social interaction with the others (Tracy and Trethewey, 2005). In addition, Cash and Kinnvall (2017) point out the emergence of ontological insecurities that are manifest in the (re)bordering of identities, cultures, communities and states, as a result of global development of free trade and augmented capital flows as well as by new technologies of communication, information, and travel. They explore the stability of identity, as well as the impact of concepts of bordering, territories, and the rewriting of the concept of state in postcolonial terms. They also consider the psychic and cultural processes through which identities are organised, reiterated and/or reorganised.

For the participants of my study, this negotiating and renegotiating is problematic. In principle, the negotiating and renegotiating takes place as a result of the discourses in the host culture, but these same discourses render the futility of these negotiations. The powerful discourses

determine the way individuals with black skin are perceived by their white counterparts, thus rendering the negotiating power of the black co-workers ineffective.

Culture

Culture can be defined as the totality of a society's distinctive shared ideas, beliefs, values, and knowledge (Serrat, 2017; Schwartz, 2020). It can also be understood in terms of *routes* and *roots* (Hall, 1996). Nigerian scholars Eniola, Ojo, Ajala, (2019) describe culture as influencing peoples' behaviour, as well as providing an important tool for explaining individual behaviour. A postpositivist and postmodern conceptualisation of culture, rendered by Holliday (2020) regards discourses of culture in terms of people's everyday personal narratives. The author considers culture in terms of non-linear connectivities where the intercultural and the cultural merge, delving "into pasts to understand the arriving Other intercultural traveller as a normal aspect of our existing societies". Holliday (2020) proposes a renewed conceptualisation of third spaces and hybridity as normalities found everywhere, thus presenting the concept of 'culture' itself in relation to national identity is presented as a poetic and figurative concept with full knowledge of the discourses and narratives that falsely politicise and commodify it. Holliday's understanding of culture sits well with Hall's concepts of migratory routes and native roots as it combines the connectiveness of one's native narratives and new trajectories shaped by realities of new, often foreign, environments. People's routes or itineraries shape the ways in which people navigate oppressive socio-political structures. Since everyday performances of identities emerge from tight articulations of ideologies, those same performances provide opportunities for pushing back those articulations to create counterhegemonic leverage. Performance seen by Conquerood (1998, p 58) is dynamic, "an action that incessantly insinuates, interrupts, interrogates, and antagonises powerful master discourses", which Bhabha (1984, p 58) sees as "continuous, performative space ".

This combination of performing one's (discursively and ideologically imposed) self and one's geographical points of origin implies a determinist notion of who one is and who one is supposed to be. It is the place of birth and the social expectations that are the determining factors. It does not, however, consider situations where one's performativity is limited, or even predetermined. In case of the participants in my study, with black skin the performative aspect of their cultural identity is obvious and therefore cannot be performed. Being black may also imply ideological stereotypes that echo the asymmetrical power relations and the static opposition to colonisation

of those of a coloniser and the colonised. This restricts the performativity even more (I discuss this in more detail in Chapter 6). I therefore contest the claims that one's cultural identity can be performed and regulated. In my study (as shown in Chapter 4) some participants attempt to perform their identity, but their attempts create identity ambiguity to both themselves and others.

Even though my study does not directly investigate cultural identity per se, it cannot ignore its importance. People's cultural identities stem from cultural values that give roots to sensemaking and understanding. I was interested in the way people experience life in a foreign host culture, and in the way the values of their cultural identities (learned in their past) influence the way they understand their experiences. Therefore, the concepts of cultural identity, its performativity, marginality, and representation were all vital concepts to consider.

Within organisation studies, i*dentity* is a "construction of the self that rests on the alteration, or "otherness" construction: "Who am I not, and how am I different? How am I different and from whom? How am I similar and to whom?" (Czarniawska, 2007, 4, cited in Holck et al., 2014, 49). Further, *identity* "constitutes the most meaningful, most intriguing, most relevant concept we deal with in both our personal and organizational lives. Gioia et al. (2013) see identity as fluid, temporal, and in flux. Identity is about *us* – as individuals and as organisation members – and it enquires into the deepest level of our sense-making and understanding" (Gioia, 2013, p 125). The dynamic view of identity resonates with the social construction perspective on identity (Corley et al. 2006), which sees identity as emerging from the shared interpretive schemes that members collectively construct.

Giddens (1991) defines self-identity as a comparatively conscious set of self-images, traits, or social attributes, a reflexively organised narrative, derived from participation in various discourses as well as experiences. This reflexive construction of self-identity is made up of cultural raw material: language, symbols, meanings, and values. Various encounters with others, experiences over a period of time have a strong impact on one's sense and awareness of self-identity. Life situations are less and less routine nowadays, they became fragmented and fractured. This means that the reflexive narrative is also often broken down into smaller fragments.

From a critical perspective, Alvesson and Willmott (2002) see identity as an important yet still unexplored dimension of organisational control. They link the concept of identity, for example, to

ethnicity, entrepreneurship, as well as motivation and meaning making (Alvesson et al., 2008). They further explore identity as "encountered by individuals, understood as a social being embedded in organisational contexts" (Alvesson et al., 2008, p 6). For them, identity refers to subjective meanings and experience, as well as visions of the self. Identity is also temporary, context-sensitive and fragmented." It is a matter of becoming as well of being". Clifford (1997, p 477) expands this definition by describing it as "a dialectic entanglement of both indigenous "roots" and traveling/migratory "routes".

As my study investigates how black African professionals experience their life and work in a foreign host culture, all the above concepts are relevant. The relationship and connection between one's cultural identity to the past is essential, as it is further interested in the way the values of the cultural identity of the participants influence the way the participants understand their experiences. It looks at the process of the participants' sensemaking as a means of their understanding.

Otherness, reflexively organised narrative and meaning-making are all connected to each other and resonant in my study. The participants make meaning of their experiences and organise this in reflexive narratives or stories they shared with me in their narratives. By doing this they reveal their understanding and sensemaking of not only what happens, but also of who they are in relation to the other and otherness. By otherness I mean not only the other individuals, but the discourses, perceptions, expectations, as well as images of themselves. Following Albert et al. (2000, p 14) who see identity as problematic and at the same time as crucial to how and what one values, thinks, feels, and does in all social domains, including organisations, I see this process as complex, yet crucial to understanding not only oneself, but also diversity in general.

Concepts of identity

Postcolonial race and black identity

Previous studies of black men have primarily focused on the young, unemployed and poorly educated (Anderson, 1999; Jones, 2010; Wilson, 2010; Young, 1999, 2018) looked at violence in urban areas, employment in urban areas, urban poverty, employment problems respectively.

Wiebold and Spiller (2016) researched the impact of black identity negotiations on the level of professional success among black men living in mainstream American society and looked at the ways in which they attained success at work. The black men in this study were professionals

working alongside white men. The questions the study investigated were concerned with black identity negotiations and their impact on the level of professional success. The study showed that the individuals who questioned their identity were other black co-workers. The identity negotiation was between being black and acting white. The men in the study highlighted the false dichotomy present in popular imaginings of black men: You are either black and economically struggling or highly successful in sports/music or you are "acting white" and therefore not black.

My study takes a subjective view of their way of experiencing, not focusing specifically on their achievements and success, but purely on the way they experience. I also connect their sensemaking and the instrumental role of the values of their cultural identity and look at their impact on motivation and self-esteem (see Chapter 6).

Within postcolonial developments of education, Belford and Lahiri-Roy (2018) explore the impact of western education both as privilege and disempowerment, laden with postcolonial influences and reinscribed patriarchal limits. They also examine vulnerability and 'voicelessness' as migrants in defining their positionalities and gendered identities within a transnational space. They analyse the impacts of postcolonialism, education, gender, patriarchy, identity discourses and transnationality through socio-cultural, postcolonial, and transnational feminist lenses.

In addition, when discussing the identity of African education and especially the field of psychology, Nwoye (2017) advocates for hybridity (Bhabha, 2004). In the attempts to reclaim and promote Africa's cultural identity, Africa should strive for a harmonious co-existence of the best of African and Western psychological traditions, in which neither should oppress the other. Nwoye (2017) implies that the postcolonial form of African science should not totally reject the Western tradition but adopt and include the African perspective. This approach would place African scholars in an agentic position to reassess and appropriate relevant epistemologies and methodologies, whether foreign or local, "as makers of culture and formulators of theories and values of psychological civilization" (Obiechina, 1992, p 19), to fit the new people of Africa (Nwoye, 2015).

R'boul (2020) examines power relations in intercultural communication knowledge (ICK) quoting Sastry and Ramasubramanian (2020) and claiming that the common understandings of intercultural communication are based on Euro-American perceptions, and engagements with interculturality are "shaped by the voices of those of us who are privileged enough to be in a

position to be heard." (Arasaratnam, cited in Alexander et al., 2014a, p 16). In other words, non-western ways of knowing are not visible in the foundational scholarship of communication research, which reflects not only a lack of insight into the scientific merit of third world intellectuals but also the legitimacy of demanding transformation in communication scholarship (Wasserman, 2020). R'boul (2020) further discusses the imbalance within knowledge production about interculturality. He claims that southern epistemologies are often construed as alternative perspectives (de Sousa Santos, 2018) while knowledge on the South may be better constructed by southern frameworks (Garcia and Baca, 2019; Mignolo and Walsh, 2018, 2, cited in R'boul (2020). Therefore, he advocates for a multivocal, polylogues perspective on intercultural communication research that would contribute to decolonising knowledge by engaging images of marginality. My study recognises that knowledge production has to be reconstructed based on the positive expansionary development and contributions of postcolonial studies for making variety heard.

From a cultural perspective, studies on race and identity have been carried out by Appiah (1994), Hall (1996), and Sellers and Shelton (2003) who connect racial identity to racial discrimination among African Americans. Jackson III (2012) discusses black identity development and connects it to intersectionality theory, and Charles (2003) connects black identity to self-hatred. White and Burke (1987) examined a structural symbolic interactionist approach to the process of ethnic identity formation among black and white college students. Sen (2007) discussed the concept of whiteness as a location in social hierarchy. The above studies examined various aspects of black identity development, but none of them considered the impact of own sensemaking on identity representation and performativity. My study shows how a white western working environment impacts identity representation and limits performativity (see Chapter 6).

Narrative Identity

People construct and share stories about themselves, relying on the episodic particulars of autobiographical memory, or self-defining memories (Singer, 2007a). They construct and internalise an evolving story, which psychologists call a narrative identity (Singer, 2004). Narrative identity reconstructs the autobiographical past and predicts the future, thus providing a person's life with purpose and meaning. Through narrative identity, people communicate to themselves and to others the connections between who they are, how they came to be, and how they think their lives may be developing in the future (McAdams and McLean, 2013).

Within the field of personality and developmental psychology, the self operates simultaneously at multiple levels: as a social actor defined by traits, and a motivated agent defined by goals and values, but also as an autobiographical author mining personally significant experiences to construct a life story connecting the present self to the remembered past and the imagined future (McAdams, 2013a, McAdams, 2015; McAdams and McLean, 2013, cited in Cowan et al., 2021; Shinner et al., 2021). Furthermore, individuals make sense of themselves and their worlds through language and storytelling (Donald, 1991; Dor, 2015; Leary and Buttermore, 2003; McAdams and Cowan, 2020; McAdams., 2019, cited in Cowan et al., 2021).

As my study investigated, among other things, the connections between making sense of experiences in the host culture and the cultural values learned in their home cultures, the study of narrative identity, the experience of self as an autobiographical author crafting an "internalized and evolving life story" (McAdams and McLean, 2013, p 233), rendered itself the most suitable approach.

As individuals continuously revise their life stories over the course of their life, they become both narrators and critics who apply an interpretative and critical lens to their stories, and learn to know themselves as well as others (McAdams, 1987, cited in Clandinin, 2007). Individuals are embedded in sociocultural contexts (Dings, 2019), which impact their narrative self-understanding, and produce various psychosocial processes (Erikson 1963). Erikson sees the "subtle negotiation process between self and social influence" (Erikson 1959) as the crucible of identity. He further claims that narrative methodology captures just this negotiation. According to Erikson, one can fully acquire a comprehensive and full understanding of the meaning of another's identity if one studies a process of what he calls "triple bookkeeping" (biological, psychological, and social dimensions.

As the connection of the participants' cultural values and their sensemaking was of interest to me, the process of autobiographical reasoning (Baddeley and Singer, 2007, cited in Clandinin, 2007) was relevant. This process involves two types of coherence: temporal and cultural. The cultural understanding involves a grasp of the normative life phases, as well as an understanding of what kind of information is and is not appropriate to be included in a life story (Bluck & Habermas, 2000). Cultural scripts influence the way individuals live, experience, and remember. Further, different cultures offer different menus of images, themes, and plots for the construction of

narrative identity, and individuals within these cultures appropriate, sustain, and modify these narrative forms as they tell their own stories (McAdams and McLean, 2013). Because of this contextualised and culture dependent aspect o,f narrative identity the authors call for future researchers to examine the development of life stories in many different societies, nations, and cultural groups. My study directly addresses this call.

Key theories and the concept of identity

Identity theories aim to answer existential questions such as "Who am I?" and "How should I act?" (Alvesson et al., 2008). They encompass the concept of identity on several levels: the individual, the cognitive, and the social. As previously mentioned, I see identity as referring to subjective meanings, experiences, visions of the self, embedded in and connected to specific social contexts. Therefore, two theories within social psychology are of importance: Social Identity Theory (SIT), introduced in the 1970s by Tajfel and Turner (1985), and Identity Theory (IT) introduced by McCall and Simmons (1978). Social identity theory (SIT) is a social psychological analysis of the role of self-conception in group membership, group processes, and intergroup relations (Hogg, 2018). It, therefore, asserts that social relations play a key role in defining an individual's own identity (Scheepers and Ellemers, 2019). Identity Theory (IT) renders a perspective where identities are internalised meanings attached to the self as a unique person, an occupant of a role, and/or as a member of a group (Burke and Stets 2009; Stets and Burke 2014a; Stets and Serpe 2013; cited in Davis et al., 2019). According to Abrams and Hogg (1990), intergroup relations focus on group processes and social-self, and social identity is part of the self-consisting of group membership and group meanings and values in identity development. Therefore, social identity theorists make some assumptions: (a) positive group feedback on identity results in high self-esteem, (b) the individuals tend to categorise societies, allowing themselves to identify with the group to which they belong, (c) the individuals determine the values of their own group by comparing it with others.

Both theories are based on different aspects of identity, but when applied together, they provide a deeper and broader insight and understanding or, as Davis et al., (2019) coin it a collective identity, or as a bridge between IT and SIT. They both focus mainly on the society or group to which the individual belongs and on the people with whom individuals interact. Hogg and Vaughan (2014) draw attention to interactive dimensions by arguing that interaction with people regulates identity and interaction with the environment constructs identity. Therefore, despite the fact that

some social psychology theories, such as self-categorisation theory (Turner et al., 1987), emphasise personal identity, they approach identity more from a group-oriented perspective. They focus on social and group factors even in personal identity development. In other words, individual and psychological factors are of secondary importance or underappreciated (Özgan, 2021). My study addresses the aspects of identity development from a personal perspective.

The concept of identity is divided into *self-categorisation* in Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, and Wetherell 1987), and *identification* in Identity Theory (IT) (McCall and Simmons, 1978). *Self-categorization* in SIT and *identification* in IT are processes through which the self is reflexive and can take itself as an object and can categorise, classify and name itself (McCall and Simmons 1987). Identity construction happens through these processes, where individuals draw on social identities and discourses available to them in their social environment. As the theories focus on people both as individuals and social beings, the concepts of identification and categorisation are helpful in understanding how the self is influenced by belonging to various groups, and by various discourses.

SIT sees an identity of a person as having a specific core that is fixed and unified for each individual (Brown et al., 2015). It also defines social identity as a person's knowledge and awareness that he/she belongs to a social category or a group. It thus expands one's sense of self onto a group level. A social group is a group of individuals that holds a common social identification or a view of themselves as individuals who are members of the same social category (Hogg and Abrams, 1988). Through processes of comparison, people who are similar to the self are classified as belonging to in-group and persons who differ are classified as out-group. SIT, therefore, comprises characteristics that are fixed and tied to oneself, such as phenotypical attributes or values, as well as salient group classifications.

Based on the above-mentioned theories, there are two important processes that happen when social identity is formed: self-categorisation and social comparison. These processes produce different consequences (Hogg and Abrams, 1988). The consequence of self-categorisation is an accentuation of the perceived similarities between the self and the other in-group members. The consequence of social comparison is the selective application of the accentuation effect in those dimensions that enhance the self. Specifically, one's self-esteem is enhanced by evaluating the in-

group and the out-group on dimensions that lead the in-group to be judged positively and the out-group to be judged negatively. As Hogg and Abrams (1988) point out, the social categories in which individuals place themselves are parts of a structured society and exist only in relation to other contrasting categories. Each category has more prestige, power, and status. These social categories precede the individuals who are born into these categories, pre-structured by societies. People derive their identities from the social categories to which they belong. People have their personal histories (personal narratives), and during the course of these histories they are members of a variety of different social structures and social identities.

According to IT, self-categorisation is relevant to identity formation. Categorisation here depends on a named and classified world (Stryker, 1980). Roles are termed here as relatively stable, morphological components of social structure, various symbols that are used to designate positions. People that are a part of society name themselves and one another as occupants of positions or roles. This categorisation is the core of identity. The meanings and expectations associated with the roles are incorporated into the self. These meanings and expectations form a set of standards that guide behaviour (Burke, 1991; Burke and Reitzes, 1981). The relationship between persons and things and a concept of resources (things that sustain persons and interactions) have been identified as central to identity formation.

According to Ozkan (2021), most studies on identity in different localities generally strive to adapt eurocentric theories or models to local contexts. They do not, therefore, address the impact of colour and race identity on the relationships individuals develop with their environment. Erikson (1968) also argues that society and culture play a key role in identity development and that interaction, especially interaction with earlier generations, promotes identity development (Schacter 2015, 2018). For example, if skin colour is perceived as a symbol, then that might designate specific position that renders that individual inferior. If that position is, in turn, incorporated to the self, it can have detrimental effects on that person's wellbeing. I agree with Özgun (2021). I believe that qualitative, narrative research allows individuals to provide information about their personalities, identities, and self. A narrative approach also allows to determine the effects of culture, society, and intergenerational factors on identity development. My narrative study allowed me to approach identity from a socio-psychological perspective and analyse how sociocultural factors come into existence.

In addition, an activation of a specific identity, where one or more types are salient, can be limited if not impossible. As a consequence, cognitive and sensemaking processes may take place: an individual will depersonalise or self-verify him/herself, and thus motivational processes may follow: an individual's self-esteem and self-efficacy may be either enhanced or diminished.

Furthermore, identity construction happens through the processes of identification and self-categorisation. Both these processes are interconnected according to SIT: an identity is a specific core that is fixed and unified for each individual (Brown et al, 2015), and it is a person's knowledge and awareness that he/she belongs to a social category or a group. What is missing here is consideration of a tension between the fixed core and the group belonging. If one's sense of self expands to a group level, and if these two sources of identification are not aligned the tension between them becomes a source of stress.

Bases of identity

The basis of social identity is in the uniformity of perception and action among group members. Uniformity of perception and action occurs among people who take on a group-based identity.

The person identity is seen by IT as set of meanings that are tied to and sustain the self as an individual. Person identities can be linked to role identities if the personal role meanings overlap with the meanings of the person identities. Person identities penetrate role and group identities in the same way as role identities infiltrate group identities. If these different bases of identity can be integrated and it can be shown how they operate simultaneously in a given situation, the degree to which an individual is constrained by structural expectations (tied to a group and role identities) or have some choice in their enactment (through person identities) can be addressed.

The activation of identities and identity salience

SIT sees a salient social identity as one functioning psychologically to increase the influence of one's membership in a group. In IT, salience is understood as the probability that an identity will be activated in a situation. Salience is a product of accessibility and fit (Oakes, 1987, cited in Stets and Burke, 2000). Accessibility is the readiness of a given category to become activated in a person. Fit is the congruence between the stored category specifications and perceptions of the situation. Fit has both normative and comparative aspects when it comes to categories. Categories have normative fit when an individual perceives that the content of the category is defined along

stereotypical, normative lines as held in the culture. A category has a comparative fit when an individual perceives within-group differences to be less than between-group differences.

IT and SIT differ in their way of seeing salience or activation (probability for IT) and that activation will happen in a situation (SIT). Another way in which they differ is in their views of salience. In IT, salience is relative if two or more different identities are at play. If there are two or more identities, and they are held by individuals in different social structural positions (salience hierarchy) which one will be activated, when more than one role may be appropriate? People will probably enact highly salient identity (Stryker, 1980). Agentive character of identity has been prominent in IT: an individual will point out his/her identity to remind themselves and others of who they are. When activated, they act on the situation to accomplish self-verification.

SIT also sees identities as relative because different identities are organised in a hierarchy of inclusiveness. Here, different identities become active as the situation changes and as relevant stimuli for self-categorisation change. Both SIT and IT agree that an identity has no effect unless it is activated. They also imply that an individual has influence over this activation. The theories do not address, what I coin as "ascribed identity" (determined by skin colour) and its impact on identity activation and identity salience. Another unanswered issue is regulatory influence of situations on behaviour.

Cognitive and motivational processes

The third area related to merging these two theories involves core processes identified in both theories. In SIT, it is depersonalisation (seeing the self as an embodiment of the in-group prototype). Depersonalisation can be a result of, for example, activation of a social identity. In IT, self-verification means seeing the self in terms of a role as embodied in the identity standard. When activation of identity happens, self-verification occurs. In this process, the person behaves to maintain consistency with the identity standard.

Both the processes (depersonalisation and self-verification) show that membership in any social group or role includes two aspects: one's identification with a category (in depersonalisation process) and the behaviours that are associated with a category (in self-verification). Both these aspects refer to and reaffirm social structural arrangements. People know the structural categories and relationships and act according to this knowledge. Both SIT and IT recognise that the self exists within society, and at the same time it is influenced by society. In addition, the self also

influences society, because individual agents act by changing social arrangements to bring the self into line with the abstract identity standard (Freese and Burke, 1994; Hogg et al., 1995; Stryker, 1980).

Motivation is tied to salience and commitment in IT. The greater the salience of the identity, the more effort would be put into enacting the identity. The level of self-esteem is also linked to a person's motivation. Self-esteem is a motivator. If a person's role were evaluated (by others) positively, his/her feelings of self-esteem would be stronger. Self-efficacy is also a motivator. Both self-esteem and self-efficacy are increased by the self-verification which occurs through performing a role well (Stets and Burke, 1990).

People act to keep perceptions of themselves in a given situation consistent with their identity standard. They take actions to modify the situations so that perceptions of the self are consistent with the standard, despite the situational disturbances caused by others, or prior actions of the self.

Cats, Stets and Burke (1999) argue that identities referring to groups or roles are motivated by self-esteem, self-efficacy, self-consistency, and self-regulation. Individuals categorise themselves in particular ways, not only to fulfil the need to feel valuable and worthy, but also to feel competent and effective. The increase in self-worth that accompanies a group-based identity may come not simply from the act of identifying with the group, but from the group's acceptance of the individual as a member (Ellison, 1993). Enhancement of one's self-worth through group membership may involve acting so as to promote acceptance through appropriate behavioural enactments; such behaviour has implications for fulfilling the need to feel competent.

Although the group, the role, and the person identities provide different sources of meaning, they are also likely to overlap. They might reinforce who one is, and at other times they might constrain the self. What is also crucial, especially in view of the cross-cultural aspect of my study, is the impact of culture on identity formation. According to Vignoles (2019) cited in Peterson and Steward, 2020) the expression of two universal *basis of identity* principles, self-enhancement and intergroup comparison, that shape identity formation vary with culture (Vignoles, 2019). When social identity is threatened, people can reframe their existing groups more positively (*social creativity*), join more positively distinct groups (*individual mobility*), or embellish the

distinctiveness of their in-group compared with out-groups (*social competition*) (Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Vignoles, 2019).

Based on social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) and self-categorisation theory (Hogg and Terry, 2000; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher and Wetherell, 1987; Levitt and Sluss, 2015), individuals define /categorise themselves across three levels of self-identity. These levels are personal identity, relational identity, and collective identity. They also make people vulnerable to identity threats. These threats jeopardise an individual's abilities to fulfil the specific identity motives associated with the corresponding level of identity.

For example, identity can be compromised as a result of structural role conflicts that can occur when one's personal standards are at odds with institutionalised expectations 2) Individuals try to negotiate these threats through adopting certain strategies of identity work. 3) Through the process of identity enactment interactions with others may help the process of self-affirmation or create pressures.

According to Ellemers, De Gilder and Haslam (2004), these self-categorisations form a basis upon which individuals are socially motivated to think and feel about organisational contexts, as well as act within them. These three levels of self-categorisation are connected, through the need to see oneself, and to be seen by others in a positive light. Identity threats can come from within (as a result of self-reflection), from external sources (an event) and from social interactions. "Having others view us favourably and as we view ourselves is a fundamental human motive" (Sherman and Cohen, 2006).

For example, Leavitt and Sluss (2015) discuss dishonesty in the workplace (lying) and connect it with threats to one's identity, as undermining the unique and fundamental identity motives at each level of the self. Baumeister, Dori and Hastings (1998) claim that identity, and the need for self-enactment in a workplace, viewing oneself in a positive light as well as being held in high esteem by others "is fundamental to social life". Identity threats are "experiences appraised as indicating potential harm to the value, meanings, or enactment of an identity" (Petriglieri 2011, p 641, cited in Leavitt and Sluss, 2015).

In summary, the meanings of identities are made and modified via social interactions. Individuals make sense of themselves based on their abilities to activate and enact their identities in the

company of others.). What I see as missing in the above conceptualisation is the impact of colour and race identity on the relationships individuals develop with their environment. For example, black skin colour might designate a specific position that renders some people inferior. If that position is, in turn, incorporated into the self, it can have detrimental effects on that person's wellbeing. In these situations, an activation or enactment of a specific identity will be limited, if not impossible, thus rendering agentive character of identity non-existent. As a consequence, cognitive and sensemaking processes will take place: an individual will depersonalise or self-verify him/herself, and thus motivational processes may follow: an individual's self-esteem and self-efficacy may be either enhanced or diminished.

Furthermore, identity construction happens through the interconnection of identification and self-categorisation. Self-categorisation happens as a result of social comparison within the groups people belong to. If a black professional first identifies himself/herself as black foreigner, and then compares himself to the group of white co-workers, his /her identity construction will be problematic. My study addresses this by proposing a concept of *duality of being.*

In addition, neither SIT nor IT addresses what I coin as "ascribed identity" (skin colour) and its impact on identity activation and identity salience. If there are more than two identities at play (black and professional) and they are determined by a social structural position (hierarchy of salience) there will be a tension between the two and the activation will be rendered futile. The individual will have a prescribed identity of being black and activating his/her identity of a professional may be rendered futile.

In addition, the evaluation of the roles people take on determines their level of self-esteem and self-efficacy. The more positive the evaluation of one's role, the stronger the feelings of self-esteem and self-efficacy. Stets and Burke (2000) suggest that the conditions under which each occurs are important topics for further research. My study addresses these conditions by investigating how black professionals experience group belonging within organisations in the Finnish work environment.

Figure 12 below summarises and illustrates the types of identity, as proposed by both SIT and IT, as well as the different processes that take place when different types are activated. It also shows how identity activation informs behavioural enactments, thus fulfilling the needs for validation and self-fulfilment.

BASES OF IDENTITY

SOCIAL / COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

Uniformity of perception/action

One's self-definition related to membership in a large collective
(In-group identity)

PERSON IDENTITY

Individual perception of the self

(Meanings tied to an individual)

Positive distinctiveness and contrasting one's own skills, abilities and attributes against those of others.

ROLE IDENTITY

Difference of perception

(In-group counter identity)

Self-definition vis-à-vis either a general relational category

ACTIVATION
Situational

ACTIVATION OF IDENTITY
Identity of salience

SALIENCE
Relative and hierarchial

COGNITIVE PROCESSES
Depersonalisation
(self as embodiment in the in-group prototype
Self-verification
(self-embodied in identity standard

MOTIVATIONAL PROCESSES
Self-esteem
Self-efficacy

Figure 12. Identity concepts and processes in IT and SIT

Identity threat sensitivity

Connected to the interest of my study, I see sensitivity to identity threats as influential in sensemaking of what one experiences. If one perceives his/her identity as threatened in some way, that individual will experience situations differently than under conditions when he/she can enact his/her identity freely without feeling threatened. For example, job insecurity threatens people's work-related identities. Work-related identity threat in times of job insecurity can happen either when people fear to lose an important part of their identity (their identity as employed people) or when they feel afraid of gaining a negative identity of being unemployed (Selenko and DeWitte, 2021).

Another example of situations where stigmatised individuals may be sensitive to experiencing identity threats concerns women of colour. Remedios et al. (2020) suggest that they attend to multiple identities, which simultaneously shape their experience (Crenshaw, 1989). Remedios et al. (2020) posit that stigmatised individuals are willing to attribute outcomes to discrimination when situational cues signal high *identity threat potential*. For example, a black woman is more likely to attribute a negative evaluation to sexism if the evaluator is a man versus a woman (Dion, 1975). Here, the out-group identity of the evaluator represents a situational cue to discrimination (Major and O'Brien, 2005). In addition, the way people of colour perceive phenotypic racial stereotypicality and their race-based social identities may impact their feeling of identity threat when cooperating with authorities. This may lead to distrust and decreased participation (Kahn et al., 2017).

Within organisations, people with higher identity threat sensitivity are more vulnerable to the appeal of corporate identifications (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002). This identification is accomplished by self-positioning of employees within managerially inspired discourse about work and organisations, informed by impersonal and behavioural features (corporate culture) with little regard to individual meanings, cultures, or ideologies. As a result, individuals identify themselves as separate entities, and by engaging other discourses they repair their sense of identity as a coherent narrative. These discourses can be taken as such, or they can be interpreted by the employees. As individuals are not passive, they critically interpret these discourses and enact them. Through specific formulations, management can strategically introduce, influence and

legitimise the presence (or absence) of particular discourses. Ideological and disciplinary forms of power operate through a supply of certain discourses, the frequency of their presence as well as specific linking of discourse and subjectivity (O'Doherty and Willmott, 2001). My study addresses the presence of "silent discourse" within the Finnish organisations where the participants of my study worked. It also shows the effect of the silent discourse on the wellbeing and the sense of inclusion of the participants. It describes subjective interpretations of experiences, rather than objective events (Elsbach, 2003).

People will interpret the same event in different ways. People with high identity threat sensitivity will see an event as threatening, but people with low identity threat sensitivity will see it as benign. The level of identity threat sensitivity is a function of high identification (Sluss and Ashforth, 2007), chronic self-identity (Johnson, 2010), and low social identity complexity (Roccas and Brewer, 2002).

<u>Identification</u> refers to the extent to which one places high importance on and affective attachment to a specific identity in regard to one's own self-concept. For example, a person might identify herself as a woman (identity), but at the same time she may not find this central to her self-concept, or self-defining (low self-identification). Thus, for her, being a woman is not that important, and therefore it has a low identification level. According to the authors, the strength of identification is more critical for understanding when an event will be interpreted as an identity threat.

<u>Chronic self-identity </u>is a difference in an individual's propensity for self-definition at the personal, relational, and collective levels. Some people have a stronger or weaker propensity to construe their sense of self at these three levels. For example, if a person construes himself at a relational identity level, he/she may find it threatening if a client is not happy.

<u>Social identity complexity </u>is an identity structure in which an individual recognises that his/her ingroups are not fully convergent or overlapping. If an individual has high identity complexity, he/she will view him/herself as a member of many differentiated groups or relationships. Individuals with low social identity complexity will perceive all their identities embedded within a single representation. Individuals with high social identity complexity will find events less threatening than their counterparts with low social identity complexity. Further, individuals with low social identity complexity may see only one rigidly defined identity, whereas individuals with

high social identity complexity see varied interpretations and multiplex distinct identities. Accordingly, high social identity complexity reduces the interpretations of events as identity threatening, because the reduced overlap in identity membership suggests that threats are compartmentalised and there is less to lose (Leavitt and Sluss, 2015).

Identity threat sensitivity increases the likelihood that identity threat will undermine the relevant identity motives. Identity threats create psychological distress and motivate people to mitigate such threats through a series of effortful strategies (Leavitt and Sluss, 2010; Kreiner, Hollensbe and Sheep, 2006), such as identifying and refuting information, nuancing the meaning of the identity, exiting, or replacing identity. People refute from the past in order to compensate for the bad feedback they receive. They can also spin their identity (Kreiner, Hollensbe and Sheep, 2006) through which they find nuanced meanings to their identity to seek for compensation. Finally, they can also exit their identity temporarily and enter an alternative identity.

In summary, sensitivity to identity threats plays a significant part in sensemaking of what one experiences. If one perceives his/her identity as threatened in some way, that individual will experience situations differently than under conditions when he/she can enact his/her identity without feeling threatened. These conditions can be organisationally inspired discourse informed by corporate culture, for example. My study addresses the impact of these discourses by proposing the presence of "silent discourse" within the Finnish organisations where the participants of my study worked. It also shows the effect of the silent discourse on the wellbeing and the sense of inclusion of the participants.

Identity threat sensitivity increases the likelihood that identity threat will undermine the relevant identity motives. Identity threats create psychological distress and motivate people to mitigate such threats. Therefore, it can be concluded that workplace interactions may attenuate or exacerbate the psychological discomfort caused by lingering identity threats. My study addresses the reasons behind the psychological discomfort experienced as a result of compromised self-concept informed by one's understanding of the perceptions of others.

Gioia (1998) questions this connection between individual identity and organisational identity. My study addresses the misalignment of these two aspects of identity and the effects of it in the case of individuals with black skin.

Identity work

Most of the participants of my study were or had been involved in work within organisations at the time of my research. Within a workplace, identity is crucial in navigating social interaction. A lot of organisational life and interactions take place in dyadic interactions with others. "Through interacting with others, we create shared meaning, which both informs and constraints identity" (Weick et al., 2005) as well as face-to-face interactions within a workplace which "allows for the positive enactment of valued identities" (Thatcher and Xiumei Zhu, 2006). In dyadic interactions, two different features of identity are relevant: 1) different self-concepts become activated at different times and in different contexts, and 2) dyadic interactions offer individuals opportunities to meet their fundamental needs for self-verification. Accordingly, individuals use identity cues to adopt interaction strategies. These strategies are likely to confirm their existing self-views to interaction partners. Therefore, it can be concluded that workplace interactions may attenuate or exacerbate the psychological discomfort caused by lingering identity threats. My study addresses the reasons behind the psychological discomfort experienced as a result of compromised self-concept informed by one's understanding of the perceptions of others.

Gioia et al. (2013) linked the enduring identity proposition to an individual level (an approach they called "extended metaphor analysis". The criteria of distinctiveness and continuity are drawn from conceptions of individual identity. The aspect of continuity is connected to Erikson's (1968) work on identity crisis. Erikson talks about personal "sameness and historical continuity" (1968, p 22) as necessary for psychological well-being. Erikson's ego-identity is defined as "an awareness of the fact that there is a self-sameness and continuity to the ego's synthetising methods and a continuity of one's meaning of others". In times of constant or frequent change, the stability of identity serves as a psychological anchor. A change within an organisation can cause distress, anxiety, discomfort and lowering or loss of self-esteem.

In stable life situations, "the narrative of self-identity runs fairly smoothly" (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002, p 626). In conditions of late modernity, identities are open and achieved rather than given, and roles are improvised rather than scripted. The identity work that Alvesson and Willmott (2002) are talking about involves one's conscious work in constructing self-identity in organisations. They imply that specific events, encounters, experiences, and transitions serve to heighten an

awareness of constructed identity and compel undertaking conscious identity work. One tends to secure his/her identity position as a result of "psychological-existential worry" (Alvesson and Willmott 2002, p 626), which is a result of the scepticism, or inconsistencies faced in encounters with others or with our images of them. When one faces tensions associated with the feeling of oneself being threatened, remedial identity work sets in.

As the participants in my study were from selected African countries, living and working in Finland, I had to consider cultural differences and their impact on their identity work. I concur with Fernando et al. (2020) who proposes a 'minoritarian perspective' (Bhabha, 2004, p xvi), whose primary concern is the ways migrant identities are established and maintained in the Global North. In his autoethnographic study he focuses on two interconnected and underresearched identity work strategies: covering and accenting. Covering involves acting to 'tone down' the markers of 'a disfavoured identity to fit into the mainstream' (Yoshino, 2007, p ix), cited in Fernando, 2020, whereas accenting is the accentuation of an identity element (Khanna and Johnson, 2010, quoted in Fernando, 2020).

Identity in organisations, a critical perspective

The participants in my study come from Kenya, Ghana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Nigeria; countries that have a colonial history. The participants were born after their respective countries regained independence and, therefore, by default belong to postcolonial times. To label them as postcolonial would be to disregard what the colonial experience meant for different people in different geographical locations, and who is speaking for/about these people. I, therefore, concur with Lunga's (2008, p 194) claim that "lumping postcolonial experiences in a single definition has a trivialising effect", and I am fully aware of the theorisations and different nuances of the meaning of the postcolonial.

Critical Theory (CT) sees identity formation as a dialectic process that occurs between structure and agency. Clark et al. (2009, p 52 cited in Holck, 2014) claim that identities are achieved, but they "may not be of your own choosing". In line with Clark (2009), CT explores identity in terms of navigating between identity regulation that places individuals within social structures, and, on the other hand, identity work concerned with individuals' efforts to make a coherent sense of self in response to the scripts provided by organisational discourses. These external factors, (power and

discourse) impact an individual, thus rendering his/her autonomy in identity construction impossible.

Identity is complex, multifaceted and characterised by fluidity and being constructed in context (Alvesson and Billing, 2009; Pullen and Linstead, 2005; Webb, 2006). It is also emergent, intersectional, and relational.

Intersectionality

The starting point of thinking about the intersection of different categories was the establishment of Black Feminism and Critical Race Theory in the 1970s which focused on the oppression of 'black' women and the lack of 'race' sensitivity in 'Western' second-wave feminist theory and activism (Wallaschek, 2017). It has at its core a non-essentialist understanding of differences among people as produced in an ongoing and context-specific social process (Zanoni et al., 2010). The term itself was coined by a legal scholar, Kimberle Crenshaw, to address the links and relations between gender, race, class, and other identity categories (Prasad, 2012) as well as to underscore the multidimensionality of marginalised subjects' lived experiences (Crenshaw, 1989, p 139), with a particular focus on an intersection of race and gender. Therefore, an intersectional approach helps in the analysis of multiple identities, especially identities where skin colour plays a part.

These intersections of singular categories which lead to discrimination are not separated from each other but create a new relation of oppression and experienced subordination. Moreover, the intersection in Crenshaw's analysis of 'race' and gender establishes a new form of subjectivity, because these women are confronted with a double marginalisation: They are not equally recognised concerning their gender and their 'race', for that reason they claim for themselves that they were discriminated because they are 'black' women.

Intersectionality, as contended by Crenshaw (2016), "is not primarily about having multiple identities; it is more about how structures make certain identities the consequences of the vehicle for vulnerability." It therefore "aims to make visible the multiple positioning that constitutes everyday life and the power relations that are central to it" (Phoenix and Pattynama, 2006, p 187). Therefore, intersectionality shows how the continuous interlocking processes produce difference, exclusion, inclusion, leading to discrimination (Acker, 2011). As a movement, it is committed to problematising law's purported colour-blindness, neutrality, and objectivity. It is also interested in analysing the various ways in which race and gender interact to shape the multiple dimensions of

Black women's experiences' (Crenshaw, 1991, p 1244). It further encompasses the mutually constitutive relations among social identities. (McCall, 2005).

The multiplicity of these constitutive relations that intersectionality allows for provide a rich and complex approach to analysing different ontologies (Phoenix and Pattynama, 2006). In this way, social positions of individuals are perceived as relational of power that constitute the individuals (Phoenix and Pattynama, 2006). Influenced by Foucault in his postcolonial approach, Hall (1996, p 444) states that the "end of the essential black subject also entails recognition that central issues of race always appear historically in articulation and in a formation with other categories and divisions and are constantly crossed and recrossed by the categories of class, gender and ethnicity". Power, inequities, and identities are therefore interconnected and act together to form one another, making identities hybrid, fluid, heterogeneous, political, and multiple (Harding et al., 2013; Holvino, 2010).

From a critical feminist perspective, the approach of Mohanty (1984) argues for a stronger reflexivity in 'Western' feminism and refers to a criticism of power relations and (neoliberal) capitalist exploitation. Mohanty states that many researchers do not take notice of the existing contingent power or of structures of domination. She analyses the claim of a 'global sisterhood' and criticises that the 'Western' feminists are – more or less implicitly – the leading activists in the sisterhood and the 'Third World Women' are powerless and are seen as objects and victims (Mohanty, 1984, p 337-341). She writes: "While 'Western' feminist researchers are sensitive to gender issues, many of them constructed a paternalistic 'Western' perspective on 'Non-Western' issues. The result is the production of a 'composite, singular Third-World-Woman' (Mohanty, 1984, p 334), who acts apparently as a homogenous social group." Further, Mohanty argues that a combination of feminist and anti-capitalist approaches is necessary because neoliberal capitalism is currently the most dominant structure which relates to various forms of exclusion and discrimination (Mohanty, 2003). The recognition of class, gender, nation, sexuality, and 'race' categories for the feminist postcolonial approach is therefore vital in tackling the dominance of capitalist globalization.

Shields (2008) finds a consistent thread that can be founded across definitions of intersectionality. It sees social identities as serving to organise features of social relations, mutually constitute, reinforce, and naturalise one another. This way of defining intersectionality sits well with the

context of my study, as it understands mutual constitution as merging identity categories (gender, for example) and taking their meanings as a category in relation to another category. Reinforcing is understood as the formation and maintenance of identity categories as a dynamic process in which the individual herself is actively engaged, and not a passive "recipient" of an identity position, but "practice" each aspect of identity as informed by other identities they claim. As much as the two first notions hold true, the third one I see as problematic. Having black skin does make one a passive recipient of the identity category of a black man/woman. Finally, naturalising is meant as a process where identities in one category come to be seen as self-evident or "basic" through the lens of another category.

Intersectionality subverts and destabilises race/gender binaries , and theorises identity in a more complex fashion, thus opening up possibilities for analyses of cultural sites that implicate both race and gender. In addition, it is attuned to subjects who exist within the overlapping margins of race and gender discourse. It is also a tool particularly adept at capturing and theorising the simultaneity of race and gender as social processes (Crenshaw, 1992) with particular attention to identity politics and intersectionality for third world women of colour. It acknowledges differences, subjectivities, and women's struggles in response (Fernandes, 2013) to "gendered colonialist dis-possessions in the past and massive post-colonial displacements in the present" (Shohat, 2001, p 19).

It is therefore particularly appropriate in theorising about identities where the intra-group differences are of importance. It exposes the differences within the broad categories of 'women' and 'blacks'. In this way, it helps mediate the tensions between assertions of multiple identities and the ongoing necessity of group politics (Crenshaw, 1991, p 1296). Ultimately, "intersectionality seeks to demonstrate the racial variation(s) within gender and the gendered variations within race through its attention to subjects whose identities contest race-or-gender categorizations".

Structural intersectionality, proposed by Crenshaw (1991), is inextricably linked to an analysis of power and structural inequalities. Crenshaw (1991, p 1245) defines structural intersectionality as "multilayered and routinized forms of domination". In specific contexts there are overlapping structures of subordination which revealed how certain groups of women were made particularly

vulnerable to abuse and were also vulnerable to inadequate interventions that failed to take into account the structural dimensions of the context (Crenshaw, 1991; Richie 2012). Intersectionality theory added a dimension to the SBW construct. With its roots in US feminism, it postulates that black women's experiences were shaped and influenced by race and class (Collins, 1990; Davis, 1981; Forson, 2011) as well as gender. Contrary to articulating gender, race, class, and age as distinct social categories, intersectionality postulates that these categories created systems of oppression, which work together to produce inequality (Cole, 2009; Crenshaw, 1991, 1989; Schulz and Mullings, 2006; Lawton et al., 2015).

Drawing on intersectionality theory, in her recent study carried out among African American women, Camille Hall (2018) investigated the role of black mothers in shaping coping mechanisms in their daughters. She claimed that historically, black women have been vulnerable to the impact of race-related stress because of their socially constructed identities both as black women and as women. I am aware that Hall's study explores Afro-American women in the American context. Nevertheless, the themes of stress related to racial discrimination, especially micro-invalidations, resonate in my study and the Finnish context as well. Moreover, Hall (2018) identified the limitation of her study and called for future research that would include relations with fathers. My study addresses this call and shows the formative influence the strong relationships with the fathers imprinted on the formation of the identities of the female participants.

Sensemaking

Sensemaking is a mental activity that involves understanding novel, ambiguous, and confusing issues that collide with people's expectations (Maitlis and Christianson, 2014; Ancona, 2011; McDaniel, 2007; Weick et al., 2005), interpretation, and active authoring of events (Sutcliffe, 2013, cited in Maitlis and Christianson, 2014), organising knowledge based on one's memories to create explanations (Brown et al., 2008) and predict the future (Hernes and Maitlis, 2010). Brown et al. (2008, p 1038) also describe sensemaking as a "search for plausibility and coherence, which embodies past experience and expectations, and maintains the self while resonating with others". Asik-Dizdar and Esen (2016) see sensemaking as a tool for job crafting. The authors argue that job crafting empowers individuals to create meaningful working environments.

Sensemaking, based on the above definitions, encompasses an ontological assumption that sensemaking occurs within individuals, which is the focus of my study. These definitions frame sensemaking as a more cognitive process, which involve developing frameworks, schemata, or mental models. Starbuck and Milliken's (1988, p 51) definition sums it up clearly as follows: "Sensemaking has many distinct aspects—comprehending, understanding, explaining, attributing, extrapolating, and predicting". This definition also resonates with the process of sensemaking that the participants of the study showed when understanding their experiences.

In contrast, other definitions position sensemaking as a social process that occurs between people, as meaning is negotiated, contested, and mutually co-constructed. I acknowledge that the sensemaking that the participants adopted was also a result of social interactions with others. Therefore, I include Weick's (1995) seven key properties of sensemaking. (Explained later in this chapter).

In 1995, Weick developed the term "sensemaking" as an alternative approach to understanding the process of organising. Instead of focusing on the outcomes, he wanted to gain insights into how individuals give meaning to events through sensemaking processes triggered retrospectively by unforeseen and unusual events (particularly evident in occurrences that threaten identities), where people seek to make plausible sense of what has occurred (Dawson and Sykes, 2019). Later, an interpretative aspect was added defining sensemaking as a process of interpretation and meaning production through which people interpret and reflect on an experience or a phenomenon (Weick et al., 2005).

As my study investigated the experiences of a life in a foreign host culture, the social aspect of that experiencing is important. According to Weick (2004), people begin their sensemaking by acquiring knowledge through active exploration (Weick 2004) and balancing the act of thinking and acting. People create frames of meaning, a cue, and a connection. The frames can be conceived as inherited vocabularies of society, organisation, work, individual projects, and tradition. Sensemaking, in Weick's view, can be driven by beliefs or actions. Connected to this is the concept of power that influences the beliefs and actions which are grounded in identities. Sensemaking is, therefore, grounded in identity construction (Weick, 1995), while identity is a central conduit of systemic power (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Foucault, 1975; Schildt et al., 2020). Because identities incorporate some of the most central and enduring beliefs held by

actors, they are often implicated in sensemaking processes. The general need of actors to maintain or preserve their identities means that their interpretations often reaffirm identity-related beliefs (Dutton and Dukerich, 1991; Elsbach and Kramer, 1996, cited in Schildt et al., 2020). Threats to identity may lead actors to revise and adjust their individual or organisational identity (Ravasi and Schultz, 2006 cited in Schildt et al., 2020) or, commonly, to reinterpret their observations.

Disparity of beliefs in any social context leads to an argument which is one form of sensemaking. Further, beliefs can be projected onto the future, thus forming expectations. Weick retrieves here Merton's notion of self-fulfilling prophecy (Merton, 1948) as a fundamental act of sensemaking. In the narratives of the participants, this was manifested by, what Mills et al. (2005) further explain as understanding how different meanings are assigned to the same event. Being a part of social constructivist thinking sensemaking is a pervasive activity that on the one hand is retrospective as it ascribes meaning to past events, and on the other facilitates future action. It also functions as an aid that helps individuals deal with complexity and uncertainty of the environment by creating a reasonable account of the world (Mills, 2005).

Major concepts and constructs of sensemaking

Sensemaking is a complex cognitive process, which involves labels and frames (Hernes 2008, p 149, cited in Weick, 2010), it is a balance of thinking and action (Colville et al., 2011) which involves *simplexity*: requirement for complexity of thought and simplicity of action. Simplexity combines and links together sensemaking, organising, and storytelling. Brody (1987, p 5, cited in Colville 2011) continues, "the primary human mechanism for attaching meaning to particular experiences is to tell stories about them. The ascription of meaning to experience provides the link between sensemaking and storytelling and organising through processes of inscription". Simplexity was manifested in the narratives of the participants when they showed their understanding of unpleasant experiences in the foreign host culture. I discuss this in detail in Chapter 6.

Weick detailed a complex overview of sensemaking theory, as well as its usage. This theory outlines seven cyclical properties that describe the manners all individuals follow when trying to make sense of the world around them.

The first property is grounded in identity construction that claims that who people are influences how they see the world. Every person has a self-image that allows him/her to understand who they are. This understanding drives and guides people in the ways they interact with their surroundings and also in the ways they interpret events and experiences. The understanding of who one is also allows one to construct understandings of the events that they are exposed to. Based on my study, I see a missing dimension in the above conceptualisation. Some of the participants in my study revealed identity ambiguity. It can be concluded therefore, following Weick, that their understanding and sensemaking of events and experiences might reflect that ambiguity. I discuss this in detail in Chapter 6.

The second property is retrospection and reflection, which refers to the process of looking to one's past in order to put the present into context. People rely on past experiences to interpret current ones; thus, sensemaking is a comparative process. Brown and Jones (1998, p 74) point out; "Individuals construct their understandings of events by omitting and shaping information to bolster their self-esteem and feelings of control". Contrary to Brown and Jones (1998), my study shows that utilising past experiences to interpret similar experiences in the present does not bolster self-esteem.

The third property of sensemaking is that it is enactive of environments and participatory (De Jaegher and Di Paolo, 2007) sensemaking is about coupling an agent, the world and experience. It can be either constrained or created by the very environment it has created. The environment that has been created by the sense maker reinforces his/her sense of credibility. In the narratives in my study, the participants showed how they come to terms with what they experienced and what strategies for moving forward they developed (Weick, 2001).

The fourth property of sensemaking relates to it being a social activity: the sensemaking process is contingent on people's interactions with others, whether physically present or not. The interactions with people around have a direct impact on how one sees the world and how one interprets stimuli and experiences.

The fifth characteristic of sensemaking is that it is ongoing: a sequential process that never stops, therefore relevant to every mundane interaction and event (Patriotta and Brown, 2011), or it is triggered by much rarer cues that happen as a result of crisis (Weick, Sutcliffe and Obstfeld, 2005). Following previously quoted Brown et al. (2005), individuals are constantly assessing and

reassessing their environment, being exposed to constant feedback, and organising their knowledge to create plausible explanations and solutions. Sensemaking is seen as occurring constantly.

The sixth characteristic of sensemaking is that it is focused on extracting cues: the sensemaking process involves focusing on certain elements, while completely ignoring others in order to support the interpretation. People evaluate some elements and use them to create a larger picture of the event as a whole. By extracting cues, people are able to develop a sense of the world around them and find their places in it. The retrospection relies on past events, the sensemaking process may allow individuals to interpret cues in ways that support their beliefs. Based on the narratives of the participants, my study expands this by suggesting the importance of the values of one's cultural identity as influencing factors. For example, the participants in my study extracted only some cues, omitting others in order to understand and find their place in the host culture. This was guided by their understanding of who they were and where they came from. It is what Maitlis and Christianson (2014) and Fisher and Hutchings (2013) call intercultural sensemaking: "the process involving the selection of scripts that reflect individuals' cultural values and cultural history." This type of sensemaking was used to negotiate one's position in the environment. The plausibility was a property prevalent in the participants sensemaking as viewing the world in ways that they found suitable was away of negotiating their position in the world. I provide examples of this in Chapter 6.

The seventh and last property, linked to the previous one, is that sensemaking is driven by plausibility rather than accuracy. People do not rely on the accuracy of their perceptions when making sense of an event or experience, but on plausibility. People look for cues that make events plausible. Weick (2001) claims that the constant bombardment by random variables forces people to view the world in a way that suits them (Weick, 2001).

 What I see as problematic here is the understanding of what accuracy of one's perceptions means. Perceptions are subjective; therefore, their accuracy must also be subjective, and therefore accurate only to the perceiver.

Sensemaking through narratives and stories

Sensemaking is understood as a rational process represented through cognitive schemas and models (Chaudhry et al., 2009; Grant et al., 2008; Jeong and Brower, 2008), or as a collaborative

activity applied to create, legitimate and sustain organizational practices or leadership roles (Holt and Macpherson, 2010; Maclean et al., 2012). Weick's framework of sensemaking is based on the claim that sensemaking is a process of social construction and committed interpretation that "introduces stability into an equivocal flow of events by means of justifications that increase social order" (2001, p 15). Cunliffe and Couplans (2011) develop the notion of embodied narrative sensemaking, which posits that whether people are aware of it or not, they make their lives and themselves 'sensible' through embodied (bodily) interpretations in their ongoing everyday interactions, therefore it is embodied.

The stories of the participants in my study were active constructions of their embeddedness in "local realities, as well as potent tools for meaning-making" (Zilber, 2007, p 1038). Processes of narration in which stories were co-authored by multiple actors to account for pasts that may be contested or nostalgised, (Humphreys and Brown, 2002), the present that was most often ambiguous and confusing, and futures that were variously desired and feared in some cases. Sensemaking stories allow actors to manoeuvre between contradictions, to ignore, and to gloss ambiguities, to both mask and disclose emotional responses and intellectual positions, to simultaneously make and to unravel sense in organisational settings (Boudes and Laroche, 2009; Brown, Ainsworth and Grant, 2012; Golant and Sillince, 2007; Pye, 1993).

The participants narrated their stories in which they described their everyday experiences. Their understanding of their experiences of and in the foreign host culture was indirectly expressed in the stories. Storytelling is a natural tool for individuals to tell stories about themselves and also for them to "make things rationally accountable to themselves" (Weick, 1993, p 635). By doing this, people capture the complexity of their social condition in order to function effectively as socio-economic actors. The narratives that they create allow them to maintain support and control and promote feelings of self-worth. In accordance with Giddens (1984), the narratives allow people to deal with their memories of past events by developing plots which in the past created coherence in which their preferred versions of their selves were enhanced. This, in turn, supported their self-esteem. The participants in my study drew on their past and told stories of their past (childhood) in which they created versions of their selves which, in turn, helped them understand their experiences in the host culture as adults.

The narrative property of sensemaking is expressed in Weick's question "how can I know what I think until I see what I say?" (Weick, 1995, p 18), and performative aspect is discussed by Goffman (1967) who talks about how individuals engage in 'face work'. This means that in their narratives and stories problematic and difficult situations are explained, and tensions are mitigated in order to influence the images and opinions that others have of them. "Person's worth is established by the opinion of others" (Boltanski and Thevenot, 2006, p 100). This means that narrators create their stories to maximise self-value, and they offer versions of events which mitigate negative implications which might be attached to their demeanour. My study demonstrates these mitigations by employing interpretive poetics to the analysis of the narratives.

Other concepts of sensemaking

Within organisation studies, interpersonal sensemaking, drawing from positive organisational psychology, was investigated by Wrzesniewski, Dutton and Debebe, (2003) who sought to understand the strengths and virtues that enable individuals and organisations to thrive. Based on the concept of job crafting, they viewed employees as active participants in the construction of the meaning of their work and themselves (Bakker and Schaufeli, 2008). The nature and purpose of narratives was also theorised as creating a coherent shared experience and aligning employees with corporate values by highlighting social conventions and acceptable behaviors (Rouleau, 2005; Weick, 2001) as deliberately 'authored' and performed as a means of *making* sense of a situation (Boje, 1995; Brown and Humphreys, 2003); as a means of *giving* sense by legitimising and normalising culture (Currie and Brown, 2003; Rhodes et al., 2010); as containing multiple meanings (Cunliffe, 2002; Yanow, 1998); or as helping storytellers deal with experiences of tensions, trauma and loss (Driver, 2009). The common theme that threads through the above-mentioned approaches is that narratives are the means by which people organise and make sense of their experiences.

Critical sensemaking draws on phenomenology to focus on the socio-psychological processes through which a sense of situation is created out of various interactions. This focus on the identity of an individual in the process of sensemaking reinserts agency in organisational studies. Critical sensemaking highlights the influence of organisational rules on individuals. The rules may constrain the ways in which individuals act and the possibility of appropriate interpretations of situations.

The importance of the context of the sensemaking is highlighted in the understanding that it is a complex process that occurs within, and it is influenced by a broader social environment. Identity construction is seen as central to sensemaking as it influences the way individuals make sense of things. Sensemaking describes a process through which individuals project their identities onto an environment and see it reflected back (Mills et al., 2010, p 188). Critical sensemaking shifts focus (within organisations) to how organisational power and dominant assumptions privilege some identities over others and create them as meaningful to individuals.

As my study investigated how black African professionals experience life in a foreign host culture, it considers their narrative accounts of their experiences related to their work. Considering such concepts as organisational power and dominant assumptions that privilege some identities over others, thus hindering individuals from thriving and ascribing meaning to their work and themselves, is of relevance to my study.

Connected with the socio-psychological processes that take place when individuals experience events is plausibility. It means that a certain type of sensemaking seems more plausible to an individual than other in a given situation. Plausibility is therefore dictated by the context. The context is often mitigated by power and control. For example, Unger (1987a, b) talks about formative contexts. The formative contexts are a link between dominant values and individual action. The critical sensemaking framework introduces formative contexts and by doing so it creates space for discussion on how the macro-level context in which individuals operate affects the cues they extract, the plausibility of various texts and narratives, and the nature of enactment. For example, Weber and Glynn (2006, p 1641) comment on the "social policing of action through institutionalised expectations" that structure processes of sensemaking.

Power is inherent in the processes of formalisation which Vlaar, Van den Bosch and Volberda (2006, p 1629) identify as a significant means by which micro-processes of sensemaking are enacted, guided and controlled: as these authors assert, "the creation of new understandings is not free of power issues and self-interested behaviour". Relatedly, Karreman and Alvesson (2001, p 78) remark on 'the power of the premise', understood as the "appropriate sequence of events in a particular context" (Mangham, 1986, p 44), which frames individual and group sensemaking (Pye, 2005).

Conclusions

In my study, I considered postcoloniality a necessary concept to understand the heritage of the participants of my study, its influence on their cultural and social values. I was also interested in the extent to which these values were still salient in their understanding of who they were and how they understood the world, especially in the host culture in Finland. My study, therefore, contributes to a discussion on meeting points of what postcoloniality entails, and Finnish culture, where exposure to multiculturalism, let alone postcoloniality, is limited.

As a consequence of the meeting of the two distinct cultures, there is also a meeting of two opposite realities: The West (Occident) and the non-West (Orient). Said's proposition of the binary classification, as well as othering, entails the process of knowing developed as a result of imposing the language, the culture, and modes of learning onto the colonised populations, thus compromising or suppressing their indigenous cultures. At the same time, in today's global organisations there is a need for creating more heterodox scenarios, which require a legitimate intersection of postcolonialism and organisation studies (OS). My research directly addresses Jack et al.'s (2011) claim that the postcolonial in OS does not speak for the themes and people involved in these scenarios, by allowing 'postcolonial' voices to narrate their own stories, thus revealing different ways of knowing, and following Mir and Mir (2013) creating space for marginal actors thus provide building blocks to alternative theories in organisations and organising. This, in turn, will open up possibilities of representation, participation, empowerment, and engagement for all actors involved.

Connected to that, within MOS the three forms of parochialism, distinguished by Jack et al. (2011) are addressed by my research. By addressing the concept of postcolonial identity, as well as a postcolonial way of knowing, my study disrupts epistemic colonisation and cultural imperialism of the studies within MOS. Further, by adopting a qualitative methodological approach, my study makes a contribution to subverting the western concepts and orthodoxy of management that underpin qualitative parochialism. And, finally, my non-western identity as a researcher from a non-western domain adds to relatively meagre research conducted by scholars from outside the western domain.

As I was interested in the impact of the cultural values of the participants on their experiencing the world, the concepts of cultural identity as self-concept, connected to its historical roots and

cultural values, as well as representation, were relevant. Giddens' (1991) reflexively organised narrative concept of self-identity, derived from experiences and social encounters, sheds light on the fragmented nature of self-concept. Alvesson and Willmott (2002) saw identity as motivation and meaning making. The connection between identity and its representation and performance, influenced by expectations and dominant discourses became resonant in the narratives of the participants. Their identities, determined by the geographical locations of their origins, pointed to cultural hegemony proposed by Hall (1999), which propelled identity negotiations Wiebold and Spiller (2016).

Social Identity Theory (SIT) and Identity Theory (IT) provided insights and understanding of the link between individuality and sociality of identity. Investigating the processes of identification (own cultural values and convictions), and categorisation (group membership) in a cross-cultural context helped me understand connections, overlaps, and possible tensions between own values and the values and expectations of others. Identity threat sensitivity and identity work were also the concepts that further allowed me to identify the ways in which individuals navigated their identity positions and experienced situations. In the analysis of the narratives of the (black) participants, the recognition of issues of race, in connection with other social categories and divisions (class, gender and ethnicity), intersectionality theory rendered an approach that helped to see social identities as mutual constitutions, or as merging identity categories. Intersectionality also subverts and destabilises race/gender binaries. It is therefore particularly appropriate in theorising about identities where the intra-group differences were of importance.

Chapter 4: Methodology

Overview

My study investigates the way people experience their life in a foreign host culture. In order to get as deep insights as possible, the only approach that I considered appropriate was a qualitative approach. Research carried out this way guaranteed obtaining rich data, which rendered a wide spectrum of insights.

In this chapter, I describe the qualitative/interpretative methodological approach and my rationale for choosing it. I also outline its theoretical underpinnings. I provide a justification for my choice of interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA), and selected elements of interpretive poetics, borrowed from narrative analysis (NA). Next, I move on to providing justification for my epistemological positioning, and I describe my methods (life-story interview). I follow by explaining the procedures (participants and sampling, inclusion and exclusion criteria, recruitment, methods of data collection). Finally, I describe in more detail the life story interview with its protocol and provide my reflections on my role in the research process.

Rationale for adopting qualitative/interpretative paradigm

As mentioned at the beginning, the interest of my study was the way of experiencing life in a foreign host culture. I was also interested in the extent to which the participants drew from the values that formed their cultural identities in the way they understood their experiences. In the process of reading and deciding on my methodological approach, I realised that my study will be interdisciplinary, located in the human sciences (Bochner, 2018) drawing from psychology and sociology.

As a researcher with limited expertise in psychology, I was surprised to learn that historically, the psychological field has been dominated by quantitative research, informed by positivism, as the superior methodological viewpoint (Lyons, 2007). For me, *understanding* of the experiences was more important than the *way* they came about. I saw the idea that experience can be grounded in empirical observation of the facts of the experience as valid. Although the post-positivistic approach does seek a description of reality that stands outside of human experience, it still does not acknowledge the context as having influence on the phenomena under study. Therefore, I considered the qualitative commitments as the only ones that rendered themselves suitable for my study.

The fact that the qualitative approach found its way into social sciences and psychology in particular (Smith, 2004, 2008) I found very encouraging; my research investigated human experience through human perceptions. It also acknowledged multiple versions of reality, truth and knowledge. A qualitative perspective allowed me to investigate and understand the world as seen through the perceptions of individuals (Smith, 2003), it focused on the collection and analysis of stories shared by people about their lived experiences (McLeod, 2003) and "involved alternative conceptions of social knowledge, of meaning, reality and truth" (Kvale, 1996, p 11). I also found Morrow's (2007) argument that qualitative research is the most appropriate methodological approach to understanding the sense and meanings that people make of their experiences, supportive to the interest of my research.

The phenomenon of my study was the way people experience life in a foreign host culture. With the qualitative approach, I studied the phenomenon in its natural settings (by natural settings I mean the narratives of the respondents), attempting to make sense of them, and understand or interpret the phenomena in terms of the meanings the participants brought to them. I saw the participants as well as their sensemaking as the sources of empirical material, descriptions of routine as well as problematic moments and their meanings in the individual's lives (Denzin and Lincoln, 1999).

I was not interested in gathering empirical facts, proving a hypothesis, or testing an existing theory. I was interested in performative recreations of lived experiences expressed by the participants through their personal narratives and stories. I viewed the participants as relational, subjective, and embedded in their contexts. The empirical inquiry I was interested in was dialogic where the truths were incomplete, subjective, and relational. I wanted to hear the narratives not only with an open mind, but also with an open heart. This called for a shift towards "concentration on horizons of human meanings" (Gadamer, 1975, cited in Bochner, 2018) and a more hermeneutic approach, where there would be room for subjective meanings, moral reflections, contextual embodiment, compassion, and empathy. I concurred with Jovanovic (2011, p 3) who describes qualitative inquiry as "a rich, heterogenous field comprising various techniques, methods, concepts, theories, interpretive patterns, values, orientations, ontological, anthropological, epistemological assumptions, ethical principles and social and political views". This description embraces the participatory role of people as part of the research process, thus acknowledging their voices as knowledge creators. It empowers rather than controls, it includes

rather than excludes. The qualitative approach therefore offered the best potential to render rich and deep insights into the perceptions and understandings of the individual lived experiences.

The critical epistemologies and theoretical perspectives of my study stem from Vygotsky's theory of learning (1978), which implies that personally meaningful learning and knowledge are socially constructed through the process of sharing understandings. I adopted a constructivist perspective, assuming that knowledge is co-constructed in specific social interactions (Gamer, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978), and truth is constructed by social processes and that it is historically and culturally specific (Taylor, 2008). Human perception and social experience are the basis for human learning. The learning process builds on prior existing knowledge, but an individual can interpret this knowledge in new ways. Knowledge, therefore, is a product of human interaction and is not something to be discovered" (Taylor 2008).

Although social constructivism does not reject the existence of an objective world, it focuses on the perceptions, experiences and the process of learning that people have developed about the world they live in. This approach allows less separation between me as a researcher and the participants. Their narratives are socially constructed, and conversational interaction takes place. It also renders the validity of the participants' interpretations just as important as my own.

At the other end of the spectrum lies critical realism, which considers an objective reality as one that exists independently of individual perception but also recognises the role that individual subjective interpretation plays in defining that reality. It occupies the middle ground between the two opposites: positivism and subjectivism. It accepts objectivism and presents a stratified view of reality that looks at emergent entities and the underlying structures that cause events to happen. Subjective observers create a variety of interpretations, and a hierarchy of meanings emerges to justify and form an objective standpoint and understanding, perceived and theorised by subjective observers. By adopting the critical realist approach phenomena are looked at through an explorative process to identify the structures and mechanisms that lie beneath the surface and cause the events that constitute the phenomena. The primary function of critical realism thus lies in determining what is objectively real and what is subjectively accepted (Taylor 2018). This connection and distinction, at the same time, between reality and subjectivity as not mutually exclusive, sits well with my understanding of the way knowledge is produced: shaped and

influenced by the objective reality *out there*, but also internalised by individuals and their reality *in here.*

Figure 3 below illustrates the interrelatedness and the intersections among epistemology, theory and methods according to Hollingsworth and Dybdahl's (2000) classification. I adopted it incorporating Willmott's (2016) additional parts.

Epistemological perspective	Theoretical position of power, relationship and identity	Methods
Constructivism: unstable truth in context Privileged value: Mutual understanding	Co-constructed to maintain intentions of narrators Identity of researcher considered in research design if warranted Varying relationship time with narrators Power shared between researchers and the researched Constructions not only build worlds, but also silence them.	Semi-structured interviews and conversations Narrators fit theoretical frame Semi-structured observations Structured and open-ended analysis
Critical realism: world is often hidden, sometimes intentionally. Privileged value: Emancipation/openness	Knowledge involves unveiling the taken for granted to facilitate emancipatory change	Narrators give feedback and participare in the analysis

Figure 13. Intersections of Epistemology, Theory and Methods. Based on Hollingsworth and Dybdahl (2000); Willmott (2016).

The epistemological implications of the above ontological approaches meant to me that the purpose of my inquiry was NOT to create a faithful representation of the reality which is independent of the knower. On the contrary, my purpose was to investigate the phenomena and generate my interpretation and a new understanding of the phenomena based on the relation

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between a human being and his/her environment (life, community, and world). I viewed this understanding as opening new possibilities to create new ways of dealing with them, thus creating new experiences. In this pragmatic view of knowledge, the representations arise from experience, and return to that experience for their validation.

I also considered McAlpine's proposition (2016) that, apart from the naturalist stance, a sociocultural and literary one can also be applied. In my study, I adopted a literary stance, which implied looking at the discourse the participants used in their stories. These were, for example, metaphors that represented powerful influences on the descriptions of their experiences. I show examples in chapter 4.

Epistemological Stance

As mentioned earlier in my research, I was interested in the experiences of black, educated professionals from Ghana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Kenya, and Nigeria. I wanted to know how they experience living and working in a host culture distinctly different to their own. I was also curious to know the extent to which they drew from the cultural values that formed their cultural identities in their sensemaking of their experiences.

I understood the process of formation of one's cultural identity as developing as a result of one's connections and influence on the culture one is exposed to. This happens at an early age and is influenced by the values dominant in a given culture. A person's cultural identity thus integrates social elements and change of time (Jameson, 2007), it is contextual, temporal, and it is constantly evolving. Based on the above definitions and concepts, I formulated my understanding of cultural identity as a temporal sense of self, derived from and driven by social values dominant in a given culture at a given point of time. The values function as motivators and driving forces behind one's cognition, understanding, and sensemaking.

My understanding of cultural identity, as well as its formation, was guiding me towards the path of my investigation. If one's cultural identity was temporal, context, and culture-bound, I considered it important to get insights into what, over time, might have influenced it. Moreover, if it was based on values learned in one's native culture, which was the childhood of the participants in my study, I needed to investigate their early memories to find out what values they learned during that time in their home cultures. My interest was, first in finding out what values learned in their

home cultures defined their cultural identities. Second, I wanted to find out how these values influenced their understanding of what they experienced in the host culture in Finland.

The way to do this was to listen to their narratives. The value of narratives as a source of knowledge was advocated by Jerome Bruner (1986) who called it a "narrative approach to knowing". According to his claim, narrative modes of knowing function as a central form of human thinking. He provided a framework for the psychological study of autobiographies, stories, and life narratives. He also claimed that they play a key role in the construction of the self and identity.

Inspired by Ricour's (1983) concept of narrative identity, expressed through being parts of the plot in the stories people tell about themselves, I adopted an open and semi-structured interview as my method. I designed my interview protocol and the questions based on identity formation models borrowed from Erikson (1980) and McAdams and Cox (2010) which I describe in more detail in the latter parts of this chapter.

Since the narrative was both the method and phenomenon of the study, it presented a possibility of interactivity between me and the participants. Narrative analysis, in my study, started in the experience of our meeting, during which narratives of experiences were shared with me. This involved the reconstruction of the participants' experiences in relation to both the other and to a social milieu (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). According to Riesman (2005, p 25), "personal narratives provide windows into lives that confront the constraints of circumstances. Attention to personal narratives in interviews opens discursive spaces for research subjects." The discursive space in my study was filled with conversations and more probing questions.

Rationale for adopting Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

IPA, with its phenomenological approach, focuses on people's perceptions and experiences of the world in which they live, which also gives them meaning. It acknowledges human experience as a topic in its own right. IPA draws its philosophical underpinnings from hermeneutics and phenomenology (Smith et al., 2012).

IPA is a relatively young research methodology, predominantly applied within 'applied' psychology (Larkin et al., 2007), and sometimes described as an approach to qualitative data analysis. It has been utilised in other areas of the human sciences, apart from psychology. I saw it as a suitable methodology for my study for several reasons. IPA is committed to the exploration of personal

lived experience. According to Larkin, Watts and Clifton (2006, p 116) IPA does not claim a specific epistemological position and has been described to have epistemological "openness" and "eclecticism", distinguished in its ability to encompass "the real and the constructed". IPA also draws from a foundation of phenomenology, social constructionism, and symbolic interactionism (Smith, 2004).

IPA aims to explore how participants make sense of the way they experience their personal and social world, and its focus is on the study of the meanings of particular experiences or events. IPA is interested in people-in-context, and the way they make sense of their experiences. IPA pays attention to the lifeworlds of the participants, and it does not concern itself with the production of objective statements, but, on the contrary, it is concerned with an individual's personal perception or account of an event or experience (Smith and Osborn, 2008), which is the focus of my study.

IPA is characterised by its reflexive component. As IPA acknowledges my participation as a researcher, and my own conceptions, it required application of a double hermeneutic perspective. This meant a two-stage interpretation process. On the one hand, the participants made sense and created interpretations of their experiences, and on the other, through my analysis I attempted to interpret the participants' accounts. IPA also acknowledges the importance of symbolic interactionism (Carter and Fuller, 2015) as part of a sensemaking mechanism. It also has a theoretical commitment to a person as a cognitive, active, and physical being whose emotional state, talk, as well as thinking process remain in constant connection with one another.

Another philosophical influence important for IPA was ideography, (described in more detail later) which facilitated paying attention to the particular. I was able to examine how a particular event became an experience, and how it was understood from the perspective of the participants of my study, situated in their contexts. Connected to this was the validity of individual cases, hence the call for small groups of participants. Ideography requires detailed case-by-case analysis of individual transcripts, and the aim of such an analysis is to examine particular cases and draw conclusions about particular groups of participants. This idiographic method of study, as opposed to a nomothetic one, focuses on individual cases and allowed me to formulate statements about those individuals. Therefore, I selected a purposive group of ten participants: five males and five females.

In my analysis, my aim was to interpret the meanings of the narratives, but I also considered wider contexts in which they were produced. Therefore Schleiermacher's (1998, in Smith et al. 2012) approach, which provides a holistic view of interpretative process, was well suited. For Schleiermacher, interpretation involves two levels: grammatical and psychological. The grammatical level investigates the objective textual meaning, and the psychological level considers the role of the author of the narrative. This view implies that individuals have unique ways and intentions when producing a narrative. These intentions create an impression on that narrative. The narrative analysis approach allowed me to investigate the grammatical level (interpretive poetics), and the phenomenological interpretative analysis rendered the insights into the psychological level.

In other words, I understood the interpretative process as my understanding not only of the text of the narrative, but also the narrators. This holistic approach created possibilities of "an understanding of the utterer better than he understands himself" (Schleiermacher, 1998, p 266). This also meant that my analysis offered a perspective on the narrative which the narrator was not aware of creating. What I also found enriching, albeit time consuming, was the iterative manner of analysis. I moved back and forth whilst looking at the data, and I interpreted the meanings within the hermeneutic circle (Smith et al., 2012). This meant that, as I approached the narratives from different levels, not necessarily in a linear fashion, I discovered new meanings and nuances.

All of the above suited my epistemological approaches well: a hermeneutic iterative way of interpretation of narrative descriptions both from the point of view of the written text itself and its attention to psychology, as well as idiographic attention to the detail, retaining a focus on the wider context within which the narratives were produced.

As mentioned earlier, IPA shares a strong intellectual connection with narrative analysis. IPA is concerned with sensemaking, and one way of sensemaking is done through the construction of narratives. Having stemmed from social constructionism, narrative analysis overlaps and integrates with some aspects of phenomenology (as shown in Fig.14). As the interest of my research was in narratives as mechanisms for understanding lived experience, these two methods of data analysis complemented each other very well.
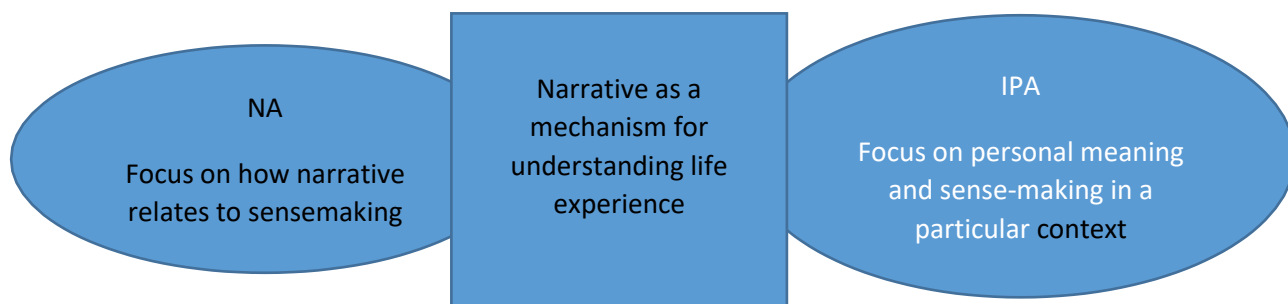
Figure 14. Overlapping areas of narrative analysis (NA) and interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA)

Rationale for adopting elements of Narrative Analysis

Apart from complementing IPA's intellectual commitments, narrative analysis pragmatic ontology of experience was particularly suitable as it encompasses several ontological features that are also features of the methodology itself. Dewey, Connelly and Clandinin (2006) identify three commonplaces/features of NA: temporality, sociality, and place, all of which I considered crucial to sensemaking of experiences.

Firstly, *temporality* refers to knowledge generation. Following Dewey, all inquiry proceeds from experience, and knowledge is obtained from experience, therefore it is attached to a specific point in time. However, I argue that, although knowledge is temporarily attached to an experience, it also transcends it, by becoming an experience itself. This conceptualisation resonated in the narratives of the participants when they internalised their experiences into knowledge upon which they based their future actions and behaviour. Connected to temporality is the pragmatic ontology of experience that emphasises continuity.

Experiences grow out of other experiences, generate knowledge, and lead to further experiences. This concept of continuity must be ontological: experiences ARE continuous, they do not just appear as such. The basic principle of ontology of experience, as stated by William James (1990) says that experiences are held together by themselves: one experience comes from the previous one and creates the following one.

The s*ociality* in my study meant to me that the participants in my study always and simultaneously found themselves in both personal and social conditions. The personal conditions could be feelings, hopes, desires, aesthetic reactions, as well as their moral dispositions. The social conditions were existential conditions, surrounding factors or forces which formed their

individual's contexts. This commonplace was connected to Dewey's notion of interaction: people are always in interaction with the situations in their experiences. Here, I found Connelly and Clandinin's (2006) claim that the relationship between myself, as the interviewer and the participants constituted a part of this social condition, impacting the generated in the interviews (Rapley, 2001). I discuss this relationship in detail in a separate part of this chapter.

The *sociality* of the pragmatic ontology is the emphasis on the social dimension of inquiry and understanding. The stories under study were products of a confluence of the social influences on a person's inner life, the social influences on people's environment, as well as their unique social history. I treated these stories as the epiphenomenal to social inquiry or reflections of important social realities, but I was also aware that they were not realities themselves.

The third feature of NI draws attention to the centrality of *place* and acknowledges the fact that all events happen in a concrete, physical place. The location of a place and its impact on the way people experience the world was crucial in my study. Following Basso's (1996) concept of the physical landscape being "wedded to the landscape of the mind, to the roving imagination, and where the latter might lead is anybody's guess" (Basso, 1996, 107, cited in Clandinin, 2007), I was aware that what the participants experienced in their native countries in Africa might have an informative influence on their understanding of what they experienced in the host culture in Finland.

Stories and narratives

As a research methodology, narrative is an interpretive approach in the social sciences, used in sociology, organisational studies, gender, studies, education, to name a few. It considers 'story' to be a fundamental unit that accounts for human experience. Human experience, rather than research, constitutes the basis upon which valuable knowledge is gained. I found this understanding suitable for my study as the connection between a story and experience was explicit here; experiences were expressed in stories.

Another reason I found stories a suitable form of narrative for my study was the fact that stories play a central role in the lives of traditional communities. According to Campbell (1969), stories brought people more in accord with themselves, others, the mystery of life itself, and the universe. Stories passed on from generation to generation carried not only the plots, but also the values that endured for hundreds of years. The stories followed a timeless and universal pattern,

which formed a blueprint, within which a story communicated a balance of various opposing forces. Through stories people shared, and still do, their personal truths. By doing so, they create links with those who participate in the exchange. The participants in my research come from societies where oral storytelling is a natural and especially valued mode of communication. Therefore, I considered using this form of data collection as one that enhanced the most natural way for the participants to share their lived experiences, as well as one that contributed to the validity of the data.

For most people, storytelling creates a way to recount an experience, provide a solution to a problem, or allow to make sense of the social world they live in (Moen, 2006). Polkinghorne (1998, 1) regards narrative as "the primary scheme by which human existence is rendered meaningful", whereas Gergen and Gergen (2006) posit that by telling stories people create coherent, understandable and meaningful frames for their lives, and can become effective means in social and individual transformation. Storytelling is a process of oral expression of events, integrating past experiences into meaningful learning as well as foreshadowing the future (McAlpine, 2016). Smith (2007) and Bamberg (2006) argue that people create stories out of life and in relation to others, influenced by the contexts, settings and audience, and also the purpose.
Atkinson (1998) claims that storytelling constitutes a basic and fundamental form of human communication. By telling stories and sharing important knowledge about themselves, people also discover deeper meanings in their own lives, by becoming protagonists and active agents.
They can also be important in constructing a sense of self, as individuals understand themselves through telling stories about their lives and experiences (McAdams, 2006).

The contexts and settings are located in culture. Culture therefore imposes its meaning on the events and experiences people narrate throughout their lives. Concurring with Bruner (1984), stories must be considered as rooted in cultural societal settings, and the way individuals construct them is also influenced by their settings. The way individuals gain knowledge of the world that they experience is constantly constructed and it is relative. It depends on the time, place, and interactions with others. Thus, storytelling is a form of organising that begins already during childhood and continues into people's adult lives. Heikkinen (2002) posits that human knowledge as well as individual identities are constructed, narrated and revised in a continual and on-going process. There is no single and static reality, but instead there are numerous realities

being constructed as a result of interactions. Therefore, human knowledge is relative and depends on people's past, their experiences, their values, the people the stories are addressed to, as well as the time and place (Bakhtin, 1986).

Analytical approaches

Interpretive poetics

Interpretive poetics, as part of narrative analysis, allowed a different analytical perspective thus rendering deeper insights into the data. It also expanded the scope of the analysis. The focus of narrative analysis is located not only in the individual's experience, but also in the social, cultural and institutional narratives within which the individual's experiences are constituted, shaped, expressed, and enacted. In the process of studying the narratives I listened, observed, transcribed and interpreted the texts of the narratives.

Annie Rogers et al. (1999) created a textual method of analysing written narratives called interpretive poetics. The primary aim of the method is to tap into and investigate what is at play deeper, beyond the written text. As I concurred with Rogers (Clandinin, 2007, p 109) that "the unconscious is at work everywhere in each of us as speaking subjects", I considered this deeper layer of analysis as necessary and helpful in my interpretative analysis. Reading into and beyond the textual transcripts of the narratives provided deeper insights than just the analysis the themes of the narratives.

I was aware of the five interpretive layers of reading a narrative, suggested by Rogers: story threads, the divided "I", the address, languages of the unsayable, and signifiers of the unconscious. However, I decided to apply only the first three in my analysis. The reason for this choice was that in my analysis I was not attempting to tap into the participants' unconscious minds, as I was neither equipped to do so, nor did I feel qualified to do so. Notwithstanding, as I listened to the recordings and reread the transcripts, I noticed broken utterances, stops in the narratives, and seeming contradictions. This provoked my curiosity and, in turn, called for analytical tools that would render a different perspective of the analysis, yet still allow me to remain at the textual level, without attempting psychoanalysis. The three first three levels of the interpretive poetics: story threads, the divided "I", and the address were just the tools to accomplish that.

Story threads

Rogers (2007) claims that every utterance people make, everything they say to someone else is a product of unconscious censorship, an inherent process people employ when speaking to others. This unconscious censorship is a form of repression people employ when they form a piece of speech, to shape their speech in specific ways for the purpose of it being heard by others. Finding the threads allowed me to uncover these "censored" layers and tap into the contents of the narratives that their authors might not be aware of creating.

As story threads span over the entire narratives, they connect the past with the present. Through my research questions, I wanted to find the connection between people's cultural values learned in their native cultures (the past), and their possible impact on their sensemaking of their lived experiences in a foreign host culture (the present). I believe that finding the story threads provided clues into this connection.

The divided "I"

Rogers (2007, cited in Clandinin, 2007) claims that when a person speaks, he/she must become divided to represent him/herself. The way people create their divided selves in their narratives points to them being at odds with who they are and who they want to be. I found this conceptualisation very useful for my study as this division between what the participant described as real, on the one hand, and ideal on the other, highlighted contradictions in these descriptions. These contradictions revealed tensions between the way the participants saw themselves and the way they were as a result of living in the host culture in Finland. Revealing these tensions further illustrated the participants' sensemaking when reconciling their cultural African values with the reality of the host culture in Finland, thus contributing to answering my research questions.

The forms of address

The concept of address explores to whom the narrator is talking in the narrative. This is connected with the way people position themselves. This positioning suggests closeness or distance, belonging or disassociation with the situations and experiences they encounter. This is also influenced by the values people hold dear to them.

What intrigued me in all the narratives was the way the narrators shifted their positions, thus changing the form of address: at times they addressed an imaginary other by using second person singular *you,* instead of first-person singular *I*. I began to wonder whether the narrators actually created extradiegetic characters in their narratives. I also wondered whether using second person narration distanced the teller from the tale?

Even though the narratives in my study were not works of fiction, I found Parker's claims about narrative in the works of fiction (cited in DelConte, 2013) helpful. Parker argues that authors employ second person narration (extradiegetic narrator) to distance themselves from certain events in their stories, especially the events or situations that might seem embarrassing, shameful or difficult to deal with. Using second person narrative also becomes a catalyst for the authors' concern that they will be associated with the events that their narrators tell, a concern that erodes the distinction between author and narrator.

Parker further claims that the tense the narrator is using plays a crucial role. Using past tense as well as historical and simultaneous present tense has the potential to distance the narrator from the events and from the "you" narratee. The rhetorical distance created by assigning experiences to a "you" only exists when people narrate those experiences in the past or present tense (having already happened or currently happening).

For example, the more a narratee is associated with the events, the less the narrator becomes responsible for them. Grammatically, this translates into because "you" have done or are currently doing something, "I" am not. Importantly, because the events are "real" and connected to another, the narrator can maintain the exclusive function of reporting, allowing the experiencing to reside in the distinct "you." In other words, by creating a narrator who directly addresses 'someone else,' a writer is in these cases able to put himself more 'in the place' of the story's 'telling' position rather than in that of the 'experiencing' position" (172). I provide examples of this later.

Finally, Larkin et. al (2006) posit that part of an interpretative analysis is to position initial interpretation within a wider social and cultural context.

To better understand the interplay between the analytical tools, and to provide a clear visualisation, I created a narrative tapestry. The tapestry served here as a metaphor of a narrative. I viewed the story threads to be a weft of a tapestry. The threads are interwoven horizontally into

a warp. The warp, running vertically, symbolises the cultural values of each individual, the cultural "I" of each narrator. As the narratives were told, the tapestry was being created, the contents making various and different patterns, structures and colours. The way narrators positioned themselves (the divided" I") and the way they addressed themselves and others symbolise their understanding of the narrated events, situations and experiences. These understandings shed light and provided the basis for the sensemaking of situations and experiences, which was the focus of my study.

Inclusive methodology

As mentioned earlier, I saw IPA and NA as complementary and therefore I adopted relevant parts from NA in order to compose an inclusive and richer methodology that ensures both rigorous data collection as well as analysis, but also allows for openness. Narrative analysis is located within the Deweyan ontology of experience (Dewey, 1938). Sharing intellectual commitments, and complementary qualities (explained later in this chapter), both IPA and NA give voices to individuals and acknowledge them as valuable data. The narratives of the participants were both subjects of scrutiny as well as media through which the participants transmitted their reality. The marriage of IPA and NA made my analysis deeper and more detailed, not to mention more interesting.

Figure 14 below shows the connections and complementary elements of both IPA and NA. The IPA allows for understanding of the meaning and interpretations of the lived embodied experiences, through the voices of the participants. NA allows for an analysis of the lived experience expressed through own narratives embedded in and influenced by social, cultural and institutional narratives.

INCLUSIVE METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Q1: How do black educated professionals of African origin experience life and work in a foreign host culture in Finland?

Q2: To what do extent do they draw on their cultural values in the way they make sense of their experiences?

INTERPRETIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS (IPA)

NARRATIVE ANALYSIS (NA)

Personal meaning and sensemaking

Examination of how people experience and make sense of their experiences

WORLDLINESS:
experiences belong to uniquely embedded positions in the world

Lived experience of being a-body-in-the-world

Experience is uniquely embodied

Physically and intersubjectively grounded actor

Voices of the experiencers

Interpretation of the experiencers

Study of stories /narratives initiated from personal experiences and proceeded in experiences

Lived experience expressed through own narratives embedded in and influenced by social, cultural and institutional ones

Socially, contextually, temporally located actor

Figure 14. Inclusivity of NA and IPA

The reason why an inclusive methodology was a suitable one was my belief that knowledge and people's understanding of lived experience is contextualised. Therefore, I adopted the "contextual constructionist" epistemological position. According to Madill et al. (2000), all knowledge is local,

provisional and situation dependent (Madill et al., 2000). I reject the realist epistemology that assumes that one reality can be revealed by using one methodology.

As the participants in my research made sense of their experiences in two very distinct cultural environments, they were and are exposed to different cultural meanings (Giorgi, 1995). This implies that their interpretation and understanding were altered as a result of encounters and observation whilst emerged in different environments, which Stiles (1993, p 602) coins as permeability. Stiles suggests that when adopting a constructionist epistemology, an objective way of looking at a phenomenon can be substituted by permeability.

The lived experiences which the participants expressed through their own narratives were embedded in and influenced by social, cultural, and institutional narratives both in their native cultures and in the host culture. The narratives that they shared with me were expressions of the "filters of permeability" or the outcomes of the double hermeneutic within their sensemaking.

Ensuring and evaluating quality

When reflecting on providing good quality for my research process and, especially ensuring the validity and quality of my findings, I realised that unlike within quantitative research, the criteria of what constitutes 'good' qualitative research are difficult to specify, and "within the methodological field, the criteriology debate continues" (Cassell, 2012). In addition, the diversity of methods used in conducting qualitative research is also dependent and determined by different epistemological and ontological commitments (Cassell (2012). For example, different epistemologies might interpret the same criteria differently (Ravenek and Rudman 2013). Therefore, adopting uniform criteria to assess the quality of qualitative research remains problematic. Whilst deciding on the most appropriate criteria to assess the quality of my study, I was reassured by Cassell's (2012) claim, that any assessment criteria that I would adopt must allow for my philosophical commitments, which also underpinned my research design. This view also called for deep epistemological reflexivity on my part when undertaking the assessment of the quality of my study (Amis and Silk, 2008).

A number of guidelines for assessing quality and validity in qualitative studies have been developed (Smith et al., 2009). For example, Guba (1981) proposed a model for assessing the trustworthiness of qualitative data, which is based on the identification of four aspects of trustworthiness that are relevant to both quantitative and qualitative studies: (a) truth value, (b) applicability, (c) consistency, and (d) neutrality. Later, Lincoln and Guba (1985, 1989) appropriated

sets of 'trustworthiness criteria' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) to replace such positivistic concepts as internal and external validity with credibility (authentic representations), and transferability (extent of applicability) respectively. They also replaced reliability with dependability (minimisation of researcher idiosyncrasies), and objectivity with confirmability (researcher self-criticism). Within IPA, Yardley (2000, 2008) proposed four broad principles which render a more pluralistic stance and can be applied irrespective of the particular theoretical orientation: sensitivity to context, commitment and rigour, transparency and coherence.

In my assessment, I combined selected criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and selected principles proposed by Yardley (2008). I focused on the following criteria: credibility (through prolonged engagement and context sensitivity), transferability (through providing thick descriptions), dependability, commitment and rigour (through data transparency), and confirmability (through demonstrating reflexivity).

Credibility

Credibility (authentic representations) asks whether the researcher has established confidence in the truth of the findings for the subjects or informants and the context in which the study was undertaken (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). It establishes how confident the researcher is with the truth of the findings based on the research design, informants, and context (Krefting, 1991). Credibility is usually obtained from the discovery of human experiences as they are lived and perceived by informants, it is subject-oriented, not defined a priori by the researcher (Sandelowski, 1986).

In order to achieve credibility or confidence in the 'truth' of my findings, out of the seven techniques (prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, referential adequacy, and member-checking) proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) I selected the first technique: prolonged engagement. Connected to that is Yardley's (2000) first principle: sensitivity to context. I attempted the member-checking technique after analysing the data, but unfortunately, the participants refused to take part. According to Tindal et al., (2009, p 180) "the very choice of IPA as a methodology is centered upon the perceived need for sensitivity to context through close engagement with the idiographic and the particular". I recruited a purposive sample of people who shared particular lived experiences, which facilitated sustained engagement in terms of establishing rapport, which I saw as central to the viability of my IPA study. I was able to develop relationships and trust with the participants through various

previous common engagements (prolonged engagement). I had known the participants for a number of years prior to the commencement of my study. I have known the context of the study (Finland and its culture) and shared its understanding with the participants. Therefore, I was confident that the participants felt comfortable disclosing information and sharing intimate stories about their experiences. I can, therefore, conclude that the accounts the participants provided were authentic.

Another way in which sensitivity to context can be achieved is through the appreciation of the interactional nature of data collection within the interview situation (Smith et al., 2009). Through developing a specific 'research persona' (Smith et al., 2009) I attempted to bracket some interactional habits of mine, such as sharing my own experiences, exercising my academic authority, demonstrating the full extent of my empathy. Instead, I tried to listen in an engaged manner and show sensitivity when posing the interview questions.

Relationship of Researcher and Researched

Alea and Bluck's (2003) model of the social functions of autobiographical memory posits that the characteristics of a narrator, such as personality (Baddeley and Singer, 2007), and a listener, as well as the quality of their interpersonal interaction, influence the kind of the narrative and the function that the narrative serves. Moreover, the characteristics of the narrative influence the way it is received by the listener. Rapley (2001, p 303) adds to this interrelational aspect of data collection by pointing out that any data emerge from a specific "local interactional context" which is produced in the talk of the interviewer and the interviewee.

I, therefore, conclude that the interpersonal as well as intrapersonal characteristics of the relationship between the narrator of the stories (interviewee, or participant as I would like to call him/her) and myself, the listener (interviewer) are of crucial importance as they influence the quality of the data gathered in the interviews.

In a life-story interview, the narratives at each stage of the narrator's life reflected the narrator's specific personal concerns, but, at the same time, they could not be disconnected form the narrator's interpersonal and sociocultural contexts. I was aware of these aspects of the factors influencing the data, and I acknowledged their impact.

I accepted the hallmarks in narrative inquiry of knowing: the relational and interactive nature of human science research, the use of the story, and a focus on a careful accounting of it. I also recognised the tentative and variable nature of knowledge. Notwithstanding, I also believed that executing the methodology of narrative analysis provided authentic and resonant findings.

I was considering if I could adopt, at least to some extent, a realist perspective. This perspective would mean that I would have to perceive social facts as objects. In other words, I would have to look at people, their relationships, their interactions, dispositions, attitudes, and culture as if they were physical things, thus making the phenomena of my study objectified. I wondered if this would allow me to stand apart from the subjects and think of them as having an independent, object-like existence with no intrinsic meaning (Smith, 1999), thus rendering my findings reliable and unbiased, and the knowledge of the researcher and the knowledge of the researched would stand as independent of each other, distant and separate. Consequently, my findings would not be bound to a specific context, but generalisable and possibly adopted to universal contexts.

Having said that, I was also very much aware that this clear-cut approach was not easy to adopt. As I began interviewing the participants, I realised that the content of the life stories they shared with me needed a more human approach. Therefore, I had to reconceptualise this distant and isolated researcher-researched relationship. I realised that human beings cannot remain totally bounded, atemporal and static, let alone decontextualised. In my study, both the participants and their life stories were very much influenced by the passage of time, as well as changing geographic locations, their values and relationships, and their transition from one cultural setting to another.

The only atemporality I could take for granted was the fact that at the point of data collection, the participants were bounded in a reality, and this reality was their given setting at that given time. They were reflecting upon their life stories from the standpoint of their current positions in time and place. This temporal location in time and space was my actual starting point: the perception and understanding of one's experiences as a result of living and working in a Western host culture.

I was also aware of the collaboration process that took place between the participants and myself. I regarded the participants as collaborators in the research process. Therefore, I use the term participants rather than informants, or the researched. After all, my research could not be carried out without their stories.

During the process of the study, I paid attention to outlining accurate descriptions of the characteristics of the research experience in the form of notes made after each interview. I believe that to be able to fully understand another human being, and the way he/she thinks and makes sense of experiences, I must see that person in his/her environment, sociocultural setting, and in their network of interrelationships with others. Following Denzin (1999), I saw presenting rich descriptions as crucial. I described in as much detail as possible the participants and their settings to stay faithful to the facts shared with me in the participants' narratives.

I attempted to remain as uninvolved as possible, especially during the process of data analysis and interpretation. One way I was able to assure this was by keeping uniform instrumentation through the study, as well as manipulation of potential intervening variables. By keeping uniform instrumentation, I mean using the same interview design (life story interview) in all the interviews. By manipulation of potential intervening variables, I mean paying attention to information that might add a different dimension to the data, and in turn change its validity. For example, my own participation in the research was such a variable. I had been rigorous in testing my own preconceptions and assumptions or conjectures against the obtained data to develop valid conclusions. Both as a researcher and human being, I recognised my own attitudes towards the subject of my study and the participants, and I needed to recognise them and make them explicit to form my own understanding of the extent to which they might cloud my data analysis and interpretation. The process of reflexive objectivity (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009) is a constant tool that I was aware of adopting throughout the duration of the entire research process.

One essential part of the reflective practice within interpretative qualitative multicultural studies involves attention to questions concerning methodology, interpretation, and practice in relation to the positions of researchers and the researched (Osanami Törngren and Ngeh, 2018). I concurred with Giddens (1976), who posited that the researcher should attempt to draw upon the same sorts of resources as "laypeople" in making sense of the subject that he/she aims to explain. In other words, I should endeavour to take on the perspective of the subject through relations in which empathy with Verstehen of the Other is pivotal to interpretation of the subjectivities of the participants (Smircich, 1983). As much as I tried to adopt such a position, I also became aware of a possible power structure that might occur between the participants and myself. In some interview situations, where the credibility of the information provided was essential, gender and race could play a part. Being a white female researcher, I was aware of this. Following Gunaratnam's (2003, p

54) concept of the racial interviewer effect (RIE), which implies that people make adjustments to the opinions they express when talking to an interviewer from a different race, as well as Archer (2002) and Fine (2004) who advocate for equal ethnic and racial positions between the researcher and the researched as a guarantee of more honest answers, I was aware of this imbalance, and of the possibility of being perceived as an outsider or even the Other.

According to Adamson and Donovan (2002) and Sands et al. (2007), these challenges are usually encountered by white researchers, like myself, interviewing non-white minorities. Hoong Sin (2007) points ou an imbalance in the literature on interracial and interethnic research. He continues by claiming that whiteness is seldom problematised, whereas race and ethnicity are analysed from the white perspective.

Another aspect of cross-cultural and cross-language research I was concerned about was the experiential and relational nature of knowledge production which my interaction with the participants will incur. Creating situated knowledge, according to Rose (1997),involves the examination of the nature of the research process by looking inward – self-reflexivity – and outward – reflecting on the relations with others involved in the research. The question I asked myself was : how the common language used in the research process, English, not the first language for both the participants and myself, will influence the data?

The situated knowledge we will create will be a result of mutually immanent social relations among the participants and myself. I was aware that, despite the fact that we speas the same language, there mifgt be a power-loaded relationship between us. For me English is my second language in which I completed my academic education, whereas for the participants English is the imposed language associated with the legacy of colonialism. How do I make sure that the voices of the participants are heard through the text, and their true meanings are shown?

I attempted to alleviate these concerns by outlining the personal, professional and political everyday experiences of the participants and myself, thus allowing the reader to fully grasp the contextual nature of knowledge production, thus increasing the trustworthiness of the research (Ellis and Bochner, 2005).

In addition, drawing on the concept of 'triple subjectivity' (Temple and Edwards, 2002) I was able to understand the complexity of creating situated knowledge entails. In in cross-cultural, cross-

language research situated knowledge is bound by the existence of several subjectivities and positionalities that all impact the validity of the data. Both the patrticipants and myself embody multiple positions in relation to one another, depending on several axes of intersectionality (i.e. gender, culture, economic status, educational background, etc.). Even though, having a common language of communication, and therefore having a better understanding of how the spoken word and local expressions are linked with the spatial and cultural identity of people (Watson, 2004) I was aware that our communication on the level of the spoken words might be impared due to the multiplicity of the different intersectional levels of positionalities.

On the other hand, there have also been studies (Phoenix, 1994; Rhodes, 1994) that claim no clear effect of the interviewer's racial background on the credibility of the data obtained.

In view of the above literature, and to defuse the tensions, I argue that matching racial backgrounds can also reproduce simplistic beliefs that only commonality can produce valuable and credible data. Dynamic multicultural interplay is a part of daily activities both in modern societies both at home and at work.

Black participants white researcher

As I began learning about the lives of the participants whilst listening to their narratives, I became aware of how shaky (Thuwai-Smith, 2007) the ground I was standing on really was. This implied epistemological challenges, such as the paradigms, practices, and frameworks which Erika Apfelbaum (2002, p 32) defined as "boundaries in cross-cultural communication that challenge the very foundations of our dominant theoretical frameworks". Even though Apfelbaum's concept of boundaries refers to listening to and understanding traumatic narratives, the issues which she raises have much wider applicability: they are the boundaries qualitative researchers, such as myself, encounter whenever attempting to understand the worlds of others carrying out cross-cultural research.

More specifically, Apfelbaum's concept of boundaries triggered the questions I asked myself throughout the research process: Can I, or should I – a middle class white woman researcher – research and present the voices of black people? How can I access, interpret and analyse narratives, which are distant to my own cultural and historical repertoire? How can I harness my own frameworks that determine how I comprehend the world, and prevent what is familiar to me from interfering with the analysis of the unfamiliar? How can I be open to other realities, and to

what extent do my own "frameworks", which are my identity, the socio-historical environment I grew up in, my partly western education, my culture, affect my openness? Which approach should I adopt when investigating the experiences of black people, as the participants of my study were? Born in the countries whose territories and states were ruled by larger and more powerful states, and grown up with experiences of imperialism and colonialism, the experiences of the participants of my study were very different to mine. At the same time, I also considered another question that originally prompted my interest in undertaking my study: how can I ignore them?

The term "boundary", therefore, implied metaphorical territoriality and division, inclusion, and exclusion creating a division between my dominant theoretical framework and points of reference and the ones of the participants. Both "territories" were separated from each other by the boundaries whose existence rendered me an outsider, excluded from the participants' dominant theoretical frameworks. For example, my limited knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of women expressed in the narratives of females informed my listening. I wanted and needed to know as much as possible, and therefore asked for explanations and clarifications of the points I did not understand. For example, my lack of familiarity with a common usage of severe corporal punishment in primary schools experienced by one of the females prompted more questions during the interview. I also reacted emotionally during the initial analysis whilst transcribing the interview. It is safe to say that a researcher familiar with these cultural norms (a black woman researcher) would listen and react differently and would ask different questions.

Making sense of black and white

The process of understanding what being black meant lead me to ponder what whiteness meant to me. The cross-cultural context of my study also made me consider the impact of my own sense of identity on my being able to remain open and bias-free to understand other people's worlds narrated in their stories.   I undertook the study with little awareness of my cultural positionality, not recognising that in the eyes of the participants I might have been perceived as "a white woman with a mission". There I was, attempting to enter the realm of people who belong to marginalised social groups, groups that do not occupy positions of economic and social power. I did not fully understand the power and privilege embedded in simply being white. To me, my being white has always been unmarked by ethnic or racial category, it was invisible, and I was colour blind. I concur with Sue's (2006) claim that white people are not aware of their racial identity, and I have to admit, following Frankenberg (1997b, p 11) that whiteness to me has always

been "rather…self-evident" suggesting that I never considered it as being my ethnic distinctive feature, a political identifier of difference, occupying a rhetorical location (Warren, 1999, p 193) within the context of my research. Similarly, I did not realise that my whiteness granted me privileges which McIntosh (1988, p 1-2) described as "unearned assets" or an "invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions" that render possibilities and opportunities taken for granted on a daily basis.

When I contemplated what whiteness meant to me, I realised that there is no one kind of whiteness and that the particular kind of white identity a person develops depends on a variety of factors. In Helms' (1994) model delineating six statuses that characterise the development of white racial identity, the focus is on the internal and external responses people exhibit when responding to racial situations. I can recognise myself in only two of them: the first one and the last one. The first one involves initial first encounters with people of colour, obliviousness to privileges of being white, and limited understanding of sociopolitical power structures influenced by race. The last status identified by Helms (1994) identifies autonomy, which involves emotionally internalising intellectualised approaches to race and white identity, confirmed by lifelong activities and commitment to resisting racial oppression and by ongoing openness to new information and growth.

Nevertheless, I did not see the exclusivity of white researchers (Bergerson, 2003) from the mixed-race research that entails cross-cultural and racial issues.   I concur with Tuhiwai-Smith (2007), who from the perspective of an indigenous researcher, attempts to disrupt the "history of exploitation, suspicion, misunderstanding, and prejudice" in acts of a counterhegemonic struggle over research. I also understand and appreciate the attempts to develop methodologies and approaches to research that privilege indigenous knowledges, voices, experiences, reflections, and analyses of their social, material, and spiritual conditions (Rigney, 1999, p 117). However, I do not see this domain of indigenous research as exclusive to indigenous researchers. I see a place for researchers, like myself, who share a common mindset, empathy, even though located in a different part of the world, and who are not quite Others. Further, I see that creating counter stories that challenge the dominant views in research such as mine has a legitimate position, as it opens up possibilities of alternative research participation speaking from different positions, and demonstrating and acknowledging different shades of white.

According to Krefting (1990), applicability is not seen as relevant to qualitative research because its purpose is to describe a particular phenomenon or experience, not to generalise others. Therefore, the ability to generalise is not relevant either, or becomes somewhat of an illusion as each researched situation is unique and made up of a particular researcher in a particular interaction with particular informants (Sandelowski, 1986).

Guba (1981) proposed a notion of fittingness, or transferability, as the criterion against which the applicability of qualitative can be assessed. Noon (2018) claimed that in IPA research, "fewer participants examined at a greater depth is always preferable to a broader, shallow and simply descriptive analysis of many individuals" (Hefferon and Gil-Rodriguez, 2011, p 756); IPA is, therefore, very cautious about making general claims. My objective was not to uncover what occurs in all settings, but rather show the perceptions and understandings of the group of ten participants, a particular group within a particular setting. Smith and Osborn (2003) wrote that IPA ought to be considered in terms of theoretical rather than empirical generalisability. This meant that transferability is more the responsibility of the person wanting to transfer the findings to another situation or population than that of the researcher of the original study (Lincoln and Guba, 1985); they should be able to draw links between the findings of an IPA study, the extant literature, and their own personal and professional experiences. This does not mean that IPA is opposed to general claims but advocates a stance that through the gradual accumulation of similar studies, more general claims can be made (Noon, 2018). Further, the authors argued that research meets this criterion when the findings fit into contexts outside the study situation that are determined by the degree of similarity or goodness of fit between the two contexts. If the original researcher presents sufficient descriptive data to allow comparison, he or she has addressed the problem of applicability. To ensure the transferability of my findings, or show how my findings can be applied to other contexts, I relied on the concept of thick description, described by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as a way of achieving a type of external validity, and by Holloway (1997) as a detailed account of field experiences in which the researcher makes explicit the patterns of cultural and social relationships and puts them in context.

Thick description

Ponterotto (2006) outlines five main characteristics of thick description as follows. Firstly, a social action or behaviour has to be described and interpreted within its particular context. Thick

description describes not only the action, but its significance. For example, in my study, I described the context of the home culture of the participants as those descriptions provided clues to understanding the participants' sensemaking of their experiences in the host culture in Finland. Secondly, thick description captures the thoughts, emotions, and network of social interaction among observed participants in their operating context. For example, in my study, I mentioned and interpreted pauses, or emotional reactions of the participants connected to their descriptions of particular situations. Thirdly, following Ponterotto (2006, p 542) "a central feature to interpreting social actions entails assigning motivations and intentions for the said social actions." I attempted to interpret my participants' way of interacting with their Finnish counterparts, and especially their reactions to discriminatory comments directed at them. Next, thick description should provide finer details to achieve verisimilitude in research: "truthlike statements that produce for readers the feeling that they have experienced, or could experience, the events being described" (Denzin, 1989, p 83-84). This led me to formulate thick interpretations, which in turn led to thick meaning of the research findings which resonate with the readers.

Commitment and rigour

Dependability closely relates to reliability (Guba, 1981; Lincoln and Guba, 1985) and entails steps taken to enhance the consistency of methods and processes during the data collection and analysis process (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In the analysis of the data, I relied on the methodology developed for over a period of twenty years, especially to ensure rigour in qualitative interpretive studies, by Gioia et al. (2012). The method allowed me to achieve data transparency and illustrate the way I coded the data, and how themes and categories emerged from the raw data (Gioia et al., 2013). It also allowed me to outline the steps of my analysis: from first-order analysis, using informant-centric in vivo codes (Saldana, 2009), through themes and sub- and super-ordinate categories.

I also showed consistency of methods and processes during the research process by creating an audit trail (Singh et al., 2021). I developed a uniformed interview protocol which I used as a starting point for each interview. I provide an example of the protocol in Appendix 6. I also describe the interview process in the latter parts of this chapter (Data collection). To provide a richer and more detailed analysis, I kept a detailed set of notes that I completed after each interview, an example of which I enclosed in Appendix 4. I am aware that dependability could be enhanced through detailed written procedures or an audit trail, through such strategies as, for example using multiple coders. Using other peer researchers would authenticate the decisions,

methods, themes, and analysis presented by me in my study, (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Morrow, 2005), but I also saw it as compromising the authenticity and exclusiveness of my authorship. I also saw external auditing as relying on the assumption that there is a fixed truth which can be confirmed by another researcher. This contradicted my interpretive perspective and my understanding that the knowledge generated in my research process was co-created, and there is no one objective truth to which my findings could be compared. Therefore, I conducted the data analysis and interpretation on my own.

Conformability

Even though conformability pertains to the objectivity criterion used in quantitative studies (Shenton, 2004), embracing objectivity is also important in qualitative research. My study was cross-cultural, and both myself and the participants were products of our respective cultures, which shaped our worldviews and understanding of the world. Therefore, our abilities to understand each other's cultural viewpoints could be compromised during the research process. In addition, the cultural contexts that shaped the identities of the participants were unfamiliar to me (I never visited sub-saharan Africa). This lack of my cultural contextual familiarity might have impacted my analysis and interpretation of the data. I, therefore, saw it crucial to adopt self-reference criteria (Lim and Firkola, 2000; Malhotra et al., 1996) and discuss my bias and influence on the research process and outcomes through reflexive analysis. Following Malterud's (2001, p 483-484) claim that "A researcher's background and position will affect what they choose to investigate, the angle of investigation, the methods judged most adequate for this purpose, the findings considered most appropriate, and the framing and communication of conclusions" I reflected on my cultural background in Chapter 1 (Personal reflections). I reflected on my position as a researcher and the relationship between the participants and myself as a researcher in Chapter 4 (Pilot study, final reflections) I explicated value judgments, and their impact on the way I analysed the data in Chapter 5 (Data analysis) and Chapter 6 (Discussion).

I also kept a reflexive journal, where I made regular entries during my research process. In the diary entries, I made notes about the decisions I made, be it methodological choices, steps of the study, or my own thoughts about specific situations, experiences, etc.

Motivated by the cross-cultural nature of my study, I consider it vital to acknowledge the role of my cultural background and the impact it might have had on the process of the research

(data collection and analysis as well as my interpretation of the findings). Therefore, I remained mindful and reflected upon my identity as a white researcher and its potential impact on the research process and my findings.

Procedures

In the following sections, I detail my recruitment and data collection procedures, the analytical process I followed, discussion of ethical considerations and assessment of the quality and validity of the study.

Participants and Sampling

IPA calls for small groups of participants. Within the framework of IPA, Larkin et al. (2019) suggest a selection of a small homogenous sample of three to six participants, with a uniform set of demographic characteristics, as this number provides enough cases to analyse convergences and divergences between participants. Homogeneity here refers to a group of people with a probable shared perspective on the investigated phenomena. In view of the above recommendations, I adopted the means of purposive sampling and interviewed ten participants: five men and five women.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Due to the specificity of my study, I was broad with my inclusion criteria, yet remained mindful of ethical practice due to the sensitive nature of the phenomenon of my study. In order to select a homogenous and ethically sound sample I created inclusion and exclusion criteria.

The participants must have had a long enough experience of living and working in Finland, therefore I recruited people who have resided in Finland between 10 and 15 years. The participants must have had higher university degrees. Moreover, the participants must come from African countries, which were part of the British Empire. I chose this as a criterion because of English being a common language, yet not a native one for both myself and the participants.

Recruitment

Initially, I approached individuals I have been acquainted with, either through social connections or work. I introduced the interest of my research to them and asked for their help and contribution. After that, a snowballing sampling followed: a technique in which one subject provides the name of another, who provides the name of a third and so on (Vogt, 1999). The African population in Finland is rather small, and the number of individuals in employment is even

smaller (see Chapter 2 for details). Therefore, the snowballing sampling technique proved very useful.

All the participants I approached agreed to participate. In one case, at the beginning of the interview a participant refused to be recorded. Despite my explanations, he wanted me to take notes instead of recording his voice. I took notes but decided not to include them in the data analysis, as I did not have the participant's words verbatim, as required by the methodology. I did not consider the data to be of value for my study and I abandoned it.

After the participants agreed to participate, I emailed the information sheet (see appendix 1) to provide an outline of the purpose of the study and to inform them about general areas of my interest. I invited them to read all the main points. I also emailed them a general outline of the questions and topics I was interested in talking about to provide transparency of the loose and general structure of the questions before the interview. I also informed them about the consent form we both would sign before the beginning of the interviews (See appendix 2). I ensured confidence and anonymity of the research process. We also agreed on the time and place for the interviews.

Situating the sample

As mentioned earlier, the participants in my research were five women and five men. Their countries of origin were Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. At the time of the study, they all lived in the Helsinki area (southern Finland) and had been living and working in Finland on average for 10-15 years. The average age of the participants was 45 years.

At the time of the interviews, three of the men were in full-time employment (by Finnish companies), two were entrepreneurs running their own businesses. Four women were in full-time employment (by Finnish companies) and one was an entrepreneur.

Data Collection

The Life Story Interview

I collected verbal data or what Easterby-Smith et al. (2015, p 129) call "natural language data", by conducting life story interviews. A life story interview is not a conversation (Atkinson, 1998) but a negotiated interaction (Taylor, 2008) shared by individuals. To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, I considered the following aspects: articulateness of the participants, integrity and honesty of the accounts, and the role of tacit knowledge in a research participant's ability to

reveal his/her thought or belief. I was mindful that the interviews would bring forth only what had overall salience at the time of the interviews. I could not control the extent to which the participants shared their true stories with me. However, I saw the interview process as an interactive, relational connection between two human beings who are engaged in the research process. I considered the role of the interlocutors as participatory, with shared interest in my study. Therefore, the level of interest and engagement of the participants formed a vital part in the research process.

I followed the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space model suggested by Clandinin and Connely (2000), a model which implies that the researcher listens, tells, and writes. First, I listened to the accounts in the life story interviews. Then I constructed my own narrative in my interview notes, in which the stories of the participants are connected to my own story. I also constructed the participants' stories in a form of cameos (McAlpine, 2016) at the beginning of the analysis of their narratives. I considered this an important part of the data as these cameos provided contextual background of the participants in a form of short stories. This not only connected the internal with the existential, but also the past with the present, which helped in understanding the native cultures of the participants.

Atkinson (2007) sees the life story interview as a natural bridge that connects several levels of inquiry: the disciplines (psychology, sociology, folklore, history, education) that adopt narrative inquiry methodologies, the methodologies themselves and within them the ideographic and nomothetic approaches, the telling and the living of a narrative, and finally the whole and the parts of the life being narrated.

A life story narrative is a qualitative research method for gathering information on the subjective essence of one person's entire life. I drew here on Dilthey's concept of life (Das Leben) (cited in Morgan, 1933). This concept refers to life as something real and significant, as it is experienced by an individual in day-to-day life. Dilthey sees an individual's experience of his/her own life in two ways: as unique (not like anyone else's), and at the same time as universal (like others). The life story interview brings both these perspectives of lived experiences into clear focus. This understanding of one's life as a lived experience formed a foundation for my narrative and interpretive approach through which I looked at people's lives as whole persons whose cultural identities were developed and moulded during their entire lives. The life story interview provided

me with insight into the spectrum of an individual's experience in its entirety. The life story interview also has at its focus an understanding of single lives in detail (Cohler and Geyer, 1982), an understanding of which I saw as the first step to understanding one's identity and a sense of self.

Further, Atkinson (2007) proposes that as a narrative inquiry, a life story interview seeks to bring forth the voice and the spirit within a life-as-a-whole personal narrative. This approach is built on respect for the individual voice of the storyteller and the meanings he/she brings into the story. Holstein and Gubrium (1995) further argue that, through a life story interview, the storyteller can construct their own reality, and the researcher learns through their stories about who they are. I particularly valued this ideographic, subjective approach for two reasons: it brought into focus one of the aims of my research of hearing previously silenced voices and unheard stories. "Telling our story enables us to be heard, recognized and acknowledged by others. Story makes the implicit explicit, the hidden seen, the unformed formed, and the confusing clear" (Atkinson, 1998). Moreover, the ideographic approach put me as a researcher in the position of a listener and a learner. I learned about the identities of my participants through their stories, and the meanings they drew from them.

Finally, Atkinson's (1998) claim that telling one's life story provides answers to the question of WHO ONE IS, was crucial to finding answers to the interest of my study. As mentioned in chapter 3, people's identities are informed by values which inform their perceptions and understanding of the world. Therefore, delving into the identities of the participants by listening to the stories they shared provided a plethora of insights into their way of experiencing and understanding the world. Atkinson (1998) suggests that one of the ways the story can be used by a researcher is to determine what relation the story told must have with the person telling it. Does the story tell who the person is? How is identity defined? What identity statuses are expressed, and are they internally and externally consistent? I provide answers to these questions in chapter 5.

Interview protocol

To design the structure of the interview, as well as the approach of the interview questions, I borrowed from McAdam's (1990) Life Story approach to understanding personal history. I found this approach suitable as it provided me with a psychologically validated view, also useful later during the data analysis stage.

When designing the interview questions, I drew from Atkinson (1998) and McAdams (1990). I focused the questions on areas that influence an individual the most and that have a strong impact on the development of the sense of self. McAdams and Cox (2010) propose a threefold framework of development of the self and identity, guised in three metaphors (actor, agent, author). These metaphors relate to the age of an individual, and therefore render themselves appropriate to be used in a life-story narrative. I designed some of the interview questions in alignment with this framework in order to obtain insight into potential factors that could have an important role in the development of the self and identity.

Personality psychologists claim there is a correlation between life stories, personality traits, and psychological well-being (Bauer, McAdams and Sakaeda, 2005; McAdams et al., 2004) while arguing that a person's internalised and evolving story of the self (*narrative identity)* constitutes a distinct layer of personality itself (McAdams, 2008; McAdams and Pals, 2006). I drew on the concepts from social psychology that explore how selves are narrated and performed situations and social contexts (McLean, Pasupathi and Pals, 2007), as well as from cultural psychology with its interests in the way in which individuals appropriate and negotiate society's master narratives in the making of self (Hammack, 2008). Following Reichenbach (1938), in the *context of discovery*, open-ended narrative accounts for broad patterns, themes, images, and qualitative characterisations can generate new theories about lives and experiences of the participants.

Adapting a life story interview protocol, I asked each participant to describe the overall trajectory of his or her life. The questions were selected to focus on several areas: childhood (usually spent in the country of origin), memories that are of importance (low points, high and turning points), and significant persons (role models). This was followed by questions about adult and professional life set in the western culture (Finland) (low, high, turning points). Ranging in length from one to two hours each, the interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed.

I conducted the interviews as a conversation with 'purpose', loosely following my interview schedule for guidance rather than being dictated by it (Smith and Eatough, 2007). I remained flexible with the schedule in light of the interviews entering unexpected areas or uncovering novel issues I found enlightening, or that were pertinent to the research question (Smith et al., 2009). This made it possible for the participants to be active agents in shaping their interviews, positioning them as their own experiential experts (Smith and Eatough, 2007). It was important for

me to foster a comfortable environment for the participants to discuss their experiences, and I only provided prompts if necessary.

I was happy to have been invited to some of the homes of the participants where I was able to observe and note down some relevant details. I included them in parts of the analysis, but as I was not able to observe all the homes, I considered the notes only as providing additional information.

Interview themes and questions

The themes I was interested in discovering were connected to the research questions.

I used these themes when designing and developing the interview guide.

Childhood memories

Please tell me what you remember most about your childhood.

> *Probe:* Can you share examples of any events of importance?

> *Probe:* Why are they important to you?

Do you remember any persons who were involved? What was special about them?

> *Probe*: Why do you consider them a role model? Are they still important to you?

Adolescent memories

Please describe a specific event from your teenage years that stands out as being especially important or significant.

> *Probe*: Why just this event? How did it impact your future life?

Do you remember any dreams/plans/desires you had then?

Adulthood

Please tell me about your life in Finland

Any specific personal/professional event from your adult years (age 21 and beyond) that stands out as being especially important or significant.

The themes and questions (adopted from Bauer, McAdams & Sakaeda, 2005) below served as additional probes if they did not emerge in the narration about the childhood, adolescence and adulthood.

Conducting the interviews

At the beginning of each interview, I invited participants to read and sign the consent form. I answered any questions they might have had at that stage. I also signed the consent form. I also let them know that in case they felt uncomfortable they were free to withdraw at any time or refuse to answer my questions. This, however, did not happen on any occasion.

I worked to gain the participants' trust by sharing information about myself and the research to build rapport before the interview commenced. This provided an opportunity for the participants to get to know more about me as a person and researcher. Revealing information about my country of origin, and the fact that I was not British, as they perceived me to be, created more equal and open communication.

I decided not to take notes during the interviews. I felt that I wanted to focus my attention solely on the participants and thought that taking notes whilst listening would disturb this process. I completed interview notes right after each interview. (see Appendix 3)

Reflections on the interviews

Following each interview, I reflected on each one individually. I wrote interview notes and made some notes in my reflective journal (see Appendix 4 for an example).

I was struck by the stories the participants shared with me and was also surprised how intimate some of the narratives were. As some of the interviews took place in the participants' homes I was welcomed and often hosted with meals. I questioned whether being interviewed by me, a white woman, had any impact on the stories the participants shared with me and subsequently the data. I found that research suggests men who are interviewed by women are more cautious with their use of language to ensure they do not cause offence (Williams and Heikes, 1993). Further, researchers have explored how their perceived

role as a 'researcher, 'female student', influences data (Richards and Emslie, 2000). I was aware of the fact that I was perceived as a white 'western' researcher who was interested in the experiences of black men and women living in a western culture. I knew that such a perception might have caused a rift between us as well as influence the data. Therefore, as soon as it was suitable, I briefly introduced my cultural background. I noticed that it did break the ice and created more open communication between us.

Transcription

Having received consent from each participant, I digitally recorded the interviews. I transcribed all interviews verbatim by myself. I checked the transcriptions for accuracy and included any significant non-nonverbal communication such as laughter and significant pauses in the narrative (Smith and Dunworth, 2003). I ensured superfluous words and hesitations such as 'you know' and 'hmm' were included so I remained as close as possible to the participants' dialogue during the analysis.

To maintain anonymity, I changed all identifying features including participant names, place names and any other identifying details. Each participant was given a pseudonym and in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998), I keep the pseudonyms and signed consent forms separate from the digital recordings, transcriptions, and personal data. The data remains password protected and will be kept for six years in accordance with University of Westminster ethical guidelines.

Pilot study

Overview

The pilot study was carried out to find out whether the methodological approach, the initial interview design, and the methodology of the analysis produced the data that provided information and possible answers to the research questions, namely: 1) How do black educated professionals, who arrived in Finland in the 1990s, from selected African countries, experience their life and work in a foreign host culture in Finland? 2) To what extent do their native cultures inform their understanding of their experiences of the host culture? 3) How do their experiences influence their cultural identities?

The method I chose at the beginning of the study was narrative analysis, and the tool for my inquiry was life-story interview, adapted from Atkinson (1998). This type of interview fulfilled several functions necessary for obtaining valid and reliable data. Firstly, stories and storytelling are central to communication among traditional communities, and they create links with those who participate in the exchange. Therefore, I considered this way of sharing knowledge as being the most natural and comfortable manner for the participants. Secondly, a life-story interview brought a perspective of lived experiences into clear focus. This understanding of one's life as lived experience formed a grounding for my narrative and interpretive approach through which I looked at people's lives as whole persons with their cultural identities, formed and moulded during one's entire life. Thirdly, Atkinson (2007) proposes that the life-story interview seeks to bring forth the voice and the spirit within a life-as-a-whole personal narrative. This approach is built on respect for the individual voice of the storyteller and the meanings he/she brings into the story. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Atkinson's (1998) approach to the subjective value of narrating one's life story (answering the question of WHO ONE IS) proved useful in addressing my research questions.

I followed Kohler Riessman's (2008, p 26) six main points that determined what good narrative research entails:

1) Interpretation begins already at the stage of the interview.

2) Narrative interviewing is not a set of "techniques".

3) Narrative interviewing requires attentive and engaged listening.

4) The setting of the interview is important.

5) The setting can forge greater communicative equality.

6) Transcripts should not be reified.

All the above points reaffirm fundamental assumptions of the approach to narrative research that I follow: The researcher participates in the creation of the narrative but does not have access to the narrator's direct experience, only to the "imitations of thereof" (Kohler Riessman, 2008, p 22). In view of the above, one of my concerns when preparing for the interviews was how I could facilitate storytelling in my interviews.

Here, I concur with Kohler Riessman's assertion that an important aspect of narrative investigation methods has more to do with developing a state of mind as well as conversational sensitivity, conducive to a conversation. Therefore, as much as it is important, the specific wording of a question is of less importance than the emotional attentiveness and engagement of the interviewer. I tried to keep this in mind and therefore the style of my interview-conversation was informal, relaxed, and friendly. I also encouraged carrying out the interviews in less formal settings, and thus suggested the participants' homes.

As much as I prepared the questions for each interview, I also "reserved" a small mental niche in my mind where I told myself: 'this will be an interesting, nice talk about YOU'. In other words, I tried to approach this as a friendly encounter with a person I do not know, but I want to get to know. In a way, I was prepared to go where the narrator took me and was open to the unexpected.

Group of participants

The purposive group (sample) of the first participants was selected from individuals who were familiar to me. The four participants were black males from Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, and the Caribbean. I decided to select this purposive, cross-section sample for the pilot study to identify potential differences and similarities among their accounts. The findings helped make further decisions as to whether I should continue my research with more homogeneous samples or to focus on a more heterogenous sample of participants. The participants were professionals,

educated at university level. The average age of the participants was 48, and the average time spent in Finland was 15 years.

Interviews

My aim from the very beginning was to involve the participants in the entire process, from the interview to the analysis. When I contacted them with my suggestion about their participation, I explained the interest of the research and the areas of my interest, and asked them for their help and participation, rather than merely for providing information. In all cases, their interest and willingness to participate was clear. At their request, I sent initial guideline questions to them before the interviews. The guideline questions were as follows:

1. What do you remember of your childhood, family stories, role models?

2. What cultural celebrations do you remember?

3. What cultural values were passed onto you?

4. What cultural influences are important to you?

5. Any special people that influenced you?

6. What do you remember of your adolescence?

7. How important is your cultural background to you?

8. What are your best memories?

9. What are your worst memories?

10. How is your life in Finland, especially at work?

11. How would you describe your identity?

The first four interviews were carried out between February 2016 and June 2016. Three of them took place in the participants' homes, one in a quiet meeting room at my university.

Each interview lasted between 1.5-2 hours and was tape-recorded and later transcribed verbatim. As mentioned before, when choosing the type of interview, as well as designing the interview questions, I borrowed from the concept of the life-story interview from Atkinson (2007), who emphasises the life-story interview as a natural bridge that brings together and renders insights

into several aspects of a person's life; it touches upon both the psychological and the cultural. During the interviews, I adopted a naturally flowing conversational approach. Although my interview protocol was structured and well-thought through beforehand, I gave some allowance during the interviews for stories to unfold naturally. This allowed for a more relational mode of interviewing, which I see as one that gives respect to participants' ways of understanding and organising meaning in their lives. I am aware that this approach does not assume objectivity, but instead privileges positionality and gives space to subjectivity. I acknowledge this feature as an advantage for the study of personal narratives.

In addition to the borrowings from Atkinson, I also added some of my own questions, based on my wish list that I created before designing my interview questions. My wish list questions were as follows:

1. Do you ever think about your identity? Is it important to you?

2. How do you understand it? Is the colonial past important to you? If so, how important (to you) is the colonial past?

3. Does it (colonial past) have any impact on your life now? Has it ever had an impact?

4. Do you feel that it had a negative influence on your life in any sense? On your professional development? As a human being?

Following my decisions about the interview-conversation approach described earlier, I decided not to take notes during the interviews. As I wanted to provide as relaxed and comfortable setting for the interviews, I wanted to focus solely on the participant and the content of the narrative. However, I did make a few small notes about the body language and the mood of the participant at certain moments that I thought were relevant and crucial to the interpretation of the meaning. After the interviews, I made notes on each interview. For that purpose, as well as to ensure a uniform and clear format, I created an interview notes template (see Appendix 1). I also updated the notes during transcription and later while listening to them during the analysis.

I also transcribed each interview verbatim. I adopted a consistent method for denoting different ways of speech, pauses, breaks, raised intonation, and different ways of stressing certain words. I borrowed from conventions developed by Gail Jefferson (1984) (see Appendix 1).

What I noticed and learned during transcribing and later reading the text was that the gestures rendered by body language were difficult to convey in the written text, but at the same time the intonation (also difficult to show in the text) helped to bring it back when reading the text. I made decisions as to leaving out small parts of the interviews, and these are impossible for the reader to know about. Transcribing and hearing the interviews was like being in the interview setting again. I enjoyed this tremendously.

Having completed the four transcripts, I was both impressed with the level of the detail as well as overwhelmed by the volume of the data. This illuminated to me how important it is to make decisions about the boundaries of a narrative and how this contributes to my participation in co-creation of the narrative.

Analysis (overview of my approach)

I have considered two different approaches to my analysis: grounded analysis and narrative analysis. Both approaches bear similarities as well as differences. Both contain elements that seem suitable for my research as they can be linked to my philosophical approaches and my methodology.

As a social constructionist researcher, I adopted a relativist ontology, accepting multiple realities, and not exclusively one. Linked to that ontological position is my subjectivist epistemology, accepting knowledge as co-creation. The intuitive, holistic approach to data offered by grounded analysis, its openness to new discoveries, possibilities of building theory grounded in data, as well as its openness to understanding data in the context in which the data was created was a suitable approach for my study. In addition, narrative analysis, with its attempt to understand how individuals make sense of their worlds and themselves, proved a suitable approach.

In summary, in the pilot study I mainly drew on narrative analysis, but also on the attention grounded analysis pays to historical and social context, as well as its commitment to the voices and views of the participants.

Catherine Kohler Riessman (2008), in *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences,* describes three levels of inquiry and analysis in narrative research. These are: 1) stories told by participants, 2) interpretation done by the researcher, and 3) reader's reconstruction. These levels correspond to

the three stages of carrying out the research: fieldwork or collecting data through the interviews, analysis of the narrative data, and writing up the results.

The analysis of the stories transcribed in the four interviews focuses on the plots of the stories, actors and their parts, activities and places, possible problems and their potential causal links. In more detail, it also explores disruptive life events (Riessman, 2000), as well as the accounts of experiences that occurred in the participants' lives which had a fundamental effect on changing their lives, giving the, what I call "native narratives", different dimensions and changing them into new "hybrid plots". The analysis of these narratives takes into consideration the intersection of biographies, history, and society. As personal narratives, all events that happen to people throughout their lives are located times and places. I consider individual narratives to be stories not just about people's lives, but also about the social spaces that they inhabit and the societies they live in. Therefore, the stories provide insight into the social spaces within Finnish society as well.

My analysis began already, in a way, as I designed the interview questions. It continued during the interview-conversation itself, further continued during the transcribing process, and continued during the analysis of the transcript.

In the thematic analysis, the themes that the participants brought in their stories were identified.

As can be seen in Table 3, the categories derived from clustering the themes in the narratives of the childhood memories suggest identity development based on such values as respect for family and authority, work ethics, education, collaboration and creativity, collectivity, and a sense of justice. The adolescence narratives show a transition into stronger agency where personal plans and ambitious goals are set by the participants. The categories aggregated from the narratives of adulthood show how the values learned in childhood were compromised as a result of attempting to adjust and accept. The categories of resignation and feeling alienated suggest negotiated, and at times failed, attempts to fit in.

Table 3. Themes and categories

THEMATIC ANALYSIS, based on the four pilot study interviews

THEMES (Childhood narratives)	CATEGORIES
Value of education	Competition, Ambition
Importance of language	Creativity
Role of teachers as mentors	Strong work ethics
Playing with peers	Group awareness, Collectivity
Role models: close family members	Respect for elders, and authority
	Sense of justice and fairness
THEMES (Adolescence narratives)	**CATEGORIES**
Value of education/studying abroad	Ambition,
Lack of money	Unattainability of plans
Role models: strong male leaders	Achieving goals
Skin colour/confusion about own identity	Racial awareness, being different
THEMES (Adulthood narratives)	**CATEGORIES**
Comparisons (own country vs Finland)	Self-verification
Acceptance (alien in a host country)	Resignation
Changing own behaviour to fit in	Adaptation
Adherence to own values	Compromising
Obligation to give back	Ambition to contribute
Value of education and self-development	

Skin colour awareness, unfair treatment	Racism, discrimination
Limited career trajectories	Prejudice
Lack of trust and acceptance	
Sense of not being welcome	Alienation
Lack of acceptance	

Coding

In agreement with Smith et al. (2012, p 36) who claim that interpretations must be grounded in the "meeting of the researcher and the text", and the IPA interpretation is based on reading from *within* the narrative, produced by the participant, I attempted to adhere as closely to the text of the transcript as possible. I also wanted to obtain insights which were both phenomenological and hermeneutic. This meant getting as close as possible to the experience of the participant, while being aware that the interpretation came both from the researcher and the participant. "Without the phenomenology, there would be nothing to interpret; without the hermeneutics, the phenomenon would not be seen." (Smith et al., 2012, p 37)

The first level of analysis involved eliciting emerging themes. I transcribed all the narratives myself verbatim, and as laborious as it was, it also turned out to be a very useful first step in my analysis. It made me relive the experiences of the interviews by hearing the voices of the participants again and remember how they communicated non-verbally at particular moments during the interviews. The transcriptions of each interview were about 15-20 pages long and provided an abundance of data. I read and re-read the transcripts, first identifying themes (Saunders, 2016), drawn as an inference from an extended passage of narration. I tried to keep an open mind, underlining and marking striking, recurrent, parts that shed light on the participants' sensemaking of experiences. I did this with pen and paper (see Appendix 1 for an example).

In order to ensure "qualitative rigor" (Gioia et al., 2012), while at the same time keeping an open, creative mind, I used the "systematic inductive approach to concept development" devised by Gioia et al., (2012, p 16). This approach has as its basic assumption that the world is socially constructed by people who are "knowledgeable agents" (17). It presents systematically first-order analysis that

adopts informant-centric codes. Therefore, following Saldana (2009), I adopted in vivo codes. In the first-order analysis, I adhered very closely and faithfully to the words and phrases used by the participants, and I did not try to distil categories at this stage.

Having said that, I was also inspired by Alvesson and Kärremann (2011) who state that "research is not just about empirical and methodological precision, it also involves craft, creativity and search for mystery". This approach also called for imagination (Mills, 1959), openness and undecidability (Abbot, 2004). In other words, being an interpretive qualitative researcher, I was aware of the rigour that had to be maintained in order to ensure validity and credibility of the findings, but I was also drawn to the idea of crafting "with my hands" (Bell, 2016) as I meandered through the abundance of data to find my way around. I tried to balance the two.

This resulted in approximately 150-200 first-order codes per interview. Therefore, I conducted the second phase of the analysis where I grouped these codes according to the similarities and relationships between them. This reduced the number of codes to about 50 per interview.

In the second-order analysis, I tried to answer the question of whether the emerging themes point to concepts that might explain or describe the researched phenomena (experiencing life in a foreign host culture). I was also curious about and open to any other or unexpected themes that emerged which were not necessary connected with what I was looking for. I was particularly interested in new themes or concepts that do not have "theoretical referents" (Gioia, et al., 2012) in the literature that I previously reviewed. At the point of "theoretical saturation" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), I identified all possible second-order codes and I developed then further into, what Gioia et al., (2012) call second order "aggregate dimensions". After that, I created a visual data structure presentation (Figure 4).

I was aware of the interpretative decisions I had to make when deciding which segments (Riessman, 2000) of the transcripts I should include in my analysis and which ones to exclude. Whilst some sections of the narratives contained more "evidence" and others less, the parts with "less evidence" still provided relevant supportive background data. In view of that, I considered the whole narratives to be valuable sources of data, and therefore analysed them in their entirety.

As I was looking into links between the participants' sensemaking of their experiences of life in a foreign host culture and the cultural values of their native cultures, I was interested in how the respondents performed their identities in their stories. I found this of particular interest and value,

as these identity performances provided insights into the links to their sensemaking. For example, they signalled acts of resistance towards the master narrative by positioning themselves in order to put forth the preferred identity. Narrators also situated their stories in particular ways, and the manner in which this was accomplished conveyed a great deal about the presentations of the self (Goffman 1969, cited in Riessman 2000), as "Identities are constituted through such performative actions" (Riessman 2000, p 20). In order to make this process visible in the stories, narrators positioned characters and the audience as well as selves in certain ways. I tried to unfold this by analysing grammatical structures and the choice of vocabulary.

I found interpretive poetics proposed by Annie G. Rogers (Rogers at al., 1999), a suitable tool which afforded a more representational way of interpreting. The method was originally created as a tool for analysing texts, and it was composed of five reading layers, of which I borrowed three: story threads, divided "I" and forms of "address".

Finally, I viewed the narratives as not assuming objectivity but rather positionality and subjectivity. Therefore, my belief was that there could not be one truth in the narrative accounts. Working from a constructionist and performative perspective, I viewed truth differently. Verification of the facts that happened in the narratives was not as important as an understanding of the meaning of

these events by the participants. The personal narratives of the participants constituted meaning-making units. I was interested in the events in the stories about the past, as they interpreted them. I was not interested in the facts as they happened. The participants related the events of the past from the vantage point of the present realities and values of the host culture, thus making a connection between the past and the present. In my analysis, I looked for these connections, as these provided clues to their sensemaking being influenced at the cultural values learned in the native cultures.

These shifting time-space connections had a strong impact on the participants' understanding and sense-making of the situations they were in, the experiences they had gone through, but also on their own identities. As Mishler (1995, p 90) says, "as we access and make sense of the events and experiences in our past and how they are related to our current selves, we change their meanings".

Final reflections

Being a critical researcher, I need to remain attuned to the issues of what Alcadipani (2015) calls "politics of identity". Nkomo (1992, p 490) emphasises the importance of societal race relations and points out that "researchers must also understand the effects of their own racial identity and experiences on their work". Cunliffe and Karunanayake (2013) posit that identity construction and identity politics are always at play as a result of researchers being immersed in the research and engaged with the researched. Vanderbeck (2005, p 388) develops this further by suggesting that the relationships the researcher shares with the research are "entangled with systems of social power based on gender, sexuality, class, 'race', ethnicity, age, (dis)ability and other factors", and therefore there is an inherent power dimension involved.

I concur with Mignolo's (2000, p 170) proposition that geographical regions, such as Europe and Africa (my example) of the world are present in the "imaginary of the modern/colonial world system". Both regions provide grounding of value systems, racial configurations as well as structures (often hierarchical) of knowledge. These values create discursive imaginaries, which in turn lead to creation of essentialist understandings of meanings. Moreover, the centre's representational apparatus of the colonial project, by evoking the myth of discovery, created practices that constructed the non-European world as Europe Other. This is particularly salient in my research, and, from a critical, postcolonial point of view, I have to include this component in my reflective accounts as well as the analysis of my data.

As a researcher pursuing my studies at a British University, and as a lecturer working and living in Finland, I am by default geographically positioned in the centre. I may also be viewed as such by the interviewees. Also, the nature of my research is embedded in traditional research practices, which in turn are embedded in spatialised politics of knowledge, with the theories, epistemologies and methods developed by the centre and for the centre.

Notwithstanding, as mentioned above, coming from Poland, by virtue of my identity as a researcher I position myself in a non-centre, peripheral location. I recognise this dichotomy, and I see it as a strength as well as contribution to breaking the paradigm of the nature of northern social science, which, as Stanfield (1994) points out, is hegemonic and dominated by white, male researchers. The value and lack of reflexivity about own identity (ethnicity, gender) as well as its crucial role and influence on the researcher-researched relationship is further pointed out by Fine

(1994) as well as by Hastings (2010), who emphasise that the relationships between the researcher and the researched are characterised as fluid and emergent, where both the researcher and the researched position themselves and also *are* (emphasis mine) in evolving manners. These changing positionalities impact the research itself and the respective identities.

There is an immediate problematisation of identities, especially my identity as a researcher. Alcadipani et al. (2015) suggest that such problematisations can have a potential influence on the research process and the results. In some of my interviews, I encountered an inversion of the orthodox structure of the interview protocol. Some of the participants at times assumed roles of investigators and shifted me into the position of that of a participant.

I was aware of this shift, but I did not see it as threatening to the research process. As a researcher located within the social constructionist, qualitative practice, I do not have the presumptive right to keep a distance. Here, I agree with the view proposed by Smith (1990), that there are power relationships present and maintained in the research process, especially during an interview. My goal was to minimise the potential structure of the subject-object distinction, thus minimising the possibility of power asymmetry. Instead, my aim was to embrace a dialogical, reflexive and intersubjective position.

Chapter 5: Data Analysis

Overview

My study's research question investigated 1) How do black educated professionals, who arrived in Finland in the 1990s, from selected African countries, experience their life and work in a foreign host culture in Finland? 2) To what extent do their native cultures inform their understanding of their experiences of the host culture? 3) How do their experiences influence their cultural identities?

This chapter is divided into two main parts. In the first part, I introduce the participants of the study with short narratives outlining their background stories. I recreated the stories as narratives based on the information the participants shared with me. I tried to structure the stories in as much a uniform way as possible. The contents, though, naturally vary as they are based on the information each participant shared with me, and they differ from each other. I remained true to the words of the participants and included no comments or any interpretations of my own.

I named the participants with fictitious names for anonymity's sake. The original names of the participants (all but one) were of Latin origin and Anglicised. Therefore, I considered it appropriate to adopt similar fictitious Anglicised names to hide the real names of the participants, thus ensuring their anonymity.

The stories of the participants and the division of the group into females and males are a result of the differences that emerged as a result of the analysis. I analysed the narratives of the female participants first and created a table illustrating the findings. Afterwards, I analysed the narratives of the males and created a similar table. As the findings showed stark differences, I decided to divide the group into males and females.

In the second part, I elicit the main themes that run through the narratives of the participants. The themes are grouped into the main superordinate themes. I also show connections between the native narratives of the past and the present way of sensemaking to demonstrate how the values and the upbringing in the native home culture informed the sensemaking of the participants in the foreign host culture, which is the focus of my second research question. The chapter continues with the analysis of the story threads, the divided "I" and the forms of address of each participant separately. Finally, it presents a summary of the findings.

Narrative analysis

Female participants and their stories

Table 4. Names, age and time spent in Finland (females)

NAME	AGE	COUNTRY	TIME IN FINLAND
Ella	57	Zambia	27 years
Jane	57	Kenia	28 years
Megan	49	Ghana	15 years
Lucy	36	Kenia	12 years
Nora	39	Kenia	17years

Ella's story

Ella was born in Zambia. At the time of the interview Ella was in her late fifties. She arrived in Finland in 1993. Before that, at the age of 17, Ella began studies in a nursing school in Zambia. She became pregnant one year before graduation. The Catholic school where Ella studied granted her a maternity leave. Unable to care for the baby whilst studying, Ella left her baby daughter in her sister's care, who was also a young mother and was able to breastfeed both her own and Ella's baby. Ella graduated from the nursing school with a specialisation in midwifery. She began working in a children's hospital, where she met her future husband. He was an engineer from West Africa, which made him a foreigner in the eyes of Ella's family. Ella obtained a special permission of the elders to marry. She got married at the age of 23.

Ella's husband got a study place at the University of Oulu (northern Finland) to study for a PhD degree. The couple decided to take the opportunity and relocate to Finland. Ella and her husband also decided to take Ella's baby with them, but the family thought that it will be better if she remains in Zambia. The baby remained with Ella's family for 16 years.

Ella moved to Finland with her husband. During his studies, Ella's husband was also working for a Finnish Railway company. He graduated in 1995, but at the same time the company started laying off its employees, and Ella's husband was one of them. He managed to get work on a short-term contract basis, but not a permanent job. As a result, he decided to look for work outside of Finland, and consequently emigrated to Canada. Ella and her husband have been living apart for over twenty years.

Ella continued her education in Finland where she completed an MA degree in Health Care and graduated in 1999. She gave birth to two sons and finally got her first daughter back. Despite her many applications, Ella was never offered a job in her profession as a midwife. She has been working full time as a nurse in an old people's home. She lives in a three-room apartment with her sons. Her daughter is married and moved out.

Story threads in Ella's narrative

The story thread that runs throughout Ella's narrative relates to loss and responsibility (also expressed with the most frequently used words). The drifting to and from different roles in the family in Ella's narrative is related to Ella's accepting different responsibilities. As a child in Zambia, from an early age, she took care of herself and others. She learned to be a caretaker and a helper, as the family situation required that. She also watched her mother raise the family singlehandedly, without the support of a man. As a young girl, she understood what the "*strength of a woman*" (Ella, 66) meant.

The interview excerpts, following a chronological sequence, as well as my interpretation below, illustrate the above claims.

Ella's narrative began with a simple statement. "*I lost my father when I was very young*" (2).

Ella's father died when she was six years old. This is the first memory Ella shared with me when asked about her childhood. She continued: "*…and that thing has remained with me for the rest of my life*". And "*I have lived with that*" (10).

This early childhood experience was in fact the only one she mentioned when asked to share her childhood memories, and she referred to it directly only once at the beginning of her narrative. Yet, it is something that, as she said, stayed with her for the rest of her life, and that sense of loss and indirect references to sadness emerged through the entire narrative. Ella said: "*My childhood memories are not… I would say…quite sad*" (1) But right after that, in the same utterance, she added: "*I…lost my father when I was very young*" (1). The sense of loss Ella expressed at the beginning of her narrative continued and permeated her story, and the event that had triggered it (death of her father), cast a shadow over the trajectory of Ella's entire life. The death of the father had marked a turning point in the life of the family, and all that followed was determined by that event.

The stability of the family was destroyed, and, as a result, Ella's sense of self became dislocated. Ella's narrative showed how she drifted among taking on different roles in the family. She was a daughter and a sister when she described her relation to her father as OUR, yet she was an outsider when she placed herself on the outside of the family when she referred to her mother and her family as THE family.

Ella's sense of responsibility, triggered at an early age, as a result of the loss of her father in Zambia, showed me that Ella had to learn to become mature and supportive at an early age. The way Ella positioned herself and understood her experiences in Zambia as a childwas influenced by a sense of loss.

Hearing Ella's narrative made me very sad. Coming from a family of four, and growing up with both my parents in a fairly stable environment, I developed a set of implicit biases (Greenwald, Krieger, 2006) that formed my assumptions about childhood as being a trouble-free time in one's life. When interpreting Ella's accounts, I felt empathy, but refrained from showing it. Instead, I listened actively. In my interpretation, losing one's father implies sadness, therefore I initially labelled the thread running through Ella's story as sadness. After re-reading the story. I realised that I my interpretation might have been influenced by my implicit bias. Ella did not mention feeling sad, she just related the events of her life. Perhaps in her understanding her childhood was challenging but still happy?

Table 5. Ella's different roles.

*"Growing up without **YOUR** father, with a single mother…"*	OUTSIDER
*" **OUR** father was a teacher."*	DAUGHTER, SISTER
***MY** father's relatives took everything".*	DAUGHTER
***THE** mum struggled.*	OUTSIDER
***THE** family was split.*	OUTSIDER
"I have been a child without a father"	CHILD

As an adult, when Ella became a mother herself she mirrored her own mother (see Table 4). Ella described her mother, and her aunt as being her role models. "…*My aunt and my mother. Those are my role models, because I have seen how they struggled. To bring us up. And I have seen, and I have come to know, to grow up to be a FIGHTER"* (66) [emphasis Ella's].

Ella described her mother as a fighter, and her mother's struggle becomes a source Ella drew from. The way Ella talked about her mother showed respect and admiration, projecting the achievements of the children on her mother: "*She was the first woman in the village to produce university graduates, a widow. And she was the first woman who has produced children with PhDs in that village" (*69).

When I asked Ella about her mother's age, when answering Ella unexpectedly took on the voice of her mother, drifting to and from between different roles. I underlined Ella's mother's voice in the excerpt below.

> *"I am ready to die now because I have seen what I did not expect to see. And I have seen whatever comes in life is for the purpose. That…at the time I lost your father if someone told me this: life will change to be like this I would not believe. Left with nothing, our father relatives who…they did not even accept to take any of us"* (Ella, 55-56).

Table 6. Summary of Ella's story showing parallels with the life of her mother.

Ella's father dies	Ella's husband leaves for Canada
Ella's illiterate mother and 8 children are left without means of support	Ella and her 3 children stay behind relying only on Ella's income
Ella's siblings are sent away to be taken care of by relatives	Ella's one child is living in Africa, being brought up by her relatives.
Ella's mother devotes her life to support her children	Ella devotes her life to support her children
Ella and her siblings take care and support their mother	Ella hopes to be taken care by her children

As a child, Ella was ready to take on mature roles and responsibilities because the difficult family situation demanded that. As an adult, she continued to do the same because the values she learned as a child were a driving force in her behaviour. The values of caring for others, taking responsibilities, being strong in the face of difficulties, respect for work, and perseverance were the values Ella learned through taking on different roles from an early age. She continued to live by these values as an adult, and accepted her roles of a single mother and wife living alone.

The concept of divided "I", pointing to who people want to be and who they are in their narratives resonated in Ella's narrative. There was a clear division between what Ella described as real, on the one hand, and ideal, on the other, highlighting contradictions in these descriptions. These contradictions revealed tensions between the way Ella saw herself and the way she became as a result of living in the host culture in Finland. Revealing these tensions further illustrated Ella's sensemaking when reconciling her cultural African values with the reality imposed by the host culture in Finland. Understanding these discrepancies helped me find answers to my research questions.

When Ella described the values she lived by, she talked about family and marriage. She said:

"*Family values… marriage values, that no matter …like my husband is away…its'… almost 20 years now. Others would have divorced, but… no… the distance doesn't stop you from being married. I don't care what he is doing, he knows he is married. Even me I know I am married. And this helps the children also, psychologically. Knowing the parents are still together. It's very healthy*" (191-194).

This description evokes Ella's ideal self, the way Ella projects herself: a married woman who does not divorce her husband. Later in the same utterance she falters, and by doing so she contradicts the previous statement (*I don't care what he is doing).* Ella's contradictory voice emerged and opposed the previous image of Ella's "I". This opposing voice defines Ella's divided "I".

The same utterance contains two different images of Ella. The first one shows her as she wants to be seen: the woman who stands by her values of family and marriage. In the second one, another voice emerges, and it undermines the first one. The statement "*I don't care what he is doing, he knows he is married*" shows Ella's sensemaking of her situation. She negotiates the tension between the ideal of traditional Catholic value of marriage and the reality of her own marriage. By this sensemaking she reconciles the reality of her life of a single mother and separation from her husband with the values she adheres to. She holds on to the values she learned as a child, growing up in a Catholic family, but the reality imposed by Finnish culture causes Ella to compromise her values.

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The tensions between the ideal and the real can further be seen when Ella describes her relation to her children. She says:

> "*First of all, I grew up an orphan. I don't know how it is to grow up with both parents. So, I want to give my children what I didn't have myself. When we are on holiday we go and visit, when he is on holiday he comes. At least they know. Parents are together, though we cannot live under the same roof, they know why. And one day if God willing, they are blessed with children, they will have children to take to their grandparents under the same roof. That is what I want. Those family values, the children when they see parents together, they also value, they have the same values*" (194-200).

Ella sees herself as an orphan even though she has a mother. The ideal self is an orphan, and this ideal allows her to romanticise her mother into a strong woman who struggles and sacrifices all for her children. This also allows Ella to become the same for the sake of her children.

The ideal Ella wants to give her children what she did not have herself, but the real Ella disrupts the ideal image by doing exactly the opposite: Ella's children are also growing up without their father, and Ella's first daughter (born when Ella was a teenager) never knew her father and grew up without her mother for the first 16 years. Ella's sister and brother-in-law "*took my daughter as their own. And they brought her up even when I graduated from nursing school, I wanted to get her. My brother-in-law said no. This is our daughter, she is used to us for 3 weeks old, she does not know you, so just leave her here. And I left her with them up to the time she was 16 years*" (Ella 124-127).

The above examples of Ella's descriptions of her cultural values demonstrate the tensions between the projection of ideal Ella who holds on to her native cultural ideal, and the real Ella who makes sense of the experiences in the host culture. Through this sensemaking, she negotiates her cultural self to reconcile the ideal with the real, thus finding her place. Ella's sensemaking is meandering between the real self and the ideal self; the ideal self being rooted in her native past and the real self-negotiating her place in the host culture.

The forms of address

The concept of address explores to whom Ella is talking in the narrative. The way Ella positions herself in her narrative suggests closeness or distance, belonging or disassociation with the

situations and experiences she encounters. This is also influenced by the values Ella holds dear to her.

By analysing who Ella addresses in her narrative, I got an insight into the way Ella positions herself as a narrator in relation to other characters in her narrative. I considered this important in relation to finding answers to my research questions, and concurring with D'Silva et al. (2016), who claim that sensemaking of one's experiences is influenced by one's positionality, I also wondered if one's sensemaking does not impact one's positionality.

Ella addresses an imaginary "Other" in her narrative. At times she uses the pronoun *you* when she addresses me the narratee, but more often than that she addresses someone else. For example, when she narrates her life in Finland and talks about her neighbours. She says:

> "*But Finnish people… no you cannot even knock at their door when you are sick, to say hey, help me out. No neighbour will help you, … as a foreigner, it is not easy. We come from a society which is open and outside, and we talk to neighbours. But here you have no neighbour* "(147-148).

Here, by addressing a constructed Other, she becomes an extradiegetic narrator, and by doing so she created a distance between herself the narrator and herself the character. She positioned herself on the outside of the situation which is different to what she is used to. Having come from a collectivist culture (as described in detail in the background to Zambia) Ella is used to close relationships with people around her, and especially her neighbours.

In Finland, an individualistic culture (Hofstede, 2010), Ella describes her experiences in a way that suggests her estrangement. She is not a part of Finnish culture and therefore in her narrative, she positions herself on the outside of it. She addresses herself by *you* in the excerpt above, as if these utterances came from someone else, the other. They sound like someone else is telling Ella "How it is done" in Finland, this is the way "we do it in Finland".

She continues her narrative by telling herself again "*When you come home you are inside, you can go by yourself, nobody will mind*" (150-151). This image of home contrasts strongly with the image of the outside world. She describes her home as a closed space which provides not only a refuge but also a reassurance that there is a place where she can be herself. I carried out the interview in Ella's apartment, and noticed that the interior supported this. There were large, framed photographs of Ella's husband and the children on the walls. The photographs marked important

events in the life of the family: the graduations and a wedding. There were also cultural and religious artefacts in the living room and in the kitchen: large religious framed images on the walls as well as figurines on shelves. The interior of Ella's apartment was very different to the interior of typical Finnish homes, which are dominated by a functional, minimalistic Scandinavian approach. I concluded that the interior of Ella's apartment provided a glimpse of her home culture and provided a safe space where she could be who she felt she really was.

In the process of autobiographical reasoning (Baddeley and Singer, 2007, cited in Clandinin, 2007), Ella shows a resigned cultural understanding of the norms of the host culture, which prevent her from social contacts with her neighbours. The cultural script she remembers from her home culture influences the way she lives and makes sense of her experiences. Her home culture offers different menus of images, with which Ella is able to appropriate, sustain, and modify her understanding of the demands of the host culture. Embeddedness in the sociocultural context (Dings, 2019) of the host culture impacts her self-understanding, which produces a negotiation between her real self and the social influence (Erikson, 1959).

In Ella's narrative, describing her experiences at work she addresses *you* again, but this time the address is directed at herself. She says:

> "*At work, the same thing, when you are working with these people, no matter how you try… where I am working, they are always EVERY DAY [emphasis Ella's] you are being reminded: go home, you don't belong here. They are mocking you; you make a mistake in typing Finnish language. They make a big issue, you make a small mistake, they make a big issue, but you see that Finnish people are making mistakes, nobody talks about it*" (169-171).

Ella addresses herself again by *you* when she says:

> "*So, every day you enter the ward you know who you are now. That you have come here you are not accepted, you are not wanted (laughing) But you are here because you need the money, you NEED [emphasis Ella's] to work*" (247).

Ella's need to work and earn her living became her purpose of being and working in Finland. She acknowledges experiencing not being accepted in the workplace, as well as not being given the same opportunities despite the same level of education. Her sensemaking shows disappointment

with the system that does not acknowledge her merits and experience. Her race and gender become a result of social processes (Crenshaw, 1992) which impose tensions and internal struggles.

Ella's level of self-esteem, linked to her motivation, becomes compromised as a result of the way the others perceive and evaluate Ella's role. In Ella's understanding her role at work is not evaluated positively enough to offer her the position her merits render. This also impacts her self-verification. Therefore, her feelings of self-esteem and self-efficacy are weakened (Stets and Burke, 1990).

Crenshaw's (2016) claim that structures make certain identities the consequences of the vehicle for vulnerability, a process through which multiple positionings of individuals are visible resonate in Ella's self-perception. This multiple positioning that Ella adopts become an integral part of her life, where power relations play a central part (Phoenix and Pattynama, 2006). Here, intersectionality theory helps to understand how the process of Ella's negotiating between her real self and the socially created self produce different identity categories which work together to produce a sense of inequality (Cole, 2009; Crenshaw, 1991, 1989; Schulz and Mullings, 2006) and a feeling of being discriminated (Acker, 2011).

Ella's descriptions of the role of her mother resonate Hall's (2018) claims that historically, black women have been vulnerable to the impact of race related stress because of their socially constructed identities both as black women and as women. Ella's single mother's struggle to support her back in her childhood in Zambia becomes a source of strength from which Ella draws her motivation. The values she learned from her mother Ella uses as a source of strength in her life in Finnish culture.
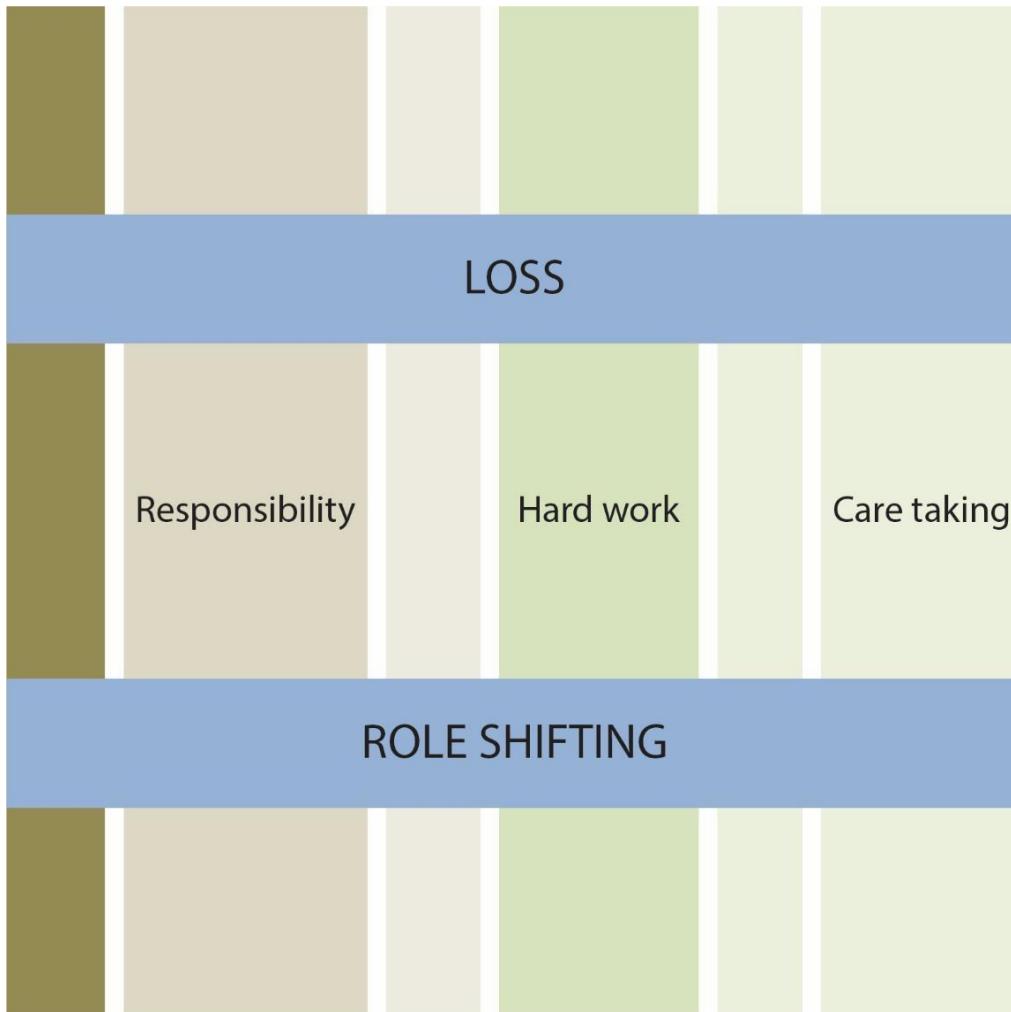
Figure 17. Ella's narrative tapestry: cultural values and story threads

The story thread, or the warp that provides the basis and structure for the weft that runs throughout Ella's narrative tapestry, relates to loss and refers to accepting responsibility by shifting her position among different roles. The warp represents Ella's past and the values learned in the home culture. The values provide the solid basis upon which the weft is woven through; the warp facilitates and sustains the weft. The weft represents Ella's presence and the events that prompt the choices and decisions Ella makes. Respect for hard work, perserverance, and care taking are the values that drive Ella's choices to take on the role of devoted mother and daughter, caretaker, and outsider.

Ella's divided "I" reveals her vulnerability to the impact of race related tensions because of her socially constructed identities both as a woman true to her values, and as a black woman who

experiences racial discrimination and micro-invalidations. She acknowledges the way she is experiencing not being accepted in the workplace, as well as not being given the same opportunities. But, at the same time, she points out the need for money as her motivating factor.

The way Ella narrates her story expresses her distance: when narrating difficult or threatening situations, she positions herself on the outside, at a distance.

Jane's story

Jane was born in Kenya. At the time of the interview, Jane was 57. She arrived in Finland in 1992. She was the oldest of ten, always taking care of her younger siblings. As a child, she was interested in learning and was encouraged by her father to start primary school at the age of 6 instead of 7. She was bright and enjoyed being at school very much.

When Jane was a teenager, she had a conversation with her father that not only encouraged her but also gave a direction to her future career path. Jane's father advised her to follow what he thought she was good at:

> "*You are always so good to your siblings. Whenever we go out and you are left with them it is always fine. So, my father said: you don't have to be a teacher of primary, secondary school, you can be a teacher to the young ones*" (134-136).

She completed her training as a kindergarten teacher in Kenya. After that, she heard about the Montessori teaching method and decided to begin her studies. She completed the first part of the programme in Kenya. She knew that to complete the full degree and to receive the diploma she would have to go to England. She also thought that she will get the best education in the UK. Encouraged by her father and financially supported by her local Catholic church, she left for London to study for one year.

Whilst studying in London, she met classmates from Finland who were pursuing the same teacher training. One of them became a good friend of Jane. After the end of the course, she went back to Finland and Jane got a job in London. After a year, Jane's friend from Finland informed her about a job opening in Finland. Her friend encouraged Jane, and even though Jane was "not ready" she decided to visit Finland. At that time, the kindergarten in a small town in southern Finland was

looking for foreign teachers, and Jane was offered a job. *"Finland was pushing me"*, is as Jane described it.

Jane came to Finland initially for one year. After a few years, Jane was offered a permanent position. *"And here I am. That is how I came"* (238).

Jane is not married and does not have children. She lives alone in a small apartment in a small town west of Helsinki.

Story threads in Jane's narrative

The influential mentorship of Jane's father and the values she learned from him is the thread running and dominating Jane's narrative.

Jane begins the narrative about her childhood memories by highlighting that she was the first born out of ten children. After that, she describes her father and then her mother.

> *"Personally, I think I had a very, very interesting childhood being the first born of… TEN [Jane's emphasis]. And… we had a loving family. My father was harsh, but… harsh enough. He loved to play with us, all kinds of fun. My mother was the serious one, you know the housewife doing all the… aaa… I wouldn't say all the housework, but anyway as a mother, she did"* (4-7).

This very brief presentation provided me with several clues as to how Jane positioned herself within her immediate family. The fact that she was the oldest child implied a responsibility of being a caretaker. The second clue was the way Jane described her mother: she introduced her last (after the father), and her description differs from the description of Jane's father. The fact that she mentioned him first in her account of her childhood memories suggests his importance as well as Jane's closeness to him. Jane's father's presence and mentorship emerges throughout the entire narrative. Because of his supportive role, he proved instrumental in shaping Jane's future career path. This is how she describes her father's influence on her work ethics as a teacher:

> *"And that rings all the time in me, that when I am taking care of children, I am doing it with the honour of my father. Then it is like… when I put myself within my profession when I had from him, it is also using my INSTINCTS [emphasis Jane's] of who I was as a child"* (131-137).

Jane also mentions the role of her father when describing learning the values of responsibility and hard work when completing her homework:

> "*And with the school it was fun, but when we came home after the work at school my father would go through it. If we got everything very good, he would take the papers and it is like…you do it now, answer the questions now. Because he wanted to know if were cheating or if we got it*" (14-16).

Both the above excerpts illustrate the values of work and taking responsibility Jane learned as a child in her native culture, and their impact on Jane's understanding of her role as a teacher. Jane's sensemaking of the way she approached her work as an adult in Finland is greatly influenced and informed by what she learned as a child. The diligence she learned as a child she applied in her work as a teacher.

The importance of Jane's father is further highlighted in Jane's recollection of the memories of him passing away. Jane says that when her father passed away she suffered a double loss: "When he passed on, actually I said I lost a friend and a dad" (41-42). Here, she describes her relationship with her father as more of a friendship and companionship than a father/daughter relationship:

> "*I think it was only that, you know I understood him, and even up to date ok, he passed on about 10 years ago, and it was like… in some moments we were like distant, but we got again closer and closer as he aged*" (41-42). "*So, I have nobody else at all whom I can really pour myself, who would understand ME [emphasis Jane's]. Because being him who brought me up and I grew in there in this family, I found that eventually we had mutual understanding in almost everything*" (75-78).

When I asked Jane about her role models, she points out her grandfather and her father. "*I took after my grandfather and my father, because they were the kind of persons who had the hands open for anything.*" (87-89)

The influence of the strong male role models and the values of diligence in studying, taking care of others, perseverance, instilled by them, Jane learned growing up in Kenya. She carried them into her adulthood. This forms a connection between Jane's native culture and its values, and the way Jane's sensemaking of her experiences in Finnish culture is informed. (Described in detail in the next section). Jane's cultural *roots* and *routes* (Hall, 1996) are connected in her personal narrative

(Holliday, 2020) where she delves into the native past to make sense of becoming the traveller in the new world in the host culture (Holliday, 2020). Following Conquerood (1998, p 58) Jane's routes shape her ways of navigating "oppressive socio-political structures" in the host culture. The way Jane internalised the presence of her father in her everyday performances as a teacher provided her with opportunities to create counterhegemonic narratives and performance. Through her everyday performance in her work, Jane fills the "continuous, performative space" (Bhabha, 1984, p 58), and interrogates, and antagonises powerful master discourses (Conqerood, 1998).

Having understood the supportive and mentoring role of Jane's father, as she described him, I was also wondering to what extent his strength was a means of subordination and dominance. According to Threborn, (2006) the power of the fathers in the African context has been challenged because it is no longer needed in the context of modernisation. Nevertheless, the patriarchy in parent-child relations continues to dominate African culture. In addition, although male supremacy over women has been eroded to some extent, by and large, it still remains strong. When trying to understand Jane's perceptions, I found Nash's (2011), the connectivity of intersectionality to contextuality and contingency of identity useful. The author pointed out that one's experience of subjectivity or domination depends on location and moment. If race, gender, class, and sexuality intersect in context-specific ways, then the shifts in contexts could have altered Jane's experiences of herself and the structures of domination that constrain. In the context of Jane's family home, and her role of a care giver Jane's father's mentoring was supportive and did not feel oppressive. Or, perhaps Jane's way of respecting her father echoed the patriarchal order pertinent to African family structure (Thoreborn, 2006), where patriarchy meant the domination of the paternal generation over the child generation, and the latter's obligation of obedience and service to the former.

Jane's way of describing her mother as "being serious" pointed to her subordination by the male members of the family, as most African customary family laws place adult women firmly under male guardians, usually their husbands, and treat them as legal minors (Cotran, 1968, Philips and Morris 1971, Stewart and Armstrong 1990).

In her narrative, similar to Ella, Jane is divided into the real and the ideal. The ideal Jane has agency and acts decisively, whereas the real Jane shows a lack of agency.

When Jane describes her arrival in Finland, she narrates it as follows:

> *"Finland was pushing me. WE [emphasis Jane's] are going to send the letter for your visa, we are going to do this…And I am like I am not ready yet. Eventually it was meant to come to Finland"* (227-229).

Jane does not seem instrumental in this process, and instead follows the decisions and actions of others, despite not being ready herself. Jane accepted the chain of events as the *route* she was meant to travel. This sense of following she reiterates later in her narrative when describing her feeling lonely and out of place in Finland.

When advised by a nun: *"there is a reason that you came to Finland. There is a reason why your contract continued. So, until your mission is over you are not leaving the country"* (385-386) Jane took it as a consolation and a further direction on her *route*. Jane accepted it as something that she was meant to do. For Jane, being a part of the church community meant not only a place of worship, but a place of belonging. *"The faith, finding something to do where you feel good and what you like. The church activity always makes me feel like I belong"* (400-401).

The examples above showed me Jane who accepted the *routes* she travelled according to an itinerary drafted by somebody other than herself. Prompted by her faith and religion, and the support of church community, she embraced the choices made for her. The sense of belonging gave her strength and encouragement to carry out active duties in the church community. Ironically, her lack of agency created circumstances which supported her ideal self and rendered possibilities for her agency in finding solutions that in turn, created circumstances which she found fulfilling.

The address

The way Jane changed the way she addressed herself pointed to three different reasons: to teach and counsel herself, to distance herself from an uncomfortable situation, and to understand and make sense of a situation or an event.

As mentioned earlier, when she described her father's role in making sure she completed her homework, she naturally shifted in her narrative and took on her father's voice (the words in italics) evoked her father and his mentoring role. "If we got everything very good, he would take the papers and it is like…*you do it now, answer the questions now*" (15). The words of her father remained ingrained in Jane's memory and were naturally included in her own speech. This was not only comforting, but also mentored Jane in her own teaching.

Jane counselled herself when she faced potentially challenging situations at work. In relation to her work, Jane reflected on her own learning and behaviour at primary school. She remembered her own experiences as a young pupil, bright and clever, restless and misbehaving, and consequently difficult for the teacher to handle. She described herself and her friend as follows:

> *"Because we would be doing silly things. So, we were always put in the first bench (laughing). And if we are put at the back, it is still a problem. So, the teacher used to say: aha ok, if I try to punish these two little heads, they will think that I am cruel to them, if I leave, they will think I am afraid of them. What do I do? So, the class knew that we were like the stars of the class"* (118-122).

By evoking the memory of herself as a child, she learned from her own experiences to be a better teacher. This different positioning provided a link between her *roots*, as a child in Kenya and the *routes* she travelled as an adult in Finland. What she learned as a child in Kenya came alive in her adulthood in Finland, especially when making sense of challenging situations at work.

> *"…when I put myself within my profession when I had from him (father), it is also using my INSTINCTS [emphasis Jane's] of who I was as a child. The idea of giving the child the right work at the right time is always the best. If you give too easy to an idle child, you are in trouble. If you give too hard you are also in trouble. So, you have to be able to balance this. I have learned that as a young person and when I look back, I think when I behaved like this at school, why I was thinking I was naughty and couldn't work with the children. Because I was afraid that if they do what I did I would not be able to control them"* (139-142).

Whilst in Finland, Jane described several situations when a Finnish person verbally abused her. For example: "*And then suddenly she started talking. And using kind of…no, before I knew that it was*

ME [emphasis Jane's], she had bubbled so many things why these foreigners are coming to our country, to destroy our country, bla, bla, bla" (294-296). "…these kinds of racism thing came many times in the street, people would say go back to your own country, and all that. I would be scarred. (326-327).

Similarly to Ella, Jane becomes an extradiegetic narrator by addressing herself as *you.* This allows her to position herself on the outside of the situation, thus becoming someone else, the Other. Jane does this unconsciously as she finds the situation difficult:

"*It was SO [emphasis Jane's] hard, and why it was even hard it was that that you have people you thought they are your security when you are with them. But all of a sudden when something happens you are all alone"* (326-330).

Becoming someone else in her narrative makes it easier for Jane to deal with the situation and the experience of being treated unfairly. She was hurt by the racist comments. What she finds even more difficult to understand is the lack of reaction of people she thought were her support. The expression of disappointment with the lack of support from others reveals here a hidden gem (Smith et al. 2010): Jane's inherent belief in her being a part of a community. She says: *"all of a sudden when something happens you are all alone" (*330).

Jane grew up in a collectivistic familism (Hofstede, 2010; Thoreborn, 2006), traditionally dominating over individual choice, where she was surrounded by people: her immediate family, neighbours, and society. That proximity meant conversations, close physical presence, everyday contact, natural exchange, and sharing joys and sorrows. Giving each other support and advice was a part of culture and was a natural way of interacting with others. The collective being was part of who Jane was, and when faced with a challenge, Jane's focus was not on what actually happened, but on the fact that nobody helped.

Jane came to terms with the racially abusive situations by making sense, which she describes as follows: *"…it is just a talk of every day. So, forget about it"* (331). Here again, Jane shifted her position and addressed herself as *you,* the Other, to unconsciously come back to the supportive voice of her father, to create a distance from the hurt and to become her own counsel. This different positioning allowed Jane to make sense of the challenging experiences in Finnish culture. She did this by evoking the memories of the supporting voice of her father, by going back to the

support her collective Kenyan culture had taught her. In other words, similar to Ella, a link with her cultural *roots* provided a source of support in her sensemaking of her experiences in the host culture in Finland.

What I also found interesting is the number of times Jane used the word *time.* I went back to the transcript and looked for the connotations with the word time. The most frequent ones were *at that time, every time* and *since the time. At that time and since the time* connect Jane's references in her narrative to the past. *Every time* suggests regular occurrence of events. Jane's narrative 'floats' in time, closely connecting the past with the present.

Summary and conclusions
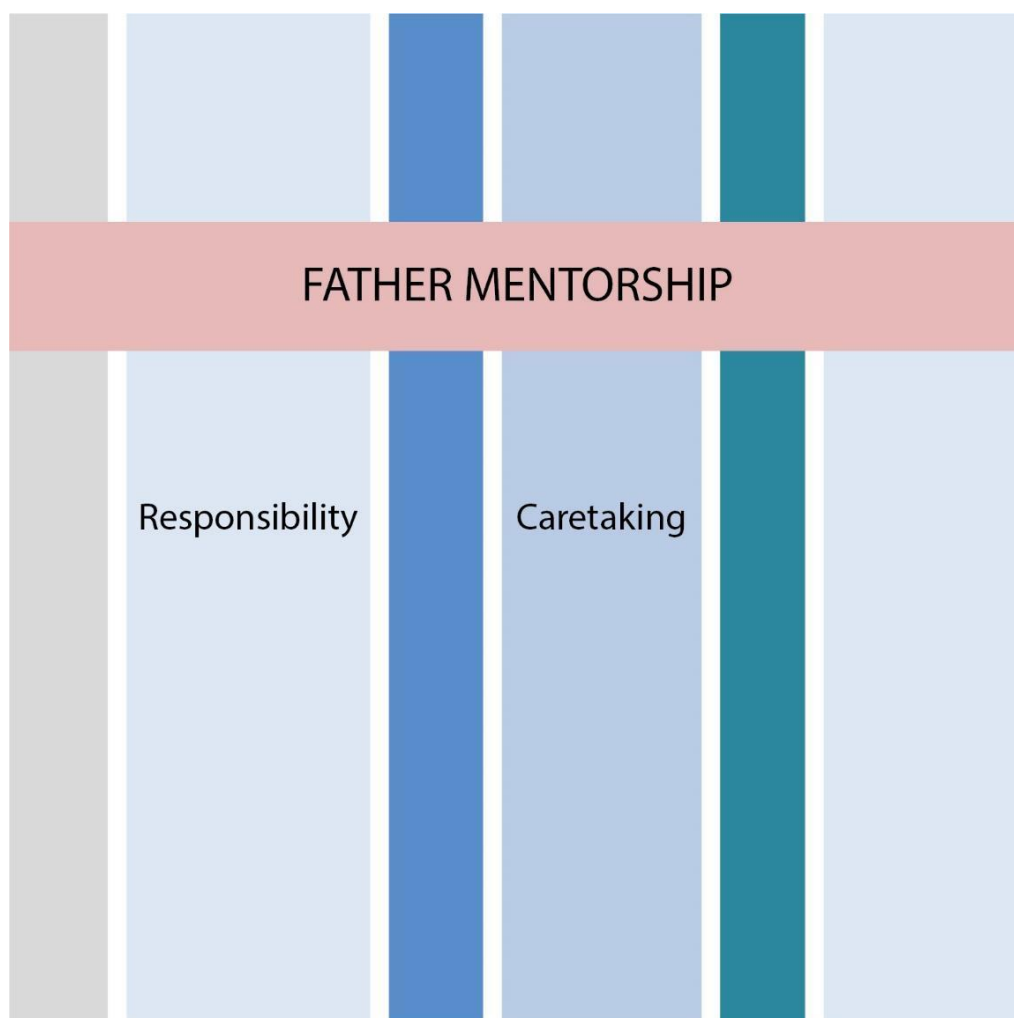
Figure 18: Jane's narrative tapestry: cultural values and story threads

The story thread that runs through Jane's narrative refers to the mentorship of her father and the values she learned from him. As a child, and the oldest of ten siblings, she learned the value of

caring for others. As an adult she developed a strong friendship relationship with her father, and his instrumental influence on her she carried through into her work ethics as a teacher in Finland.

Through reflecting and sensemaking, Jane represents herself by becoming divided (Rogers, 2007). The way Jane creates her divided selves in her narratives points to her being at odds with the real and the ideal. On the one hand, Jane accepts what she sees as meant to be. On the other hand, this seemingly passive acceptance becomes a tool and allows her to make sense of her experiences. Through this sensemaking, she is able to find support and strength to find solutions that, in turn, create a life that she can find fulfilling.

Finally, when faced with difficult situations (racial abuse) Jane adopts positions that allow her, at times, to distance herself, and at times to offer herself counsel. By such shifting of positions she is able to address herself through the voice of the Other, thus unconsciously go back to the supportive voice of her father to create a distance from the hurt and to become her own counsel. This different positioning allows Jane to make sense of the challenging experiences in Finnish culture. She does this by evoking the memories of the supporting voice of her father, by going back to the support her collective Kenyan culture taught her.

There is a connection between the importance of Jane's father and her being at odds with who she wants to be, and who she is. By carrying forth into her adult life, especially at work in Finland, the encouraging presence of her father, Jane gains support when facing difficult situations. Jane cannot change the situations that result in experiences of hurt and loneliness in Finland, but reflecting on her experiences from her childhood, she also evokes the voice of her father. This, together with her faith, made it possible for Jane to overcome the sense of loneliness in the host culture in Finland. The native *roots* pave the way to the routes Janes follows.

Lucy's story

Lucy was born in Kenya. At the time of the interview, Lucy was in her thirties. She arrived in Finland in 2010. In Kenya, she grew up in a family with strict parents. At the age of nine she was sent to a boarding school and, as a result does, not remember much of the life of her family. She described her school as not too bad, but very strict. The boarding school was located far from Lucy's home. This resulted in rare contact with Lucy's family home and the family. She also missed close contact with her immediate neighbours and the community she grew up in.

The boarding school had very strict rules, including corporal punishment. Although the school was located within Lucy's own (Luo) tribe, she met a lot of people from different areas, which she found challenging. Apart from corporal punishment, the school followed a demanding schedule. The day began at 4 am and ended at 7 pm. Apart from studying, the pupils had a lot of other duties, such as cleaning the school's compound and doing their own laundry. Lucy spent four years there. After that, she continued her education at a secondary school, also a boarding school for girls.

She came to Finland to study. She completed her bachelor's degree in international business. At the time of the interview, she was planning to continue her studies by completing her MA degree with a focus on HRM. She would like to do it in Finland, and after that she is planning to return to Kenya, where she has a boyfriend.

She works as an assistant to a supervisor in a large international hotel in Helsinki. Although she does not have a family of her own, she financially supports her younger brother's education back in Kenya. She lives alone in a suburb of Helsinki, in a small apartment.

Story threads in Lucy's narrative

The story thread that runs through Lucy's narrative refers to endurance and missing connections with the places where Lucy says she belongs to, and with the people she is a part of.

When I asked her to share her childhood memories she said:

> *"I cannot remember really good things because where I was born, the family where I was raised in, my parents were strict and I went to a boarding school when I was really young, so it didn't really give me a chance to experience much at home…"* (Lucy, 4-6).

Lucy refers to her family as *the family where I was raised in.* In her narrative, Lucy looks back at her family and does not refer to it as *my family*, but she describes it as if she were an outsider. This points to severed, missing connections. She describes this as follows:

> *"… at the age of nine already I was in a boarding school so home with the parents and the people around was more…so I did not get this time to …interact with people, but generally*

the experience within school and the home it was not that bad, but as I said it was as a kid
it was bit strict, so you feel there is something you are missing" (7-10).

In her memories, Lucy looks back at herself as a child. In her description above she uses the past tense when describing herself as a child, and in the same sentence, she switches to the present tense when talking about her experiences as an adult. From her adult perspective, Lucy renders her time at school as *not that bad*, but at the same time she sees it as a hard one for *a kid*. She reiterates her sense of missing connections by comparing her situation to what it could have been. The missing connections with the people she describes as the group of people she is a part of, come forth when she mentions her tribal belonging. This rationalising allows her to understand and make sense of what happened to her. The excerpts below illustrate Lucy's way of understanding and explaining her situation on the one hand, and also repeated regret about missing connections, on the other.

> *"…a parent can decide to take the kid to a boarding school or just to go to a school nearby*
> *and then come back home. So, if you go to a nearby school then it is easier for you to*
> *interact with people, because those people who will be going to that local school they will*
> *live in that area. But then …. For me I went to a really far school, it was a boarding school*
> *"*(21-23).

> *"… in Kenya we have different tribes, and they practice different things. I am from Luo*
> *culture, Obama culture.*" (Lucy, 34-35). "*But I missed something when it comes to my own*
> *culture, when it comes to relating with people"* (28-29).

Lucy's childhood narrative describes mainly the hardships of her life in the boarding school. She does not mention life at home at all. This lack of descriptions of family life in Lucy's narrative is a secret gem (Smith et al., 2010) which I sadly found. In the narrative Lucy shared with me, there were no happy childhood memories of family life or relationships with parents or siblings. Lucy's childhood narrative was all about enduring hardships. Moreover, I saw and heard tension in Lucy's narrative as she went on telling me about life at school. This tension was noticeable in the way Lucy structured her sentences: they were broken, unfinished, and contained contradictions at times.

"You need to meet a workplace different culture. So, for me it was a good thing, but again… when you think of now… being home, your place… you feel like …it is not… you are not used to how they deal with things" (36-38).

Coming from a culture where beatings, as a form of punishment, were not allowed in primary schools, I found the brutality of punishing young children terrifying. Yet, reading Thereborn (2006) helped me understand that respect for seniority in African culture was central to social systems, as was deference to elders, as well as strict paternal and teacher discipline. Nyasani (1997, cited in Lassiter 2000, p 129) wrote: "The child in Africa was muzzled right from the outset and was thereby drilled into submission to authority from above". I also found that the norm of deference to parents is included in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, whose §29 stipulates that everyone is obliged "to respect his parents at all times, and to maintain them in case of need", and should be taken as a valid social norm (Goolam, 1998, p 373ff, cited in Thereborn, 2006).

I further wondered whether what I found terrifying In Lucy's eyes was simply the norm and an accepted and condoned way of life. The experiences of hardships in her childhood, and the tensions in Lucy's utterances when she tried to make sense showed connections Lucy made between the past and the present. She made a clear connection between her childhood in Kenya and her experiences in Finnish culture: *"But my childhood life generally I would say was interesting, and again SO, SO [emphasis Lucy's] hard. But it made me be the person who I am now"* (144-145). Here, she acknowledged her childhood experiences and ascribed value to these experiences as well as their impact on who she became as an adult. Through her sensemaking and rationalising of her experiences from her childhood in Kenya, Lucy reconciled them with who she became as an adult.

The divided "I"

When narrating harsh boarding school conditions, Lucy uses the personal pronouns *you* and *we* and *they/them/I.* For example, in the passage below, she describes brutality at school and uses the pronoun *you.* When she talks about the hardships of life, she switches into the pronoun *I* and *we.*

> *"The teacher canes you so bad and then maybe you have some internal bleeding, and you don't know it, of course you just have been to school, but after some time you hear like ok*

you are sick, and then that is it "(77-79). "Yea, it was hard life, but you know, because I was
born in Kenya I understood, like ok, this is the life though hard, but I am not alone. WE
[emphasis Lucy's] are all going through it" (57-59).

What I found surprising in the above utterance was Lucy's unconditional acceptance of life as she
knew it. She also seemed to be consoled by the fact that she shared the suffering with other
children. A possible explanation for this is the African concept of the individual and self to be
almost totally dependent on and subordinate to social entities and cultural processes (Nyasani,
1997, cited in Lassiter, 2000).

Lucy's "I" is divided here into the real self, a helpless child who suffered corporal punishment, and
the ideal self who accepted it as a natural part of life. By using *you,* Lucy, like Ella and Jane,
unconsciously positioned herself on the outside of the difficult situations in order not to
experience the hurt.

Later in her narrative Lucy describes African people using the pronoun *they*. She says:

"…the Africans…will never learn unless you beat them".

Here she dissociates herself from African people. Following Rogers (2007) claiming that when a
subject speaks he/she must become divided to represent him/herself, I conclude that here Lucy
creates a juxtaposition through which she represents herself. She is African and she suffered from
being beaten. Yet, in the passage above, she refers to the people she is a part of as *the Africans*
and *them*. Lucy represents herself as not belonging to the people she actually belongs to. By
creating this juxtaposition, she disconnects herself from the suffering, if only in her narrative.

In her teenage years Lucy disassociates herself from groups she is in.

> *"In secondary school, I would say, I was a bit different because, since also in my high school*
> *I also went to a boarding school. And there were different cultures, these kids who are*
> *raised in towns, and for me my hometown is not that big, so you find, like… they could*
> *know their latest musicians and their behaviour, when you go to the entertainment places.*
> *It was kind of… you were not a part of them ".* (166-168)

Here, at the end of the utterance, Lucy changes the pronoun into *you*, and becomes the "Other",
as if quoting what she might have been told by her peers.

Lucy's divided "I" comes forth again when she reflects on her experiences and defines herself. The ideal Lucy is: "not *easily MANAGED [emphasis Lucy's]. You must be friendly with me for you to instruct me. But if you are too authoritative it won't work*" (397-398). Through Lucy's sensemaking, she transforms herself from a helpless child into a strong and independent adult.

The address

As mentioned earlier, the concept of address explores to whom the subject is talking in the narrative. This provides an insight into the way Lucy positions herself in relation to other characters in her narrative. The positionality of the narrator plays an important role in sensemaking of the narrator's experiences (D'Silva, et al., 2016). As sensemaking of experiences is the focus of my research, I consider the way Lucy positions herself as a narrator in her story pivotal.

When Lucy talks about her life in Finland, she begins her description by comparing Kenya with Finland.

> "… *Since Kenya is not the best, but Finland I admire, because it is a free world, you can do what you want, you have the time to… you know in Africa we are not able to go to university and also work at the same time, but here it's possible, and also it's …makes you be so independent, so you have to know how to pay your bills by yourself, whether if you in Africa, in Kenya you are depending on your parents, everything is your parent, parent*" (221-225).

For Lucy, Finland means a free world where there is freedom and independence. In her first sentence, by addressing the unconscious other with *you*, she is reassuring herself of the freedom she has in Finland. Then, by using plural *we,* she becomes a part of a collective in the African context, and as an individual in the Finnish context. Lucy associates the lack of freedom and independence with parental control.
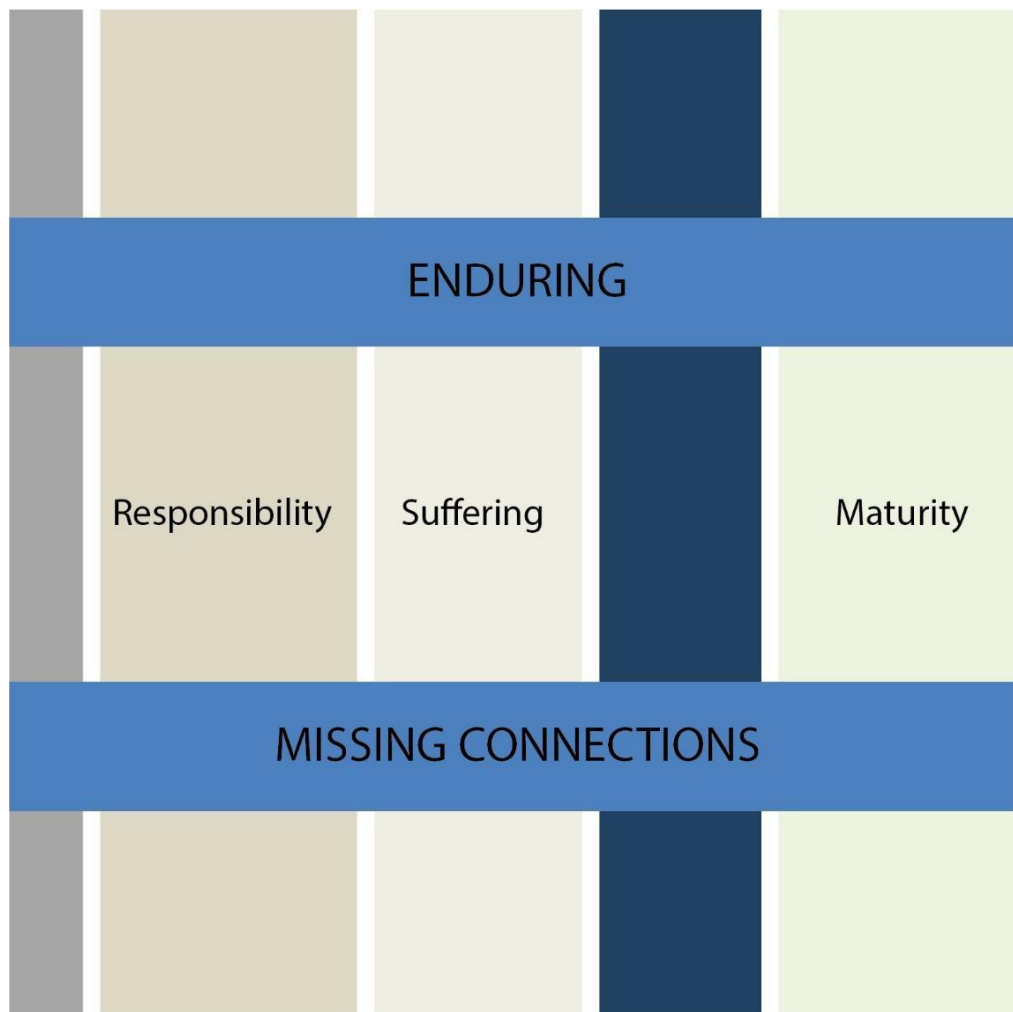
Figure 19. Lucy's tapestry: cultural values and story threads

The way Lucy makes sense of her experiences is illustrated through the story thread in her narrative, the way she represents herself (through the divided "I"), and the way she positions herself in relation to the others in her narrative.

The story thread that runs through Lucy's narrative refers to the connections that Lucy describes as missing in her life, and enduring. These connections refer to people and places. The connections with her closest family were severed, or not developed as a result of Lucy being geographically distant in a boarding school during her childhood and adolescence. The connections with the people who belonged to the same tribe, social group, community, and peer group did not develop

as a result of that geographical distance. Also, in Finland Lucy does not describe being connected to any particular group.

Through reflecting and sensemaking, Lucy represents herself by becoming divided (Rogers, 2007) to represent him/herself. The way Lucy creates her divided selves in her narratives points to her being at odds with who she really is and who she wants to be. Lucy juxtaposes herself as a helpless child who suffered the harshness of a rigid, disciplined, and confined life of strictness of her upbringing at home and in the boarding schools, with the image of a strong, independent, and free woman who creates her own boarders, and does not allow others to hurt her.

Finally, Lucy strategically positions herself (the address) in her narrative at times to distance herself from situations and locations where she does not want to be, at times to reassure herself of her possibilities and the freedom she has.

There is a connection between Lucy missing connections with the people and places and being at odds with who she wants to be, and who she is. By focusing on the hurt Lucy experiences and the missing connections with her roots and home, she highlights the need for the above. Lucy needs to belong and be connected. She cannot change the past, but she can make sense of it. She does so by rationalising her experiences, attributing positive and constructive value to them. The experiences of the past, rooted in Kenyan culture, as traumatic as they were, become a source of reflection and sensemaking. That sensemaking of rationalising and accepting, as well as turning the hurt into positive and enriching influence, made it possible for Lucy to overcome difficulties in the host culture in Finland.

Megan's story

Megan was born in Ghana. At the time of the interview, Megan was in her late forties. She arrived in Finland in 2004. As a child, Megan lived with her family in a military compound. Her father was an army officer, and her mother was a housewife taking care of a family of eleven.

There were nine siblings in the family. Megan's mother did not have any formal education, but, as Megan described her, she was enterprising and traded produce at a local market. Megan also had a stepmother who, like Megan's mother, was not educated and did not encourage Megan to study. In fact, she discouraged it and considered it a waste of money. Despite that, Megan did go to school and studied automobile engineering (I explain this in more detail later in the analysis).

She was fifteen at the time. As a teenager, Megan's dream was to become a surgeon, a pilot, or a captain of a ship.

After graduating, she began working for Audi VW in Ghana as an assistant of the workshop manager. She soon realised that she was not earning as much as her male counterparts and decided to enhance her qualifications. She decided to continue her education and found a suitable course in Germany. She was not able to pursue it as it was offered only in German. In her search for other suitable courses, she came across a real estate course offered in Finland. The course was in English and free of charge. Megan was also interested in technical and architectural drawing and therefore found the course interesting. Megan came to Finland to study, even though she never planned to go to Europe. She decided to stay in Finland for one year to complete the studies. She was in her early 30s then. Shortly after she arrived in Finland, she met her future husband, a Brit. They got married and now they have two children.

Megan is a successful entrepreneur who runs her retail company together with her husband. The company sells natural cosmetics based on raw materials imported from Ghana, and involves African women in the production. Megan lives in Helsinki with her family.

Story threads in Megan's narrative

The threads that emerge throughout Megan's narrative are those of acceptance and adjustment.

As a teenager, Megan had ideas and dreams about her future. As mentioned above, Megan dreamed of becoming "*a surgeon, or a pilot, or a captain of a ship*". Achieving these dreams meant studying and training within the field of science. As a result of Megan's stepmother's interference, Megan was not able to study the courses she initially wanted to study.

"*So, she did all that she could, in her best, to stop my dad from supporting. Because in my country we do pay for education*" (42). In the end, as a result of a family friend convincing her father to allow her to study, Megan was able to go to school after all. But as Megan says:

> "*It was too late for me to go to the science class, so I ended up doing automobile engineering, which was closer to my dreams, which I did enjoy very, very much*" (50-52).

Even though Megan's plan to follow science did not work out, Megan took the opportunity presented to her, adjusted, and followed a different trajectory.

Megan changed her education plans yet again, when she chose to study real estate in Finland instead of engineering in Germany. She changed her plans as education in Germany was not free of charge and the courses were offered in German. Megan was not able to study in German, so an option in Finland was a better one. The course in real estate in Finland was free of charge and in offered in English. The above example shows that Megan did not plan to study real estate, nor did she plan to leave Ghana. She narrates this as follows:

> "I did not plan to stay, not at all. I never planned to go to Europe, because it wasn't something that was… no. But then it was like the situation, ok, let me just go and come back. And I VOWED [emphasis Megan's] not to spend a day over my visa, so…But then I stayed" (68-78).

Megan did not plan to leave Ghana, and she did not plan to study real estate. She did not want to stay in Finland either. Yet, she did all of that. She did that because she was able to embrace the opportunities that presented themselves to her. She accepted them and followed a trajectory she did not map for herself.

Another example of Megan's ability to accept events beyond her control was her marriage. She met her husband a month after she had arrived in Finland, and three weeks after that he proposed to her. When she was congratulated by friends on her engagement, Megan was surprised. This is how she describes her experiences:

> "…in our country that's not how we are engaged. It is a WHOLE [emphasis Megan's] village, the whole community. It's a big thing. You don't just say to one person that… you don't do that. But then…I said to myself: ok, you have to learn different culture. So that's how it happened and then we got married three months after the engagement. And then… just that's how it started for us" (115-118).

Megan accepted the situation and was able to make a very important decision through her sensemaking. She was able to accept different cultural customs and adjust to something that was so very different to the culture she grew up in. Here, again, she followed a life trajectory that she never thought she would follow.

When narrating her first experiences in Finnish culture, she described them as "*a bit rough*" (123). She got "*very frustrated*" (129) by having to begin her business without the support of a Finnish

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network, which was not (and still is not) available to her to the extent she says she would need it. Because both Megan and her husband are foreigners in Finland with limited language abilities, they have limited access to all the information available to Finnish entrepreneurs. They do not have the same networking possibilities as their Finnish counterparts. Despite that, Megan describes her life as being *"orchestrated by a divine"* (80). Her spirituality and faith in God (described in more detail in the following section) make it possible for her to be flexible and accepting when following a path that she does not always plan to follow. Her spiritual way of interpreting life situations and her experiences allows sensemaking to transform challenges into positive opportunities. The following excerpt illustrates Megan's sensemaking.

> *"So, for me Finland has been very beautiful, it has really helped me discover some things in me that I didn't know I had. Gifts I didn't know I possessed. Like, discovering some secrets about myself. I knew back at home everything… you know the right way to speak, you know how to get things. So, you don't challenge yourself so much. I have always been like this; I didn't like it when everything is given to me. Without sweat. So, I have been that kind of very strong person"* (123-139).

The divided "I"

Following Rogers (2007), when Megan speaks, she becomes divided to represent herself. Similar to the previous participants, the way Megan creates her divided self in her narratives points to two seemingly disparate images of the self.

When talking about her childhood memories, Megan mentions her parents and makes a direct connection between them and herself.

> *"I see part of my mother in me, let's say 35% of my mother in me, and more of my father in me. That is how he embraces challenges, you never hear him complaining, but I complain a lot. He just DOES [emphasis Megan's] things. He does not complain"* (24-26). She also adds: *"…they have really made me who I am"* (12).

Megan attributes her parents' roles to making her who she is. She also describes her life in general as *"orchestrated by the divine"*. These descriptions concur with my conclusions on the analysis of the story threads that run through Megan's narrative: Megan's flexibility, ability to accept and

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adjust to situations beyond her control. What I notice is that at the same time Megan says that she does everything on her own. She says:

"Of course, we all have different destinies, but in my life, I have always said don't wait for somebody to do it for you. Do it yourself, you have the power" (180-182).

Here, Megan's "I" is divided into the self who is a strong, independent, and active woman who runs her own business in a foreign culture, on the one hand. On the other hand, there is Megan's reliance on her faith and spirituality which renders a woman who accepts and adjusts to what she sees as being "*orchestrated by the divine*", and therefore, beyond her control.

This division reveals a seeming contrast between who Megan strives to be and who Megan is. Megan's belief system incorporates two different spiritualities: one she carries with her from her native culture from Ghana, and one she adopted as a result of living in Finnish culture. As a child, she grew up in a religious family, where voodoo was practiced. As an adult, she combines it with Christianity. This is how Megan makes sense of what she believes in.

"But we have this traditional belief, we have voodoo in our home and…we are. I am from that kind of family. But I always tell people that voodoo is not about killing, it is also the same worship that we have, or that you believe in. The Bible says that if you have faith as small as a mustard seed you can move mountains. So, if you have faith that's the thing. It is what you think it is and you believe in it. I believe in Jesus Christ as well as a Christian. If I say as a Christian then I am associating myself with being religious, but I am from the kingdom of God. I am a kingdom citizen. I believe in the father, the Creator" (244-251).

Megan's self is striving towards an image of an independent woman entrepreneur in charge of her thriving business. Megan's real self is a spiritual woman who believes in intervention beyond her control. This seemingly contradictory division is actually complementary, and Megan draws support from both. Having come from a continent which has the highest rate of entrepreneurship in the world, and it is the only continent on which women account for the majority of entrepreneurs (World Bank, 2019, cited in Ojong, Simba, Dana, 2021), Megan embodies the values of spirituality and entrepreneurial spirit of a women entrepreneurs (WEs) from Sub-Saharan Africa, where the economic contribution of women workers is very considerable (Amine and Staub, 2009). Yet to be successful entrepreneurs in Sub-Saharan Africa, women often face a

variety of challenges arising from the socio-cultural, economic, legal, political, and technological environments in which they live. Moreover, unfavourable conditions in local regulatory, normative, and cognitive systems place additional burdens on women who desire to become entrepreneurs or to expand an entrepreneurial business. Figure 1. below illustrates these challenges. Despite the challenging business environment in Finland, Megan creates and runs her business in Finland, combining the entrepreneurial spirit and spirituality from her native culture.

Figure 1. A model of variables affecting the marketing environment of women entrepreneurs.

Source: Adapted from Amine and Staub, 2009

Forms of address

Megan addresses herself using the pronouns *I* and *you*. When she says: *"I always say to myself: because I don't have anybody, you have to pull yourself out yourself"* (199-102) she is addressing herself as two different persons. This way of addressing herself is very much connected to Megan's divided "I". When she addresses herself using the pronoun *I,* she addresses her entrepreneurial self. She reaffirms to herself the fact that she is alone and therefore she must be self-reliant and act without anybody's help. By addressing herself using the pronoun *you*, Megan speaks to herself as the *other*, motivating herself to take action. She becomes her own voice of authority. But this also resonates the personality of Megan's father that Megan described earlier

as someone who *"embraces challenges".* Perhaps by addressing herself with a motivating voice of authority Megan evokes her father. This is also a way of taking a distance from herself in order to take charge and command herself to take initiative.

Summary and conclusions
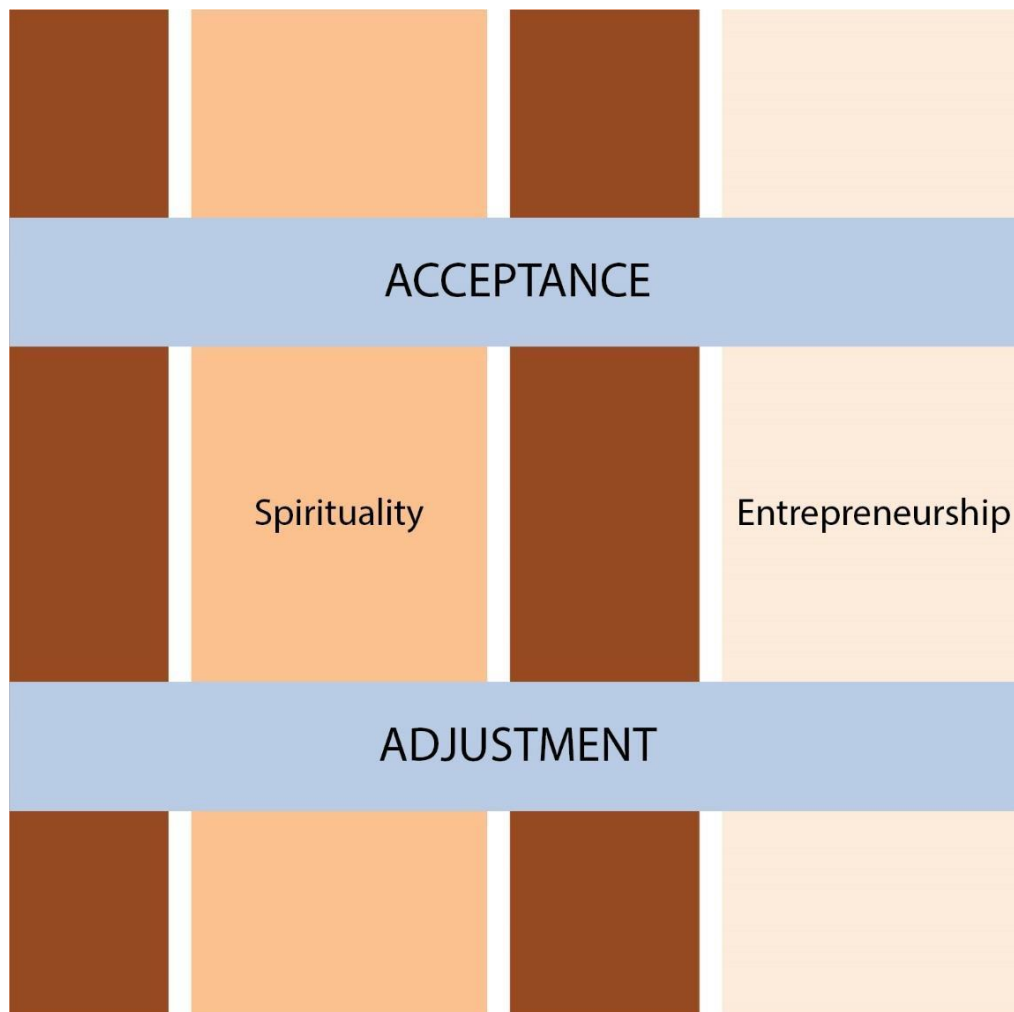
Figure 20. Megan's tapestry: cultural values and story threads

The way Megan makes sense of her experiences is illustrated through the story thread in her narrative, the way she represents herself (through the divided "I"), and the way she positions herself in relation to the others in her narrative.

The threads that are emerging throughout Megan's narrative are those of acceptance and adjustment to situations that arise as a result of unexpected situations beyond Megan's control.

which happened during Megan's childhood, adolescence and adulthood. They were important and demanded flexibility and the ability to accept and adjust. They also created new, unplanned, and life-changing trajectories. Megan was able not only to accept them, but also embrace the opportunities they presented. She was also able to follow the new trajectories her life took.

Through reflecting and sensemaking Megan shows her divided "I"(Rogers, 2007) to represent herself. The way Megan creates her divided selves in her narratives points to her being at odds with who she really is and who she wants to be. Similar to Lucy, Megan juxtaposes herself as a helpless spiritual woman who accepts her life as orchestrated by the divine, with the image of strong, independent and free woman who successfully, and almost single-handedly runs her own business.

Finally, Megan positions herself (the address) in her narrative at times to distance herself from herself in order to take charge of situations, and at times to reassure herself of being alone and having to rely only on the "power" she had.

There is a connection between Megan's ability to accept and adjust to situations beyond her control and her entrepreneurial spirit and spirituality. By attributing who she became to her parents and the native spirituality that she learned about and practiced in her family home in Ghana, Megan illustrates her connection with and attachment to her native culture. Megan needs to hold on to where she comes from. But being married to a westerner, living in Finland and running her business in Finland necessitates sensemaking that allows her to reconcile both worlds. She combines Christianity with her native beliefs. She accepts different cultural customs and learns from them. Finally, she rationalises her experiences, attributing positive and constructive value to them. She acknowledges the value of challenging experiences and transforms them into positive discoveries about herself.

Nora's story

Nora was born in Kenya. At the time of the interview, Nora was in her late thirties. She arrived in Finland in 2003. Before arriving in Finland, as a child Nora was part of a close extended family which consisted of four siblings, Nora's mother, cousins and grandparents. Nora's mother took care of the family singlehandedly, as Nora's father had left the family. The family was Christian and belonged to the largest tribe in Kenya, Gikuyu.

Nora was particularly close to one of her sisters, as there was only two years between them. Nora described them as *being like twins* who spent most of the time together. Nora's other sister was eleven years younger. Nora's mother was not educated but worked as an office assistant to support the family, and consequently she was absent a lot of the time. The family had a nanny to help take care of the children. Apart from the nanny, the community also took part in bringing up the children. The family experienced financial difficulties. Nora remembers, that, as a child she did not have all that she wanted to have, but the basic needs of the family were met.

Both grandparents played an important part in Nora's life, she described them as her second parents. The grandfather was "*very bold and man of character, the man that you would like as a leader in the community. He was a leader in the church, a leader kind of a structure. And my grandmother was a leader too, but she had many children, so she was mostly at home, and she was not educated*" (63-65). The children used to spend holidays with the grandparents when Nora's mother was at work. The grandfather became a mentor and a teacher to the children, as he spent time helping them with their schoolwork.

Education was important in Nora's family. Nora's mother was not well educated, so she wanted her children to get an education. Nora and her sisters went to good schools in Nairobi where Nora met good teachers. Nora remembers the influential role of some of her teachers, from whom she learned about life in general, and about making good choices.

Apart from education, religion also played a part in family life. Nora went to a Baptist missionary high school, where, apart from studying, she was also inspired by a teacher whom Nora admired as her role model.

> "... the way she (the teacher) valued education and the way she valued life and people in general, and how you treat people, how you stand out there, the kind of character you should have honesty, she held honesty she so greatly and diligence, how you work hard and do things, and especially she pushed us in basketball we had to wake up so early in the morning and she used to say that if you don't perform well you cannot be in the basketball team" (104-108).

Nora came to Finland to study. She says:

> "I always wanted to go out, especially struggling with my studies, I always thought there were greener pastures out there, and I wanted to go to the States" (163).

Nora was granted a study place to study engineering in the USA, but her grades in mathematics were not high enough for her to pursue the studies. Therefore, she went back to school to improve her grades in math, but before she finished the course, her mother was advised by a friend about a study opportunity in Finland. The free education in Finland was a strong incentive for Nora in view of the family's financial challenges. She applied for a study place, passed the required entrance exam, and began her BA degree in international business and IT. She graduated three years later.

Shortly before arriving in Finland, Nora met her future husband, a Kenyan who studied in Finland. After four years, they got married and shortly after, their first child was born. Nora has been taking care of the family and worked part-time in a Finnish retail company. She lives with her family in the western suburb of Helsinki.

Story threads in Nora's narrative

The story thread that consistently runs through Nora's narrative is one of belonging. Nora highlights her belonging to her closest family, to her extended family, to her tribe, to the school community, to the church community and to her faith, to her country and finally to Africa. In her narrative she claims she is a part of all the above, and she describes them as part of who she is.

Nora prepared her narrative based on the general guidelines for the interview I sent her before we met. She started her narrative by saying:

"I am Kenyan, so that's where I start" (7).

She brought small balls of different colours to illustrate the beginning of her narrative. With the aid of the balls, she created a circular shape to show the image of her country and her extended family inside. Each layer had a different colour (see Picture 1).
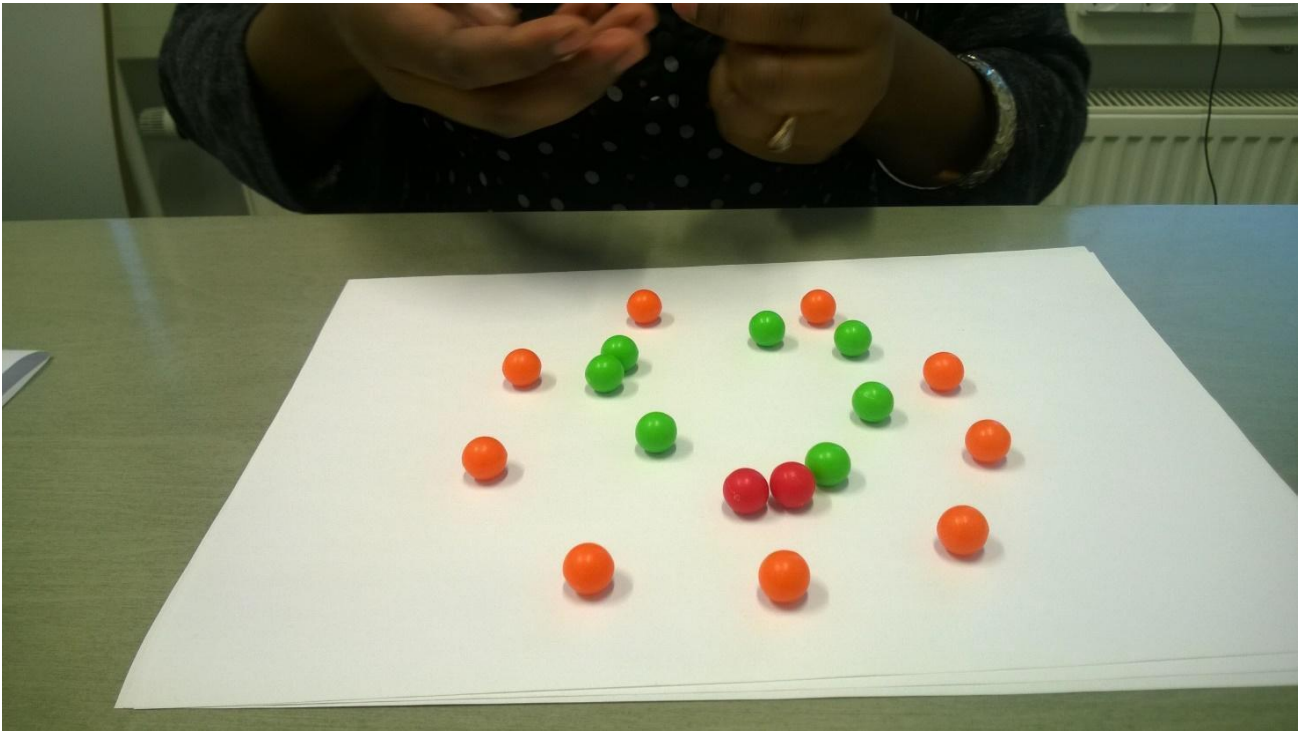
Picture 1. Nora illustrating her country and family.

Nora began with the orange colour to illustrate Kenya. In Maasai culture, which is very closely connected to the Gikuyu tribe, to which Nora belongs, the colour orange traditionally symbolises generosity, warmth, friendship, and hospitality. It is also the most important colour in Maasai culture due to its protective qualities (Jowy, 2016).

She continues to describe all the tribes inhabiting Kenya and uses the green colour to mark them. Red, which in Maasai culture, stands for bravery, unity, strength and danger is used by Nora to depict her grandparents. *"So, I am from the extended family… and mostly the people who play a big role here are my grandparents. They are my second parents, I would say. So, I'm gonna use the red to present my grandfather and my grandmother in the extended family. If it forms a circle, I am using circle just for a community, it is mostly community based. Kind of a culture"* (24-26).

Red in the Kenyan flag symbolises the bloodshed in the fight for independence. As she continues her story about her family, Nora adds more red balls to represent her parents (see Picture 2).

> *"…supposed to be three circles there… and two of my sisters and the queen of the home, my mum. I'm gonna use also the red for her, like my grandparents. So, I grew up in single parent HOME* [emphasis Nora's]. *You get the picture."* (30-32)

I interpreted the circular shape and the symbolism of colours as not coincidental in Nora's story. The family, illustrated by orange and red, with its most important people, is in the middle of a circle that surrounds it.
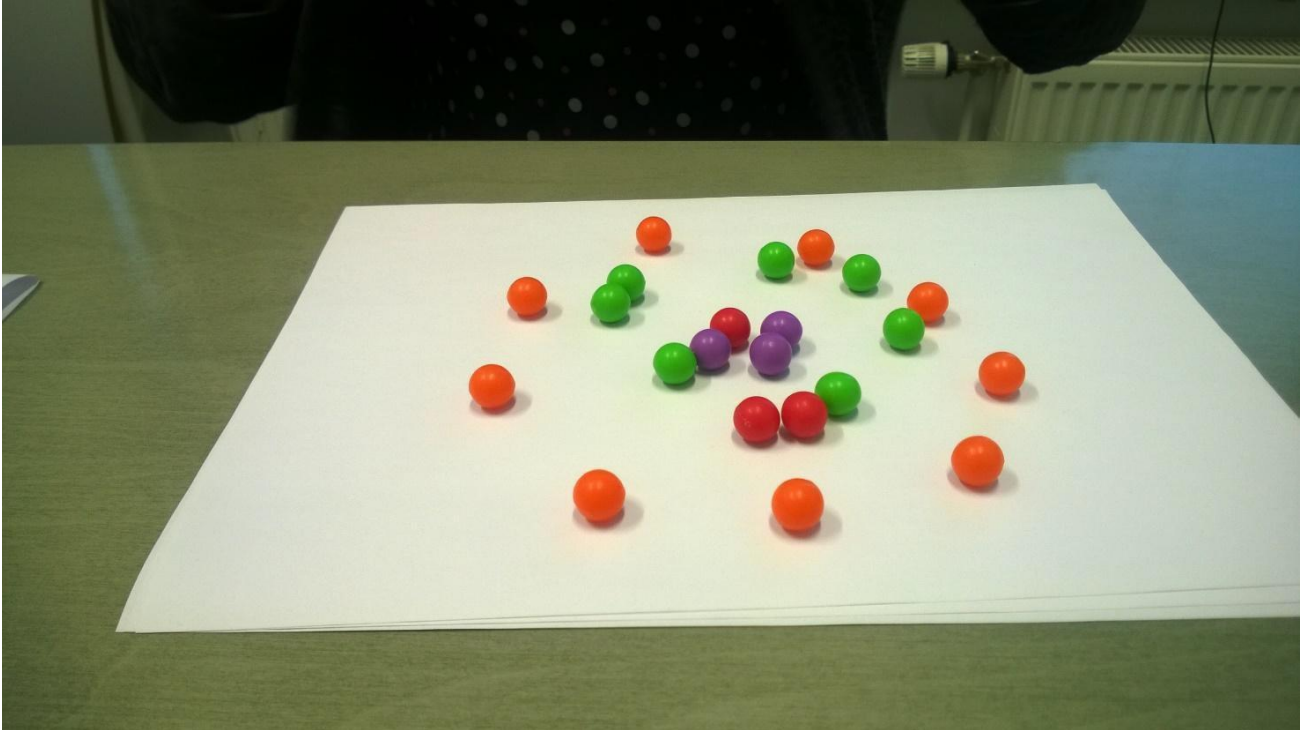
Picture 2. Nora illustrating her country and family, adding colours.

Right from the beginning, Nora places herself very firmly in the middle of her extended family. This centrally placed visualisation of herself also suggests that her belonging is of importance to her. Her opening statement "*I am Kenyan, so that's where I start*" sounds like a defining sentence, where Nora defines her position. For Nora, it all begins in the place where she was born. The visualisation of the narrative Nora creates highlights to me the way she locates herself in her entire narrative.

When describing her childhood memories, she uses the word *together* very frequently in connotation with time.

> "*So, in my childhood mostly I remember is my time at home with my family with my mum and my two sisters, and mostly with one of my sisters. Because we had like two and a half years gap, aaaa… that made us very close, and we spent most of our time together, we went to school together, we did things together*" (38-41).

Nora's sense of belonging is evident in the narrative describing her experiences of Finland where she says: "*Living in this country is SO* [emphasis Nora's] *different to my country. Everything is different, from the weather, the food, people. I have grown up in a community-based country, where if I have a problem, my problem is your problem.* "(266-268). She refers to Finland as *this country*, and to Kenya as *my country*. This indicates the distance and possession at the same time.

Hearing the above comments, I noticed seeming contradictions in the way Nora describes and depicts herself in relation to her closest and extended family as well as the community, and the country. Why would Nora leave the family and community she is so closely connected to?

As mentioned in Nora's story, there was strong encouragement towards studying and getting an education from Nora's mother and grandfather. Nora's mother's education did not ensure a job good enough to support the family, so, as I interpret it, she might have wanted Nora to create a better future and saw getting an education as a trajectory towards it. Nora also developed curiosity and wanted to go abroad. Moreover, in 2002, the National Kenyan Civic Education Programme was introduced throughout the country in order to promote civic education as part of democratic learning. The programme increased political knowledge and participation, and the sense of Kenyan versus tribal identification and political tolerance (Finkel and Smith, 2011). These developments and initiatives might have contributed to Nora's and her family's awareness of possibilities of higher education abroad.

Moreover, Nora explains and makes sense of the financial difficulties experienced by her family, by providing explanation of the social conditions in Kenya which are partly to blame. But she also rationalises her mother's situation, thus partly explaining to herself that low education will not secure a good and stable financial situation.

> "*And the other thing I remember is the difficulties in growing up with finances, there was a financial strain, because there is only one person bringing food to the table and she had to work long hours. And since she was nor educated her job was not that good, she did mostly, low paid jobs like secretary and this kind of … of work, so her pay was quite little. But then it was if you don't have a good position at work then definitely your salary is gonna be very low*" *(*51-58).

Nora acknowledges losing language skills in her native language Kiswahili. Here, again, through her sensemaking she sees that completing education in English gave her an advantage: She says: "…*you can easily relate, especially with the outside world, with the international. It is easier for you to leave*" (151-152). The education in English opened the door for Nora to the outside world.

My interpretation is that Nora's decision to apply for a study place in the USA did not mean consciously leaving her family. Wanting to study in the USA was about getting a good education, which, in turn, would secure a good job and financial stability. Leaving the family and home behind was a natural consequence. Nora's narrative about her close familial connections does not imply that she was missing home. She actually does not mention it in her narrative. Even though she has been living in Finland, she still feels that she is part of her Kenyan heritage.

The examples of Nora's divided "I" highlight these themes more.

The divided" I"

In Nora's narrative, Nora's self is divided into the singular, ideal self, expressed by a singular I and collective, real self, expressed by the plural *we*. In her narrative, Nora becomes at times a narrator and at times the character. When she is a narrator, she projects herself as an individual and uses the singular *I*, and when she becomes a character, she becomes a part of a collective plural *we*.

> "*So, we have different ethnic groups in Kenya. There is the Kikuyu, the Luo, the Ouija, the Masai, the Kalenjin, the Meru and many others. And **I am from** one of them, **I am from** the Kikuyu tribe" (12-17). "**I am from** the Christian background", "**I am from** the extended family*…" (21-25).

In the excerpt above, Nora describes herself as being a part of and belonging to the tribe and the culture where she is from. She also uses the phrase "I am from" in contrast to saying, "I am". This points to a location, a point of departure where Nora comes from and from where she draws her roots. It also implies a temporal connection between the past and the present. *I am from* means I once was there, and now I am here. Both the past and the present constitute who Nora is. Moreover, the fact that Nora uses the verb *to be* in the present tense also points to a connection between where she came from and where she is at the present time.

The excerpt of the narrative below shows how Nora's I is divided between her belonging to a collective and her being herself as an individual, and how it is interwoven in her narrative

depending on where she positions herself. Her cultural heritage makes her a part of a collective, and she represents herself as the plural *we.* In the excerpt below, she mixes the *I* with *we*, as if divided between the two. This form of narrating also shows that Nora sees herself as an individual, but also a part of a larger collective.

> *"**I come from** Kenya with lots of cultures, and all, and then **I come from** an extended family, with my aunties and my uncles and my cousin, it's a very much together the extended family, so we feel that we are one big family. But in the real sense I am from a single parent home with two of my sisters"* (34-36).

Forms of address

Nora applies the values of diligence and hard work, learned in her childhood in Kenya, in her approach to work whilst in Finland. When she narrates the challenges she faced, she talks about her experiences of different work ethics young Finnish employees show. She says:

> *"… they wake in the morning and cancel their shifts, that's very difficult to work with them, so that has been challenging, and I think, based on my growing up people value work in Kenya. Work is something that you value, you take good care of your work, you are loyal to your work. You don't wake up in the morning and just cancel your shifts, because work is precious, and everybody is working*" (251-255).

Here Nora addresses both herself (she reiterates what she was taught as a child in Kenya), by using *you* and also, she indirectly addresses the young employees she works with.

Nora's understanding of her work ethics is related to the cultural values she grew up with in Kenya. She expresses her understanding of what it means to have work and to do it well. Her cultural values clash here with what she experiences in the Finnish company where she works. She is critical, and she tries to make sense of the behaviour of her co-workers.

Later in her narrative she says:

> *"I would say my culture has enabled me to survive in Finland. Because there is a very strong foundation of …of… especially the identity of who I am and how I see myself" (318-319).*
> *"That spirit of working hard has helped me survive here"* (348).

Figure 21. Nora's narrative tapestry: cultural values and

The way Nora made sense of her experiences is illustrated through the story thread in her narrative, the way she represented herself (through the divided "I"), as well as the way she positioned herself in relation to the others in her narrative.

The thread that was consistently emerging throughout Nora's narrative was belonging to and being a part of. Nora highlighted her belonging to her closest family, to her extended family, to her tribe, to the school community, to the church community and to her faith, to her country and finally to Africa. In her narrative, she claimed she was a part of all the above.

Through reflecting and sensemaking, Nora showed her divided "I" (Rogers, 2007) to represent herself. The way Nora created her divided selves in her narrative pointed to her being at odds with who she really was and who she wanted to be. Nora was divided between her belonging to a

collective and, at the same time to her being an individual. These two selves were interwoven in her narrative depending on where she positioned herself. Her cultural heritage made her a part of a collective, thus she represented herself as plural *we.* Whereas for her the host culture in Finland meant an adjustment to a different, more individualistic way of working and living.

The way Nora positioned herself (the address) in her narrative, at times as an individual, at times as part of a collective, which she expressed by using singular *you* or plural *they* pointed to her being distant to something she was not a part of, and to reassure herself of the values she wanted to live by.

There is a connection between Nora's sense of belonging and being a part of her heritage culture, and her real and ideal self. By describing herself from the very beginning as *being from* Kenya, Africa, a tribe, a community and a family she made a very clear point that her heritage culture defined who she is. The role model of her mother and grandparents, the values of diligence and work ethics she learned from them define her work ethics in Finland. "*The spirit of work*" learned at home in Kenya that Nora describes as *"helping her survive in Finland"* illustrated her connection with and attachment to her native culture. Nora not only held on to where she had come from, but she BECAME as a result of where she had come from.

Living and working in Finland necessitated sensemaking that allowed her to reconcile both worlds. Even though she was critical of the work ethics she experienced in her workplace, she held on to her own cultural values.

As mentioned earlier in Chapter 3, in order to better understand the interplay between the analytical tools, and to illustrate the connectiveness and interdependence of one's cultural values learned during childhood and adolescence and the experiences of adulthood, I adopted a tapestry as a metaphor. The tapestry also provided a clear visualisation of the findings. The tapestry rendered itself the best way to show the process of an individual creating an illustration of his/her life experiences by metaphorically weaving threads (warp) through a net of weft. The warp, running vertically, symbolised the cultural values of each individual, and served as a basis and support for the weft. The weft, running horizontally, symbolised the story threads in the narratives, the positioning of the narrators and the divided "I" of the narrators.

For example, the story threads common to most of the narratives of the female participants were: loss, missing connections, belonging, and acceptance. The narrators were divided between the real and the ideal selves. The ideal selves were rooted and connected to the cultural values rooted in their native cultures (hard work, work ethics, suffering, maturity, faith, spirituality, care taking and entrepreneurship). The real selves were the individuals who became as a result of their experiences of disruptions and events that lead to transitions. These transitions were short-term or prolonged experiences where the participants moved from their life phases or conditions. For example, after moving to a new host culture in Finland, the participants narrated having to develop new strategies for managing and coping with their changing situations. When experiencing the changes or transitions, the participants' changing expectations for themselves and their roles in society lead to insecurities, or the dissonance between their former and present sense of self, and their relationships with former and new social groups (Introne, Minoz, Semaan, 2021). Their identities, or self-concepts, and internalised views of themselves as social or physical beings was altered.
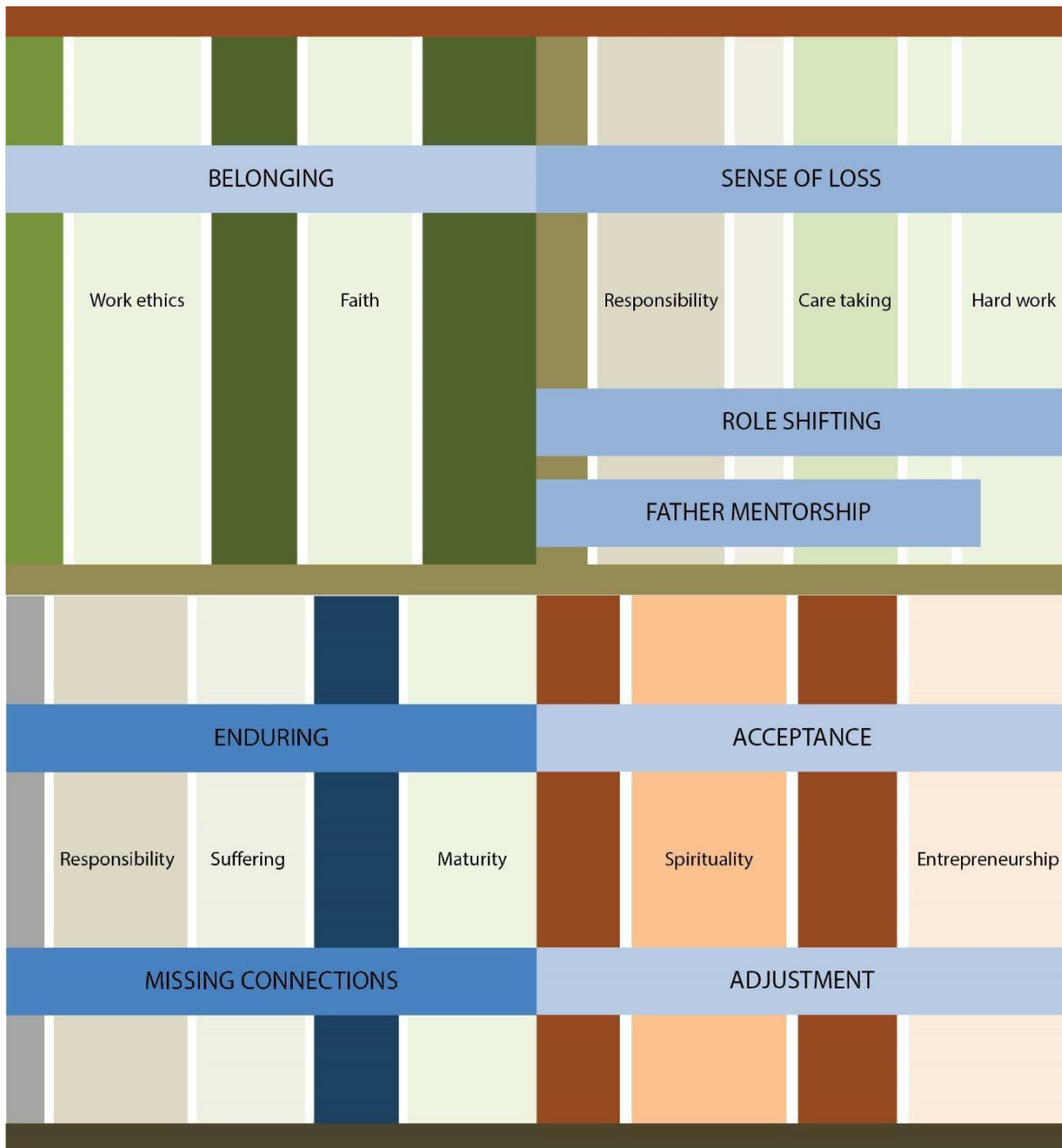
Figure 22. Female participants collective tapestry: cultural values and story threads

Male participants and their stories

Table 7. Names, age and time spent in Finland (males)

NAME	AGE	COUNTRY	TIME IN FINLAND
Mike	43	Nigeria	18 years
Tom	43	Kenya	17 years
Luke	53	Zimbabwe	23 years
Mark	58	Kenya	25 years
Paul	59	Ghana	16 years

Mike's story

Mike was born in Nigeria. At the time of the interview, Mike was in his early forties. He arrived in Finland in 2002. Back at home in Nigeria, Mike's mother was a teacher and paid attention to Mike getting good education. Mike talked about his mother's expectations and a disciplined routine which implied that schoolwork had to be done diligently before playing. He liked studying, and he also spoke highly about his teachers.

He described his childhood as safe and secure with a lot of freedom to play with his friends. He was used to hard work and perseverance to reach his goals. He described his childhood as challenging at times and a bit scary. He was growing up in a society without structure and the volatility of the social and political situation did not guarantee a stable future for school leavers. This gave him a feeling of insecurity. As a teenager, he reflected on his future, and that was a source of uncertainty and fear. He also believed that the purpose of going to school and getting an education was to get a job. The situation in Nigeria did not give him reassurance that he will find a job.

After elementary school, he passed the entrance exam to a science school and continued his education. Mike decided to come to Finland to study. He completed his bachelor's degree in international business and after that an MA degree, also in international business.

Mike wanted to be an entrepreneur, and his goal was to have a consultancy company that would "help Finnish companies, to give back to society, help Finnish companies to get into countries like Nigeria" (124-125). He set up his company and contacted several companies. He offered his services to one of them, and despite initial interest, experienced disappointment. The information

Mike provided was used by the company, but not rewarded. Mike described this as a "*nasty experience*" (133) and as a result, he decided to focus his efforts on foreign companies.

At the time of the interview, Mike was married to a Finnish woman and had two sons. He lived in Helsinki with his family.

Throughout Mike's narrative, the threads that emerge both in his narrative about his childhood memories and his experiences of living in Finland is "falling and rising". This can be seen not only by looking at the way Mike makes sense of his experiences, and the vocabulary he uses, but also from the tone of Mike's narrative.

For example, when narrating his early memories, Mike associates his childhood with freedom. Considering the fact that Mike narrates his childhood from an adult perspective and living in Finland, I wondered if this suggested a tension between the way he remembers his childhood and the way he experiences his life in Finland. I present the answer later in his narrative (below) when he describes his experiences in Finland.

When talking about society as a whole, Mike uses a powerful metaphor:

> "… *The issue with Finland, regarding foreigners, or regarding somebody like me, is not being able to give space or a chance to prove he or she could be, so as if they are raising a big wall with big chains which you cannot break through*" (102-105).
> He clarifies this judgment later in the narrative:

> "*So, the ability to allow somebody to BE or to SHOW [emphases Mike's] what he or she is capable of is what they are lacking*" (56-57).

The metaphor of "big wall with big chains", combined with the metaphor used earlier, I see as, what Smith (2011) calls a shining gem. A shining gem is something that shines in the narrative and requires some detective work to establish its meaning. The wall with chains stands for imprisonment. Mike compares his lack of opportunities to prove his abilities to a prison which he cannot break out of.

The contrast between his descriptions of his childhood memories which encompass freedom, and his descriptions of the lack of opportunities in Finland, which are depicted as wall with chains

(imprisonment) has profound symbolic meaning. It suggests that the values Mike learned and believed in as a child and young adult, when confronted with the realities of Finnish culture, prove to be useless and of no value. He describes his personal values as follows:

> *"… values in life I have is to be courageous and take risk, and stay focused, having a very clear goal, be as industrious as it can be, be honest and have empathy and sympathy, remember to put yourself in somebody's shoes, and… also be as social and encouraging as you can be to other people and give room for a reasonable discussion and peaceful discussion …"* (174-177).

In his endeavours to provide his consulting services to a Finnish company (as mentioned in his story), Mike acted in accordance with his values: he had a goal, was not afraid to work hard and take risks. His trust in the honesty of his potential clients was shattered when he was rejected and concluded that he had been used.

Whilst attempting to understand Mike's reasoning and interpret its meaning, I could not help but wonder how close to reality Mike's understanding of the rejection was. Was Mike actually taken advantage of? Perhaps his expectations were too high, and his belief that his hard work will pay off was somehow naïve. Perhaps the fact that the Finnish company was not interested in his services was a result of Mike not providing sufficient information. Perhaps Mike's understanding was informed by what Goffman coined as stigma, "an attribute that is deeply discrediting" (1986, p 2, cited in Warr, 2005) and "the situation of the individual who is disqualified from full social acceptance". If, following Goffman (1986, p 138), stigma is rooted in an existing understanding of social identities as 'perspectives' produced in interactional settings, then Mike's understanding might have been informed by stigma as not only a relation between people, but also a relation of self to self.

Goffman further argued that an individual "learns and incorporates the stand-point of the normal" through processes of socialisation. By doing so, an individual understands how he/she is likely to be placed in a stratified order of normal–stigma positionalities (1986, p 32). Through this psychosocial process, individuals judge themselves against incorporated norms and anticipate "the standards against which they fall short" (1986, p 32). What if Mike had adopted such a stigmatised position which rendered him inferior, and, as a result, interpreted his negative social relation with the potential Finnish client as his failure to realise "a particular norm" (1986, p6)?

The tone throughout Mike's narrative was related to the way Mike made sense of his experiences. It alternated between heavy and pressured, and positive and appreciative. When Mike narrated his experiences of the realities of life during his childhood in Nigeria, he focused on how strict (but also fantastic) his school was:

> *"my childhood education was fantastic, and I had very good teachers" (10-11).* When the story turns into his thoughts about future prospects it falls back into the tone of pessimistic resignation*, "the fear of the future was there, because you don't know what's gonna happen"* (25).

The same alternation between the tones could be seen when Mike narrated his life in Finland, as illustrated also with his opening sentence:

> "*There were ups and downs" (84).* His next, positive sentence acknowledges having good friends, but the tone slips back into more pessimistic comments of the *"negativities, or the negative attitudes from people"* (88).

The tone became tragic at the end of Mike's narrative when he described a low moment, which could be regarded as a life changing event. He described it as "*nasty experience*", …" *the experience, I really broke by back. I said: now I am done with Finnish companies." (144-145).*

He attempted to make sense of this experience by finding explanations for the way he had been treated.

> "*People say that Finland is very honest, and the question I asked: Are people honest because they are really honest or because they have the fear that they will get caught?"* (133-135)

He did not provide answers, instead he added:" *that was a nasty experience. And then I let it go"* (137-138). Here again Mike's sensemaking was about blame, but also resignation.

What I also find surprising was how Mike made sense of seeing himself. He categorised himself as belonging to a different group than foreigners (*regarding foreigners, or regarding somebody like me),* he saw himself as being different. Unconsciously, without verbalising this difference, he called himself different. I interpreted this as his unconscious expression of "a colonized mind with an inferiority complex" (Chilisa, 2017, 333). Mike saw himself not as any foreigner in Finland, but a

different type of a foreigner deprived of possibilities to "BE" [emphasis Mike's] (105) and show his abilities.

> "… there is certain kind of position the foreigner and blacks they cannot attain…, they cannot go further. So, ability to allow people not to useful is a very, very big drawback in Finland. And the ability not to recognise that somebody can be useful, even though the black person is not a Finn. (throat) or does not have white skin." (107-110).

In his sensemaking, in order to better understand his experiences and the foreign culture where he lives, Mike negotiated himself in order to find his place in Finland, a foreign culture he called home. His final remark, at the very end of the interview illustrated his approach very clearly.

> "So, these questions I ask myself: do I want to be a wise man, or do I want to be a clever man? A clever man wriggles himself out of trouble when he gets himself into one. A wise man will not allow himself to get into that trouble. So, I had to make a choice when I first came here" (214-217).

Mike experienced disappointments, and he admitted their impact on his wellbeing. Yet, he rationalised them and through sensemaking he was able to persevere. Mike described the values he learned in his native culture as follows:

> "Because we believed in our culture, that you have to work hard, and then you have to get there. Sometimes it is gonna be bad and difficult, but you have to always persevere and persevere and that you will get to your goal" (20-22). This together with his role models helped him negotiate his own self….

> "My role model was Soyinka, he is the Nobel prize winner from the western part of Nigeria, and he was very popular in Nigeria and, a smart guy, and… I looked up to him not only because he created something out nothing and he became somebody, and he has also been encouraging. … because I read a lot of his books, so I could say that he shaped a lot of my thoughts that I was thinking at that particular moment, at that particular period. And how to see the world differently. And how to look for something inside of you that you want to be" (64-72).

Mike's "I" was divided in his narrative into the way Mike described himself as his ideal self: someone who works hard, takes risks, and believes in his ability to achieve goals. Mike's real self, conversely, was helpless and deprived of professional possibilities and acknowledgment.

When Mike narrated his childhood memories, he began with describing his mother, a teacher, who had paid attention to Mike's education. Because of his mother's influence Mike also gained confidence in his own abilities. He says:

> "…*my mother made me understand the ability that I had that I could focus and if I wanted to go for something, I could go for it, and it was good" (8-10). "It's because people do believe that when you go to school then you have better chances to become successful*"
> (45).

Mike also pointed out the values he learned belonging to the Igbo tribe. "*That was embodied in us the Igbos, that ability to take challenges and then to take risks*" (22). Mike had grown up believing that by taking risks and embracing challenges, he could achieve whatever plans and goals he created. When Mike described young people, like himself, growing up in Nigeria, he depicted them as creative and fast learners. He also pointed out that creativity had to be nurtured, encouraged, and channelled in the right direction. This, in his opinion, was not possible in Nigeria, but it was in Finland (45-47). Mike believed that Finland was a place where there were opportunities and possibilities, and where his ideals could be realised.

Mike's ideal self-clashed, and remained at odds with his real self, which became evident in his narrative about his studies and work experiences in Finland.

Mike made a claim in his narrative that his work was not acknowledged.

> "*… one of my lecturers could not believe that I could be good in something that I am good at based on my origin and colour*" (93-94). This statement illustrates how what the values associated with Mike's cultural origin, as well as the lessons he learned as a child are confronted with the way he was treated by a lecturer. The value of putting a lot of effort in one's studies, as well as the value of education in itself, as a path to success is crushed when confronted with his experiences of unfair treatment.

Forms of address

Apart from Mike's position as a member of the Igbo tribe, and relating to himself through the plural *us/ours,* Mike shifted his positions when describing the situation in Nigeria. The passage below illustrates different forms of address Mike used when narrating his retrospective reflection on his home country:

> "*So, when I now look at Nigeria, I see people going more in sole entrepreneurship, <u>we</u> have so much in Nigeria because the entrepreneurship is mostly based on trade by selling which is one-by-one. People are fast learners, <u>they</u> are creative, <u>they</u> make things out of nothing. So, <u>we</u> lack opportunities*".

By using different forms of address, Mike positioned himself as part of his native country, and at the same time he saw himself as standing outside of it. He disowned his belonging to his native country, and at the same time he still felt a part of it.

FALLING AND RAISING

| Taking responsibilities | | Education | Strong work ethics | Diligence |
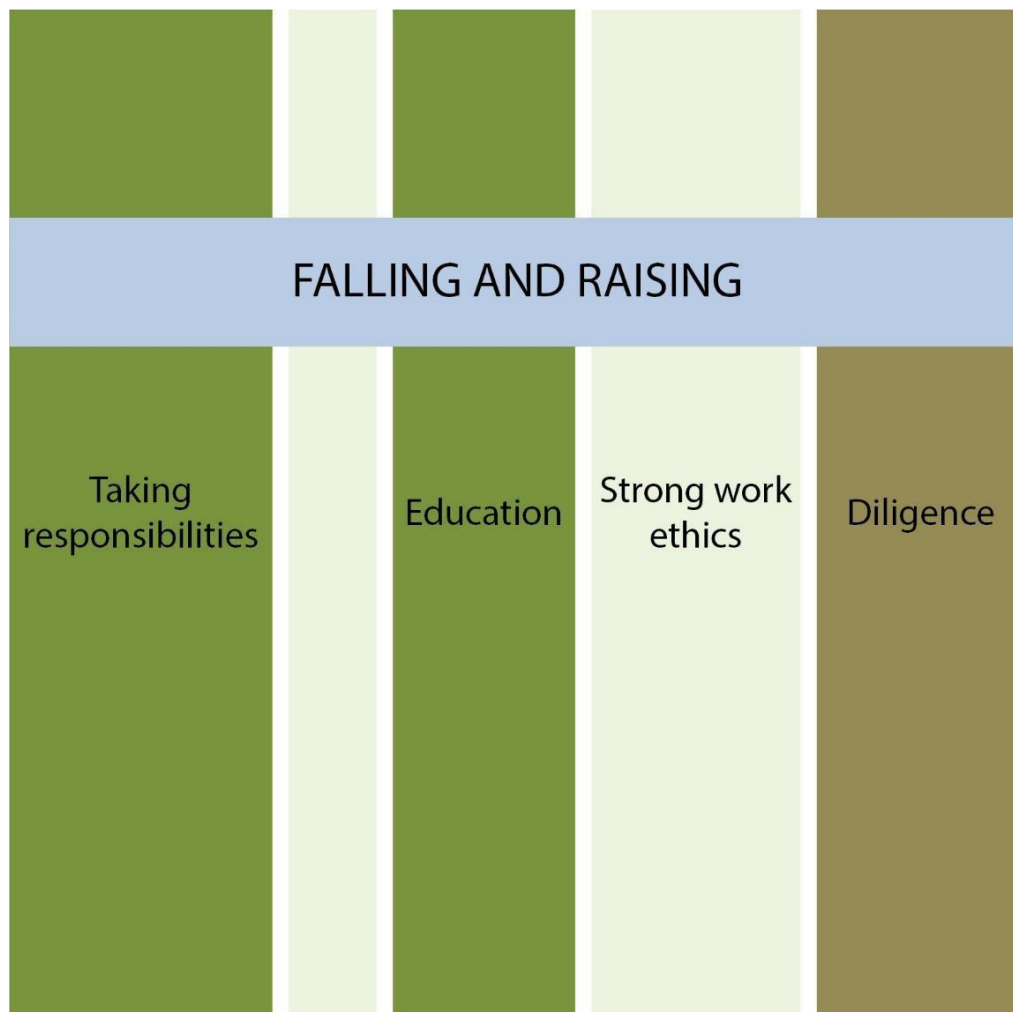
Figure 22. Mike's narrative tapestry: values and story threads

Throughout Mike's entire narrative, the thread that emerged is one of "falling and rising". When Mike experienced unpleasant and threatening situations, he felt crushed. As a result, and through his sensemaking, he changed his actions and put effort into attaining his goals again. The value of perseverance and diligence learned in his childhood allowed him to continue and not give up. However, his divided "I" suggested tensions between Mike's true self and the limitations he experienced in Finland; on the one hand, a hardworking man, not afraid to take risks, and on the other, a man whose talents are not acknowledged, thus preventing him from developing his skills.

Still deeply rooted in his native culture, Mike remained at odds with trying to adjust his behaviour in Finland to fit in. In the way he positioned himself in his narrative, he showed his position as part of his native culture, and at the same time on the outside of it. The way he described his identity suggested a sense of loss. In his sensemaking, he oscillated between the values of his native

culture and the host culture in Finland. He also ascribed his inability to function as a successful professional within Finnish culture to the Finnish work culture by blaming it for limiting his professional potential to be seen. Mike's sensemaking did provide support.

Tom's story

Tom was born in Kenya. He came to Finland in 2003. At the time of the interview, Tom was 43.

Tom and his four siblings grew up in the suburbs of Nairobi, in a residential area. The first language he learned was English, beginning at the kindergarten level, followed by primary school, four years of the secondary school, and four years of university education. Tom mentioned his father's emphasis on studying and doing well at school. Even though Tom's school days were long (8am-4pm), Tom's father expected the children to continue studying at home as well after school, which he also supervised.

Tom remembered the family as having "*very LITTLE*" (43) [emphasis Tom's]. He pointed out the time when Kenya had been colonised, and education had not been compulsory for black children. (see more details in Chapter 1). Tom further explained that the reason for the importance of education in the family was triggered by Kenya regaining independence and the availability of education. His parents had gone to school themselves and pointed to their children "*you have to put a lot of effort into studying if you want to amount to something*" (56-57). Tom's grandfather was a teacher in a missionary school.

As a teenager, Tom wanted to go abroad to pursue further education, as "*there were no variety*" (76). He was interested in studying computer science, and considered the UK, Canada, and the USA. He also understood that his parents could not afford for him to go to the USA. Being interested in computers, whilst still studying at secondary school, Tom spent a lot of time in the principal's office, which had the school's only computer. As a student, Tom was working in 24-hour customer service, and at night when the service was quiet, he spent a lot of time browsing the net. That was how he found out about study opportunities in Finland.

His brother had already been studying in Finland and sent him more information about a particular school. Tom sent his application and was accepted to study business. After a year, he changed his studies to computer science and completed his MA degree. At the time of the interview, he worked for a large international IT company, was married to a Finnish woman and had three children. He lived with his family in Helsinki.

The thread that runs through Tom's narrative at different stages of his life is the balance between giving and taking.

For example, as a child Tom was told by his father:

> *"If you don't study you amount to NOTHING"* … [emphasis Tom's] (35). Tom reiterates this again in his narrative when he says: *"you have to put a lot of effort into studying if you want to amount to something"* (56-57). These sentences not only emphasise the importance of education, but they also shape Tom's understanding and belief in a trajectory that leads to a good life.

When Tom began thinking about his own plans during his teenage years, he understood that his dreams of going to study in Canada or the USA might not materialise, because, as he says:

> *"… you also understand you don't just get what you WANT, you have to WORK for it"* (80). [both emphases Tom's]

When Tom made sense of what he had experienced at work in Finland he said:

> *"You learn something from the Finn you give something to the Finn as well"* (268).

The first two instances showed me the way Tom understood and accepted that nothing was just given, but it required work. He had learned this understanding from his father, who he described as his role model.

The third example showed Tom's way of summing up what it meant for him to negotiate his position in Finnish culture at work. In the narrative about the challenges Tom experienced at work, he described in detail the process that led him to getting the job, and the way he behaved among his Finnish colleagues. He also explained the extent to which he had to change who he was in order to fit in. The excerpt below illustrates Tom's short account of a very low moment he experienced at work.

> *"The most unpleasant for me is when people show it into your face that you are not welcome"* (262-263).

But what I found striking here is the way Tom made sense and created his understanding of the dynamics of this non-verbal interaction.

> "*Because your presence affects their way of doing things. So, what I picked from the Finns that I also want to be ALONE (huh/heh) we have to COLLABORATE all the time, so I do my thing and go home. Even in the PUBLIC places it changed me as a person*" (268-271)

Tom's sensemaking showed an understanding of and appreciation for the way his Finnish co-workers and his employers might experience Tom's presence among them. He understood that his presence could compromise their behaviour and way of working. As a result, Tom attempted to change his behaviour by becoming more like a Finn.

Tom's cultural values of strong work ethics, flexibility, and creativity learned in his childhood proved helpful when dealing with challenging situations at work.

The divided "I"

> "*At the moment, I am international. I am international, even though I am a FINN. I am a DUAL citizenship. But I would say I am a citizen of the world. Yea... I would fit in anywhere I would go. Because I CANNOT completely fit as a Kenyan because I have adopted the western way, the Finnish way, but STILL in Finland I am a foreigner. I will give you a very good example. <u>This was the best time ever</u>. When I realised that I am a Finn* (huh/heh)" (314-318).

The excerpt above shows how Tom associated who he was with his nationality and his national belonging. He expressed several contradictions: he said he was a Finn and a foreigner in Finland, he was a Finn, and he was international, he could fit in anywhere he went, and he could not fit in completely as a Kenyan. He seemed to be entangled with different categorisations of who he saw himself to be.

These contradictory categorisations do not project a clear idea of what Tom's real self and Tom's ideal self are. In the narrative, Tom negotiated his identity both within himself and with the Finnish work environment. He did so as a result of experiencing a social identity threat. His work environment did not provide identity-safe cues, suggesting that his ethnic and cultural identity would be valued (Avery et al., 2013; Davies, Spencer and Steele, 2005; Walton, Murphy and Ryan, 2015). On the contrary, it created an environment where Tom was likely to anticipate and

attribute experiences of discrimination to his ethnicity, what Pietri, Johnson, Ozgumus (2018) refer to as a ethnic-prominence viewpoint. Because of ethnicity being both a historically and contemporary basis for discrimination, Tom's narrative suggested experiences of high levels of stigma consciousness, which, in turn, increased his vulnerability to social identity threat. Being vulnerable, he also had heightened vigilance for cues suggesting that his ethnicity would be devalued in his work environment.

However, his feelings were different when taken out of the Finnish environment. Tom began making sense of his identity and belonging when confronted with questioning whilst on holiday in Greece. Asked by a Nigerian if he spoke Finnish, and where he was from, Tom answered in Finnish, he was from Kenya. As the Norwegian did not believe him, Tom told him he was from Finland. Tom comments: *"So, that was the first time I felt so FINNISH" (335). [emphasis Tom's]* Having *met* Finns at the hotel later on Tom felt that he was accepted as one of them, as a Finn outside. Tom continues:

> *"We sat at a table, spoke Finnish and for me it felt like I was ACCEPTED as a Finn because we are ABROAD. But the minute we land here I am a FOREIGNER. I am accepted as a Finn when abroad" (345-347) [all emphases Tom's]*

The tension of Tom's divided "I", between who he wants to be when it seems convenient, and who he was, was resolved by his sensemaking of the situation in order to negotiate his identity. By diversifying his positionality in different localities, he positioned himself nowhere in particular. He sums it up by saying:

> *"When I am abroad, I am a Finn, when I am in Finland, I am Kenyan and when I am in Kenya, I am Kenyan. No, when I am in Finland, I am a foreigner. It's kind of makes sense".* (391-392)

The secret gem (Smith, 2011) here was the way Tom referred to himself as a "foreigner". Unlike Mike, by describing himself as a foreigner, Tom was not acknowledging the colour of his skin. He described himself as any other foreigner. He created what Murray (2000, p 341) calls *"social construction of identity through the process of narrating his or her life to others"*. Through this performative technique Tom adjusted his identity and behaviour to present an image he wanted

to present depending on his audience. This was a result of making sense and coming to terms with how he felt being perceived by others.

The excerpt below illustrates Tom's sensemaking, which shows his way of performing his identity. I quote this longer passage, as I consider it very important to give space for Tom's voice here. My summary would not suffice here, and it would impair the validity of Tom's sensemaking.

> "*The most unpleasant for me is when people show it into your face that you are not welcome. They don't have to SAY [emphasis Tom's] it, but you can see it through their attitude, in the air…and that can be a challenge. Even though you try to speak Finnish as much as you know, but you can still see from their attitudes and behaviour they show you; please go away. And that can be annoying.*" (262-265).

> "*…it is stereotypical because I am a foreigner, I should be a cleaner. If I start to explain to them, they think really? People are doubting, so if I want a short conversation with somebody, I will say what they want to hear instead of casting a doubt and having to explain it again all over again. Trying to sound believable… if I say I am a foreign student (even though I graduated a long time ago, I am believable, If I am not a student, I must be a refugee. If I say I am working people think ok, he is planning to stay. I am a THREAT [emphasis Tom's]. You have to choose your answers based on the audience. If you look like a French exchange student who will stay for 4 months and then will go back, you are welcome. (huh/heh) You must choose the answer according to the audience. You disappoint people expectations if you tell them who you are. It is very annoying if you are judged just by the way you look*" (410-420).

Forms of address

In Tom's narrative of his childhood memories, he used only the first person plural *we.* This clearly indicated his continual unconscious sense of belonging to the collective of his native culture. The form changed into first person singular when he described his teenage years, when he made his own, more individual plans, and started working. When he described his experiences in Finland, he addressed himself by using the second person singular *you*.

> "*In a sense that… **you** get all the resources… and people aid **you** or guide **you** on how to do things, but mostly it's coming from your input, your own contribution. And other that that*

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you get used to doing what you are supposed to be doing, it's more of a routine? But then

you also need personal development if you want to have an area of expertise that you want

to specialise in, and that's how you become an expert" (144-148)

Tom highlighted the importance of education in general.

"My parents were my role model. Especially my dad. And he was quite…, always telling us

to do better at school, and pushing us to go forward and put a lot of emphasis on our

studies. If you don't study, you amount to NOTHING" (34-36).

He equated education with an intrinsic value of who his is. By addressing himself by using the second person singular *you,* Tom changed the tone of his narrative into an authoritarian one and became his own voice of authority. This, I interpreted as Tom quoting the voice of his father "telling him what to do" and Tom obeying it.

This way of relating to himself allowed him to address himself from a distance in an imperative tone. The imperative tone addressed at himself suggested, on the one hand, respect for an authoritarian voice, and on the other, distancing himself from it. He respected the authoritarian, imperative tone of the other, as it resonated the voice of his father giving him advice about succeeding in life through education. At the same time, he took a distance from it, thus creating an illusion of himself being in control.
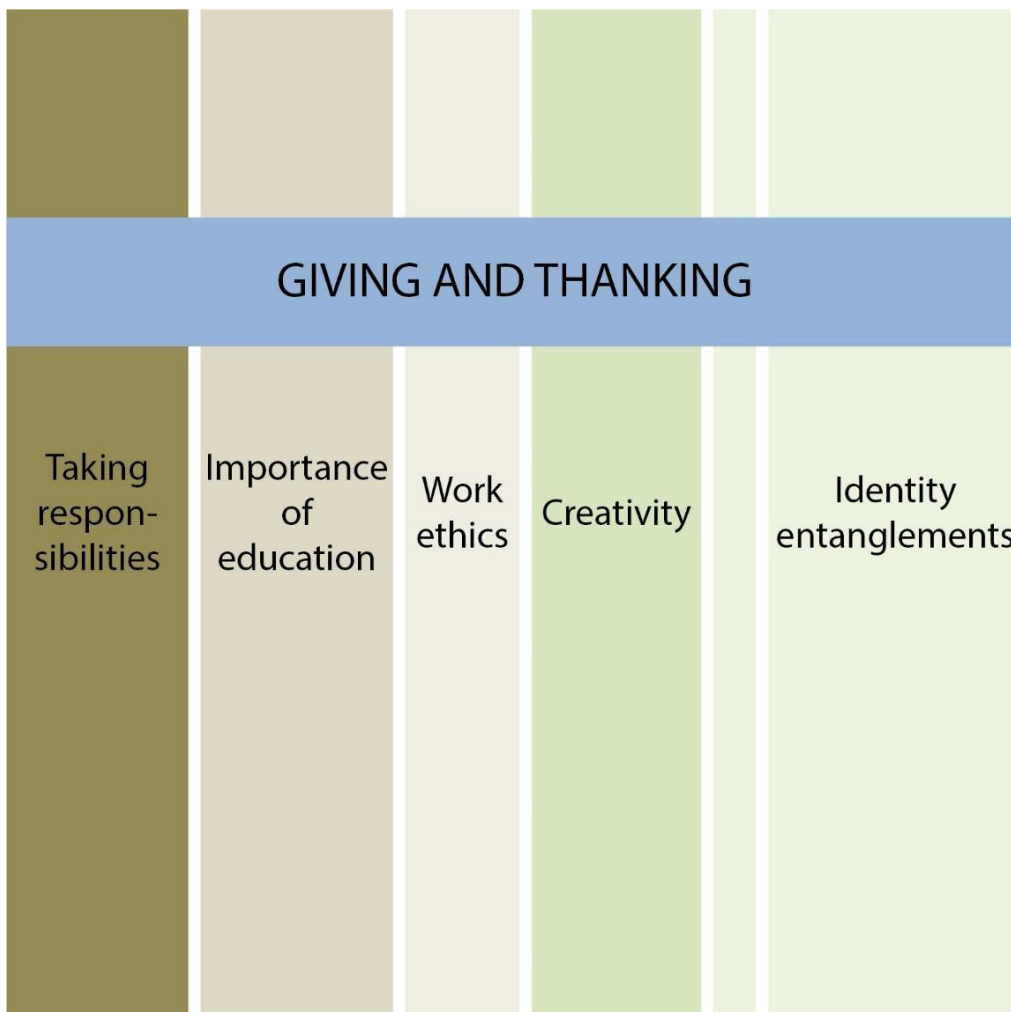
Figure 23. Tom's narrative tapestry: values and story threads

The thread that runs through Tom's narrative at different stages of his life is the balance between giving and taking. Tom described it as "you *get something, you lose something*". His sensemaking about his experiences in Finland suggested maintaining a balance between the two. Tom had learned to be creative as a child, and as an adult he used this skill when he adjusted his behaviour to demanding, new situations in the host culture. For example, he described his cultural and national identity according to what he perceived as expectations of his recipient.

This seeming flexibility shows tensions and entanglements of Tom's self- categorisations. Tom describes himself to be a Finn, a foreigner in Finland, an international man who fits in anywhere he goes, but not completely a Kenyan. Through his sensemaking, he performs according to the audience and its "demands".

The way Tom positioned himself gave more clues to his identity: he belonged to his native culture when he narrated his childhood memories by using the first person plural, *we.* He was on the outside when he used the second person singular *you* when he narrated experiences in Finland.

Luke's story

Luke was born in Rhodesia, "*which was a British colony*" (1), now called Zimbabwe. At the time of the interview, Luke was in his early fifties. He arrived in Finland in 1987. He grew up in a rural area, in a small village. Luke's father worked in Salisbury, now Harare, the capital city. Luke's mother took care of the family and the farm in the village. As a child, Luke took care of the cattle, spent time with his friends in the fields with a lot of freedom to play, "we *were herding cattle and then we had a lot of fun, we ate fruits from the forest, we would swim and then we would fight*" … (5-6). At the age of 7, Luke went to a primary school situated 3-4 km from the village, which he describes as "traumatic" (16) because of having to study in English and being far from home surrounded by unfamiliar people.

As a child, Luke saw his father occasionally during his visits to Harare. Luke enjoyed the time spent with him, "*his manner, the kind of life, the love that he showed to me and the stories he told me*" (49-50). Luke also mentions his grandfather as a storyteller "*of the old days*".

As Luke grew, he began enjoying school and became a very good student. He described learning to read and write as "*the breaking point*" (67). He read a lot, burying himself in books in his native language, which later he would retell to other boys in the village.

After completing high school, Luke went to a teacher training college for 3 years. After graduating he worked as a secondary school teacher for 5 years. He started teaching at the time when Rhodesia regained independence and, as a result, education became available to all children in the country. The classes were very big, and Luke found his work very exciting. After five years Luke began to consider further studies in Canada. He applied to several universities, but in the meantime, he met a Finnish lady and moved to Finland.

He was offered a place at the university to study economics. He also studied journalism and communications. He was working at the same time doing odd jobs in a restaurant, post office, as

an English teacher, and freelance journalist. He enjoyed having work and being a student. When his relationship broke down, he considered returning to his home country, but remined in Finland.

At the time of the interview, Luke was looking for a permanent full-time job and, in the meantime worked part-time with refugees. Luke was divorced, had three grownup children and lived alone in Helsinki.

The thread that ruan throughout Luke's narrative was one of belonging to his native culture and holding on to his native cultural roots.

When narrating his childhood memories, Luke described going to school as a very difficult experience. When he explained the reasons for it, he said:

> *"The traumatic thing was this kind of experience that I was in a class there were so many other people, different people who were not members of my family or…they didn't come from my village, from my locality, because most of my people from my village were my relatives"* (33-36).

He described people and places as belonging to him using the possessive pronoun *my*. Luke saw himself as belonging to locations and social groups, and this strong kinship was a source of his sense of security.

When he discovered reading and writing he said:

> *"When I got to learn how to read and write that was the breaking point. Then I found that I really enjoyed reading and I could bury myself in books"* (67-68).

He began reading stories in his native language which he would later retell to younger boys. On the one hand, the discovery of reading opened doors to something new for him, and on the other, by reading in his native language, Luke still was able to hold on to his cultural roots.

When narrating his teaching experiences Luke shortly said: *"I was a good teacher and enjoyed teaching"* (81). After that, his narrative fell back into a long and detailed narrative of the past colonial times when education was not available to black children. This detailed historical overview of the situation suggested that his professional trajectory was influenced by the situation of his country. The parental push towards education was also influenced by the availability of

education after regaining independence. Luke's interest in reading stories and telling them to younger boys was triggered by his passion for reading, and that encouraged his teaching career choice. His further interest in education impacted his interests in studying abroad. Free and accessible education in Finland made it possible to realise this interest.

After over 20 years in Finland Luke said:

> "I am still very much a Zimbabwean African. I am still very much in there. I have not … come to the IDEA [emphasis Luke's] that I am going to spend the rest of my life here. But that, maybe this is just a wish, this is just a wish that I mean… but I still haven't gotten to the idea that all my life is going to be here" (232-234).

The divided "I"

When Luke narrated his childhood memories, he referred to himself at times in the singular *I* and at times as the plural *we*. He used the plural *we* when he described positive memories of his life in the village (quoted in Luke's story) and he switched into singular *I* when he talked about difficult experiences at school. This way of narrating his positive experiences in plural and the traumatic experiences in singular pointed to Luke's cultural belonging to a collective, and associating support from the collective. Luke's way of referring to himself in the singular suggested him dealing alone with unfamiliar and difficult situation. "So*, when I went to school, I think it was this idea this unfamiliarity of everything, the noise, the so many different people, the control that I was supposed to be in the classroom and then I didn't understand what was going on"* (38-40).

This division between Luke alone and Luke as a part of a collective resonated in his narrative about his experiences of Finnish culture, where he said:

> "…we have the bigger family concept that we belong together, we give to support to each other, things are when things are bad, like they are now for example economic and political problems, hey we are… people give each other support. Somebody is sick, and … you know people are asking how are you feeling? They are concerned about the welfare of the other person. They are concerned here, I don't say, but it is in a different way" (275-279).

Luke narrated his divided "I" in the following way:

> "*I live in Finland, and I understand the system how it works and whatever what is supposed to be done, but then there is the ME [emphasis Luke's] who is still over there. In terms that,*

somehow, I CANNOT… [emphasis Luke's] it's very difficult for me not to still be connected to what is happening … in Zimbabwe. If you understand what I mean… the relatives are THERE… [emphasis Luke's], and of course at the moment you… like everybody from the developing countries in particular… we do help a lot of people there. With the money we are earning and… all that. So, you cannot be detached from your roots so to speak. But at the same time, you are HERE. … [emphasis Luke's] (hands movement) so I see it as … polar identity: here and over there" (260-266).

Forms of address

Luke's narrative about his education and the reasons for coming to Finland was a part of a wider socio-political narrative that described the availability of education during colonialism in Rhodesia. It also described the policy implemented by the British. In his narrative, Luke took on the voice of the colonisers. By doing so he engaged in a monologue directed at other colonisers. He addressed them as if he was giving them directions as to how they should treat black people. The following excerpt illustrates Luke's way of narrating this:

"…in colonial times the settler, the British settlers in Zimbabwe, they …the idea was…I mean…the black people were there for labour, cheap labour, the source of cheap labour. So, there was no need to provide them with sophisticated education. What you needed was just a person who could count 1,2,3,4,5 and understands some few commands and can work effectively" (121-126).

"… if you give the black people education, they become politically conscious and they become troublesome or CHEEKY [emphasis Luke's] as they used to say, the word they used, they become cheeky, in other words you know, they become err…. You know, they become less subservient, they begin to… demand their rights and that sort of thing, so you really need somebody who was simple, who could work in your house and would call your boss, and he would call your wife madam and would look after your children and the other would cook for you your meals, and the other one would work in your gardens. So, you needed simple, but if you give black people education then they become conscious then they begin demand their rights" (132-138).

Luke changed forms of address here and thus also changed his own positionality. When he began, he used the plural *they* to refer to the British settlers. Then he used *them* to refer to the black

people, thus distancing himself from the people he belonged to (as quoted earlier). He distanced himself even further when he took on the voice of the coloniser himself.

Luke narrated this to set the scene for his own situation. This was actually the beginning to his story describing his coming to Finland. This long introduction was striking to me: Luke connected the situation of his country during colonial times to his narrative in Finland at the present time. Moreover, the hidden gem here (Smith, 2010) is the way he did it. The form of address, as well as the sarcastic tone Luke adopted, conveyed partly the state of affairs as it really was (I describe this in detail in the Chapter 2), but also provided a bitter ridicule of the situation. Like a jester, Luke narrated through the voice of the British, but he also ridiculed their own policy. Luke made this connection to the past, bitterly ridiculed it, and by doing so he also showed that his present trajectory was a result of that past. His present in Finland was thus determined by that past.

Summary and conclusions

ADHERING TO NATIVE CULTURAL ROOTS

Taking responsibility | Importance of education | Work ethics | Curiosity
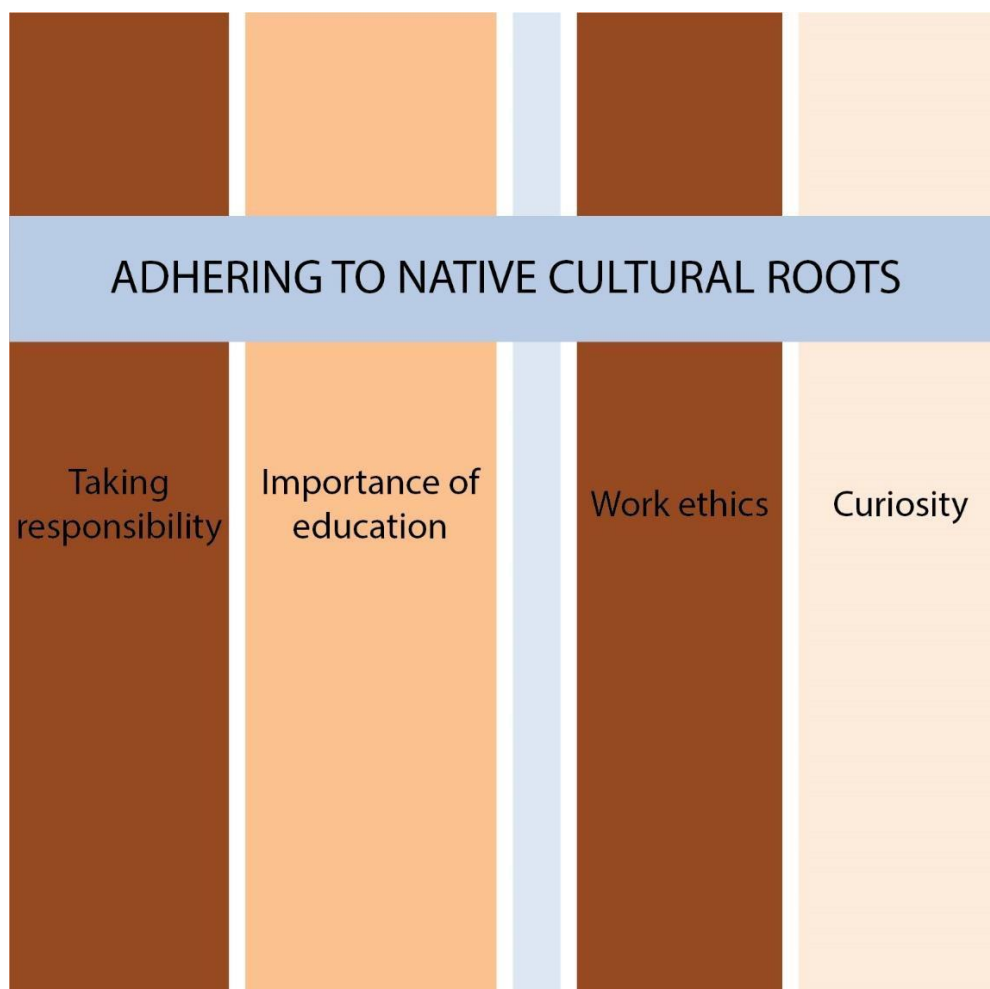
Figure 24 Luke's tapestry: story threads and values

The thread that ran throughout Luke's narrative was one of belonging to his native culture and holding on to his native cultural roots. He described the people and the places of his past as "*my people, my village, my locality*". Hearing, reading, and retelling stories in his native language was his way of holding on to his cultural roots. The kinship he shared with them was a source of security for him. The changes he experienced during his life were traumatic and difficult.

Through his divided "I", Luke referred to himself as singular "*I*" when he talked about the difficulties he had faced, and as plural "*we*" when he described positive memories of his life in his native culture. This pointed to Luke's being divided into a collective plural, belonging to his native culture, and a singular I belonging to the host culture in Finland.

Luke's connection to his cultural roots was further highlighted in the ways he addressed the other but adopted a sarcastic tone when describing the situation that influenced his life trajectory that led him to Finland.

Luke's final statement about the way he saw himself: "*I am still very much a Zimbabwean African. I am still very much in there*" (232) further emphasised the connection between his divided "I", the forms of address, as well as the story threads that run through his narrative of holding on to his roots and being a part of his past. Luke's sensemaking was informed by his comparisons of Finland and his home country.

Luke's strong adherence to his culture resonates what Hountondji (2020) calls idealising and romanticising non-Western cultures. He claims that some cultures, as a result of long history of colonialism and slave trade, were systematically said to be inferior to the Western culture, thus internalising a sense of inferiority. This produced two temptations: the temptation of contempt of the Western culture, and second, that of an overall justification and excessive and uncritical reaction to one's own native culture. Luke's narrative resonates with this sentiment: he identifies with his own traditions as a result of self-defence and justification. Hountondji (2020) further claims that people develop a relation with their own culture which is not so pure and straightforward as it would have been normally, or in situations that would not compel to answer the challenge of other cultures at the same time. In view of the above, I wondered whether Luke's adherence to his own cultural roots was a biased expression of his relation to his native culture, or

as Hountondji (2020) describes it "poisoned by the obsession of collective self-defence imposed on us by a hostile environment".

Mark's story

Mark was born in Kenya. At the time of the interview, Mark was in his late fifties. He arrived in Finland in 1989. He grew up in a small town in a family of six. Mark's mother was a housewife, and his father worked as a member of administrative staff in a hospital, in a supervisory position. The family, also the grandparents, lived in a house that Mark described as "*a typical colonial house*". Mark had vivid memories of his house and the extended family who inhabited the house.

He has fond memories of his grandmother who he referred to as mother. She took care of Mark, his siblings, and cousins. Mark remembered her as being fair and protective. She always had time to spend with him and the other children.

Mark mentioned going to school, but his childhood memories focused mainly on activities that included his family. He talked about playing outside with his peers, spending a lot of time around his grandmother, watching her prepare food, and sharing stories. He also talked about festivals and celebrations that involved a lot of preparations and lasted for several days. Some of Mark's uncles were fishermen, and he remembered himself and other boys "*used to go out fishing on the boat, jumping off the boat and so on*" (266).

When Mark met a Finnish woman in his late twenties he moved to Finland. At the time, Mark was already a qualified martial arts instructor so, soon after he arrived, he applied for work, and he was offered a part-time job at a fitness club in Helsinki. After a year, dissatisfied with the working conditions at the club, Mark left and decided to open his own martial arts training centre. He also enrolled on Finnish language courses for foreigners, offered by the University of Helsinki.

As Mark was also interested in architecture, he decided to continue his education: he took up part-time studies in technical drawing in a vocational college. In the mornings Mark was at school, and in the afternoons, he was teaching martial arts and training. When he graduated from the vocational college, he began looking for work. He got a job in an electrical drawing office.

Mark had several jobs in Finland, but he experienced unfair treatment and racial discrimination. In the end, he gave up working for companies in Finland and focused solely on his own business. He painted and worked on creating a children's story based on the memories of his childhood.

At the time of the interview, he lived with his wife and two sons in the suburbs of Helsinki.

Story threads in Mark's narrative

The thread that runs through Mark's story referred to discontinuity and unfairness. In the memories of his childhood and later in his narrative of his adult life in Finland, Mark's understanding and sensemaking of his experiences was overshadowed by the lack of continuity in his life and by being treated unfairly. The discontinuity in his life Mark described as contributing to his sense of missing or the lack of something.

The excerpts below illustrate my interpretation.

Mark described his grandmother as his role model. When I asked him what made her his role model, Mark answered:

> "My *grandmother was a role model to me. Because I still remember her…err… because at that time I remember she was a very fair person"* (51-52) *"I called my grandmother Mother. We all did". I think because we felt safer"* (54). Mark continued:

> *"And she used to protect us in that sense. Ye… and that's why we gathered around her fighting and looking for space whenever she was doing the washing. So, I think that was the reason"* (54) *"… she had this, I think this soothing err… ability that she used to give out, and we used to gather around her and felt safe"* (56).

Mark equated his grandmother's soothing influence with feeling safe and being protected. His grandmother's presence belonged to Mark's past, particularly his childhood spent in his native culture. Being around his grandmother gave him a sense of security. He also considered her to be his role model because, as he said, she was fair. I therefore concluded that Mark's grandmother was one of the sources where he learned the meaning of fairness.

Mark mentioned another person who he referred to as a role model. He was a white male, a French man who Mark described as follows: *"He was a role model because, I guess he had accepted us, he was always very fair. How he treated people, respectful"* (101-103). Here again Mark pointed to fairness and acceptance as the values he saw in the man who he considered his role model.

When, at the age of 25, Mark came to Finland he described this experience as follows:

"I left when I was 25, I came here, and it felt like, and although I was grown up, I was a man but then it felt as if there is another stop gap. That something, because I had to readjust to another way of life" (79-81). "So, it felt a little bit like that, that something is missing. And I still do, I still feel that. I still feel, I don't know why I can't shake that off. But I still feel that it's as if you are searching for something. I feel like I am searching for something, and I have not got there yet" (124-126).

Mark described the move to Finland as a readjustment to a new and different way of life, but also a loss of something. He tried to make sense out of it by saying*:*

"It just felt is there is something… I guess if a person is born in a country and stays in a country, you have a continuation in your life" (106-107).

For Mark, being born and living in the place of one's birth means continuation, and that continuation also gave him the feeling of security. He remembered that from his home country. When he moved to Finland the sense of continuity was disrupted and, on top of that, the sense of security was shattered when he experienced unfair treatment whilst looking for work, and later when working for Finnish employers.

When I asked Mark to describe his life in Finland, he began by saying: "I find life in Finland hard" (298). When narrating his experiences, Mark did not talk about his family or his friends. He talked about his work. He described in detail several events when he applied for jobs or was actually employed by Finnish firms. His narrative was about the experiences of unfairness which he experienced on several occasions. He was underpaid for his work in comparison to his Finnish counterparts, he was asked to do odd jobs in an architect office where he was employed to do technical drawing, he was refused job interview opportunities because of the colour of his skin, and finally, he experienced exclusion whilst working in Finnish teams. He was also disillusioned with the lack of professional relationships that he thought would contribute to his career development. He commented:

"I started noticing: Finns talk about friendship, but they are not really friends. They are only there when they need you. And once you have given them the things they need, they are off. And friendship is gone. And that is one of the lessons I have learned here in Finland" (546-549).

From the analysis of the story threads in Mark's narrative, I could see that fairness and continuation were the basis of Mark's sensemaking of the experiences he described in his narrative.

He learned about the value of fairness from his role models: his grandmother and the white French man he mentions in his narrative about his childhood in his native culture. He also learned about the value of acceptance. "… *but you accept what you see, you accept the person as the person is*" (149). This understanding of his experiences connected with working in Finland was underpinned by Mark's sensemaking that triggered a belief in him being treated unfairly. He attributed racial discrimination as being the reason for that. Mark's sensemaking, underpinned by the values of fairness and acceptance learned in his native culture informed his understanding of his experiences in Finnish culture.

The divided "I"

Mark's I was divided between the plural *we* and singular *I.* Throughout his narrative, whenever he narrated experiences that had taken place during the time spent in his native culture, he expressed himself using pronoun *we.*

> "*At that time we used to (long pause) in the early days my grandmother was alive, my grandfather just died, my ant had just passes away, so it was my grandmother and we as kids used to sit around her when she used to do the washing , we used to fight for a position, so she used to do her washing in a basin, one of these big basins, the sun was shining and we were all jostling around to get the best position err… and that's how much I remember of her*" (13-17).

The way Mark opened and closed this passage marked a very clear location of this part of his narrative. He placed it clearly in the past (*at that time*), then he narrated it in the plural *we*, and finally he closed it with singular *I*. In the past, in his native culture, Mark depicted himself as a part of a collective plural *we*, whereas in the narrative about the present, in Finland Mark depicted himself as singular *I.*

This illustrated the division between Mark's ideal self: the individual, and Mark's real self: collective, holding on, and belonging to his native culture. This division caused a tension between fitting into an individualistic culture in Finland and, at the same time being a part of a collective in

Kenya. Mike's sensemaking of whatever he experienced in Finland was influenced by this tension. The values of fairness and acceptance he had learned as a child clashed in the Finnish culture with the way he was treated when looking for work, for example.

Forms of address

In the final remarks of his narrative, Mark made final comments about the colour of his skin. *"What I have learned being black is that I am more cautious than probably a lot of people, but the reason being because I have had reasons to be cautious"* (571-572). Here Mark became an intradiegetic narrator. He continued:

> *"Because you have people who smile at you, and the next moment they stab you (second person narrator). But that goes for everybody (heterodiegetic narrator). You know, black people will do it to black people, white people will do it to white people, but it's also the racial thing itself also. (heterodiegetic narrator). I can't really say it's…, basically it's, one thing you have been told a lot: if you want to say, complain this thing is not working for me here, well it's not your country. Go back to your country (second person narrator). (572-576).*

This excerpt illustrates how Mark oscillated between different forms of address: from a narrator who was narrating events or situations he was not a part of (heterodiegetic), own experiences (intradiegetic) to a narrator who was addressing an imaginary other (second person narration) when narrating difficult situations. What Mark expressed using second person narrative, as if addressing someone else, not himself, were his own experiences or words he might have heard addressed to him. Here Mark reported on his real experiences or events, but he connected them to an other. This allowed him to maintain the function of reporting, allowing the experiencing to reside in the distinct *you*. A narrator who directly addresses 'someone else,' positions him/herself more 'in the place' of the story's 'telling' position rather than in that of the 'experiencing' position.
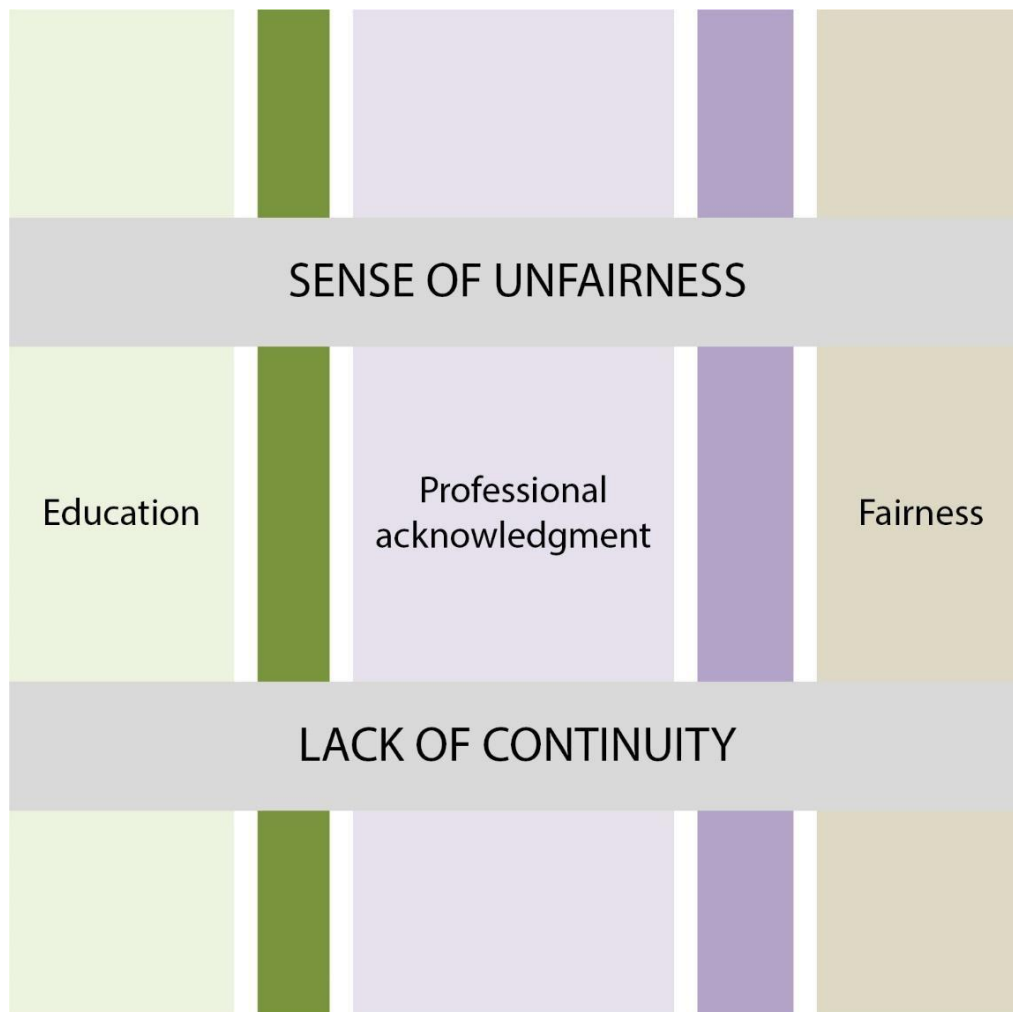
Figure 25. Mark's narrative tapestry: story threads and values

As a child, Mike had learned the meaning of fairness and what it meant to be accepted and acknowledged by others. He talked about being treated fairly as a child, and about experiencing it from his role models. The thread of unfairness and acknowledgment were evident in his narrative when he described his experiences in Finland. He talked about being treated unfairly, and not being accepted because of his skin colour. These two threads were present both in the narrative of his childhood and adulthood.

Fairness and being accepted in his native culture were at odds with unfairness and not being accepted Mark experienced in Finland. This was also expressed in Mark's divided *"I"*. On the one hand, Mark wanted to fit in and be the ideal self: the individual, who can function within Finnish work culture, and on the other Mark's real self: collective, holding on and belonging to his native

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culture. This division caused a tension between fitting in to an individualistic culture in Finland and, at the same time being a part of a collective in Kenya.

This distant belonging was expressed in Mark's positioning. Mark reported on his real experiences or events that had happened to him, but he connected them to an Other. This allowed him to maintain the function of reporting, allowing the experiencing to reside in the distinct *you*. He thus became a narrator who directly addressed 'someone else,' positioned him/herself more 'in the place' of the story's 'telling' location rather than in that of the 'experiencing' position. Mark did this because this distancing made it easier to relate to difficult experiences. I therefore concluded that Mark's sensemaking was influenced by the values of his native culture.

Paul's story

Paul was born in Ghana; at the time of the interview, he was in his late fifties. He came to Finland in 2004.

He grew up in a family of nine. In his childhood memories he talked a lot about his mother and the support she had given him. He did not mention his father.

Paul went to a business college after completing his primary education. He followed pedagogical studies and got a teacher training diploma from the University of Ghana. He worked as a teacher. After that, he completed a diploma in behavioural science at the University of Ghana. He completed an MA degree in philosophy of education. He came to Finland to study, and graduated from the University of Rovaniemi with a PhD after eleven years of pursuing the studies.

The firsts three years of primary education Paul had completed in the Ghanaian language. After that all his education was in English. He went to a Methodist mission school, where he learned "*about* (pause) *God. God is omnipotent, omnipresent and everywhere. We were taught about good values, obey our teachers and being courteous*".

At the time of the interview Paul was married and had four sons. Two of them lived in Finland and two in Ghana. The oldest son studied at Aalto University, the second oldest son worked as a computer scientist at the University of Ghana. Paul lived with his family in the suburbs of Helsinki.

The story threads that run through Paul's narrative are duality of cultural identity, belonging, and regret.

When Paul narrated his childhood memories, he talked about his education and the supportive role of his mother. He also expressed his regret at not being able to give back what had been given to him. He said:

"I *could not pay back what they invested in me"* (2). Paul referred here to his parents, but especially to his mother. He considered education and support he had received as a child to be an investment that should be paid back.

He expressed his regret as follows:

> "The *prime aim of education is that a parent invested in his children and if one day he will pay back is. That, I could not give back what the parents have invested in me*" (252-253).

Paul regretted not being able to pay back to his country the education he had received. His doctorate was about the value of the Ghanaian language in school curricula. He was personally concerned about the situation of his native language in shaping the development of his country and future generations. He expressed this concern on several occasions in his narrative. He saw the role of a native language as formative and necessary for wellbeing and development. This is how Paul described this in his narrative when referring to his primary education:

> "*The Ghanaian language was used only up to the level primary 3 and a child should be taught is L1, because that is what he is born with. And in a child that means not learning L1, barrier to a child happiness progress in life*" (30-32).

> "*In the school I remember when we used to read the books we read, they were all foreign, they were blue books and red books, they were all foreign, they all gave foreign ideas. We knew of the Americans geographically, we knew of the European environment, but the immediate environment was not that well known, because what we were taught was FOREIGN* [emphasis Paul's]" (24-28).

In the excerpts above, Paul also expressed the way he saw a connection between the language of education and the native culture: he equated learning in English to learning about foreign

concepts and ideas. For example, the religious values that Paul had learned as a child, and that were very much a part of his native culture, were changed when *"the white man came with his religion"* (160). Moreover, the changes in family values Paul attributed to the introduction of the white man's culture. The collectivistic concept of social connections was also altered into individualistic one, where concerns about others diminished: *"Because before the white man came to Africa, Africa was a communalistic state"* (245).

Paul described himself as an African with a dual personality. When I asked him what he meant by this, he explained that he was partly an African and partly a westerner. His understanding of this stemmed from his sensemaking which was based on the way a person acquires knowledge. And here again he saw the vital role of the native language. He made a claim that there was a link between African and western knowledge, but these two knowledge systems could not be brought together, thus creating a gap. This gap was caused, according to Paul, by the introduction of the foreign language (English) into education. Paul had to reconcile the two different aspects of his personality in order to live in the Finnish culture.

> *"We are in part African and in part in the western sense. We have an ability to combine and reconcile to a true Ghanaian. What I mean by dual personality. When you come here you must try to … (pause) you must try to (pause) breed the two"* (170-173).

The story thread of dual cultural belonging, and regret about not being able to give back to his country indicated the way Paul made sense of his experiences in the Finnish culture. He saw such aspects of Finnish culture as individualism, lack of care and respect for the elders or extended family members, not practicing religion as fundamentally different from his native cultural values. On the other hand, he saw protecting the Finnish language and providing education in Finnish at all levels as positive. He drew from the positive aspects and saw them as enriching his own cultural views.

The divided "I"

In the passage quoted in the previous section, Paul described himself as an African with a dual personality. Yet, in another part of his narrative, when he elaborated on the differences between the role of the language in Finland and Ghana, he said:

"And if a Finn does not know the meaning of a word "phone" in the English language he knows it in the Finnish language. That is not so in the African sense. We are just like ...We are not good in our culture as we are good in foreign cultures. So, we are just in-between distances" (64-66).

On the one hand, Paul described himself as being partly African and partly western, incorporating both parts into himself. And on the other hand, he described himself as "*in-between-distance*". These two descriptions seem contradictory. Whereas the first one is a combination of two different parts, the second one is intangible and difficult to define.

Paul's ideal self was expressed in the first description, and Paul's real self was described in the second one. The "I" is divided between the ideal self (partly African and partly westerner) and the real self was the in-between- distance. The following passage, a final excerpt of the narrative confirmed this interpretation. It was Paul's bitter summary, and one that also summarised the threads described earlier. Paul said:

"No matter how a log remains in water, it will never turn into a crocodile. (silently but firmly) *No matter how I remain in Finland, no matter how I absorb a white master's knowledge I can never become no white man. (*louder*) what I am saying that you can absorb all the white man's knowledge, you can absorb all white man's culture, but what will they say? They see you as a stupid black, they see you as having nothing to contribute to their economy"* (360-364).

Forms of address

The passage quoted below illustrates different ways Paul narrates the story, thus addressing different audiences. Through these changes he addressed the reader from different positions: he was an extradiegetic narrator when he made general statements about "*how things are*", positioning himself outside of the situations he narrated. Paul became an intradiegetic narrator when he narrated the situations he felt he belonged to. These were usually connected with his cultural belonging.

"Before *the white man came the African family was the extended one (*extradiegetic narrator*). And the extended one we cared for, the extended family (*intradiegetic narrator*).

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But when the white man came, he brought the nuclear family, comprising your wife and children. They don't care for the extended family. Because they feel that to care for the nuclear family is cheaper than the extended family. But that wasn't the case. And it's due to this that people have become self-centred. And self-centred is not good enough for *evolvemen*t (extradiegetic narrator). *Because traditional African sees himself as intertwined with other people, he can even punish someone else's child for being immoral* (extradiegetic narrator)*. But currently you have no right to do it because of a child right* (second person). *One thing now the people have been saying that the schools should be giving back to the missionaries. Why? The moral decadence of African societies is due to the schools being secularised* (extradiegetic narrator). *In the missionary schools we adhere to strict rules* (intradiegetic narrator). *In schools in Ghana there was a prayer before the classes start* (extradiegetic narrator). *Even before we go home, we prayed. Morning assembly, we prayed* (intradiegetic narrator). *You see? (*narratee*) We believed*" (intradiegetic narrator) (326-339).

He also narrated using second person narration. This referred to situations where Paul expressed imposed actions that prohibited actions. Through addressing an imaginary Other, Paul actually addressed himself as if reiterating to himself what was not allowed to do, or as if he was referring to words that he had heard or had read before, spoken or written by someone else.
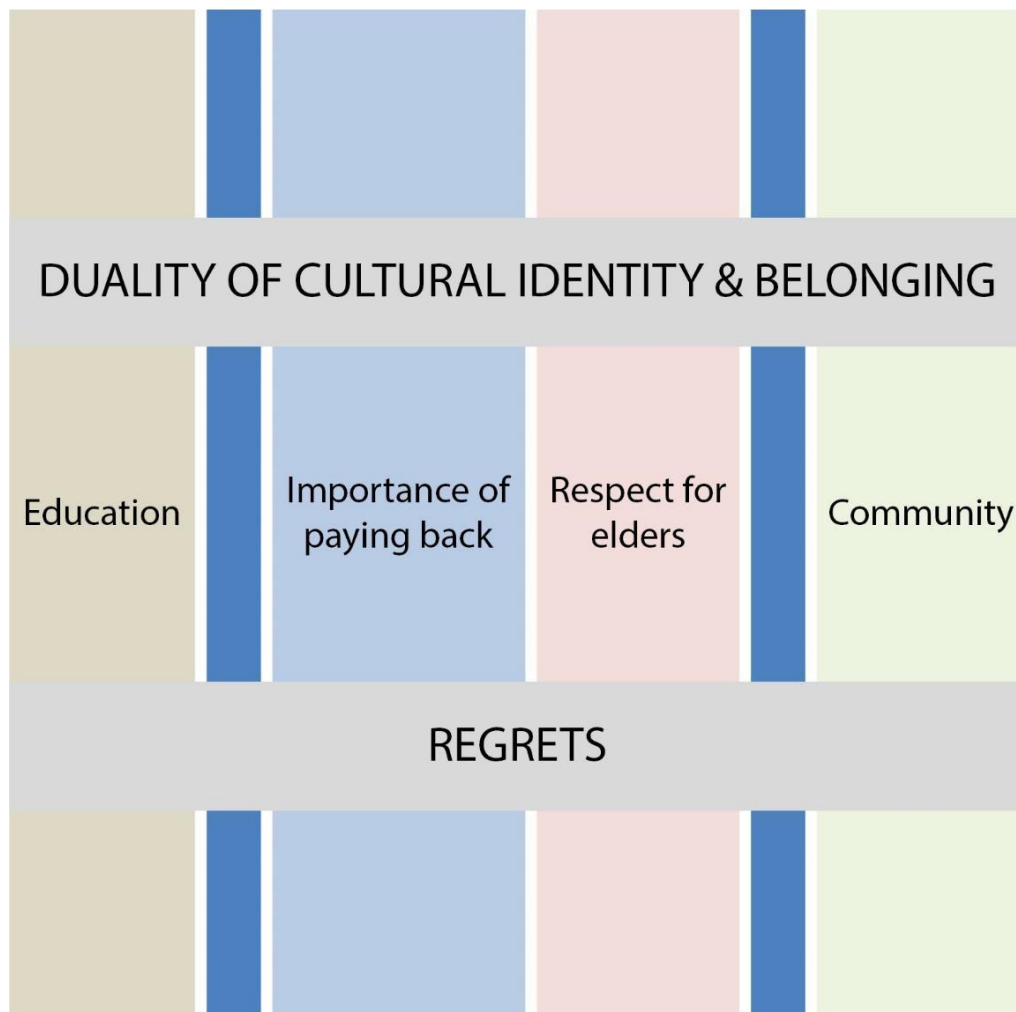
Figure 26. Paul's narrative tapestry: story threads and values

The story threads that run through Paul's narrative were duality of cultural identity and belonging, and regret. Pauls' sensemaking was based on the way a person acquires knowledge, where a native language plays a crucial part. The imposition of the English language created impossible situation for Paul, who wanted to acquire and develop knowledge in his own native language. Paul attempted to reconcile the partly western part of his self which developed as a result of living in Finland and the African self who he truly was.

Through different ways of positioning himself as a narrator in his narrative, and thus addressing different audiences, Paul showed his various ways of his belonging and being distant. Paul became an intradiegetic narrator when he described the situations which he felt a part of. These situations were connected with his cultural belonging. The memories of his childhood, acquiring knowledge,

and the value of his native language provided a source and basis for Paul's sensemaking, which was the need for validation. Paul expressed bitterness when describing the lack of validation of his academic achievements. The lack of validation is the result of a lack of acknowledgment and colour discrimination.

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The tapestry below illustrates the connectiveness and interdependence of the cultural values learned during childhood and adolescence and the experiences of adulthood for the male participants. Their life experiences are metaphorically woven as threads (warp) through a net of weft. The warp, running vertically, symbolises the cultural values of each individual, and serves as a basis and support for the weft. The weft, running horisontally, symbolises the story threads in the narratives, the positioning of the narrators and the divided "I" of the narrators.

For example, the story threads, common to most of the narratives of the male participants were adhering to native cultural roots, a sense of unfairness, and duality of cultural identity and belonging.

Similar to the female participants, the narrators were divided between the real and the ideal selves. The ideal selves were rooted and connected to the cultural values rooted in their native cultures (work ethics, respect for elders, communal living, diligence, value of education, paying back). The real selves were the individuals who became as a result of their experiences of disruptions, and events that lead to transitions. For example, after moving to the new host culture in Finland, the participants narrated having to develop new strategies for managing and coping with their roles and behaviours in Finnish work environments. When experiencing the need to adjust, the participants' expectations of these environments and themselves created insecurities, or the dissonance between their former and present sense of self. Similarly to the female participants, their identities, or self-concepts, and internalised views of themselves as social or physical beings was altered. But contrary to the female participants these alternations in the self-concepts became sources of tensions.
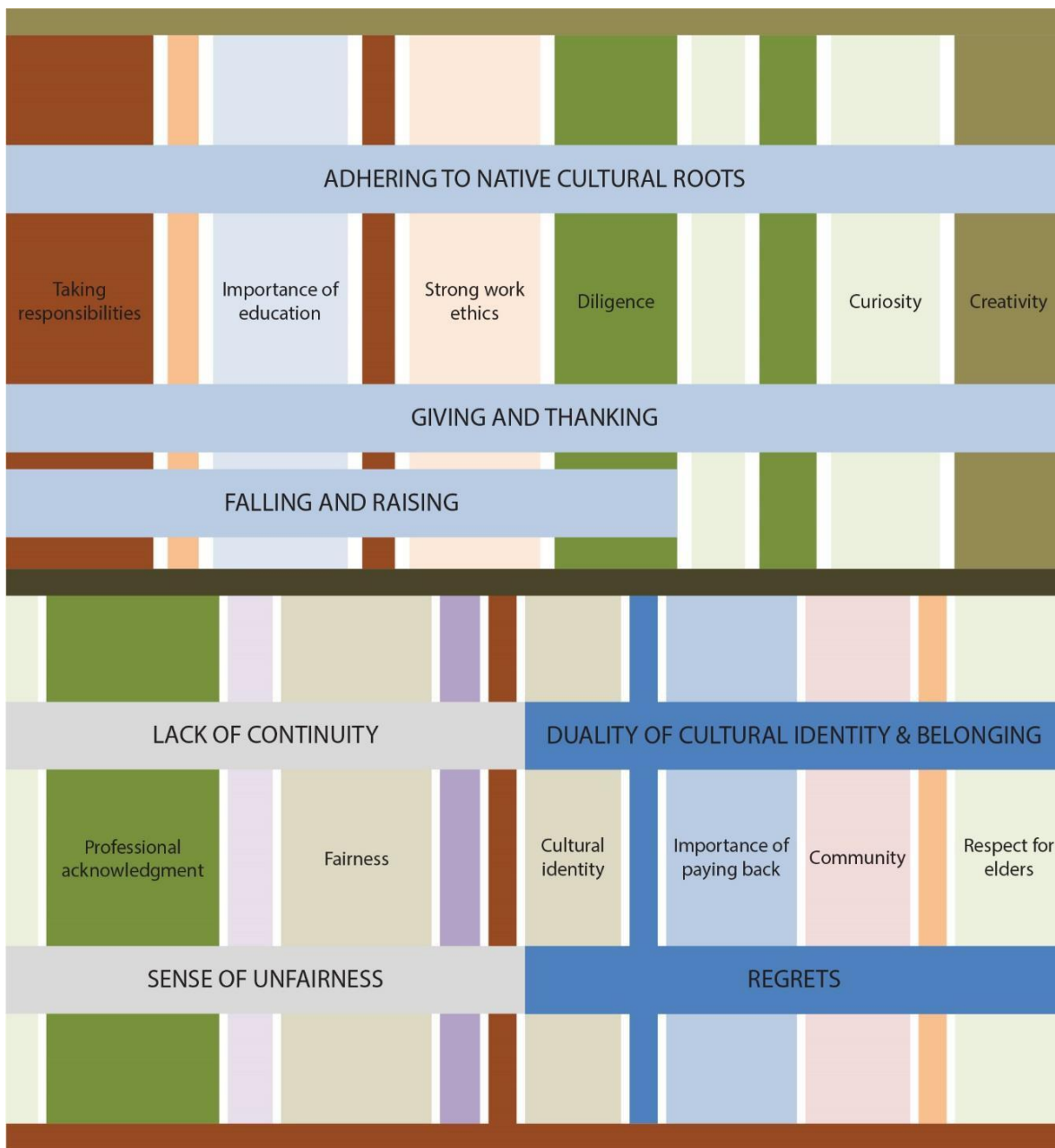
Figure 27. Narrative tapestry of male participants

Thematic analysis

Overview

Tables 5 and 6 below outline the superordinate and subordinate themes identified by the thematic analysis. It can be seen that there are differences between the themes highlighted in the male and female narratives. The main differences between the themes identified in the native home culture are the concepts of family. Whereas female participants focused on close relationships with family

members, especially with the parents, the males focused on the parental influence in terms of motivating them to study and get an education. Male participants did not stress the importance of faith and spirituality, whereas females saw it is a crucial part of their life and identity. Both females and males identified injustice and discrimination in the host culture, but for the males it resulted in feelings of alienation and a sense of dislocated self, and for the females it resulted in a reinforced sense of self and enhanced ambition and belief in personal potential. Faith and spirituality seemed to play an instrumental role in the process.

In the analysis that follows, I grouped the superordinate themes and connected the subordinate themes to show connections between them. I also wanted to show connections between the past and the present to demonstrate how the values and upbringing in the native home culture informed the sensemaking of the participants in the foreign host culture, which is the focus of my second research question.

Therefore, in the following section, I discuss the themes as summarised in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 8. Themes identified by thematic analysis (males)

SUPERORDINATE and subordinate THEMES	
MALE PARTICIPANTS	
NATIVE HOME CULTURE Childhood, adolescence	FOREIGN HOST CULTURE Adulthood

PARENTAL PUSH TOWARDS GETTING AN EDUCATION Perseverance to achieve goals Respect for the value of education	INJUSTICE Discrimination Limited career prospects
IMPORTANCE OF KINSHIP AND CULTURAL BELONGING Respect for own cultural values	ALIENATION Feeling of not being accepted
	DISLOCATED SELF Attempts to fit in

Table 9. Themes identified by thematic analysis (females)

SUPERORDINATE and subordinate THEMES	
FEMALE PARTICIPANTS	
NATIVE HOME CULTURE Childhood, adolescence	FOREIGN HOST CULTURE Adulthood

LARGE FAMILY Collectivism Taking on roles of responsibility	INJUSTICE Discrimination Limited career prospects Lack of trust
STRONG CHILD-PARENT RELATIONSHIPS Respect for parental authority	STRONG SENSE OF IDENTITY Belief in own potential Ambition Self-reliance
IMPORTANCE OF FAITH, RELIGION, SPIRITUALITY Adherence to own cultural values	RELIGION AS WEAPON

Theme 1 : Parental push towards studying and getting an education

The influence of parents, and their mentoring roles, as well as their push towards studying and getting an education was evident in the narratives of all the participants. However, it was particularly strongly emphasised in the narratives of the male participants. Therefore, the following section focuses primarily on the narratives of the males, and it touches on the narratives of the females.

Being educated was seen, by the parents and grandparents, as having social status, a path to getting a steady profession, and a way of securing a stable and secure financial situation. The connection between education as a way to gaining a profession, which also secures financial stability, was also evident in all the narratives. All the participants also expressed how important studying and excelling was to them, and how motivated they were. Studying was also seen as a source of gaining self-confidence, and achieving good results was a source of self-esteem. It was also seen as developing diligence, hard work, and perseverance.

As I was trying to understand the reasons behind this strong parental emphasis on studying, I began to wonder if there might be a connection between the way the previous generations

experienced the lack of education in their lives. I also realised that most of the participants in my study were born after their respective countries regained independence (I described this in more detail in Chapter 1). The point when the previously colonised countries became independent brought major changes in their education systems. Education in Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, and Zambia, in a variety of forms, became available to all. In other words, the participants of my study enjoyed different educational opportunities to those of their parents and grandparents.

This connection to the past and the experiences of the previous generations was of interest to me as I was interested in finding out the extent to which the cultural values, learned during the participants' childhood in their native home cultures, informed their understanding and sensemaking of their experiences of their adult lives in Finland.

From the analysis of the narratives, I could see that, for the participants, education did not only mean academic merits. It had another intangible value that meant a lot more: it was a frame of mind and an understanding that being educated can offer what the previous generations did not have: financial stability and access to something that previously was only accessible for people of higher social position, the white people. It therefore meant a higher social status.

In addition, studying to achieve good results, supervised and encouraged by the parents and grandparents was also a "lesson" in perseverance and not giving up, creativity, and curiosity. This lesson developed skills and characteristics which the participants drew from in their life and work in Finland.

Home culture

The grandparents and parents of the participants of my study grew up in colonial Kenya, Nigeria, Zambia, Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), and Ghana. The fathers and grandfathers had professions, some of them being teachers. Out of the mothers and grandmothers, all but one did not complete high education. Some of them were illiterate.

As described in more detail in the Chapter 1, within 47 crown colonies, access to education during colonial times was limited, as the way in which education was developed from one territory to another was diversified due to the absence of a strong direction from the Colonial Office in Whitehall (Whitehead, 2007). Throughout the British colonies in Africa, education for black

children was not compulsory, and as a result, the majority of those children, especially girls, did not go to school (Whitehead, 2005).

Among the male participants, two mention encouraging roles of their fathers and grandfathers in shaping their understanding of the importance of pursuing education. The male ancestors were working in professional capacities, and therefore could see the value of being educated as a means to achieving financial stability. Two male participants mentioned their mothers as being the driving forces, and one mentioned his grandmother. Among the female participants, all of them mentioned a lack of education among their mothers, but the theme of parental push towards education was not as central as for the male participants.

Tom described his parents as his role models. He says: "My parents were my role models. Especially my dad. And he was quite…, always telling us to do better at school, and pushing us to go forward and put a lot of emphasis on our studies. If you don't study, you amount to NOTHING" [emphasis Tom's] (34-36).

For Tom's father, the value of education meant achieving personal value and having social status. This was the understanding Tom learned as a child. When I asked Tom why his parents were his role models he answered: "Because they were COLONISED [emphasis Tom's]. They were born at the time when Kenya was colonised. They had very LITTLE" [emphasis Tom's] (42-43). Tom connected being colonised with the austerity of his family. As a result of the financial difficulties Tom experienced as a child, he learned to be creative when he was forced to make toys rather than buy them.

For Luke, it was the encouragement of his father and the storytelling of his grandfather that prompted his curiosity and learning to read, and becoming a storyteller himself. Luke described his grandfather as follows: "… by that time he retired and had very nice stories to tell, you know. He was a person who could. You know, tell stories about the old days, when they were hunting, and that sort of thing" (Luke, 54-56).

Luke was sent to a boarding school at the time when education in Zimbabwe became available to black children. His understanding of society when Zimbabwe was colonised, he explained as follows: "…the racial society was like a pyramid that you have white people at the top, the British, then you had the Asians and the coloured, then you have the black people at the bottom" (Luke,

95-97). Therefore, for his parents, being educated meant achieving a social status equal to white people.

For Mike, Paul, and Mark it was their mothers and grandmother respectively who stressed the importance of studying. In their cases education was seen as a means of getting a job lucrative enough to ensure financial stability.

For Mike, it was an influence of his mother, who was a teacher.

> " …*there is a certain amount of… expectation that, from me as a child of a teacher I should be able to pass subjects very excellently or at least very good, so sometimes it was a big pressure on me, but now when I look back I kind of appreciate, appreciate that because my mother made me understand the ability that I had that I could focus and if I wanted to go for something I could go for it and it was good*" (Mike, 52-54).

Mike's mother was a mentor to Mike, and it was because of her that as a child Mike learned not only how to study but also gained self-confidence and belief in his abilities.

Paul also mentioned one of his teachers as someone who guided him to his future profession: "I took his advice and entered teacher training collage. And through that I am here now. He was very special to me that way" (104-105).

For Paul, education meant an investment. An educated person has a duty to return what was invested in him back into society. "You *must give back what you have learned back to the society*. That's the aim of education" (132-133). This way of understanding the value of education came from what Paul observed in Ghana as a young man. Paul remembered "… euphoria about the West and you were told to be obedient towards them, and what not, and on Independence Day we worshiped the whites" (118-119). He further explained that the Africans who were obedient, "who obeyed their ideas" (126) were given education opportunities abroad. Some of them returned. Some of them became future leaders and politicians. Some of them did not, and those Paul calls "the conmen of that time" (129).

Paul understood that what one learned should be used for the benefit of one's own society and country. Studying abroad and not returning to benefit the country for Paul meant a loss of resources that could otherwise contribute to the development of his own society.

Mark described his grandmother as a role model because of her fairness. He also mentioned a white male who "accepted us" as a role model. For Mark, it was the attention and acceptance of his male mentor and the sense of being treated fairly by his grandmother that gave him the confidence to pursue education.

In summary, the push towards diligence in studying and getting an education was prompted by the ancestral understanding of its value and benefits. For the males, it was the experience of being educated and having professions which meant financial stability. For the females, it was the opposite: a lack of education meant no means of support, and reliance on the husbands or extended family.

Apart from achieving academic merits and gaining higher social status, getting an education was also seen as having access to something that for the previous generations was only accessible to a privileged few.

In addition, apart from developing a frame of mind and understanding that education guarantees a good future, as children, the participants learned the meaning of diligence, respect for authority, creativity, curiosity, perseverance, fairness, and acceptance.

All the above informed and influenced their understanding and sensemaking of their experiences in Finnish culture. The following section provides examples of the above.

Host culture

The reason for most of the participants for moving to Finland was pursuing their own or their spouse's education, or relationships with Finnish partners (2 cases). In all cases, however, pursuing further studies proved necessary in order to enjoy better employment opportunities.

At the time when all the participants arrived in Finland, in the late 1990s, Finland had already been a part of the EU (since 1995), and the late 1990s witnessed a new form of higher education institutions, introducing the polytechnic, as an alternative path to higher education. This created more study places than before, as well as easy accessibility to pursuing higher education. Moreover, a key objective of Finnish education policy since the early 1970s has been to provide all citizens with equal opportunities to receive a high-quality education, regardless of age, domicile, gender, economic situation, or native language, where the potential of every individual should be maximised. This short description of the situation illustrates that the educational environment in

Finland at that time was very favourable and study places were easily accessible for domestic and overseas students to pursue education and obtain higher education diplomas. All the participants of my study studied at polytechnics or universities in Finland shortly after arriving.

As mentioned in Part 1 of the analysis (interpretive poetics), all the participants, as young adults, expressed willingness and interest in studying abroad. All of them were interested in studying in Canada or the USA, but, as mentioned earlier, the financial constraints of their families limited the realisation of their plans. Education in Finland, on the other hand, was free of charge. In addition, the flexibility in the study paths offered by Finnish universities and polytechnics made it possible for students to work and study at the same time. The mindset about the value of education developed in their childhood, together with the values and skills developed in their home cultures, allowed them to combine work and studies and complete their studies. Diligence and hard work, as well as determination to achieve their goals made it possible to study and complete the degrees. Luke and Mark describe their experiences as follows: "I went to university, studied economics. First my major was economics, but then I changed it to journalism, communications. Yeah. I was working most of the time, first I started working in one restaurant, that was my first working place" (Luke, 154-156).

Mark describes his daily routines as follows:

> "*I would be in school in the morning from 8 till 3. I used to run home, I used to drive home get something to eat and by 6 o'clock I had to go to the training and we were there for 2 hours, which was in a stadium, and 2 hours later, 8 o'clock I would be driving back home and then I would be sitting at my deck with my Dictaphone listening to what the teacher said and doing all my homework and the whole process starts again*" (Mark, 409-414).

All the participants combined work and studies. For example, Nora studied and completed her bachelor's degree in international business whilst taking care of her small child and working part-time. Ella completed an MA degree in midwifery and health care whilst working full-time. Mike was an entrepreneur during his studies.

Apart from hard work ethics and determination to achieve goals, the participants also learned as children in their home cultures that being educated opened a path to work opportunities. This turned out to be different in Finland. Even though they all completed the degrees they studied for,

getting jobs was difficult. For example, Mike became an entrepreneur after several unsuccessful attempts to establish cooperation with Finnish counterparts. Mike also experienced discriminatory treatment already as a student. He says: "… one of the negative things that was when one of my lecturers could not believe that I could be good in something, based on my origin and colour. So that was a very, very… that was depressing …" (Mike, 94-96). The confidence and belief in his abilities to achieve his goals, learned from his mother, was confronted with unfair feedback Mike received from his teacher. In both cases, perseverance and not giving up allowed Mike and Luke to remain in Finland and continue as entrepreneurs.

Mark, on the other hand, did succeed in getting several jobs, but the experiences of unfair and discriminative treatment (not being paid the same as Finns) made him leave and set up his own company. Leaving the last job, he described as "the saddest day I had in my life" (Mark, 496). Mark's understanding of accepting others and fairness learned from his grandmother back in Kenya was shattered when confronted with his experiences in Finland.

For Paul and Ella, getting a job did not mean a successful and fulfilling professional trajectory. For example, even though Ella completed all required courses and degrees (also in Finland) to make a her a fully qualified nurse and midwife, she was never able to work as a midwife. "I am only working as a staff nurse in the old people's home" (165).

Despite her disappointment, Ella did find fulfilment in her work. What helped her was the values she learned as a young girl when she was forced to take different responsibilities in the absence of her father. As a child, she became a caretaker to help her mother, and as an adult she lived by the same values as her mother: taking care of her children and living and working to support them. Working and earning her salary gave her motivation. Also, her faith and religious values helped her in her sensemaking of the experiences in Finland. She consulted priests when in need and found consolation. Ella also admitted that, as a caretaker for old people she did a better job than her Finnish co-workers, as in her culture respect is given to elderly, and the community life Ella was used to as a child made interacting with and caring for old people a natural part of life.

Paul, who completed his PhD in Finland, makes a strong statement that sums up his experiences. He says:

"No matter how long a log remains in water, it will never turn into a crocodile. (Silently but firmly) No matter how long I remain in Finland, no matter how I absorb a white master's knowledge I can never become no white man. (Louder) What I am saying that you can absorb all the white man's knowledge, you can absorb all white man's culture, but what will they say? They see you as a stupid black, they see you as having nothing to contribute to their economy" (Paul, 360-364).

Paul, for whom education was an investment that had to be repaid by giving back to society, described the reality in Finland as one that did not offer that possibility. His description shared a view with Mike who stated: "the ability to allow people not to be useful is a very, very big drawback in Finland" (108). Both Paul and Mike stated that their skills, knowledge, and abilities were not recognised because Finland did not allow them to show how useful they could be. Paul could not give back and Mike could not achieve his goal of cooperating with Finnish companies.

Theme 2 : Importance of kinship and cultural belonging

The importance of kinship and cultural belonging was identified as another major theme, both by male and female participants. Idang (2015) claims that belonging to social groups and growing up with a sense of kinship among their members forms an intrinsic value of African culture. In the following section, I briefly outline the origins of the concept and the meaning of kinship within the context of African culture, and by doing so I show its importance as well as make a connection between its cultural roots and the value it still has in the present, which is the interest of my study. Drawing on identity theory (IT) and social identity theory (SIT), I further show the ways it informs the way the participants make sense of their experiences of the host culture.

The meaning of culture in African context

The continuation and the connection between past and present are conveyed in Ezedike's (2009, 455, cited in Katundano, 2020) definition of African culture as "a continuous, cumulative reservoir containing both material and non-material elements that are socially transmitted from one generation to another. African culture, therefore, refers to the whole lot of African heritage".

I also find Fafunwa's (1974, 48) conceptualisation of culture particularly relevant to my study as it describes the experiences of a child embedded into his/her native culture. It also captures the totality and inescapable continuum of cultural heritage passed on from past generations to the next. He writes:

"The child just grows into and within the cultural heritage of his people. He imbibes it. Culture, in traditional society, is not taught; it is caught. The child observes, imbibes and mimics the action of his elders and siblings. He watches the naming ceremonies, religious services, marriage rituals, funeral obsequies. He witnesses the coronation of a king or chief, the annual yam festival, the annual dance and acrobatic displays of guilds and age groups or his relations in the activities. The child in a traditional society cannot escape his cultural and physical environments".

This description places all human beings as inseparable parts of the environment in which they grow, and which nurtures them. It also shows how inescapable the culture they grow in really is; people do not just grow up *in* it, but they grow *into* it. That suggests that the culture which, as adults, individuals claim as theirs, had been created by others long before. Therefore, people do not only acquire the culture, but they also become its bearers. People carry it as they grow, and eventually they pass it onto the next generations. I expand this definition and take it one step further. If people grow into the culture, they also become embedded in it. Being a part of the culture gives people a sense of belonging.

I concur with Idang's (2015) claim that values that people live by shape their understanding and sensemaking of their immediate environment as well as other people. As in my study I am interested in finding out the extent to which cultural values inform the participants sensemaking I outline below what values guide the behaviours and habits in African culture.

The moral code is connected to religious and moral, economic and political values. It is a system of various beliefs and customs which every individual should observe. African culture has a moral code that forbids doing harm to a relative, a kinsman, an in-law, a foreigner and a stranger (Idang, 2015). It can be seen that in African society people are connected by codes of behaviour that promotes and protects immediate groups to which people belong.

Understanding the above allowed me to conclude that the theme of the importance of kinship and belonging present in the narratives describing the past illustrated deeply imbedded values of sharing and belonging that the participants grew into in their childhood. They described that importance in a variety of ways. For example, for Mike it was his tribal belonging that he carried forward to his adulthood. Mike says: "it was embodied in us the Igbos that ability to take challenges and then to take risks and go out of your comfort zone and challenge status quo. Those

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are things that I could say I gained when I was a child" (Mike, 65). For Luke and Paul, it was the support of their relatives: "Most of my people from my village were my relatives. Because everybody who lived in the village was a relative. Most of them, 99%" (Luke, 37-39). "We lived as a family. And the head of the family made sure that nobody went hungry" (Paul, 106).

For Jane the importance of belonging to her culture meant her identity. She says: "African woman, I speak to my culture, because that shapes me who I am. And my culture makes me stronger. Well, I think… keeping my African values makes me even stronger" (Jane, 51). For Nora it was the connection with her extended family. She described her grandparents as "second parents" (61) who she learned a lot from. Lucy associated her ancestors with the intangible spiritual values of support when she says: "And through that respect we believe that blessings come from above, parents, grandparents… And that is the only way that we can get the blessings that carry us forward when we are married" (Lucy, 354-355).

It can be seen that the importance of belonging and kinship has its roots in African culture, whose values the participants learned during their childhood in their native culture. The values of belonging, sharing, caring for community of people with whom they grew up shaped them as children and still inform the way they understand and make sense of their experiences. They provided sources of tangible and intangible support of people, support for sense of identity, ways of learning common and acceptable behaviour. They were also sources of intangible wisdom and blessings.

In the following section I connect the theme of importance of kinship and belonging to the theme of alienation which is predominant in the participants' narratives of the host culture.

Host culture

Belonging and having a sense of kinship is a cultural value present in the African culture. This was the value the participants lived by in their respective countries before arriving in Finland. In the host culture in Finland, on the other hand, all participants expressed a sense of alienation and not belonging.

Alvesson et al. (2008) points out that identity theories aim to answer existential questions "who am I?" and "how should I act?". I see the understanding of self (who I am) as connected to belonging (with whom I am). Therefore, I draw in my analysis from the IT and SIT. The concept of

identity is divided into *self-categorisation* in Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, and Wetherell 1987), and *identification* in Identity Theory (IT) (McCall and Simmons, 1978).

SIT which sees an identity, a sense of self of a person as having a specific core that is fixed and unified for each individual (Brown et al., 2015), and which defines social identity as a person's knowledge and awareness that he/she belongs to a social category or a group. According to SIT therefore, one's sense of self is expanded onto a group level. Through processes of comparisons people who are similar to the self are classified as belonging to in-group and persons who differ are classified as out-group. SIT, therefore, comprises characteristics that are fixed and tied to one's self, such as phenotypical attributes or values, as well as salient group classifications.

For the participants in my study their sense of self and understanding of who they are is very much tied to their belonging to a group: a family, a tribe, a village, etc. That belonging was also a source of tangible and intangible support that enhanced their sense of self and their wellbeing.

To compare, in a study carried out in 2016 by Forsberg and Nätkin show how a concept of family has changed in Finland. It shows three trends that influence the change. They are the valuing of an individual self-centred way of life that creates a framework for reasoning that does not leave room for others. Further, centrality of money and a career development which does not leave room for family relations. Finally, individual self-centred social security policy and family policy which in Finland provided the same social benefits to single people as to married couple. All the trends are based on values that promote individuality and individual development.

The results of the above study show stark differences between the values in Finland and the values the participants grew up with in their culture. When talking about challenges at work Tom mentioned lack of collaboration among the Finnish co-workers. For Tom it was natural to collaborate, as that was the way he was used to as a result of growing up in Kenya, where he was of a large family.

> "*What was missing was the collaboration. Working together, sharing knowledge for instance or sharing experience…Actually there was one colleague who did not care, who did not want to collaborate, to share knowledge. For me it was WEIRED that somebody might*

have useful knowledge and don't want to share it. That's not good for the TEAM and yet we are working as a team" (Tom, 238- 242).

Tom also expressed his feeling of not being welcomed, which resulted in him feeling alienated. He described it as follows: "The most unpleasant for me is when people show it into your face that you are not welcome. They don't have to SAY it, but you can see it through their attitude, in the air" (262).

The feeling of alienation and not belonging is also expressed by Mike, Paul, and Mark who despite completing Finnish master's and doctor's degrees, respectively did not have the possibility to be allowed to attain positions and go further, and to have a possibility to show that "somebody can be useful, even though the black person is not a Finn, or does not have white skin" (110-111).

Following Brown et al.'s (2015) conceptualization of sense of self is (2015) and connecting it to Alvesson's questions of identity and behaviour I concluded that in case of the narratives mentioned above answering the question "who am I?" did not pose a problem. However, the answer to the question "how should I act?" was problematic. The participants mentioned above tried to comply with the expectations Finnish working environment demanded: having an education and being willing to work. Yet, as it turned out this did not guarantee the expected outcomes. Paul, Mike, Mark and Luke did not succeed in getting work for Finnish companies. Tom was the only one who secured a job in a Finnish company, but his working practice was rejected. In all cases the participants experienced sense of exclusion and consequent alienation.

As a result, they also expressed a sense of dislocated self.

Theme 3 : Close parent-child relationships, female participants

Close relationships with family members, particularly with the parents, and their mentoring roles, was a theme identified by all participants. However, it was more evident in the narratives of the female participants, therefore the analysis below discusses the narratives of the female participants.

Parents and families provide environments where children learn the values that guide their behaviour. Moreover, the relationships with the parents influence the coping behaviours of the children by being models to the children, and by providing structured cohesive family environments (Abaied & Rudolph, 2014). Therefore, delving deeper into the nature of the parent-

child relationships provides clues to the roles of the parents' influence. To guide my understanding of what it means to be a black woman I found theory of intersectionality helpful, as it places a black woman intertwined in various categories of oppression. I also brought the concept of Strong Black Woman (SBW) schema (Abrams et al, 2014) from which I drew to better understand the origins and the characteristics of the stereotypical model of a black woman. The relation theory helped me to understand the value of parent-child relationships as well as their formative influence.

Parental influence

All female participants grew up in large families that became first social environments which Parker (2000) provided opportunities for the first experiences of socialisation, a transactional process by which they learned standards, skills, motives, attitudes, and behaviours (Parker 2000). The bonds with the siblings and parents became first social networks. In my study the females' demonstrated close and nurturing relationships either with the fathers or the mothers. I therefore conclude that the socialisation process was gender informed (Leaper & Friedman, 2007) and created different outcomes. By developing close relationships with their mothers, female participants were socialised in ways that reinforce the significance of nurturant and affiliative bonds with others (Leaper & Friedman, 2007; Reid, Cooper, & Banks, 2008; Chodorow, 1978). Whereas close relationships with their fathers socialised the females to value independence and autonomy.

In both cases the relationships with the parents provided social bonds (interdependence and affiliation) that were integral in the development and sustainment of females' sense of self and psychosocial well-being (Jordan & Hartling, 2002) and they also play a part in how women defined themselves. (DeFrancisco & Chatham-Carpenter, 2000; Patterson, 2016; Tatum, 1997). In addition, those supportive familial relationships (e.g., Mandara & Murray, 2000; McKinney, Donnelly, & Renk, 2008) contributed to positive self-esteem, especially at an early age.

In the following sections I show how the female participants described their relationships with their mothers and fathers, and I look at their role in and influence on the development of their self- esteem. I also link the mentoring roles of the parents and the strong sense of woman identity the female participants developed in their adulthood. I further show how that sense of woman identity contributed to their sensemaking of their experiences in the host culture in Finland.

Intersectionality theory added a dimension to the SBW construct. With its roots in the US feminism, it postulates that black women's experiences were shaped and influenced by race and class (Collins, 1990) as well as gender. Contrary to articulating gender, race, class, age, as distinct social categories, intersectionality postulates that these categories created systems of oppression, which work together to produce inequality (Cole, 2009; Collins, 1990; Crenshaw, 1991, 1989; Schulz & Mullings, 2006).

The origins of the Strong Black Woman construct date back to North American chattel slavery. For hundreds of years systematic, cultural, and institutional oppression—pre and post enslavement—have disenfranchised and fragmented black women and their families (Anderson, 1994; Collins, 2005; Schiele, 2005; Wright, 2000; Young, 1996). These particular and unique sociohistorical experiences of black women have influenced the adoption of the culturally specific SBW Schema, a construct ubiquitous in African culture (Parker, 2010). It is characterised by beliefs that black women have a duty, by virtue of their gender and historical legacy, to assume multiple roles: they should be strong, independent breadwinners and caregivers. They should also assume various responsibilities, while consistently showing strength.

The concept of "strength" of the SBW construct, developed from the sociocultural traditions of the West African countries from which the original enslaved Africans were taken (West, 1995). In the historical, polygamous West African context, women took roles of nurturers and also mothers of both their biological and nonbiological children.(Thompson 2003). They were also self-reliant laborers, by crafting and selling their own textiles in the marketplace as well as participating in agricultural work. Those realities could have provided a foundation for the characteristics of caretaking and self-reliance evidenced in contemporary African women (Hamin, 2008; Romero, 2000; Thompson, 2003).

The "strength" of the SBW was also an expression of a need for the controlled expression of negative feelings in potentially hostile environments: performing duties within the enslaver's household meant frequent contact with the enslaver, back-breaking work, sexual and physical assault, and the constant threat of familial separation. "Strength" therefore, also meant concealing the feelings, not expressing the pain, anger, and negative emotions that resulted from their societal position.

Carter and Rossi (2019) offered a different critical view on the performance of strength by black women. She claims that the image of the enslaved Black women as "mammy" and not a slave was created by an oppressive White society "to justify the economic exploitation of house slaves, and sustained to explain Black women's longstanding restriction to domestic service" (Collins, 1990, p. 266). Thus, the exploitation of slave women reinforced the narrative that black women slaves in fact wanted to happily care for their slave owner and his family, her family, and community by being self-sacrificing, mothering caretakers (i.e., "mammies") . Any forms of resistance to this role was considered abnormal (Carter & Rossi, 2019). The dark skin and broad shoulders signified physical, psychological, and spiritual strength, and ability to survive despite the challenges of life, remining seemingly unaffected or without fatigue. Moreover, the mammies were desexualised and nonthreatening figures empowered and revered as matriarchs in the community (Chen, Williams, Hendrickson, and Chen (2012). They expressed no personal desire or motivation which was their rationale for their tireless and ever-present availability for others' needs.

The tragic irony I found here is that the false narrative of strong womanhood was actually reinforced by and dependent on White oppressive standards of servitude (West, 2008). By embodying and internalising this intersecting race and gender stereotype black women become empowered and marginalised at the same time.

Black mothers also played a role in teaching their daughters skills that empower them to deal with and withstand racist confrontations.

Black Mothers

Black mothers are characterised as being good mothers in terms of being strong and solely responsible for the upbringing of their children, living lives of sacrifice for the sake of their children, and providing a better opportunity for their children. (Elliott and Reid, 2016; Thomas et al., 2008; Hall, 2018). Drawing on intersectionality, in her recent study carried out among African American women Camille Hall (2018) investigated the role of black mothers shaping coping mechanisms in their daughters. She claimed that historically, black women have been vulnerable to the impact of race related stress because of their socially constructed identities both as black women and as women. I am aware that Hall's study explores Afro American women, in the American context.

Nevertheless, the themes of stress related to racial discrimination, especially micro-invalidations, resonate also in my study, in the Finnish context. Moreover, Hall identified the limitation of her

study and called for future research that would include relations with fathers. My study contributes to Hall's study, by investigating the influence and role of the fathers, as well as broadens the scope by including Finland.

When talking about her mother Ella describes her as a "fighter". "Well… My aunt and my mother. Those are my role models, because I have seen how they struggled. To bring us up. (pause) And I have seen, and I have come to know, to grow up to be a FIGHTER" [emphasis Ella's] (41-43). And she continues: "But women… they are always there to fight for their children. And that is exactly what I am doing" (71-72).

Ella showed the characteristics of a stereotypical strong black woman, solely responsible for the upbringing of her children and for supporting the family, she had seen in her mother. She carried the schema into her adult life. As an adult Ella lives in Finland where the culture is open and supportive towards single mothers and independent women. Yet, Ella choses to mirror her mother's life.

Nora's narrative also provides examples of similar descriptions. Nora sees her mother as being a hard-working breadwinner: …"my mum, of course. I saw her work hard and she was a good mother, she did what she could. To see that her kids had the best. She even sacrificed her life for us" (Nora, 94-95). Nora appreciates and respects what her mother did for her and her siblings. But she does not attempt to do the same for her children. Unlike Ella, Nora also points out the importance of her mother's work outside the home to financially support the family. Nora says: "I remember more them, having time together, eating together, my mum was not always present, because as I single parent, she had to work a lot. So, and she worked most of her life" (43-45).

Evan though in Ella's description her mother is a fighter, and in Nora's her mother is a matriarchal leader, they both follows the SBW schema: strong, sole breadwinners and caregivers, taking on various responsibilities, while consistently showing strength. Ella and Nora learned from their mothers as their role models, and they were inspiration for their sensemaking of the experiences of their lives in Finland. Ella internalised the values she learned from her mother and translated them into her own life by mirroring her mother. Nora did the same, but she translated what she learned as a child by choosing a different, divergent from that of her mother. In both cases, though the model of the mothers served as a resource to make sense of the experiences both Nora and Ella faced in Finland.

The remaining participants, Jane and Megan described their mothers as passive, and instead the roles of their fathers were more predominant.

As a result they developed a coping mechanism in response to the double bind of experiencing abuse and oppression while simultaneously having to mask emotional vulnerability.

Supportive African father figure, passive mother

As mentioned earlier in the process of socialisation the role of gender, as well as bonds with others play a pivotal role in women's development and consequent well-being. Previous studies have suggested that supportive relationships and closeness with fathers may be important in promoting positive academic-related outcomes in girls (Lee, Kushner, & Cho, 2007) as well as their occupational aspirations (Hanson, 2007). Moreover, close and supportive father-child relationships were also associated with higher self-esteem among young and teenage African girls (Mori, 1999; Richards, Gitelson, Petersen, & Hurtig Cooper 1991). In line with the findings of previous studies (e.g., Hanson, 2007), it was suggested that girls who perceive higher quality relationships (e.g., more supportiveness and warmth) with their fathers will also report greater academic engagement.

Megan and Jane grew up in families where both parents were present. Notwithstanding, they described their relationships with their fathers as much closer than the relationships with their mothers. Their fathers were understanding, supportive and encouraging. The mothers in both cases, on the other hand, although not physically absent, were perceived and described by their daughters as distant and passive.

Whilst talking about her parents Megan saw herself as partly her mother and partly her father: "I can see more of my father in me. That is how he embraces challenges, you know...never heard him complaining, but I complain a lot. He just DOES things. He does not complain" (Megan, 27-30). Megan's father played a pivotal and supportive role in her making choices about her technical line of education. Megan aspired to achieve male professions, worked towards educating herself, and as a result became an entrepreneur who runs her own company. Through the role model of the father Megan learned to be a doer herself, which I analysed in more detail in Part 2 of the analysis.

Jane described her father as follows: ..." And I think my father has been like ... we had so much in common more with my father than with my mother" (Jane, 25). For Jane, the relationship with her

father was mutually supportive: he was her mentor and a friend, and Jane was his supportive daughter and also a friend. For Jane, being the oldest of ten siblings this meant that she also took on different roles, already as a child.

Both Megan and Jane are strong independent women: Megan is an entrepreneur who successfully runs her company in Finland, and Jane (single) is a teacher, who supports her mother and siblings in Kenya. The role model of their fathers and their close relationships gave the daughters strong basis for their sense of self-esteem, which in turn developed into a strong sense of woman identity.

To conclude I see a connection between the nurturing influence of both parents. Strong and close relationships with the parents developed strong sense of identity in the female participants. Close relationships with the mothers developed strong black woman identity, whereas close relationships with the fathers developed strong entrepreneurial woman identity.

Theme 4: Religion, spirituality and faith, female participants

Faith, Religion and Spirituality was a theme identified by the female participants. As spirituality and religion are integral part of philosophy in African culture (Idang, 2015) I provide a short overview of its main principles.

When using the term *African culture,* I am cautious of placing it under one common umbrella by calling all the diverse cultures of all the African countries as African. For that reason, I provided short outlines of the countries of origin of the participants of my study in the Background chapter, as I am aware that each country has its own separate characteristics.

When discussing the African culture, I rely on the knowledge of indigenous researchers such as Nobles (1991) and Idang (2015) who justify the usage of one common term "African culture" by claiming that even though Africa is inhabited by various ethnic nationalities with their 100 different languages, modes of dressing, eating, dancing and even greeting habits, Africans do share some dominant traits in their belief systems and have similar values that mark them out from other peoples of the world. Both researchers claim that the cultures of traditional African societies, together with their value systems and beliefs are close, even though they vary slightly from one another. Both Nobles and Idang further claim that there is a peculiar way of life, approach to issues,

values and world views that are typically African. Therefore, in view of the above I feel justified using the term African culture when referring to Ghana, Kenya, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Nigeria.

Importance of spirituality in African culture

As mentioned earlier, the female participants emphasised the role and importance of faith and religion in their lives, both as children and as adults. They grew up in religious homes where religion, spirituality and philosophy were the fulcrum around which every activity revolved (Nobles, 1991; Idang, 2015, p 8). Religion for them was more than a daily prayer and a visit to a church. It was also an African philosophy of life, and "the understanding, the attitude of mind, logic and the perception behind the manner in which African peoples think, act or speak in different situations in life" (Mbiti, 1990,p 281). Religion was also equated with belonging to a community of which an individual is an integral part. For the females, as for African people "to be human was to belong to the whole community" (Mbiti, 1990, p 5).

All female participants grew up as Christians, some, like Megan incorporated indigenous native beliefs into her Christian faith. In all cases though, spirituality and religion became a source of strength and support when dealing with challenges in the Finnish culture.

Jane and Lucy found a sense of belonging when she joined a church community. For them the church community is a source of spiritual, emotional, and instrumental support. They find their sense of belonging in the church where they worship and work as volunteers. In the host culture, so different to their own being active in the church gives them a sense of belonging. "*I wouldn't have lived in Finland without my faith. I think that's the most important thing. It has been like a weapon for me, it has been a BIG [emphasis Jane's] tool for me*" (343-346). "*Yea… anyway the faith, finding something to do where you feel good and what you like. The church activity always makes me feel like I belong. And now I feel like I belong more, because I have something to do, which is meaningful.*" (Lucy, 400-404).

Nora connected her religion to her identity. For Nora her faith is a part of her cultural identity. Her pride in who she is a source of her confidence and self-esteem. "I identify myself more with my faith. I have grown up in Christian school so it's a big part of me.… and how I live really comes together. I also identify myself as a Kenyan. I am proud to be Kenyan. Everywhere I go I say I am Kenyan". (Nora, 451-453)

For Ella being an active member of the church community and deep spirituality help her survive difficult experiences at work. "I get my strength from CHURCH. My religion gives me the strength. Whenever I have problems, I consult the priest" (206-207). Consulting priests about making difficult decisions is a form of counselling for her.

Megan believes in divine intervention throughout her life, and especially in the way her company evolves.

Finding a source of strength and support in faith and religion resonates the role spirituality played in black women's experiences during the times of slavery (Musgrave et al. 2009). The female participants in my study relied on faith and spirituality, as during the time of slavery the hardships women were exposed to were overcome by spirituality. They see God as a deliverer from unjust suffering and the comforter in times of trouble" (Eugene, 1995,cited in Musgrave et al., (2001). Unlike men, they pray daily, and take part in the activities of church communities (Miller, 1995, cited in Gilbert, 1996). Them believe in and rely on God as a protector in their daily lives. Spiritual support for them enhanced adaptations to traumatic events (Miller, 1995).

For some it was a source of belonging and having a meaningful purpose. For some it was a source of counselling and support. For others it was a part of their cultural identity, and for some it was a source of support in daily running of her business and coming to terms with the having a sense of purpose in a foreign culture.

Chapter 6: Discussion

Overview

My findings show that the sensemaking in the foreign host culture of the participants was informed by the values and the influence of their role models of their respective home cultures. Females drew from strong native female identity archetypes rooted in their home cultures, which resulted in reinforcement of their strong sense of black woman identity in the host culture. Males drew from an identity of an educated man who excels and achieves his goals, informed by the values of fairness and justice, which resulted in development of compromised sense of identity in the host culture, especially in the work environment.

In the discussion, I focus on understanding the reasons behind the differences in the sensemaking between males and females. I first discuss the findings related to the female participants, followed by the discussion on the findings related to the male participants.

Understanding Black woman's experience

As mentioned earlier the findings showed differences between the sources that informed the sensemaking of the participants. The narratives of all female participants showed that their sensemaking was underpinned by adherence to the identity of an archetypal strong black woman, feeling an obligation to present an image of strength and to suppress one's emotions, especially the Strong Black Woman (SBW) schema (Abrams et al., 2014), whose beginnings can be traced to the times of slavery (see Chapter 5 for details). African women in Finland live in a sociohistorical context that includes a past of enslavement, racialised gender discrimination, and a legacy of oppression that has resulted in the uneven allocation of resources still evident today (Romero, 2002; Thomas, Witherspoon and Speight, 2004; Allen, et al., 2019). The SBW paradigm can be one way to explain how African women have learned to cope with these various realities. Thompson 2003). The readiness to "live lives of sacrifice" for the sake of her children (Thomas et al., 2004, p 311) was particularly noticeable in the narratives. The point of interest here and the questions I asked myself were why the adherence to the tenets of SBW was still expressed in the narratives if the women who live in a culture that does not demand living according to the models that necessitate the spirit of servitude, especially sacrificing own lives for the sake of the children.

When attempting to discuss and answer the question I adopt intersectionality to frame my discussion. I am aware of intersectionality's heuristic approach and the three discursive spaces, (Cho, Crenshaw and McCall, 2013) it occupies as a framework of investigation of intersectional

dynamics, as discursive debates about the scope of and content of intersectionality as a theoretical and methodological paradigm, and as a space consisting of political interventions employing an intersectional lens. In my discussion however, I apply intersectionality as a framework of investigation as my study is context specific, and it investigates the conflation of race, gender and identity construction.

Further, I adopt intersectionality as a theoretical perspective as its structural and political components (Crenshaw 1994/2005) allow for a multilevel discussion on the way the female participants in my study experienced different identity categories at different times and in different situations. The identity categories that I find most helpful in my discussion are race and gender. I do not consider class per se and sexuality as I did not find any indication in the narratives of the participants that would suggest their importance in shedding light on the question mentioned above. However, I will include the socioeconomic status of the participants as it is closely connected to their race.

The identity categories that the females experienced when adhering to the SBW schema related to race (black) and gender (woman). The convergence of these categories, according to Shields (2008) rendered a status of marginalised identity. The mirroring of the experiences of their mothers the female participants adopted the identity status of an archetypal black woman. The story threads in the narratives (resignation and acceptance) confirm this positionality. One way to explain this adherence to the identity of an archetypal black woman is its association with the familiar role model, which the females knew in their childhood. However difficult the lives of their mothers were, to them as children, the way their mothers demonstrated strength that provided sources of comfort and support. As adults, they still drew on the role models of their mothers and provide the same support to their children. In other words, the connections between the identities created intersections that inform and validate each other.

Looking at the intersecting identity categories and the points of their intersections provides insights into the sources of validation these intersections created. Figure 1 below illustrates the points of intersections and their relatedness to the roles the female participants adopted. Female participants, due to identity fluidity (Shields, 2008), experienced multiple identity categories, that were not only related to their race, and gender. I see the SBW schema as underpinning the identity of a black woman who is strong and self-reliant, and self-sacrificing. However, the

narratives of the females suggest additional identity categories which are related to and drawn from the family roles the females played in their home cultures as daughters. These identity categories not only intersect with each other, but also form mutually constitutive relations (Crenshaw, 1989).
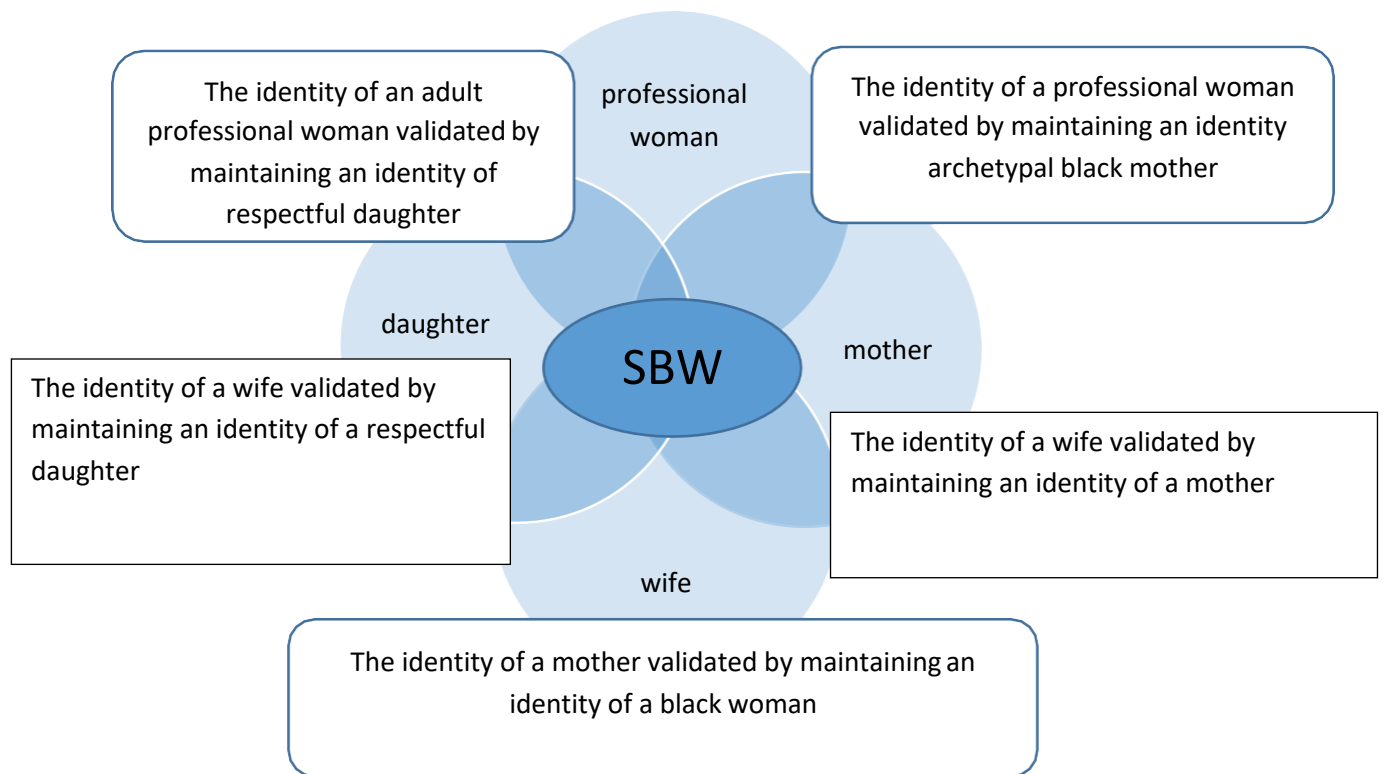
Figure 28. Points of intersections between identity categories and roles

Following Stryker (1980), I see the roles the female participants adopted as constitutive to the core of their identities, as they played crucial part in who they became as adults, they informed their sensemaking, and they guided their behaviour (Burke, 1991; Burke and Reitzes, 1981). I conclude, drawing from social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1986) that the meanings and expectations of the female participants, associated with their roles, were incorporated into their selves. The interdependence of the roles are the points of intersections of identity categories. For example, the narratives of the female participants show how their identity categories of professional women, mothers and wives (in the host culture) were tightly connected, informed by and maintained by their identity categories of devoted daughters (in the home culture). The salience of the daughter identity category was expressed in the narratives when the females referred to the instrumental aspect of their connections with their parents ("I work in honour of

my father", for example). This salience of the daughter identity category was not only instrumental in the identity of a professional woman in the host culture, but it also validated it and gave it meaning. (see Chapter 5 for details). The points of intersections of the identity categories did not create hybrid identity categories, as Shields (2008) suggests. Conversely, they serve as positive validators to the identity categories   adopted by the female participants, and connected to their roles.

I also find Alvesson and Willmott's (2002) critical perspective that describes identity as visions of the self and subjective meanings and experience, as supporting my claim above. The way the female participants adhere to the Strong Black Woman schema, and draw from it suggest development of a mindset rather than a new hybrid identity. The SBW serves as an underpinning ontological system of meanings, a cognitive scaffolding that supports their sensemaking, thus allowing for a construction of a vision of the self that supports and positively validates. Describing themselves as 'fighters', 'working to honour their fathers', 'living their lives for the sake of their children', links them to their archetypal cultural role models, and reaffirms their sense of self, as well as satisfies their need for what I coin as *positive identity validation*. It does not, however, reinvent and recreate their identity, but instead turns their gaze back to their home cultures, where the formative support of close childhood relationships with their mothers and fathers, respectively, (see Chapter 5), and an autobiographical memory of those experiences in adulthood (Singer, 2004a) created a framework of reference which served as a source of the psychological empowerment and positive identity validation that the professional work environment in the host culture could not provide.

Notwithstanding, the findings provided by the analysis of the story threads in the narratives of the females showed acknowledgment and acceptance of situations and comments that the females understood as discriminatory (see Chapter 5). Following Bhatia (2003), I concluded that this understanding was informed by the way the females saw themselves as reflected in the eyes of the host culture. Propelled by the cultural dynamics in Finland, in the 'eyes' of the host culture (the way Finns perceive black members of society) the females as a group, understood and accepted themselves as "people of colour".

This drift between the positive identity validation the SBW rendered to the females, and the way they felt perceived, labelled as black, and thus judged accordingly, created tensions and problematised the concept of self-identification, as proposed by social identity theory. Contrary to

SIT's claim that through negotiations of the tensions people might experience difficulties with self-categorisation, thus leading to diminished self-esteem, the findings of my study suggest the opposite to take place. The narratives of the female participants did not show evidence of experiences of difficulties with self-categorisation. They did show, however, evidence of self-categorisations, drawing on SBW schema. This, in turn, became a source of positive validation and enhanced their self-esteem.

Having concluded the above, I still wondered if the experiences of womanhood as well as motherhood of the females in my study were unique, and specific to them as black women. Were they different to the experiences of white women, both in terms of being women and mothers?

What makes a black woman black

The starting point for me was trying to understand the processes through which women learn to be women, and further, what womanhood means and represents to them. In other words, I wanted to understand how a woman's identity is formed, and I wanted to understand it within a cross-cultural context. I found Nancy Chodorow's (1971) concept of the role of socialisation helpful. According to her, socialisation is detrimental in the process of identity formation both for men and for women.

In cross-cultural research, according to Chodorow (1971) there is no evidence to suggest that there are any differences in personalities between men and women. It is the socialisation processes that create differences; they are different within cultures, thus creating specific expectations of behavior associated with different understandings of what is masculine and what is feminine in different cultures (Barry, Child, Bacon, Whiting, 1959). Within western traditions the socialisation of girls tends to be more nurturance, obedience and responsibility-oriented, whereas the socialisation of boys focuses more on self-reliance and achievement (Barry, Bacon, Child, 1959). The findings of my study suggest different patterns of socialisation of females to take place. In line with Mead's (1949) claim (girls take on their female identity through natural identification with their mothers from the time of birth) the females who experienced closer relations with their fathers than mothers were socialised by strong male role models. By this identification they acquired self-reliance and a sense of achievement.

The females grew up in large families where the role models were strong, single self-reliant mothers in families where fathers were absent. In families where both parents were present, the

role models were passive mothers and strong, supportive fathers. What I found intriguing was the fact that in both types of families, the girls followed the role model of the parent who demonstrated strength, confidence, and self-reliance. In some cases, it was the mother and in some the father.

Contrary to Chodorow (1971), therefore, I conclude that the females in my study went through a process of socialisation that equipped them with a confluence of personality attributes, commonly associated with both female and male characteristics. Drawing on Chodorow's (1971) western concept of socialisation and its impact on woman identity formation, I conclude that the way the female participants were socialised into their womanhood was different to their western counterparts.

The different processes of socialistion, in combination with the principles and traditions of the SBW schema rendered the distinctness and uniqueness of the way the females experienced their identities as black women.

Understanding Black man's experience

The connection of the formative influence of the parents and other role models and their influence on processing the male participants' experiences in the host culture resonated in their narratives. The male participants drew from an identity of an educated, ambitious man, and values of fairness, provided by their role models, particularly their parents.

The narratives provided accounts which served as counter narratives to what Ilmi (2011) described as the Black sentiment, and what bell hooks (2001) referred to as the white men supremacist thinking, and subordination of a black man. The parental advice and support, underpinned by an awareness of the unequal hierarchy within "the world out there" instilled an understanding that getting an education and excelling at school was crucial and equated with succeeding in life. This form of parental advice and support paved a path in a specific direction, a trajectory that demanded persistence and promised rewards.

The value of education as a means to achieving higher social status as well as professional and financial stability created a point of departure and momentum that propelled the thinking and motivation behind the decisions to leave their native countries and pursue life elsewhere.

Apart from the influence of the parents as the role models, also the communities where the male participants grew up were sources and foundations from which they viewed the world. The values instilled in them formed their identities, which embodied spirituality, and a collective community way of life rooted in their indigenous African identities. The indigenous, intergenerational knowledges (Wane, 2005) generated and passed down through storytelling, observations, and traditional ceremonies became instrumental to their selfhood and produced culturally grounded knowledge. The spaces where the indigenous knowledges, that Semali and Kincheloe (1999) described as embodied knowledges of the colonised ,formed their cultural identities.

In order to understand what might be involved in the creation of the embodied knowledges of the colonised, Fanon's explanation of the psychological effects of colonialism is helpful. He described it as the juxtaposition of the black and white 'races' which created a massive psycho-existential complex (2008, p xvi). The racial inferiority (the colonised) and superiority (the coloniser) complexes, according to Fanon, colonised the minds and contributed to creation of identity that, by internalising economic inferiority by the colonised, became a psychological pathology (Fanon, 2008). In other words, the values of the coloniser or oppressor, which judge the colonised to be inferior and backward, were internalised by the colonised, and as a result he/she experiences a loss of self-esteem, and experience host culture whilst occupying liminal spaces of marginalisation and silences" (Conquerood, 1998).

In my study, the male participants expressed experiencing belonging to the "spaces of marginalisation". Nevertheless, despite experiencing a sense of alienation and rejections, the males did adhere to their cultural values and did not attempt to fully adopt the values of the host culture. Instead, they constructed their identities through *self-categorisation* (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, and Wetherell 1987) and *identification* (McCall and Simmons, 1978) drawing on social identities and discourses available to them in the host culture social environment. Drawing on Social Identity Theory, the fixed and unified core specific to male participants (Brown, 2015) rooted in their awareness of belonging to a social category rooted in their native cultures remained intact. Therefore, Hall's (1999) concept of cultural hegemony as changing the dispositions and the configurations of cultural power, not getting out of it" (468) hold true only to some extent.

On the other hand, this self-categorisation also created an accentuation of the perceived differences between their selves (black) and the other (white) in-group members. Contrary to SIT's premise, the self-esteem of the males was not enhanced by evaluating the in-group and the out-group on dimensions, as their in-group belonging was not judged positively. Instead, their in-group belonging rendered them outsiders, and was judged negatively. Therefore, contrary to SIT, their group belonging did not enhance their self- esteem, nor did it strengthen their self-efficacy. In addition, the process of identification was problematic. There was tension between how they might want to identify themselves, how they thought they were perceived and identified by others, and how they were judged as a result.

Connected to the above, the person identity, as defined by IT (as set of meanings that are tied to and sustain the self as an individual) penetrate role and group identities in the same way as role identities infiltrate group identities. These different aspects of identity should be integrated and should operate simultaneously in a given situation. However, in the case of the males, the structural expectations of the host culture were constraining making the choice of enactment of the different identities limited. As the male participants expressed ambiguity of their sense of self in some situations in the host culture, I conclude that there is a tension between their person identity and their role and group identity.

This tension prevents the males from functioning psychologically to increase their influence of their membership in groups, what SIR describes as identity salience. IT sees salience, a product of accessibility and fit (Oakes, 1987, cited in Stets and Burke, 2000), as the probability that an identity will be activated in a given situation. In the case of the male participants, their race identity, their colour identity, and their professional identity were held by them in different social structural positions (salience hierarchy). They were not able to enact highly salient identity (Stryker, 1968), or point out their identity to remind themselves and others of who they were. Therefore, the agentive character of identity, prominent in IT, was limited, and the accomplishment of self-verification was compromised.

In addition, both SIT and IT agree that an identity has no effect unless it is activated. They also imply that an individual has influence over this activation. The theories do not address the situations where individuals are not able to fully and freely activate their identities. My study

suggests a concept of "ascribed identity" (skin colour and racial belonging) and its impact on limited identity activation and identity salience.

The key processes that occur as a result of the limited identity, depersonalisation in SIT (seeing the self as embodiment of the in-group prototype), and self-verification in IT (seeing the self in terms of a role as embodied in the identity standard) are also problematic in case of the male participants. As they knew the expectations of structural categories of the host culture, they also tried to act according to this knowledge. But in their case membership in any social group or role was problematic: they were not able to fully identify with a category (in the depersonalisation process) and then adjust their behaviours to a category (in self-verification).

Moreover, identities that refer to groups or roles are motivated by self-esteem, self-efficacy, self-consistency, and self-regulation. The males categorised themselves in particular ways, not only to fulfil the need to feel valuable and worthy, but also to feel competent and effective (Cats, Stets and Burke, 1999). The group-based identity enhances self-worth, but it does not only come from the act of identifying with the group. The group's acceptance of the individual as a member also plays a vital role (Ellison, 1993). If the group membership does not render positive acceptance, the feeling of self-worth is diminished.

As motivation is tied to salience and commitment in IT, the level of self-esteem is also linked to a person's motivation. The male participants expressed alienation (their roles were evaluated by others negatively) and therefore their feelings of self-esteem were weaker. In addition, as self-efficacy is also a motivator, both self-esteem and self-efficacy were decreased, and self-verification was compromised despite performing roles well (Burke and Stets, 1990).

Although the group, the role, and the person identities provide different sources of meaning, they are also likely to overlap. They might reinforce who one is, and they might constrain the self. Stets and Burke (2000) suggest that the conditions under which each occurs are important topics for further research. My study addresses this need by opening up a conversation and widening the scope of factors that impact the overlap of the different identities under different circumstances. It also shows that this overlap is not always a straightforward process, and cultural constraints play a part. Apart from achieving various levels of economic well-being, the migration of people with distant cultural backgrounds does have effects on people's cultural identity. Akerlof and Kranton (2000) suggest a concept of identity economics connected to migration. It suggests that the utility

of both the immigrants and host culture population encompasses economic well-being and cultural identity. The migration effect on cultural identity depends, among others, on the distance between cultures: the greater the distance between the cultures, the more likely the preference of the immigrants to live in diaspora communities than to integrate into the host countries' culture.

Drawing on Hall (1999), who describes cultural hegemony as people's identities being bound to mapped geographical points of origin, my study brings to attention that different ways of perceiving these origins involves hegemonies that sustain ideologies that are connected to these geographical points of origin, creating intersections of privilege and inequality, and imposing a kind of identity supremacy.

These points of departure created a framework, which the males utilised (their own cultural histories, cognitive categories and cultural logic) to create their own understandings of their realities (Dei, 1999) in the host culture.

Identity work

As the narratives of the male participants refer to their thoughts and reflections on their cultural, racial and colour identities, as well as the fluidity and continuity thereof (see Chapter 5) I found the conceptualisation of the study of identity provided by Brown, 2015, p 20) relevant to my discussion. Brown et al. (2015) described identity as an understanding of "people's subjectively construed understandings of who they were, or desire to become".
Brown's concept makes a connection between subjective understanding of who one is, and the desire to become. The desire to become is, therefore directly and continually impacted by individual concepts of who one is, based on their own understandings. Through reflection and sensemaking, people create their own meanings based on their past experiences and values. Drawing on Brown's concepts mentioned earlier, the influence of the subjective meanings people create may either be detrimental, or they may propel a person's motivation to become. The males pointed out to the way they experienced social interactions in the host culture, and the emotions those interactions evolved. They also mentioned the way the interactions impacted their perceptions of themselves (see Chapter 5) as well as their behaviour. The interactions were discriminatory in their nature, and as a result produced uncomfortable feelings, which in turn produced identity constraints (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003) where in order to maintain a

coherent sense of self, the males undertook identity work. Social interactions therefore rendered situations where their own cultural identities had to be resisted at the expense of accommodating being different yet kind-of-similar. This involved two processes: accommodation or resisting certain identities. The males attempted to accommodate parts of their identities that would fit into what they considered was expected of them, and at the same time they resisted the identities that they perceived and understood as not accepted.

This process was both transformative and formative. It was transformative as the temporary feedback and "momentary achievements" (Ybema, Keenoy, Oswick, Beverungen, Ellis and Sabelis, 2009, p 301) inflicted the identity work. It was also formative as, "through a mutually constitutive process that intersects with power and discourse" it created a new 'other-selves' (Kosmala and Herrbach, 2006, p 1398).

The above conceptualisation of the aspects of identity work implies that people are active agents in the identity work they undertake. I see the agency of the male participants as problematic. As identity formation and maintenance needs confirmation, including confirmation of imagined others (Mead, 1934), the process involves "always an act of power" (Laclau, 1990, p 33), which in turn is based on differentiation, achieved through the maintenance of domination and privilege. Therefore, following Knights and Willmott (2004, p 72), identity work can be problematic for individuals as a consequence of the "real or imagined demands of others". My study contributes to this understanding by proposing that identity work becomes even more problematic for individuals whose skin colour predetermines their positionality within a particular environment. This led me to conclude that the agency in the identity work of the male participants as black professionals in a white host culture was reduced to navigating between *being different yet not-so different*. This reduced agency was even more limited as the male participants did not experience what Mead (1934) claims to be important: individuals' reliance for confirmation, including that of imagined others for recognition and acknowledgment. Further, drawing on Roberts (2005), working environments and work itself render opportunities for continuous self-improvement and recognition. However, the males described situations at work in the host culture where strains, tensions, and surprises were prevalent. They produced experiences and feelings of confusion and self-doubt, which led to identity work and examination of the self (Brown, 2015, p 25), rather than recognition and acknowledgment.

Consequently, as a result of the lack of recognition, the male participants described experiencing a sense of alienation in the host culture. They connected their experiences to their colour identity. Therefore, in my further discussion I see it suitable to recourse to the concepts of the racial gaze on black identity formation, proposed by Fanon (1967). In addition, as the narratives also showed the males' attempts to fit into the Finnish work culture, I also bring Bhabha's (1984) concept of mimicry, which, seen from a postcolonial perspective, serves as a mode for partial self-affirmation for colonised subjects.

The white gaze

Fanon's understanding of the phenomenology of blackness is connected to the above-mentioned perceptions and understandings of colour identity, as well as its impact on self-worth, motivation, and efficacy. He made a distinction between the experience of skin difference and being the black Other. This distinction manifested itself "only in the encounter with whiteness or, more precisely, the white imagination "(Fanon, 2008, p 89).

Fanon's concept of "the white gaze" and the influence of its weight (Fanon 2008, p 90) resonated in the narratives of the male participants. For example, they described their understandings of the way they thought they were perceived by the white coworkers (being black, therefore inferior). This understanding created a vision of themselves that they adopted as their own. In other words, they viewed and understood themselves through the white gaze (Fanon, 2008, p 91). By accepting this way of self-perception (through the white view) they also adopted different identities of a white-defined black Other. Following Fanon (2008), in this perception they incorporated a connection between their native past and a tradition of white erasure and re-scripting of black history and culture.

In trying to understand this conceptualisation, I found the phenomenological corporeal schema (Merleau-Ponty, 1962) helpful. It highlights people's embodied relationships with the world, and potential difficulties that a black person experiences in a white-scripted world as a result of his skin colour. In the case of the male participants of my study, this understanding does not fully hold true. Their capacity for expression and ability to reconfigure their history was diminished as a result of their entanglement with the constraints and cultural demands of the environment of the host culture. As expressed in their narratives (see Chapter 5), this entanglement rendered the

possibility to emerge and distinguish themselves as individuals difficult if not impossible. The reason for this was the fact that being black in the white working culture, which is racially oppressive, rendered an environment where the freedom of equal participation was impossible.

Further, Weate's explanation of interracial encounters sheds more light on the process. Weate (2001, p 172, cited in Nielsen, 2011) claims that "the White is able to participate in the schematisation of the world, whilst the Black may not, for his skin difference closes down the possibility of free agency". As a result, the male participants sought ways to adjust and navigate their colour identities in ways that would best accommodate their compromised freedom. For example, when asked where they come from, they provided answers that they thought would best accommodate the expectations of the person who asked the question (see Chapter 4).

This example illustrates what Fanon (1967) described as the trauma of psychological fragmentation, inherent in the colonised black man. This trauma produced a mindset of constant self-devaluation under the white gaze, which informed an understanding of the males' identities through approval of "the world of whites" (Fanon, 1967). This, in turn, created a state of double-consciousness in black men, which I see as a psychological source of sensemaking that results in what I coin *duality of being*.

My understanding of *duality of being* is a result of the tension of living in the dichotomous split between the identity of esteem, associated with being white, and devaluation of the black self. The participants' identity of educated professional men became compromised as a result of the cultural dynamics of the host culture. Fanon suggests that to remedy this tension, one has to necessarily undergo "the death and burial of local cultural originality" (Fanon, 1967, p 18). In the case of the males, their life situations in the host culture necessitated adjustment and acceptance of new and different cultural values. The narratives of the male participants expressed strong adherence to their own cultural roots, but also a regret that the values connected to those roots are left in the shadow of the new culture. Contrary to Fanon, they were not buried and abandoned. They were compromised, but also helpful in the process of negotiating the males' positionality in the host culture.

From my own perspective as an alien living in a foreign culture, I have learned that effacing one's own cultural uniqueness does not devalue the influence of the foreign/white gaze, let alone create psychological comfort. Similar to the male participants, adopting a new hybrid, what I call an

almost Finnish/whitish mode of self-understanding, attained by mimicking or imitating the Finnish/white culture at times rendered a temporary sense of empowerment, but it did not provide a true sense of belonging and inclusion. Conversely, at times, it created an even more uncomfortable sense of psychological entanglement, as I felt placed in an-in-between position, neither here nor there.

The concept of mimicry sheds light on this dynamic.

Mimicry

When trying to understand the processes of adjustment and attempts of fitting in expressed in the narratives of the male participants, I drew on Bhabha's (1984) concept of mimicry. From a postcolonial perspective, mimicry implies that a colonised subject emulates and tries to reproduce the habits, culture, speech, and values of the coloniser. The male participants developed a sense of ambivalence, or what I coined *ambivalence of being.* This was manifested in feeling unwelcomed and out of place. The male participants mitigated their ambivalent existence by managing it and attempting to adjust to the cultural norms of the host culture, partly by employing mimicry. The mimicry took different forms. For example, some participants tried to accept the individualistic approach to problem solving in teams (see Chapter 5 for examples) and lack of collaboration as they understood it. Others pursued further education and attained higher academic degrees at Finnish universities in order to match those of their Finnish coworkers. Others employed their sense of ambivalence as a form of resistance, in which irony and parody were used. For example, by juxtaposing the cultural norms of African culture with their equivalents in the host culture and mocking them, the males were able to joke about them, thus making their meaning less of a burden. This provided sources of psychological empowerment. By ironicly mimicking the dominant discourse, the mimicry itself also showed the weak points of the dominant discourse. According to Bhabha (1984), ironic mimicking, as a response to the dominant discourse, reveals the weak points and anxieties of the dominant discourse, and by doing so it disrupts it. I concur with Bhabha's claim that this conscious action on the part of the colonised may create a sense of empowerment, but I suggest it was only a temporary solution, and agree with McClintock (1995) questioning the equivalence between mimicry and agency. In her view, neither irony, nor mimicry or ambivalence create a path to human agency. They do not provide a source of long-lasting psychological comfort and true empowerment either.

As seen in the examples above the mimicking to emulate the coloniser was not a mutually constitutive process, and therefore it did not foster a positive and creative attitude in the mind of the colonised. On the contrary, it was more of 'Othering' and maintaining differences between Western and non-Western identities (Boussebaa et al., 2014).

The double vision of mimicry (Bhabha, 1984) creates a dialectical and fluctuating relationship between the colonisers and colonised, where accommodation and resistance co-exist, and at the same time a sense of ambivalence is generated for both the colonised and the colonisers (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2006). The ambivalence produces neither identity nor difference, it is only a sort of "*partial presence*" (Gupta, 2012).

In conclusion, the postcolonial concepts of Fanon's white gaze and Bhabha's mimicry and ambivalence resonated in the way the male participants made sense of their experiences in the host culture. The ambivalence they experienced was a result of the dialectical relationship between adherence to the values instilled in them by their host cultures and role models, and attempts to adjust to the values of the host culture. Contrary to Bhabha's understanding of mimicry, the way the males utilised mimicry did not suggest a desire to change their identities and become like someone else. They utilised mimicry to adjust, navigate, and mitigate their cultural identities in the host culture.

Chapter 7: Conclusions

In this final chapter, I elaborate on the answers to the research questions, and I outline the contributions and limitations of my study. Finally, I set out possible avenues for further research in this area.

Through posing my research questions, I was attempting to understand, broadly speaking, the black experience in Finland. I was particularly interested in the way black educated professionals, who arrived in Finland in the 1990s from selected African countries, experience their life and work in a foreign host culture in Finland.

My ontological assumption was that the self is a social creation, capable of creating meanings created within social groups. It logically followed, then, that the meanings the participants (and myself) made were conveyed through structures that were social in nature. The participants in my

research, or narrators of their stories, were connected to their social contexts, both those from their past (native countries) and those from the present (Finland). I listened to and read the narratives from *within*, and I found relations between the external (social) contingencies and internal (individual, self-reflective) experiences. As my first question was *how,* any preconceptions or anticipated answers were excluded. Therefore, what was shared with me in the narratives lead me to a discovery.

Through retrospection and extracting clues, the participants applied sensemaking as a comparative process through which they used their past experiences to put the present into context. In other words, they processed their experiences of events or situations in the present (host culture) by reaching out to and falling back on their native narratives of the past (home culture) as points of reference. In the process, in their narratives of the present they omitted unpleasant experiences. In extracting clues, they also showed a reliance on plausibility rather than accuracy when interpreting experiences. They talked about them only when prompted by my additional questions. This initial omission suggested to me what Brown and Jones (1998) coined as bolstering their self-esteem. The participants extracted only some cues, omitting others in order to create comfortable cultural accommodation of themselves in the host culture. It was what Maitlis and Christianson (2014) as well as Fisher and Hutchings (2013) call intercultural sensemaking and describe it as the process through which people select specific scripts that reflect their cultural values and cultural history.

Omitting accounts of difficult or unpleasant situations did not mean that they were blocked out or ignored. When prompted by my additional questions, the participants provided numerous examples of traumatic situations. However, in order to bolster their self-esteem in their sensemaking, they focused on selecting the positive in the comparative process. Relying on their native narratives rendered this possible. The participants applied this type of sensemaking to negotiate their positions in the host culture. When making sense and reflecting on their experiences of the present, it was evident that the values of the home cultures were salient and influential.

This connection between the native and host cultures, and the reflexivity of the narratives was very important, also in connection with the second and third research questions in which I was

interested in the extent their native cultures inform their understanding of their experiences of the host culture, and the way their experiences influence their cultural identities.

I discovered a connection between the process of sensemaking and identity construction of the participants. The narratives of the time spent as children in their respective native home cultures showed how learning and understanding of cultural values of their home cultures constructed and shaped their cultural identities.

Weick's (2010) sensemaking model, grounded in identity construction resonates the findings of my study. The participants' self-images allowed them to understand who they were. In the home cultures the salience of their black cultural identities was acknowledged and accepted, it was *in place*. In the host culture, on the other hand the salience of their black cultural identities was questioned and not always accepted, it *was out of place*. Their salient identities became their silent identities.

This way of incorporating aspects of identity salience rendered understandings of the events that they were exposed to in the host culture. Based on the findings of my study, I found a striking paradox: in order to understand the world, they had to understand who they were. And in order to understand who they were, they had to fall back on their self-images of black, out of place, silent Others. This understanding underpinned the way they made sense of themselves and their experiences in the host culture. The identity work they undertook proved futile, especially for the male participants.

The values of the respective native home cultures came into a stark clash with the values of the host culture in Finland when the participants attempted to adjust and fit in. This compromised the cultural identities of the participants, as well as their self-images and sense of self. The identity threats, although evident for both male and female participants, were more strongly experienced by the males, who showed stronger identity threat sensitivity, level of social identity complexity, level of propensity for self- definition, and level of self-identification.

The identity work undertaken by the participants alleviated these threats to various degrees and resulted in different outcomes. For the female participants, the identity work resulted in reinforced self-definition and self-identity. For the male participants, it resulted in weakened self-

definition and self-identity. Both females and males drew strongly on the values deeply rooted in their native cultures to make sense of their experiences of life in the host culture.

Theoretical contributions to knowledge

Following the three tasks of critical research within management studies (insight, critique, and transformative redefinition), as outlined by Alvesson and Deetz (2009) my study contributes to all of them.

Firstly, my study has provided a unique insight into the lived experience of black African educated professionals living and working in Finland. Despite the stark differences between Finnish and African cultures, the way the African participants make sense of their experiences in Finland reveals the following characteristics: adherence to and respect of the values of their native cultures, acceptance of life conditions, resilience, perseverance, and diligence. All these characteristics are, in fact, the same as the Finnish ones.

This knowledge provides critique directed at the conventions and structures of social orders and the forms of knowledge as well as privileged understandings. It operates as part of a relationship between the researcher and the researched as it opens a possibility of a conversation "that exceeds the partialities of each" (Alvesson and Deetz, 2009, p 19). By doing so, it suggests an alternative perspective of considering black foreign co-workers, a perspective that looks beyond skin colour, thus developing what Simons (1989, p 198) coined as "political competence" which he describes as "access to the entire range of skills required to decode, encode, interpret, reflect upon, appraise, contextualise, integrate, and arrive at decisions respecting that information". Therefore, the findings of my study offer a possibility of the transformative redefinition (third task of critical research) of skills and competences necessary in cross-cultural and diversity management.

Secondly, my study contributes to questioning the concept of whiteness, which over the past 30 years and more, has been rendered normal and invisible, and central to dialectical comparisons with ethnic minorities, thus bolstering white power and privilege. By providing insights and knowledge about African cultural values, my study undermines whiteness understood as a

historically contingent ideological mechanism that establishes notions of racial superiority, maintains social status, power and privilege, and endorses discrimination and injustice against non-white people and cultures (McIntosh, Moon and Nakayama, 2020).

Methodological contributions to knowledge

By adopting an inclusive methodology (Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and elements of Narrative Analysis (NA)), I was able to access the meaning of the narratives of the participants from a wider perspective and at a deeper level. On the one hand, I was able to investigate how the participants made sense of the way they experienced their personal and social world, the context, the lifeworlds, and their individual personal perceptions of events and experiences. On the other hand, I was able to read deeply into the text of their narratives and analyse it from a literary perspective.

Moreover, as IPA is predominantly utilised within 'applied' psychology (Larkin et al., 2007), adopting it for my study showed that its application in the fields other than psychology can render valid findings. By including elements of interpretive poetics, my study widened the narrative possibilities of IPA, thus allowing for a more holistic approach to the interpretative process (Schleiermacher, 1998, cited in Smith et al., 2012) where the interpretation involved two levels: grammatical and psychological. The narrative analysis approach allowed me to investigate the grammatical level (elements of interpretative poetics), and the phenomenological interpretative analysis rendered the insights into the psychological level. This deeper two-level analysis strengthened the validity of my interpretative analysis.

Limitations

Following Larkin, Shaw and Flowers (2019), phenomenological research, especially within psychology, focuses on personal meanings of individuals. It considers the relationship between people and the world as operationalised at the individual level. Therefore, in IPA research projects, the most common research designs involve collecting qualitative data from a small and reasonably homogenous group of participants who share a certain contextual perspective on a given

phenomenon. The fact that the accounts of their personal experiences serve as a lens for illuminating the broader meaning can be considered a limitation as it might have a bearing on the applicability of the findings. In my study it was a homogenous group of ten black professionals of African origin.

The inductive logic and the cumulative approach to knowledge creation in IPA call for a detailed and context bound way of analysis. In my study, the accounts of the participants were local and bound to the contexts of the African home countries and Finland. Therefore, in my findings I reported in detail the views from and within the Finnish cultural frame, but I did not claim that my findings shed light on studies carried out, for example, in the UK. In order to ensure greater validity and applicability, other, subsequent studies may be added to my study. In this way, based on these additional case studies, and their detailed analyses, more general claims could be made. (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2019).

Another self-limiting aspect of IPA, entailed by a small and homogenous sample of participants, could be applied in studies where research questions or the object of study has relational aspects. For example, my study investigated how black professionals experience their life in a foreign host culture in Finland. Since their experiences are bound to specific cultural contexts and these contexts influenced their experiences, it would make sense to investigate also the experiences of other parties who constituted these contexts, their Finnish counterparts. An analysis of data revealing multiple perspectives could generate stronger accounts, thus wider perspectives of the findings.

Nevertheless, in adopting IPA as my methodological approach, I was interested in meaning, not causality. At the same time, I was aware of the possibility of triangulation of my findings by inviting the participants to read my analytical accounts of their narratives in order to enhance the persuasiveness of the findings. I did not receive a consensus from the participants. In my future research projects, I am interested in adopting what Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2019) describe as greater influential range in order to achieve greater persuasiveness of findings. I do not see that reaching greater persuasiveness could be achieved by designing the research process based on a model of causality, or as a shift out of phenomenological analysis and into a more empiricist frame of reference. I can still analyse the data with the focus on meaning, not causality. I can strive to obtain transparency by involving the parties who might have conflicting perspectives on the

phenomenon. I can triangulate the findings by inviting the participants to partake in the analysis. This would create a wider contextual range of my analysis, where not only one specific group of people would be investigated in one specific context.

Another limiting aspect of myself, as a researcher analysing and interpreting data from a phenomenological position, is the fact that I was re-interpreting my participants' individual interpretations of the meaning of their experiences. In other words, I was interpreting what the participants had already interpreted themselves, rendering a third-person interpretation. One way to overcome this somewhat compromised position could be the use of the multiplicity of evidence (the triangulation mentioned above, for example) to ensure more rigour and transparency. This approach could potentially create more "generalisability" or "abstraction" into my future phenomenological research projects, retaining caution and context-sensitivity.

Future research

During the process of my study, and especially after I analysed the data, I realised that several areas of further research became evident and worth pursuing.

For example, within the field of identity studies, the connection between colour identity and performativity could be further investigated. According to McIntosh, Moon and Nakayama (2020), in the last 30 years whiteness studies have extensively described whiteness as a historically ideological mechanism that determines racial superiority, maintains social status, power and privilege, and endorses discrimination and injustice against non-white people and cultures. Whiteness has been rendered as normal and unnoticeable, in fact invisible. This implies that the greater the extent to which whiteness is unquestioningly accepted as normal and invisible, the greater the extent to which ethnic minorities are stereotypically 'othered' and structurally relegated or side-lined. My study touches upon performativity and colour identity. Further research would ask questions such as: how is white identity perceived by non-white people? How does this perception impact their self-perception?

Within the field of communication, the deployment of discursive techniques promoting whiteness over non-whiteness could be explored. The increase of racial prejudice expressed in various

discourses at the beginning of the twenty-first century, and, on the opposite end of the spectrum movements promoting equality among various groups of people, calls for such a research.

Within the Finnish context, a study investigating the second generation educated professionals and their experiences of life and work in Finnish culture could be carried out as a follow-up to my study. Investigations into questions such as whether Finnish culture is a home or a host culture to them would bring further insights into the experiences of the educated black professionals residing in Finland.

Within education, Oelofsen (2015) posits for humanising approaches to pedagogy. She argues that *Ubuntu,* a Nguni term, translated as "I am because we are" (Tutu 2007, 3, cited in Oelofsen, 2015), provides a starting point for some of these conceptual explorations that would address and respond to problems inherent in the postcolonial world. The concept of "human" as understood by Afro-communitarianism recognises the importance of others, of history, of context and community in the formation of one's identity, thus seeing the individual as necessarily socially embedded and affected by context. The ultimate aim, then, is not personal fulfilment as an individual, but rather the recognition that personal fulfilment is part of a *communal self.*

<p style="text-align:center">******************************</p>

Final comments

My encounter with Jacob, a Ghanaian student I introduced in Chapter 1 sparked my interest in the stories of people who leave their native home countries in search for a different, better life. Now, seven years later, after completing my research, I can see that the Shakespearian themes of human predicament and an exiled, marooned existence, which I investigated in *The Tempest*, resonated in the stories of the participants of my study. The state of being marooned and exiled, as Shakespeare rendered it, however, does not refer to the physical geographical location where one finds him/herself stranded without the possibility of returning home. In the stories of the participants of my research, it refers to a marooned and exiled sense of self, where questioning one's own identity still pertains.

In her latest book *Caste*, published in 2020, Isabel Wilkerson writes about racism. She quotes an anthropologist, Venter (2000, cited in Angier, 2000), who claims that race is a manmade invention,

with no basis in science or biology. "Race is a social concept, not a scientific one" (Venter, 2000) and all human beings evolved, in the last 100,000 years, from a small number of tribes that migrated from Africa. Ashley Montagu, an English-American anthropologist, claimed that the entire system based on racial inequalities was based on an arbitrary and superficial selection of traits, and "the idea of race was in fact the deliberate creation of an exploiting class seeking to maintain and defend its privileges against what was profitably regarded as an inferior caste" (Montagu, in Wilkerson 2020, p 66).

Additionally, the term Caucasian was coined in 1795 by a professor of medicine, Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, (Wilkerson, 2020) on the basis of a skull he liked the most out of many that he had collected and studied. The skull was acquired from the Caucasus Mountains in Russia. He gave the name to white Europeans, and from then on white people called themselves Caucasians.

The social constructs such as race, or being categorised as a Caucasian, create powerful connotations which imply biases and involve actions of systemic power of groups of people over groups with less power. Racism is usually conflated with prejudice. Ascriptions of race are also connected with the notion being good or bad. This, in turn, creates a hierarchical system, a system of casts where everybody has an assigned fixed position connected to their identity.

Presumptions that immigrants or people of colour could not be in a position of authority ,reside in more affluent districts or suburbs, or be a graduate of a prestigious universitie, also uphold the fixed positions of white people within the hierarchy of casts. This position reinforces the subconscious affirmations that the immigrants and people of colour should remain in their ascribed positions of being the silenced Others, and not step out of them. The suppression of alternative accounts of European histories, Others are continually excluded from narratives of Europe and Europeanness and are forced into the dichotomy of the inside/outside, particularly refugees, who despite being "victims of an International System that brings them into being', this International system 'then fails to take responsibility for them" (Fitzgerald, 2017).

The questions of white and black, as well as the positionality of immigrants in Europe, are becoming more and more prevalent in the current socio-political scene. The rise of nationalism and far right discourse and the immigration crisis have made Europe and its populations question its values and commitments as a bastion of Human Rights and 'Western' humanitarian principles.

'Cosmopolitan Europe' (Bhambra, 2017), the foundation, widely understood as one of the foundations of the European Union, is under threat. The Western values espoused by the European Union, have been put under considerable pressure in the Mediterranean Sea during the migrant crisis, and recently on the Polish-Belarusian border. The representation of the Mediterranean Sea as the border between 'European civilisation' and its counterpart 'Others', is distinctly colonial in its imaginings (Guizardi, 2017). Owens (2016) alleges that Europeans are being challenged to face their 'colonial amnesia' and begin to make connections between colonial activities by Western powers and the conflicts that continue to rage still today.

I believe that stepping out of these assumed positions can also happen the other way around. It could be suggested that being a white, middle class woman I took upon myself to investigate a topic that was not mine to investigate; thus, I became an Other.

In line with Bergson (2003, cited in Lury et al., 2020) and Tuhiwai-Smith (2007), I acknowledge the importance of indigenous researchers being involved in indigenous research, and the exclusivity of white researchers from such contexts. I also acknowledge the attempts to develop methodologies and approaches to research that privilege indigenous knowledges, voices, experiences, reflections, and analyses of their social, material, and spiritual conditions (Rigney, 1999, p 117). Nevertheless, I stepped out of my "cast", and entered a terrain where my cultural and educational background could be seen as limitation and out of place. But I am convinced that researchers like myself, who share a common mindset, empathy, and sincere interest in the research subject can open up possibilities of alternative research participation, speaking from different positions. Empathy, understood as putting myself into the participants' position and imagining how I would feel, was my starting point. Wilkerson (2020, p 386) suggests a radical empathy which involves putting the work to educate oneself and "to listen with a humble heart to understand another's experience from their perspective, not as we imagine we would feel". In other words, understanding the world, the diverse multitude of people who create it, is not about me, but about someone else. I cannot possibly imagine how I would feel if I was black, because it would be a situation I can never really experience. Instead, I can develop openness, and, through my study, create deep knowledge, with the hope that they will span a connection, a bridge, the crossing of which will change my vantage point and will make me appreciate the narratives of people whose stories are different to mine. I will then listen to their narratives with different sensitivity and empathy, and

their happiness and pain will convey new meanings to me. Completing this study taught me to do just that. I hope that readers of it will experience it in a similar way.

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Appendix 1

Examples of Finnish advertising introduced first in 1920s and taken up again in 1950s. Abandoned in 2001.

Appendix 2

Interview notes template

<u>PARTICIPANT</u>:

<u>TIME AND PLACE</u>:

<u>DURATION</u>:

<u>CONSENT FORM</u>:

<u>DECISIONS</u>:

<u>PARTICIPANT OBSERVATIONS</u>:

<u>RESEARCHER OBSERVATIONS AND REFLECTIONS</u>:

<u>SURPRISES</u>:

Appendix 3

Transcript notations.

(0.5)	Length of pause in tenths of a second (for longer pauses only)
(.)	Micro-pause
and?	Question mark: Raising intonation.
and↑	Arrow: very rapid rise in intonation
°and °	Degree signs: the volume of talk is very quiet, almost a whisper
AND	Capital letters: considerable rise in volume
And	Underlining: speaker's emphasis
(and)	Word in brackets: the best possible hearing
Huh/heh	Laughter.
An: d	Colons: sound stretching
[and]	Square brackets: interviewer own translation
<and>	Words in <>: indicates slower pace than the surrounding talk
>and<	Words in ><: indicates faster pace than the surrounding talk

Appendix 4

Interview notes template with my notes

PARTICIPANT: Female, 35 years old, Kenya.

TIME AND PLACE: 4 November 2016, a quiet meeting room at the researcher's university.

DURATION: about 1,5 hours.

CONSENT FORM: Explained, read through and signed by both the participant and the researcher.

DECISIONS: The transcript will be sent to the participant for her comments as part of the data analysis.

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATIONS: She was very happy to participate and came well prepared. She took control of her story and started the way she prepared it, before I asked any specific questions. She illustrated her story by explaining her cultural location by using colourful balls. She placed them on a piece of paper to show different members of her community as well as their locations in a circular shape. (See the photographs attached).

She was relaxed and happy to share her story. She gesticulated a lot, occasionally smiled. She sat upright, leaning her arms on the table.

RESEARCHER OBSERVATIONS AND REFLECTIONS: As much as I was happy that she took this assignment so seriously I was also suspicious that it was so well prepared. She did think about what she wanted to say in advance. This is good and at the same time can be taken as too well prepared and structured. The questions I sent to her were only guidelines (I mentioned this in the mail), but she prepared answers to all of them. My feeling was that she wanted to satisfy my interest by giving me as comprehensive answers as possible. She had notes with her.

I suggested that she participates in the analysis. She was very happy to do this. We agreed that after the transcript is ready, I will send it to her for her reading, comments, corrections as well as analysis. I see this as a gesture of gratitude: she owns the story, so she should have it. But I also want to include her in the analysis and interpretation.

We both enjoyed the conversation, after which she invited me to her home to meet her family and to eat with them. I will take this opportunity, and my observations of her home will be added to these notes later.

SURPRISES: The level of preparedness. The idea of presenting herself and her culture/belonging to her culture in a visual manner by using the colourful balls was interesting.

Appendix 5

Template analysis, initial template

<u>CHILDHOOD</u>

      1 Most important memory

          1 Important event (Why?)

2   Most important people, role models

          1 Why?

      3 Positive influences

          1 People

          2 Events

      4 Negative influences

          1 People

          2 Events

<u>ADOLESCENCE</u>

      1   Most important specific event

          1 Impact on life

      2   Plans, dreams, desires

      3   Positive influences

      4   Negative influences

<u>ADULTHOOD</u>

      1 Life in Finland

      2 Most important

          1 Impact on life

      3 Positive influences

          1 People

          2 Events

      5   Negative influences

<u>TURNING POINTS</u>

1 Turning point/event.

1 Turning point: understanding of yourself.

<u>LIFE CHALLENGES</u>

1 Challenges at work

2 Challenges in life

1 Ways of dealing with this challenge.

2 Impact on you