“We Are Like a Black Dot Dropped on a White Paper”: Power, Resistance and Emotions in Negotiations of Inclusion/Exclusion by Forced Migrants.

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Abstract

The dissertation advances the understanding of integration as a power struggle between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' (Klarenbeek, 2021, 2024) by examining how Eritreans who arrived in Switzerland as forced migrants (EFMs) negotiate inclusions and exclusions through everyday practices, verbal resistance against racism, and emotions and their regulation. It elucidates the multidimensionality of power struggles in integration based on three theoretical frameworks: practices of everyday life (de Certeau, 1984), reversal discourse (Foucault, 1990), and affective-discursive practices (Wetherell, 2012). The project engages with both European migrant integration studies and critical intercultural communication studies to advance research on black migrants 'experiences in Switzerland and, more broadly, in Europe (Hawthorne, 2023; Rastas & Nikunen, 2019; Small, 2018). The dissertation makes four key conceptual contributions to the understanding of integration as a relational power laden process. First, it demonstrates the complexity of forced migrants' everyday practices of negotiating structures of exclusions and power relations in interpersonal and institutional settings. It shows that while their ability to use tactical and strategic forms of power is constrained, it is not limited to their subjectivity. The dissertation moves away from the predominant applications of de Certeau's (1984) schema of tactics and strategies as a binary and demonstrates that the two form a continuum whereby practices can have tactical and strategic elements. It also identifies a novel form of strategy deployed by proxy. Second, it examines the complex communicative dynamics of reverse discourse in response to everyday racism as dispersed resistance. It identifies five novel types of discursive reversals (Foucault, 1990) animated by affect through which migrants challenge and renegotiate relationships shaped by racial hierarchies, thereby altering the dynamics of these interactions. Third, the dissertation advances the understanding of emotion as central to integration and offers insights into how emotions are managed to negotiate cultural differences and systemic and structural exclusions. It develops the concept of 'intercultural extrinsic emotion regulation' to explain how the EFMs attempted to regulate each other's emotions based on their interpretations of and investments in racial hierarchies. Fourth, the dissertation offers methodological insights into the capacity of discomfort to generate understanding in the

context of studying refugees by a researcher who is herself a refugee. The dissertation draws on 65 in-depth semi-structured interviews and eleven publicly available YouTube recordings of Zoom meetings of the EFMs.

Keywords: Affect and emotion regulation, affective-discursive practices discursive resistance, forced migrants, power dynamics and relational integration, productive discomfort, racial exclusion, tactics and strategies

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Academic Contributions from PhD research

1. Research output:

1.1. Publications in peer-reviewed scientific journals:

Sereke, W. B., & Drzewiecka, J. A. (2024). "Techniques to be respected as a human being!": Moving beyond the binary of strategies and tactics. *Ethnic and Racial Studies, 47(10),* 2266-2287. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2023.2259465

Sereke, W. B. (2023). 'Are you a refugee like us? Oh then we have hope!' Affective discursive encounters in doing insider Other research. *Migration Studies*. Online first, https://doi.org/10.1093/migration/mnad035

Sereke, W. B., & Drzewiecka, J. A. (Forthcoming). 'May death stay away from us!' Regulating desperation and desire by Eritreans with asylum status. *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication*.

1.2. Manuscripts under second round of peer-review:

Sereke, W. B. (First submitted: April 2024). 'What about you, are you integrated?' Resisting racial exclusion by reversing racist discourse. *Communication and Race*.

1.3. Ongoing research projects:

Sereke, W. B., & Drzewiecka, J. Home beyond digital reach: How digital divide and repression shape family relations between Eritrea and diaspora.

Sereke, W. B., & Drzewiecka, J. "I feel safe and secure but at home, I feel in a house": How Eritreans who came as forced migrants articulate their belonging and identity.

Sereke, W. B. "I Thought Europe Would End My Troubles": Ambivalence and Regret Among Forced Migrants Facing Racism in Switzerland.

Sereke, W. B., & Drzewiecka, J. “Aren’t we racist towards others?”: Eritreans who came as forced migrants relativizing and acknowledging racialization.

Drzewiecka, J. & Sereke, W. B. Affective-discursive practices of refugee adaptation: emotions, race and inclusion/exclusion.

von Rütte, B., Manser-Egli, S., & Sereke, W. B. Swiss by ancestry: Nativism in Swiss Naturalization Practice.

1.4. Full-paper presentations at scientific conferences

Sereke, W. B., & Drzewiecka, J. (2023, December). *Home beyond digital reach: How digital divide and repression shape family relations between Eritrea and diaspora*. ECREA Diaspora, Migration and the Media-International and Intercultural Communication Sections Conference, Rotterdam, Netherlands.

Sereke, W. B., & Drzewiecka, J. (2023, December). *Negotiating dominant affective discursive practices amidst looming disintegrative social crisis: Experiences of Eritreans who came to Switzerland as refugees*. IALIC Conference, European University Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus.

Sereke, W. B., & Drzewiecka, J. (2023, November). *“What about you? Are you integrated?” Resisting discursive subjugation*. 109th Annual Convention of the National Communication Association (NCA), National Harbor, MD.

Sereke, W. B., & Drzewiecka, J. (2023, August-September). *Responses to subtle racism by Eritreans who came as forced migrants to Switzerland.* RGS-IBG Annual Conference 2023, London, United Kingdom.

Sereke, W. B., & Drzewiecka, J. (2023, July). “*I feel safe and secure but at home, I feel in a house”: How Eritreans who came as forced migrants articulate their belonging and identity*. The 20th IMISCOE Annual Conference European Communication Conference, Warsaw, Poland.

Sereke, W. B., & Drzewiecka, J. (2023, July). *Emotional labour and emotion work? How forced migrants manage their emotions during exclusions.* The 20th IMISCOE Annual Conference European Communication Conference, Warsaw, Poland.

Sereke, W. B., & Drzewiecka, J. (2023, May). *"May death stay away from us!" Regulating desperation and desire by Eritreans with asylum status*. The 73rd Annual International Communication Association Conference (ICA), Toronto, Canada.

Sereke, W. B., & Drzewiecka, J. (2022, October). "*Are you sure there is no consequence?" The power of rumours in eliciting fear, mistrust, despair, and undermining inclusion: The experience of Eritrean forced migrants in Switzerland*. The 9th European Communication Conference (ECREA), Aarhus, Denmark.

Sereke, W. B. (2022). *"Are you born here or you are a refugee like us? Oh then we have hope!" My experience as a refugee researcher with Eritrean refugees,* presented at the 19th IMISCOE annual conference. Norway, Oslo, in person, 29 June -1 July.

Sereke, W. B., & Drzewiecka, J. (2022). *Emotion work and struggling for inclusion: A case study of Eritrean forced migrants in Switzerland*, presented at 28th International Conference of Europeanists. "The Environment of Democracy." Lisbon, Portugal, online, 20-22 June.

Sereke, W.B., & Drzewiecka, J. (2022). *If you think I am ignorant because I am black, I challenge you! A case study of Eritrean forced migrants in Switzerland,* presented at IMISCOE Spring Conference, the University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany, online,16-18 March.

Sereke, W. B., & Drzewiecka, J. A. (2021). *Winning Inclusion: The experiences of integration of Eritrean forced migrants in Switzerland*, presented at the 18th IMISCOE's Annual Conference, Crossing borders, connecting cultures, online hosted by University of Luxembourg, 7- 9 July.

Sereke, W. B., Drzewiecka, J. & Arafat, R. K. (2021). *Digital self-help initiatives as instances of negotiating integration and migrant belonging: A case study of Eritrean forced migrants in Switzerland*, presented at the Migrant belonging: digital practices and every day online conference, 21-23 April.

Sereke, W. B., & Drzewiecka, J. A. (2021). *Tactics to negotiate inclusion and belonging: A case study of Eritrean forced migrants in Switzerland*, presented at the Challenging Integration through Everyday Narratives VOLPOWER Academic Workshop: Online, 20-30 April.

Chapter 1: Introduction

European migrant integration studies have been criticised for relying on a normative understanding of integration and for reproducing colonial and racist knowledge about migrants, particularly racial minorities (Astolfo & Allsopp, 2023; Amelian, 2022; Favell, 2022; Schinkel, 2018). Scholars highlight the colonial and racist roots of the concept of integration, tracing its origins to policy discourses (Astolfo & Allsopp, 2023; Favell, 2022; Schinkel, 2018). They argue that integration policies were initially designed to limit migration from former colonies to Europe. These policies continue to sustain racial categorizations of superiority and inferiority, disguised under the notion of cultural cohesion (Favell, 2022; Schinkel, 2018). Analysing the integration of migrants through normative and policy outcomes reinforces marginalising discourses that portray them as inferior (Amelina, 2022; Favell, 2022; Schinkel, 2018). One way in which this lingering colonial understanding of the 'other' manifests in academic discourse is through the portrayal of migrants as "integrating agents" who are supposed to alter their cultural identities to fit into the dominant society (Klarenbeek, 2021, p. 910; also see Favell, 2022; Rytter, 2018; Schinkel, 2018). Reducing migrants to subjects of integration portrays them, particularly visible minorities, as deficient and passive individuals whose inclusion depends on changes they make to align with mainstream society (Amelina, 2022; Favell, 2022; Schinkel, 2018). Critics argue that despite meeting policy benchmarks for successful integration, visible minorities continue to face stigmatisation and racialisation, considered problematic by policy and research (Rytter, 2018; Schinkel, 2018).

Lack of attention to race and racism in discussions about migrant integration has been criticised for perpetuating colonial power hierarchies and reinforcing colonial ways of knowing (Amelina, 2022; Erel et al., 2016). Black forced migrants, even those who achieve social mobility, experience stigma and discrimination (Small, 2018). In European contexts where this study is situated, research shows that black migrants experience systemic, structural, and racist exclusion (Hawthorne, 2023; Rastas & Nikunen, 2019; Small, 2018) and become targets of negative affect (Ahmed, 2004). However, the denial

of the significance of race as a relevant social and analytical category in migrant integration in Europe has limited scholarly attention to the experience of black African migrants (Hawthorne, 2023; Rastas & Nikunen, 2019; Small, 2018). This is critiqued by scholars of the Black Mediterranean and Black Europe, who call for research on "Black subjectivity, resistance, and livingness" in Europe as fundamental to decolonising knowledge about migration (Hawthorne, 2022, p. 485; see also Hawthorne, 2023; Rastas & Nikunen, 2019; Small, 2018). This dissertation addresses experiences of a group of black African migrants to counteract what Hawthorne, drawing on Crenshaw (2020), calls the "unmattering of Black life" in Europe (2023, p. 490). Specifically, this research focuses on Eritreans who came as forced migrants (hereafter EFMs) to Switzerland where they constitute the largest group of black Africans (Swiss Federal Office of Statistics, 2022).

The colonial and racist underpinnings of integration are further sustained by the lack of attention to power relations between migrants and the host community and its institutions, thereby reproducing the notion of migrants as passive agents (Favell, 2022; Klarenbeek, 2021, 2024; Schinkel, 2018). Integration studies that touch on power dynamics view power from a unidimensional perspective, usually depicting the host community as powerful while portraying migrants as powerless individuals who depend on the will of the host community to integrate successfully (e.g., Ager & Strang, 2008; Penninx, 2019; Spencer & Charsley, 2021). Klarenbeek (2021, 2024) foregrounds power in her conceptualization of integration as relational. She conceives integration as a power struggle between 'insiders' and migrant 'outsiders' where the host community may maintain, raise, and/or transform social boundaries. The dissertation advances the understanding of integration as power relations through the frameworks of practices of everyday life (de Certeau, 1984), reverse discourse (Foucault, 1990) and affective-discursive practices (Wetherell, 2012). The frameworks allow us to explore how migrants negotiate inclusions/exclusions through deployments of power in everyday practices, verbal resistance against racism, and emotions and their regulation. The analyses guided

by these frameworks show migrants as actively negotiating their inclusion/exclusion and thus imply the concept of agency.

Studies of migrants' agency either focus on how they overcome challenges without addressing the complexity of power relations (e.g., Balyejjusa, 2019; Huu, 2021; Liu et al., 2018; Msabah, 2019; Torok & Ball, 2021; Turaeva, 2020; Şimşek, 2018) or see migrants as 'the weak' who perform tactics, drawing on Michael de Certeau's framework of practices of everyday life (Fischer, 2020; Hall et al., 2020; Kahveci et al., 2020; Oner et al., 2020). Based on a rethinking of de Certeau's framework of practices of everyday life (1984), the dissertation shows that migrants are able to access and exercise different forms of power, including strategic power, to overcome exclusions through creative everyday practices. It shows that while some practices are tactical or strategic, some are both. It also identifies a novel form of strategy deployed by proxy. The dissertation thus demonstrates the complexity of forms and relations of power that migrants negotiate in interpersonal and institutional settings.

The dissertation also shows that migrants resist racism by responding to its overt and subtle forms with creative discursive reversals (Foucault, 1990). Examining the complex communicative dynamics of resistance through reverse discourse reveals how language can be strategically wielded as an empowering tool. It also sheds light on how marginalised groups momentarily disrupt established power dynamics, patterns, and routines by challenging dominant narratives through reverse discourse strategies. The dissertation thus advances the application and the repertoire of forms of reverse discourse as resistance (e.g., (Baaz & Lilja, 2022; Lilja, 2022; Seppälä, 2022; Towns, 2022). It also expands the understanding of how black migrants respond to subtle and direct racism which has been predominantly studied in the context of US minorities or non-black migrants in Europe (e.g., Chen & Lawless, 2018; Davis, 2018; Parker, 2002; Jun et al., 2021; Jun, 2012; Rossing, 2016).

Experiences of exclusion and cultural differences, that might not be easily legible to migrants, evoke powerful emotions which are managed in various ways. Increasingly, studies show migrants' emotional struggles in settlement but they tend to conceive emotions as individually felt responses to social conditions (e.g., Adams & Ghanem, 2024; Kivisto & Vecchia-Mikkola, 2015). They show that migrants mobilise emotions to overcome challenges with limited attention to power relations (e.g., de Borja, 2021; Limbua, 2023; Raffaetà, 2015; Wang & Chen, 2020). Intercultural communication studies address emotions in adaptation only indirectly (e.g., Kinefuchi, 2010; Labador & Zhang, 2023; Sarabia et al., 2022). Hence, this dissertation advances the understanding of integration as power relations by examining emotions and their management as inherent in, shaped by and shaping patterns of social relations. To this end, it employs the framework of affective-discursive practices (Wetherell, 2012, 2013, 2015). It shows how emotions and their management are shaped by the understanding of social relations and one's position in them in a communal context advancing the concept of intercultural extrinsic emotion regulation.

The dissertation addresses integration as power relations by analysing experiences of a group of black people who came as forced migrants from Eritrea, a small country in East Africa. The experiences of black migrants in Europe have received limited scholarly attention (Hawthorne, 2023; Rastas & Nikunen, 2019; Small, 2018). Scholars of Black Mediterranean, Black European, and Black Diaspora argue that attending to the experiences and resistance of black people in Europe is a move towards decolonising knowledge about migration in Europe (Hawthorne, 2020; Crenshaw, 2023). To this end, the dissertation shows EFMs' struggles with racial exclusion and examines how they negotiate power relations while grappling with the demands of administrative state integration institutions, cultural differences, and structural as well as racial exclusions in the Swiss context that defines itself through nativist ideals and whiteness but denies the significance of race (Dahinden, 2022; Purtschert, 2019). It thus advances the understanding of the complexities of integration of black forced migrants, specifically,

and “black life in Europe,” generally (Hawthorne, 2023; Rastas & Nikunen, 2019; Small, 2018).

This dissertation comprises six chapters, two have been published, a third has been accepted for publication and the fourth one is under review, all in peer reviewed journals. The first and the last chapters are introduction and conclusion, respectively. This first chapter presents the rationale and the theoretical framework of the study, lays out the methods and research objectives, discusses relevance of the study, and outlines the dissertation.

1.1. Academic discipline

This dissertation is situated within the fields of migrant integration studies and critical intercultural communication studies. In the European context, migration studies have been examining migrants’ embedding in new social and cultural contexts as ‘integration,’ a concept that has come under much criticism recently (e.g., Ager and Strang, 2008; Favell, 2019, 2022; Dahinden, 2023; Klarenbeek, 2019; Rytter, 2018; Schinkel, 2018; Wieviorka, 2014). Scholars point to European integration studies’ lack of conceptual clarity, conflation of the normative with the empirical, emphasis on outcomes rather than processes, and inattention to power relations between migrants and host communities (Favell, 2019; Klarenbeek, 2019; Rytter, 2018; Schinkel, 2018). In contrast, critical intercultural communication studies, mostly based in the US, conceptualise migrants’ experiences in settlement as ‘differential adaptation’ recognising it as a complex and variable process of change shaped by agency, power, and discourse (De La Garza and Ono, 2015). The concept of differential adaptation acknowledges migrants’ active agency in deciding how to adapt and what different pathways to take. It highlights that factors such as race, gender, class, education, sexuality, ethnicity, personal agency, and societal discourses about migrants play crucial roles in their adaptive processes (Acheme, 2023; Chen & Lawless, 2018; De La Garza & Ono, 2015; Drzewiecka & Steyn, 2009, 2012;

Labador & Zhang, 2023; Shrikant, 2018). However, their focus has been predominantly limited to the US.

This dissertation engages with both European migrant integration studies and critical intercultural communication. While the former brings a focus on the European historical and cultural context, the latter informs critical analyses of communicative dynamics of the whole dissertation. The chapters are centrally framed by one or the other based on the journal where they were published or are submitted, and its target audience. Chapters 2 and 5 address conversations among European scholars and thus primarily reference their studies. Chapters 3 and 4 are tailored for US-based journals and framed by intercultural communication studies. In these chapters, the dissertation provides new insights into EFMs' struggles with exclusion in European contexts and how they navigate exclusions and cultural differences through affect and resistance, thereby broadening the scope of knowledge in the field and engaging in scholarly conversations with US-based critical intercultural communication academics. This dual approach advances theoretical and practical understanding by offering new perspectives on the experiences of EFMs in Europe, thus contributing to both European migrant integration studies and critical intercultural communication.

1.2. Research objectives and relevance

The dissertation makes several contributions. First, it advances the framework of integration as a relational process of negotiating power relations between national 'insiders' and migrant 'outsiders' (Klarenbeek, 2021, 2024). It does so by demonstrating how EFMs overcome different forms of systemic and structural exclusions by deploying power through practices of everyday life (chapter 2), verbally resisting subtle and overt racism interpersonal interactions (chapter 3) and mobilising different emotions to advance their inclusion (chapter 4).

Second, the dissertation advances the understanding of the complexity of migrants' agency. Chapter 2 shows the different ways in which EFMs negotiate integration through practices of everyday life in the form of tactics and strategies to overcome systemic exclusions and structural barriers imposed by state administrative integration institutions and social practices. The chapter examines how EFMs deploy various forms of power from different sources based on de Certeau's tactics and strategies as practices of everyday life (de Certeau, 1984). It shows that most EFMs had to resort to tactics from the position of 'the weak' to momentarily turn the systems, products, resources, and discourses of the dominant order to their advantage or just get by (Buchanan, 2000). However, it also shows that the forms of power they deployed are not limited to their subjectivity as 'the weak' since some participants used both tactics and strategies and recruited the authoritative power of friends or social workers to deploy 'strategies by proxy.' The chapter shows that migrants' practices can be tactical or strategic as well as contain elements of both.

Third, the dissertation addresses the power dynamics in EFM's responses to direct and subtle forms of racism. Chapter 3 advances the understanding of communicative resistance to racism through the framework of reverse discourse (Foucault, 1990). It contributes to studies that examine responses to racism by the marginalised primarily focusing on US-based racial minorities (e.g., Chen & Lawless, 2018; Davis, 2018; Parker, 2002; Jun et al., 2021; Jun, 2012; Rossing, 2016) and predominantly on non-black migrants in Europe (e.g., Çelik, 2015; Hametner, 2014; Herwig, 2017; Kaiser et al., 2023). The chapter shows how migrants targeted by racist statements deploy discursive reversals in unorganised, and overt forms of resistance. The chapter extends the application of the framework, which has been extensively used to study organised forms of resistance (Lilja, 2022; Baaz & Lilja, 2022), to dispersed forms of resistance. Further, it expands the repertoire of reverse discourse (e.g., Baaz and Lilja, 2022; Town, 2022) by demonstrating five types of discursive reversals EFMs deployed to challenge racism communicated verbally in interpersonal interactions with colleagues, friends, ordinary people, and law enforcement officers in everyday life. The chapter shows how the five types of reversals

counter racism by reversing the discourse and the affective flow. Affective reversal is a novel contribution and advances the understanding of resistance through reverse discourse.

Fourth, the dissertation advances the understanding of emotions and affect in negotiating inclusions/exclusions within the racial structures of the integration context defined by dominant whiteness. Chapter 4 shows that EFMs understood emotions and their management to be central to negotiating cultural differences as well as racist exclusions but their ideas of what emotions were most useful to their inclusion conflicted with each other based on how they understood racial relations. The chapter uniquely identifies a communal form of extrinsic emotion management that, while agentic, was enmeshed in power structures and different understandings of race relations. In a conflictual process of emotion regulation, the participants advocated different modes of emotion management based on different diagnoses of the problems facing them. While one mode of emotion management promised more emancipatory effects, another implied submission to racial structures. The chapter also shows that emotions and their modes of management form different subjectivities that are oriented differently within the social structures and integration relations. The chapter is informed by and advances the affective-discursive framework by applying it to a migrant context of negotiating inclusions/exclusions (Wetherell, 2012, 2013, 2015).

Fifth, the dissertation advances the affective methods in the studies of 'refugee' integration. Chapter 5 advances the understanding of the complexities of the positionality of a 'refugee scholar' in the field dominated by non-refugees studying refugees and the value of negotiating discomfort that arises in interviews. It shows that the position of the scholar as 'insider other' facilitates feelings of discomfort between the interviewer and interviewee. On the basis of the shared cultural knowledge and some similarities in the refugee experiences, such discomfort becomes productive offering insights into deep layers of meaning making. The chapter thus advances the work on the productivity of

discomfort and awkward feelings in the field (Chadwick, 2021; Schmidt, van der Weele, & Sebrechts, 2023).

1.3.Literature review

1.3.1. Criticism of integration

The dissertation responds to the critiques of integration in migration studies and advances adaptation studies in intercultural communication. Integration studies have been criticised for relying on normative understandings of integration and policy-prescribed outcomes rather than processes (Dahinden, 2023; Favell, 2019, 2022; Klarenbeek, 2019; Rytter, 2018; Schinkel, 2018). Scholars argue that examining migrant integration through normative assumptions embedded in policy discourses reproduces their colonial legacies and sustains racial categorisations of subjects as superior or inferior (Favell, 2022; Schinkel, 2018). Favell (2022) substantiates this by demonstrating the historical roots of integration policies. He notes that integration as a policy was introduced at the end of colonisation to curb migration from former colonies to Europe, thereby protecting European purity (Astolfo & Allsopp, 2023; Schinkel, 2018). Other scholars also contend that integration policies are ostensibly designed to bridge cultural differences between migrants and host society through civilising and disciplining programs, which nevertheless maintain established racial hierarchies (Onasch, 2017; Sebastiani & Martín Godoy, 2020). Under the guise of promoting social cohesion, integration policies perpetuate a colonial 'us versus them' hierarchy, reinforcing the presumed superiority of the host society over migrants (Schinkel, 2018). Gill (2020) encapsulates this argument by characterising integration as "present-day colonialism" (p. 5). Consequently, these scholars argue that analysing migrant integration using normative concepts and policy-oriented outcomes perpetuates the colonial and racial underpinnings embedded in these policies.

This dependency on policy and normative assumptions is manifested in migration research, where migrants, particularly those who stand out in terms of race,

are reduced to "integrating agents" (Klarenbeek, 2021, 910). Scholars argue that portraying migrants as individuals who 'integrate' through conscious actions, i.e., by advancing the host society's cultural and human capital while diminishing their cultural identity, reproduces stigmatising and racist discourses. Such depictions problematize migrants, implying they are deficient subjects who need to change to align with an imaginative seamless society (Amelina, 2022; Favell, 2022; Schinkel, 2018). This perspective comes from imagining the incoming visible migrant through the lens of many lacks: civilised culture, manners, knowledge, etc., and viewing their cultural norms as defective; therefore, they must be domesticated to fit into the societal norms and values of the host country (Onasch, 2017; Schinkel, 2018). Such a perception, also essentialises the host community's cultural norms and depicts the dominant society as a unified entity with no fractures, into which migrants are supposed to 'integrate' (Schinkel, 2018). Such depction as deficient subjects who must change to align with an idealized seamless society (Amelina, 2022; Favell, 2022).

The colonial and racist underpinnings of integration are further maintained by a lack of scholarly attention to 'race' and racial power relations (Erel et al., 2016). While migrants who advance economically escape scrutiny from scholars and policymakers, those who struggle financially are treated as problems. Additionally, black migrants, regardless of their level of economic advancement or ongoing economic challenges, experience stigma and discrimination due to racism (Hawthorne, 2023; Rastas & Nikunen, 2019; Small, 2018). However, racial power relations are unaddressed due to the denial of race as a relevant category to integration in Europe (Erel et al., 2016; Favell, 2022; Schinkel, 2018). In Switzerland, where race and racism are denied due to the absence of a colonial past and the discourse of 'racelessness' prevails, discussions about racial discrimination remain sensitive topics (Michel, 2015; Purtschert, 2019). Nevertheless, scholars have addressed the country's complicity in colonialism and its influence on the understanding racial differences (Michel, 2015; Purtschert, 2015, 2019). They also demonstrate how discourses such as Überfremdung, or 'overforeignization,' in German,

have been strategically applied in Switzerland to exclude migrants (Michel, 2015; Purtschert, 2015, 2019). While studies have shown exclusionary and discriminatory practices against non-black forced migrants and foreigners (Fibbi et al., 2006), scholarly focus on racism against black migrants has received attention only recently following the Black Lives Matter movement (Michel, 2022; Fibbi et al., 2022). Attending to the racial dynamics of settlement provides insights into the struggles of black migrants in Europe through exclusion, which is crucial to preventing the reproduction of colonial knowledge that serves to maintain a form of "colonial and racial dominance" (Astolfo & Allsopp, 2023, p. 11; see also Amelina, 2022; Tuley, 2020). Scholars of Black Mediterranean, Black Europe, and Black Diaspora call for analyses of the racial dynamics of settlement, exclusion, and resistance of black migrants from Africa as a fundamental step toward decolonising knowledge about migrants (e.g., Hawthorne, 2023; Rastas & Nikunen, 2019; Small, 2018). This dissertation responds to this call by focusing on the experiences of EFMs, who are the largest black population from Africa in Switzerland.

Scholars have also criticised integration studies for their inattention to power relations between migrants and the host community and its institutions (Favell, 2022; Klarenbeek, 2021, 2023; Schinkel, 2018). While a few authors touch upon power in their formulations of integration (e.g., Ager & Strang, 2008; Penninx, 2019; Spencer & Charsley, 2021), Klarenbeek (2021, 2024) gives it the most explicit treatment. Penninx (2019) views the dominant society as decisive in the 'integration' of migrants due to power differences. Similarly, Spencer and Charsley (2021) recognise the host community as creators of opportunities and barriers for migrants owing to asymmetrical power relationships between the two. The refugee integration framework of Ager and Strang (2008) addresses power through access to resources provided by the host country to facilitate the 'integration' of newly arrived refugees. However, the extent to which these scholars discuss power is one-sided and relegates migrants to a passive role reliant on the dominant society's will. Even Ager and Strang's (2008) framework, which views integration as a multidimensional process, seems to portray refugees as passive recipients of assistance. Since its focus is on newly arrived refugees, it pays little attention to the

power relations between migrants and the host community. In contrast, Klarenbeek (2021, 2023) foregrounds power in her conceptualisation of integration as relational.

Klarenbeek is developing a framework of relational integration that conceives integration as a process of boundary change in which both 'insiders' (whose societal standing is unquestioned) and 'outsiders' (whose membership is scrutinised due to their migrant status) are intrinsically involved (Klarenbeek, 2021, p. 906). Integration is negotiated within hierarchical membership relationships, where "legitimate members" perceive some migrants as lacking legitimacy to reside in their territory (Klarenbeek, 2024, p. 246). Klarenbeek (2021, 2024) argues that increased integration, rather than facilitating social cohesion, leads to social friction. As 'outsiders' assume positions typically held by those with established social standing, their legitimacy comes under scrutiny. Power dynamics shift when those with unequal social standing vie for equal standing. Feeling threatened, 'insiders' wield their gatekeeping power to determine the conditions of inclusion and exclusion. This dissertation addresses the issue of power by focusing on practices of everyday life, communicative dynamics of discourse reversals in response to racism, and the role of emotion management in negotiating cultural differences and racial exclusions.

1.3.2. Strategies and tactics of negotiating power relation

In response to the critiques of integration studies, scholars argued for attention to power relations between 'insiders' and 'outsider' (e.g., Favell, 2022; Klarenbeek, 2021). Several studies have shown migrants' active agency and resilience in the context of long-term settlement (Erdal & Oeppen, 2013; Balyejjusa, 2019; Huu, 2021; Liu et al., 2018; Msabah, 2019; (Nourpanah, 2014; Torok & Ball, 2021; Turaeva, 2020; Şimşek, 2018). They elucidate how migrants view integration as survival in countries that provide limited opportunities (Şimşek, 2018), devise long-term strategies to improve their livelihoods (Liu et al., 2018; Msabah, 2019), renegotiate their identities (Nourpanah, 2014; Torok & Ball, 2021), become entrepreneurial (Balyejjusa, 2019; Turaeva, 2020), and negotiate

transnational belonging (Erdal & Oeppen, 2013; Huu, 2021). However, these studies do not address power directly, thus providing limited insight into the power relations between migrants and 'insiders'.

Those that explicitly address power relations turn to de Certeau's tactics and strategies (1984) and view migrants' actions as tactics of the 'weak' (Borrelli et al., 2022; Fischer, 2020; Hall et al., 2020; Kahveci et al., 2020; Oner et al., 2020). These studies illustrate the tactical deployment of power through various actions by migrants and refugees to navigate their precarious circumstances. Hall et al. (2020) demonstrate how Brexit-induced uncertainty prompts migrants to employ a range of tactics, such as securing legal status, relying on social networks for emotional and practical support, diversifying economic activities both within and outside the UK, engaging in informal economies, securing private health insurance, and seeking medical care in their home countries. Fischer (2020) highlights the tactical use of integration discourse by descendants of migrants to negotiate belonging, showing how they contest or reinforce this discourse to distinguish themselves from new arrivals. Oner et al. (2020) provide insight into how refugees create informal networks and participate in local economies to navigate the uncertainties of their temporary status and establish a sense of belonging. Similarly, Williams (2006) describes how refugees rely on pre-existing connections and form new community spaces such as social clubs and religious groups, interact with institutions like NGOs for legal aid, housing, education, and employment opportunities, and participate in informal economic activities to overcome structural barriers. Kahveci et al. (2020) note how migrant retirees tactically navigate "place-bound and space-structuring" state strategies and powerful market agents to enhance their quality of life and access affordable living conditions (p. 3161). These strategies collectively highlight the resourcefulness and agency of migrants and refugees in creating stability and a sense of belonging amidst uncertainty and precariousness.

Migrants also deploy power against hegemonic structures and the "daily meticulous, and dispersed procedures of disciplining social bodies and discursively

ascribing subjectivities" by tactically conforming to the expectations and norms imposed by these dominant power structures (Safouane et al., 2020, p. 1144; Borrelli et al., 2022). This tactical compliance, driven by feelings of rejection and scrutiny, aims to secure resources, rights, and protections and can also be deployed in ways that reproduce and reinforce dominant discourses used to marginalise migrants (Borrelli et al., 2022; Safouane et al., 2020). Regardless, Safouane et al. (2020) argue that these actions are "tactical performances of agency" (p. 1145). The authors contend that conceptualising migrants' agency should not be limited solely to emancipation and resistance. Migrants can also enact agency by reproducing dominant discourses and ascribed subjectivities to accomplish immediate interests, even if such actions may limit their long-term capacity. This involves adopting behaviours and roles expected by power structures to ensure survival. When migrants adhere to imposed expectations to achieve short-term goals and shield themselves from further marginalisation, this compliance may constrain their long-term ability to resist marginalisation. However, it represents an agentic effort because it is not passive acceptance but a calculated decision to accept certain limitations and constraints to meet more pressing and practical needs (Safouane et al., 2020). This conceptualisation of migrants' agency challenges the simplistic binary understanding of agency as emancipation or resistance (Borrelli et al., 2022; Safouane et al., 2020) and emphasises the nuanced ways in which power operates within marginalised communities.

Studies conceptualising migrants' actions as tactical manoeuvres associate power with subjectivity, viewing migrants as de Certeau's 'weak' due to their outsider status. Although analysing migrants' actions through a tactical lens challenges the colonialist view of forced migrants as passive, interpreting their actions solely as tactics based in their outsider status limits our understanding of power. Focusing on their subjectivity as defining what forms of power are available to and/or deployed by them obscures the complexities and nuances of their actions. It also contradicts de Certeau's formulation of strategies and tactics. De Certeau focused on investigating the "modes of operation" that marginalised groups enact to achieve their goals, rather than on their subjectivity (de Certeau, 1984, p. xi; see also Buchanan, 2000). While two studies show that migrants who

have access to political connections and wealth in South Africa (Harrison et al., 2012) and marginalised Kurds in Turkey (Secor, 2004, p. 360) use strategic power, this has not been taken up by other studies. Further, scholars' tendency to view migrants' actions as tactics emerged from an understanding of strategies and tactics as binary opposites. However, Buchanan (2000) challenged this conceptualization, arguing that it ignored de Certeau's assertion that the distinction between strategies and tactics is intended to suggest a broader "initial schema of actions" rather than a conclusive framework for examining the practices of the marginalised (de Certeau, 1984, p. 35).

Strategies and tactics have been understood by social scientists as binary opposites, with strategies defined as a form of power through which the dominant system enforces its authority and tactics as techniques by which 'the weak' counteract domination. However, theorists argue that a closer examination of de Certeau's work shows that strategies and tactics are not rigidly separate forms of power but rather fluid, hinting at the possibility that both forms exist on a continuum (Ahearne, 1995; Andres et al., 2020; Buchanan, 2000). In his discussion on von Clausewitz's treatise On War, de Certeau himself offers that strategic powers may resort to "tricks" and "deception" (de Certeau, 1984, p. 37). This blurs the binary distinction between strategies and tactics (Ahearne, 1995; Andres et al., 2020). Further, drawing on de Certeau's own admission, Buchanan, (2000) argues that strategies and tactics are formulated elusively as "an initial schema" (De Certeau, 1984, p. 35) for creating a broader framework rather than for conclusively investigating "modes of operation or schemata of action" (ibid, p. xii).

This dissertation advances the understanding of strategies and tactics as non-binary forms of power based on the crucial distinction de Certeau makes between *lieu propre* and *espace*, a distinction that has often been ignored by social scientists (Andres et al., 2020; Buchanan, 2000). Andres et al. (2020) assert that de Certeau metaphorically used the term *lieu propre*, which means a proper place in French, to denote the origin of strategic power or source of authority (p. 2444). Thus, *lieu propre* is a fixed territory of power, which allows strategic enactment of authority and provides stability and

predictability (de Certeau, 1984; see also Buchanan, 2000). In contrast, *espace* lacks a terrain of its own. It is a "practised place," where 'the weak' tactically employ "forces alien to them" not to overturn the system but simply to achieve their goals (de Certeau, 1984, p. xx). Their power lies in their ability to execute actions through the use of 'ruse', 'clever tricks', and manipulation to manoeuvre around dominant forces (De Certeau, 1984, p. xx). Their success depends on the reasonable utilisation of "vectors of direction, velocities, and time variables" (de Certeau, 1984, p. 117). Understanding strategies and tactics as defined by their origin in *lieu propre* or *espace* helps to distinguish modes of operation of actions from subjectivity. De Certeau clearly argues that the goal of strategies and tactics is to investigate practices, not the subjects who perform the actions. Thus, this shifts the focus from who is performing an action to from where the power is deployed. Therefore, whether an action is classified as a strategy, a tactic, or a combination of both, depends on the specific circumstances and location where the action takes place (Andres et al., 2020; Buchanan, 2000; Secor, 2004). Studies that use de Certeau to elucidate migrants' actions as tactics (Fischer, 2020; Landau & Freemantle, 2010; Hall et al., 2020; Kahveci et al., 2020; Oner et al., 2020; Safouane et al., 2020) did not attend to pay this distinction and instead rely on migrants' subjectivity, perceiving them as 'the weak' due to their outsider status. As highlighted, this runs against de Certeau's formulation and impoverishes our understanding of power.

Chapter 2 employs and advances the understanding of the tactics and strategies schema by examining how EFMs mobilise and deploy different forms of power in longer term settlement to overcome or sidestep systemic and structural barriers, and counter racist exclusions. The chapter addresses this question by focusing on concrete practices and examining modes through which they operate. It gives particular attention to de Certeau's (1984) important distinction between *lieu propre* and *espace*. It shows that some actions can be tactics, strategies, or a combination of both, functioning as entangled forms of power. In doing so, the chapter contributes to the growing literature on migrants' agency by providing evidence that their actions cannot be solely theorised as tactics as they sometimes have access to *lieu propre* from which they can deploy strategies and their

actions can have elements of both. This chapter provides a close analysis of tactics-strategies as a continuum that has been hypothesised and but demonstrated only to a limited extent.

These contributions advance our understanding of migrants' agency by demonstrating how EFMs deploy different forms of power from different sources (Safouane et al, 2020). In some situations, albeit limited, migrants can be powerful actors, deploying power from a *lieu propre*. However, these manifestations of power are not inherently subversive, nor do they necessarily lead to significant structural changes. By making this argument, the dissertation contributes to Safouane et al.'s (2020) conceptualisation of migrants' agency. It demonstrates the various forms of power that migrants deploy, both as weak and empowered, by focusing on practices rather than subjectivity. Analysing power dynamics and the struggles through exclusions further contributes to the reconceptualization of migrant integration through the lens of power (Klarenbeek 2021) and racial exclusion (Dahinden 2022; Favell 2022). This approach moves us away from colonialist views that portray visible migrants as powerless or as de Certeau's 'the weak' who can resort to only tactics to resist exclusions.

1.3.3. Resisting racism through reverse discourse

The denial of race as a relevant category for integration in Europe neither erases race nor shields black people from experiencing racist encounters (Michel, 2022). Michel (2022) argues that race does not evaporate because it is omitted from legal or policy discourses. To the contrary, such denial has led to the emergence of various discursive mechanisms that indirectly convey racist statements, often masked as innocent conversations or humour, in everyday discourse (Augoustinos & Every, 2007; van Dijk, 1987). Racism, whether expressed indirectly or directly, is hurtful and powerfully affects the targeted (Ahmed, 2004). These feelings shape how the offended respond to racial discrimination. Communication studies have yielded valuable insights into how racialized minorities in the US respond to racism (Bell & Hastings, 2011; Camara & Orbe, 2010; Chen & Lawless,

2018; Parker, 2002; June et al., 2021; June, 2012; Rossing, 2016). Scholars have identified various strategies for handling both overt and subtle racist encounters. For overt racism, common confrontational responses include retaliation, expressing discomfort, and reporting incidents (Camara & Orbe, 2010; Chen & Lawless, 2018; Parker, 2002). Non-confrontational yet direct responses involve projecting confidence, assertively embracing one's racial identity, and using non-verbal expressions (Davis, 2018). When facing subtler forms of prejudice, individuals choose tailored non-confrontational methods. These may include ignoring discriminatory behaviour, rationalising it, changing jobs, or assimilating into the predominant social class (Bell & Hastings, 2011; Camara & Orbe, 2010; Davis, 2018; Parker, 2002; June et al., 2021; June, 2012). Humour emerges as another key strategy, allowing individuals to subtly counteract racism without direct confrontation (e.g., Parker, 2002; Rossing, 2016). These findings illustrate the diverse ways racialized minorities navigate racism. However, they predominantly focus on minorities in the US and do not address forced migrants' responses to racism in European contexts.

Scholarship on migrant integration in European contexts reveals diverse responses to discrimination (e.g., Çelik, 2015; Hametner, 2014; Herwig, 2017; Kaiser et al., 2023). However, these studies primarily focus on responses to racist comments about cultural and religious differences, which the host community interprets as signs of unwillingness to integrate. The focus on discriminatory practices due to religious differences, rather than the racism that black people experience in everyday life, is primarily due to the denial of the significance of race in social relations and in the analysis of migrant integration in Europe (Small, 2018).

Responses to race-based discrimination against black people are addressed by only a few scholars (Ellefsen et al., 2022; Omeni, 2016). These studies, although not focused on forced migrants, provide insights into the racist exclusions black minorities endure and how they cope with it. Ellefsen et al. (2020) highlight the racial discrimination black minorities experience in Norway and their resistance through direct confrontation, reporting incidents, and ignoring racism. Similarly, Omeni (2016) examines the

experiences of black students in Poland, noting their responses to racism, including verbal confrontations, physical altercations, avoidance of certain areas, social withdrawal, and normalisation of racism as a coping mechanism. While studies on both cultural/religious discrimination and race-based discrimination provide valuable insights into the various responses marginalised groups deploy against racist exclusion, they offer a limited understanding of the power dynamics of the communicative aspects of resistance. Further, the emotional impact of racism and the role of emotions in resistance have not been addressed. To explain the complex communicative dynamics of resistance in responses to racism reported by the participants and how emotions and their interpretations elicit resistance, this dissertation employs the frameworks of reverse discourse (Foucault, 1990b) and affective-discursive practices (McConville et al., 2020; Wetherell, 2012).

Reverse discourse is a concept first introduced by Foucault (1990b) to elucidate how a dominant discourse can be strategically contested using its own logic and elements. Resistance through reverse discourse is deployed through "reiteration, re-articulation, or repetition of the dominant discourse" by slightly altering its original meaning. The objective of reverse discourse is not to subvert the dominant discourse but to challenge power by slightly altering the meaning of the dominant discourse and placing value on it (Lilja, 2018, pp. 427-430). Change through reverse discourse comes over time. This characteristic thereby positions reverse discourse as more of a constructive than a subversive form of resistance (Lilja, 2018). Recent research calls for a more nuanced interpretation of reverse discourse, moving beyond the "strict binary" of dominant versus counter-discourse (Baaz & Lilja, 2022, p. 303). They reveal that reversals can sometimes transcend obvious binaries, emerging as complex, ambiguous, and mixed inscriptions of characteristics (Baaz & Lilja, 2022; see also Lilja, 2022; Seppälä, 2022; Towns, 2022). In this context, Baaz and Lilja (2022) propose considering humour and ironic twists as a form of reverse discourse (p. 305). Studies also offer methods for identifying reverse discourse by looking at cracks and contradictions in a discourse (Towns, 2022).

While studies apply reverse discourse to analyse organised forms of resistance, such as social movements or activism (e.g., Lilja, 2022; Baaz & Lilja, 2022), its application to unorganised forms of resistance remains largely unexplored. Chapter 3 expands its application by examining resistance through reverse discourse in dispersed forms of resistance, i.e., individual-oriented, and unorganised forms (Lilja & Vinthagen, 2018). It also deepens the understanding of resistance through reverse discourse by investigating the role of affect in resistance (Lilja, 2017; Lilja & Vinthagen, 2018) drawing on the affective-discursive practices framework (Wetherell, 2012). The framework conceives affect as intertwined with meaning and thus discourse (Wetherell, 2012). Affect as a force arises from the body and completes discourse, giving it power to circulate and draw people into affective-discursive practices (Wetherell, 2012, 2013, 2015). Thus, attention to affective-discursive practices allows us to elucidate patterns of social relations, power dynamics, and the impact of these relations on shaping patterns of human responses (McConville et al., 2020; Wetherell, 2012). The framework is particularly helpful to understand the entanglement of emotions with interpretations of racist statements, the discursive construction, and the social positioning of black people in Europe, thereby drawing those targeted into resistance through reverse discourse (McConville et al., 2020; Wetherell, 2012). The framework will be addressed in detail separately in the next section.

Chapter 3 explores the complex dynamics of discursive resistance against racism, highlighting how such resistance is animated by affect. It examines how emotions are deployed in reverse discourse and identifies affective reversals. It offers a detailed analysis of how EFMs challenge power using the racists statements' own logic and elements during interpersonal interactions. The analysis provides insights into power relations, agency, and discourse by revealing the communicative complexity and dynamics of such interactions as well as the agentic dimension of emotions. While previous studies have primarily applied reverse discourse to analyse organised forms of resistance against oppression and discrimination (Baaz & Lilja, 2022; Lilja, 2022; Seppälä, 2022; Towns, 2022), this chapter extends its application by examining how individuals respond to everyday racism at the micro-level, demonstrating that these responses are active and visible forms of resistance.

The analysis identifies five types of discursive reversals that expand the repertoire of reverse discourse. These discursive reversals do not only serve as mechanisms of resistance against racism but also grant the racialized some power to disrupt established power dynamics, patterns and routines albeit temporarily. Resistance through reverse discourse provides insights into how EFMs negotiate stigma, misrecognition as citizens, and relegation to subjects of integration despite being citizens. Although resistance through reverse discourse is provisional and social change comes with time, it is nevertheless an agentic effort.

The dissertation advances the understanding of migrants' agency by showing that EFMs are not solely executors of tactics or trivial forms of resistance (Safouane et al., 2020). Instead, by appropriating power's logic and reverting it as resistance tools, they become agents, capable of disrupting established patterns and routines of those in power. The affective-discursive framework further contributed to our understanding of agency by elucidating how emotions and their interpretation drew the racialized into resistance against discrimination and negotiating their social positions within dominant power relations.

The dissertation also advances the understanding of the much-debated concept of migrant integration as a power struggle where racial exclusion is enacted by 'insiders' resisted by those perceived as 'outsiders' to assert dignity and social standing, by continuously disrupting and challenging established power dynamics (Klarenbeek, 2021, 2024). As demonstrated in the findings, the stigmatisation and reduction of black migrants to "integrating agents" who will never qualify to be recognised as rightful citizens (Klarenbeek, 2021, p. 910; see also Dahinden, 2022) powerfully affect them. Narratives and actions perpetuating this portrayal manifest during interactions between EFMs and the dominant white society and its institutions. However, as shown in the findings, migrants negotiate their position in society by actively resisting and reinterpreting the prejudice communicated to them through discursive reversals.

1.3.4. Integration as affective-discursive practices

Migration and adaptation studies have been addressing emotions following Boccagni and Baldassar's (2015) call for attention to emotions within the context of migrants' adaptive processes to better understand the complexities of their experiences in settlement. A few migration scholars explore how migrants emotionally grapple with the challenges of settling into new social structures (e.g., de Borja, 2021; Kivisto & Vecchia-Mikkola, 2015; Raffaetà, 2015; Wang & Chen, 2020; Zani & Momesso, 2021). Identity work in new cultural contexts is described as emotionally arduous, often frustrating and uncertain, with no clear endpoints. This struggle is further compounded when migrants are forced to accept jobs below their qualifications and navigate stereotypes and racism (Kivisto & Vecchia-Mikkola, 2015). Insecurity, instability, and lack of connection with the host community trigger emotional distress in refugees, evoking homesickness and nostalgia (Adams & Ghanem, 2024).

Some studies examine how migrants navigate marginalisation and social contempt in their new social contexts (de Borja, 2021; Limbua, 2023; Raffaetà, 2015; Wang & Chen, 2020; Zani & Momesso, 2021). Zani and Momesso (2021) discuss how migrants transform negative emotions, such as anger, regret, and frustration, into resources for mutual support and solidarity by sharing their experiences, forming supportive networks, and engaging in collective actions. This coping mechanism enables them to navigate inequalities and hierarchies. Hope activates Ecuadorian migrants' agency, enabling them to strive for meaning and stability despite power imbalances and the precarity of migration (Raffaetà, 2015). The study highlights how hope empowers migrants to navigate and overcome difficulties. De Borja (2021) shows that migrants manage fear, anger, helplessness, and loneliness through the "emotional labour of persistence" (p.3). This process is driven by faith, familial love, and conscious emotional reconfiguration. Faith provides comfort and strength through shared feelings, respect, hope, and belief. This emotional management enables migrants to recuperate a sense of self and navigate precarious conditions. Wang and Chen (2020) analyse how highly skilled Western migrants manage their emotions

when facing negative feelings and challenges. This includes reconfiguring their migration aspirations. They identify various types of emotional labour performed by scholars working in China both before and after their migration. These migrants regulate their emotions to navigate difficulties, including experiences of racism. Limbua (2023) explicates that migrant workers and students abroad, challenged by working in jobs below their qualifications, engage in emotional labour. They manage their emotions by suppressing frustration and viewing their current situation as a step towards future advancement despite their underemployment. This study also reveals the limits of emotional work, showing that suppressing emotions to protect transnational family members from worry creates tensions when hardships are sensed.

In communication studies, extant academic literature focuses on migrants' emotional practices on social media and their role in maintaining transnational connections (e.g., Alinejad & Ponzanesi, 2020; Döveling et al., 2018; Robertson, Wilding, & Gifford, 2016). Much fewer studies examine migrants' emotional struggles in situ, highlighting emotions in the context of belonging and embodiment in new cultural settings (e.g., Kinefuchi, 2010; Labador & Zhang, 2023; Sarabia et al., 2022). These studies show how feelings of safety and being at home contribute to a sense of belonging, while experiences of marginalisation trigger resistance (Kinefuchi, 2010; Sarabia et al., 2022) and the pressure to assimilate evokes ambivalence (Labador & Zhang, 2023). When migrants of colour settle in new cultural environments, they experience emotional strain as they find themselves subjected to new racial categorizations through the lens of the dominant white population (Labador & Zhang, 2023; Oloruntobi, 2022; Sekimoto, 2012).

Insights from migration and adaptation studies help us understand the emotional struggles migrants face when settling into new social structures. However, some of these studies view emotions as individually felt (e.g., Adams & Ghanem, 2024; Kivisto & Vecchia-Mikkola, 2015). Existing research on emotion management primarily focuses on individual self-regulation of emotions to cope with immediate difficulties and maintain functionality in hostile environments (de Borja, 2021; Limbua, 2023; Raffaetà, 2015;

Wang & Chen, 2020; Zani & Momesso, 2021). Adaptation studies in intercultural communication show migrants' emotional struggles during adaptation to only a limited extent and without addressing them theoretically. It is not well understood what other emotions are invoked in negotiating inclusions/exclusions, how these emotions are managed and how these are implicated in maintaining and/or challenging social structures.

To this end, the dissertation applies the affective-discursive framework, which foregrounds issues of power, subjectivity, and the social patterning of emotions and sense-making (Wetherell 2012, 2013, 2015). Discursive psychologist Margaret Wetherell developed the framework to elucidate how emotions are deployed to secure privilege and maintain social positions by excluding others. The dissertation extends the framework to examine how EFMs managed their emotions to make them more culturally appropriate and more effective in negotiating exclusions in a communal setting of online meetings during the Covid-19 lockdown.

Wetherell conceives affect as an embodied and dynamic practice that is part of a social patterning and is "intertwined with meaning-making and other social and material figurations" (Wetherell, 2012, p. 17). Conceiving emotions as practice means that emotions are not only bodily intensities that overtake us, but 'things' we do, meaning they are patterned, situated, and embodied practices (Scheer, 2012; Wetherell, 2012, 2013, 2014). The performance of affective-discursive practices, whether as new actions or recurring patterns, is carried out by agents who are shaped through the repetition and habituation of these practices (Wetherell, 2013). Emotions serve as means through which people are subjected to and by emotions (Scheer, 2012). They also play a crucial role in maintaining and reinforcing social structures and norms by shaping how individuals interact, conform to, and reproduce societal expectations (Hemmings, 2005). Unlike Cultural Studies, which view affect as bodily intensity separate from discourse, the framework of affective-discursive practices sees affects as a force arising from the body that is intertwined with meaning-making and discourse (Wetherell, 2012, 2013, 2014). Wetherell (2012) argues that discourse is the process of communication that articulates

and completes affect, granting it the power to affect others and circulate among people. She also highlights the social and relational aspects of affect, which gives it the force to spread, persuade others, and draw them into affective practices. Wetherell (2012) focuses on understanding the deployment of affect to marginalise certain groups and secure privileges for those with power or privilege. In the context of migration, tensions emerge when migrants, perceived as out of place, become targets of negative affect and experience racial exclusion. These experiences necessitate emotion management, prompting investigation into how and why migrants regulate their emotions, to whose benefit, and what this tells us about integration and migrants' agency.

Emotion management, a concept first introduced by Arlie Hochschild (1983), addresses how people shape, mobilise or suppress emotions following rules of a specific social order and power relations. While her work primarily focused on flight attendants to explore how feeling rules interact with a gender ideology that places different expectations on women compared to men in expressing and managing their emotions, much research has examined how other differences, particularly race, shape who is expected to regulate which emotions (Bonilla-Silva, 2019; Jackson, 2018, 2023; Wilkins & Pace, 2014). To Wetherell (2019), emotion management is an affective-discursive practice that is socially patterned. She argues that examining the social uses of emotion regulation gives insights into how people negotiate their emotions within a specific social context, whether to act in accordance with cultural norms or to please others. While research on the management of emotions has predominantly focused on self-regulation, recent studies have turned their attention to the regulation of others' emotions aiming to direct another person's emotional responses toward a desired emotional state (Nozaki & Mikolajczak, 2020, p. 10).

Chapter 4 shows a communal process of emotion management by analysing how EFMs try to regulate each other's emotions in a communal setting. It does so by analysing YouTube recordings of Eritrean community Zoom meetings to understand their affective-discursive practices and modes of emotion regulation at a communal level. The chapter investigates the different modes in which participants in Zoom meetings attempted to

regulate their emotions and those of others, revealing varied understandings and conflicts about how to advance their social mobility. It shows that emotion regulation was conflictual as it was informed by differing ideological viewpoints on one's position in racial hierarchies, interpretations of their situation, cultural interpretations of emotions, and strategies to overcome marginalisation to achieve inclusion. By analysing conflictual emotion regulation, the chapter highlights the differing viewpoints among participants regarding what hinders their inclusion, whether inappropriate emotional expressions or structures of exclusion, and what emotional practices are most effective in responding to racist exclusion. Examining conflictual emotion regulation provides insight into the different ways in which EFMs regulate emotions to negotiate power relations and cultural differences. It offers insights into how EFMs negotiate structures of exclusion, both in ways that perpetuate exclusionary discourses and through acts of resistance. The chapter highlights what is at stake in emotion regulation, who benefits from it, and what this means for integration. In doing so, it demonstrates the capacity and limits of migrants' agency (Safouane et al., 2020) by showing how affected subjectivities actively work to bring about, comply with, capitulate to, reinforce, or challenge power relations (Wetherell, 2013, p. 235). Further, the analysis of conflictual emotion regulation contributes to the rethinking of integration by advancing a novel perspective that underscores the dynamics of emotion regulation by migrants confronting cultural differences, systemic barriers, and structural exclusions while embedding in a social milieu marked by racial exclusion and cultural difference. Chapter 4 posits that the affective-discursive practices of migrants are shaped by the new cultural norms of the dominant society and different ideological viewpoints towards structures of exclusion.

1.4. Context and population of study

This dissertation responds to the charge that integration studies perpetuated "unmattering of black life" in European contexts by focusing on a group of black people who came as forced migrants in Switzerland, EFMs (Hawthorne, 2023, p. 490, see also Rastas & Nikunen, 2019; Small, 2018). Attending to the racial dynamics of settlement provides

insights into their struggles through exclusions, which is crucial to preventing the reproduction of colonial knowledge that serves to maintain a form of "colonial and racial dominance" (Astolfo & Allsopp, 2023, p. 11; see also Amelina, 2022; Tuley, 2020). As argued by scholars of Black Mediterranean, Black Europe, and Black Diaspora, examining the exclusions and resistance of black migrants from Africa is a fundamental step toward decolonizing knowledge about migration, which has been shaped by the silencing of race in social life and theory (e.g., Hawthorne, 2023; Rastas & Nikunen, 2019; Small, 2018).

In Switzerland, where the black population is notably "minuscule" (Small, 2018, p. 3), Eritreans represent the largest group of black African migrants. Presently, their numbers reach approximately 40,969 within 8 million populations (Swiss Federal Office of Statistics 2022). The arrival of Eritreans in Switzerland began in the 1980s, driven by protracted conflicts and successive annexations, albeit in small numbers. Switzerland's restrictive asylum policy at that time limited the number of arrivals (Eyer & Schweizer, 2010). Following the 1998-2000 border conflict with Ethiopia and the introduction of indefinite and unpaid military service, and widespread violations of human rights (Kibreab, 2009), increased numbers of Eritreans searched for refuge. In 2009 Switzerland introduced a favourable asylum policy becoming a preferred destination country for many Eritrean refugees, who were already arriving in growing numbers since 2006, reaching a peak in 2015 and 2016 (Swiss Federal Office of Statistics, 2022).

Eritreans are the largest group of refugees living below the poverty line, predominantly relying on social welfare (Swiss Federal Statistical Office 2022a). Their struggle with unemployment and insufficient income stems from a variety of factors, including poor education, language barriers, and unrecognised academic credentials, which collectively impede their ability to find employment (Eyer & Schweizer, 2010). Further, even those Eritreans who have attained a higher level of education and are deemed to have 'integrated' successfully still face structural barriers that limit their upward mobility (ibid).

Despite their large number and particular challenges, Eritreans received limited scholarly attention. Examining their experience is crucial for increased understanding of "Black subjectivity, resistance, and livingness" in Switzerland (Hawthorne, 2023, p. 485) and decolonizing knowledge in migration study (Amelina, 2022; Mayblin & Turner, 2021). It offers insights into how black migrants from Africa, as active agents, negotiate racial differences and exclusions in a nation that defines itself through whiteness and nativist ideals and denies symbolic recognition to black naturalised citizens (Dahinden, 2022). Thus, studying their experience becomes relevant to the decolonial project of challenging Europe's silence about race (Hawthorne, 2023; Rastas & Nikunen, 2019; Small, 2018). Crucially, this dissertation aims to contribute to rethinking integration through a decolonial approach by addressing power dynamics between forced migrants and host community and its institutions.

The category 'Eritreans who came as forced migrants' is used after careful consideration of the participants' complexities and the implications and limitations associated with this category. As Dahinden et al. (2021) warn, categories and categorisation can perpetuate essentialist and exclusionary discourses and should be approached with critical reflexivity. The category includes participants who arrived under various conditions, with diverse backgrounds and different migration cohorts. Although diverse in many ways, all participants share the experience of arriving as asylum seekers. However, not all received refugee status but nevertheless managed to stay and, like other participants, have resided in the country long-term. To capture this dynamic, the category 'forced migrants' was chosen over 'refugees'. The terminology to refer to the group, whether as 'black' or 'Eritrean' was also subject to critical reflection. Eritreans have a complicated relationship with blackness. While some identify themselves as black, many began to accept this label as their identity after migrating. A few prefer to identify as Eritrean rather than black. Thus, to avoid subsuming them into the broad category of 'black' with which they have a complicated relationship, the dissertation opted for a national category Eritrean. Although this choice re-centers the nation-state, it includes

participants with varied ethnicities, religions, cultural practices, political views, and conditions of departure.

1.5. Research methods

1.5.1. Interviews as situated affective-discursive encounters

The reflexive turn in migration studies prompted consideration of how knowledge about migrants arriving to and settling down in Western contexts has been produced (e.g., Favell, 2022; Amelina, 2017, 2021; Nieswand & Drotbohm, 2014; Schinkel, 2018). This critical reflection has prompted researchers to examine how their methodologies might inadvertently reinforce stereotypical and state-centric views that portray migrants as a homogeneous group with deficits (Nail, 2020). In response, scholars have advocated for removing ethnic categorisations from migrant studies (Wimmer, 2007), questioning taken-for-granted assumptions about migration processes (Amelina & Faist, 2012), shifting the focus away from viewing migrants as a distinct group (Dahinden, 2016), and moving beyond nation-centered analytical perspectives (Anderson, 2019). Recent studies also emphasise the need to develop and implement research methods that challenge traditional, hegemonic frameworks, particularly those critiqued for reinforcing existing power dynamics and marginalising migrant voices. This shift calls for methodologies prioritising ethical engagement, participant empowerment, and reflexivity (Fiorito, 2023; van Liempt & Bilger, 2018).

Migration scholars have also begun to reflect on the role of emotion in research (Cîrstea & Pescinski, 2024; Gray, 2008; Franca, 2023; Wajsberg, 2020). Some studies demonstrate how emotions intertwine with study subjects, becoming a driving force in research (Gray, 2008). Cîrstea and Pescinski (2024) address the role of emotions in knowledge production by emphasising intimacy as a method. They argue that intimacy, defined as close, empathetic relationships between researchers and participants, helps negotiate vulnerability and tension, challenges exploitative power dynamics, and provides

deeper analytical insights into migrants' lives. This approach, they contend, enables migration scholars to produce more "equitable knowledge that is grounded in and sensitive" to the lives of their participants (p. 3).

However, some migration scholars view the negative or uncomfortable emotions encountered during the research process as problematic and requiring management rather than as sources of knowledge (Cîrstea & Pescinski, 2024; Franca, 2023; Wajsberg, 2020). Wajsberg (2020) argues that the fatigue experienced by participants due to extractive and excessive research undermines the quality of knowledge production. Similarly, Franca (2023) highlights the importance of strategic emotion management to preserve research integrity, particularly when researchers' negative emotions are triggered by participants' narratives that conflict with their ideological beliefs. Cîrstea and Pescinski (2024) also highlight the discomfort researchers feel due to intimate relationships with participants, emphasising the need to acknowledge and manage this discomfort rather than dismiss it as too personal to ensure ethical and sensitive research practices. This viewpoint is consistent with broader social science discourse, where managing difficult emotions during fieldwork is recommended to guard research integrity (McKenzie, 2017) and protect researchers' well-being (Dickson-Swift et al., 2009; Drozdzewski & Dominey-Howes, 2015; Ratnam, 2019).

Recent studies, however, highlight the importance of difficult emotions for analysis in research (Chadwick, 2021; Schmidt, van der Weele, & Sebrechts, 2023). Chadwick (2021) emphasises the significance of "staying and working" with discomfort in research (p. 5), arguing that this is particularly crucial when studying marginalised participants to avoid generating hegemonic knowledge that perpetuates social hierarchies. Similarly, Schmidt, van der Weele, and Sebrechts (2023) propose 'awkwardness' as an alternative term for discomfort, illustrating how such engagement can illuminate relational concepts and unnoticed emotional labour undertaken by researchers. Chapter 5 of this dissertation contributes to understanding the value of discomfort in generating insights about the living conditions of forced migrants by reflecting on its emergence during data

collection, relationally between the participants and myself as an 'insider Other' researcher.

As Carling et al (2014) argue, researchers' positionality is not a fixed binary of insider or outsider but is "context-specific and relational" (p. 44). Scholars who share ethnonational, cultural, and religious identities with participants reflect on their positionality, challenging the insider-outsider dichotomy (Chavez, 2008; Kusow, 2003; Miled, 2019; Tewelde, 2021; Zulfikar, 2014). They argue their status spans various contexts, being insiders in some and outsiders in others (Bergen, 2015; Carling et al., 2014; Merton, 1972). While addressing what this dual positionality offers and constraints in terms of logistical and practical advantages, they also show how it evokes emotions like fear, mistrust, hesitance, trust, and intimacy (Kusow, 2003; Miled, 2019; Tewelde, 2021; Chavez, 2008; Zulfikar, 2014). Kusow (2003) describes how fear and mistrust impeded the research process. Miled (2019) reflects on emotional entanglements, highlighting participants' discomfort, hesitance, trust, and intimacy experienced during ethnographic research. Tewelde (2021) highlights being viewed as a suspicious outsider despite sharing an identity with participants. Chavez (2008) and Zulfikar (2014) demonstrate the emotional tensions between professional boundaries and personal connections. However, these scholars view the negative emotions that emerge relationally due to their positionality as obstacles to be managed rather than as sources of knowledge. Contrary to this conventional understanding, chapter 5 argues that difficult emotions emerging during affective interview encounters serve as a valuable source of knowledge. Paying attention to these emotions generates insights about migrants' "livingness" and coping strategies that might otherwise remain obscured (Hawthorne, 2022, p. 485). The chapter elucidates the value of emotions as a source of knowledge in research by providing insights from my research. It demonstrates how to attend to and analyse emotions through the method of interviews as situated affective encounters (Ayata et al., 2019), informed by the affective-discursive framework proposed by Wetherell (2012, 2013, 2014).

Ayata et al. (2019) propose a method that views interviews as "situated affective encounters" (p. 67). They assert that the researcher-participant relationship is dynamic, shaped by various relational affective intensities and contextual factors throughout the research process. Consequently, interviews are shaped by emotions as much as they are shaped by other factors such as the researchers' positionality, including power, gender, ethnicity, race, etc. Thus, they invite researchers to pay attention and document emotions that transpire during interviews. Ayata et al. (2019) encourage researchers to be attuned to the emotions expressed and felt, as well as to non-verbal cues from researchers and participants throughout the research process, and to document these rigorously. They also highlight the importance of using field notes and diaries to capture the affective dimensions of interviews for a more comprehensive analysis. Through rigorous documentation and self-reflexivity, researchers can collect embodied data that enables them to contextualise and analyse interviews beyond the textual analysis of transcripts (Ayata et al., 2019).

While the interviews as situated affective encounter method offers insightful contributions to analysing affect, its conceptualisation of affect as non-discursive and a bodily intensity that circulates among people and manifests in various intensities (Ayata et al., 2019) narrows interpretative possibilities (Wetherell, 2012). Thus chapter 5 infuses Ayata's et al. (2019) with the understanding of affect as intertwined with discourse based on the affective-discursive framework (Wetherell, 2012, 2013, 2015) to advance the understanding of discomfort during interviews between researcher as insider Other (Chadwick, 2021, p. 5). Grounded in my own research experience as an insider Other, the chapter elucidates how this combined framework has made me attentive to the emergence of productive discomfort emerging from comfort and how analysing the diverse emotional expressions of discomfort generates new insights. These insights reveal the subjectivity of forced migrants within structures of inequality, power dynamics, and agency through a decolonial lens. It demonstrates how "staying and working with discomfort" (Chadwick, 2021, p. 5) of emotional entanglements as participants recount stories that are difficult to tell and hear, provides insights into knowledge that decolonises the silence about race in

the European context and challenges colonial knowledge depicting black forced migrants as inferior (Amelina 2022).

1.5.2. Data collection and analysis

This dissertation employed qualitative methods to examine the lived experience of Eritreans in Switzerland. The analyses draw from two types of data sets: in-depth semi-structured interviews with 65 Eritreans who came to Switzerland as forced migrants and publicly available YouTube recordings of Zoom meetings of Eritrean refugees in Switzerland. The analysis in chapters 2, 3, and 5 draws from the 65 in-depth interviews, whereas the analysis in chapter 4 draws from YouTube recordings of Eritrean community Zoom meetings.

1.5.3. In-depth semi-structured interviews

From the onset, my relationship with participants was entangled in a web of emotions. I am Eritrean, and I came to Switzerland in 2010 as a graduate student. I have been a refugee since 2014. As I will show below, my ethnonational identity, refugee status, and role as a doctoral researcher enmeshed my fieldwork with emotions and shaped my interaction with participants. My fieldwork and rapport building began by first attending different community events. It was then that I first observed fear, confusion, and discomfort when I approached people at the events directly or through contacts to request their participation. These emotions, in turn, made me worried and concerned. Before advancing further with recruitment and interviewing, I deeply reflected on these emotions before I proceed further with the interview process (Ayata et al., 2019). This reflection helped me grasp the meanings behind these emotions (Wetherell, 2012, 2013, 2014) and to "cultivate self-knowledge" as a researcher (Gould, 2009, p. 30).

Drawing from my reflections, tacit knowledge, and lived experience as an Eritrean refugee, along with the informal information I had collected, I realised that for many, it

was their first encounter with an Eritrean refugee and a 'woman' conducting doctoral research in Switzerland. Many of them are employed in low-paying jobs (Eyer & Schweizer, 2010), leading to a perception that jobs such as research positions were exclusively for the white population. They were also worried about sharing personal information regarding their asylum cases due to concerns about Eritrean and Swiss authorities. Developing cultivated self-knowledge allowed me to devise a strategy that minimised their fears and concerns. I avoided using the term interview and instead used *elal*, which, in English, means informal chat or conversation when I approached them to request their participation. This helped lift tensions. I also told them that I was not interested in their asylum cases, which completely shifted the dynamics of my relationship with them. However, despite these assurances, some people still refused to participate, particularly women, due to pressure from their spouses.

Participants were recruited from diverse backgrounds across Switzerland's three linguistic regions through personal contacts and community networks, followed by snowballing. In total 65 participants from diverse backgrounds and migration groups were interviewed to understand their lived experiences in the context of long-term settlement. Out of the 65, 30 were female and 35 were male participants. They lived in Switzerland between 14 and 40 years. Their ages ranged between 28 and 60 years old. 18 participants were naturalised citizens. 25 had C permanent residency permits. This status is granted to refugees who had B permits and demonstrated successful integration after 5 or 10 years of holding a B permit. 19 participants were refugees with B residency permits. 3 were provisionally admitted refugees with F residency permits. The interviews were conducted in Tigrinya, the lingua franca of Eritrea, lasted 2-3 hours. The interviews focused on their experiences in Switzerland. However, many participants wanted to start by sharing their journey to seeking refuge, and some also shared their negative experiences in Eritrea. Interviews were transcribed, and the transcripts were annotated with descriptions of emotions expressed and paralinguistic cues. This included highlighting changes in participants' facial expressions, body movements, and fluctuations in voice pitch, volume, and tone during transcription (Ayata et al., 2019).

As Ayata et al. (2019) argue, the interview process is a dynamic relationship between researchers and participants, enmeshed with affective flows between the two. Thus, they invite researchers to approach interviews as situated affective encounters. Adopting this method allows us to be attentive to emotions and garner embodied data. Drawing on this, I commenced conducting interviews allowing affect to flow relationally between me and the participants. I paid attention to emotions including those expressed indirectly, paralinguistic cues and my own emotions. As Wetherell (2015) says, affect lives in narratives where emotions "bubble up" people ruminate about past events or narrate their experiences (p. 5). Responding to their emotionally charged, curiosity-tinged questions, which emerged due to my dual identity as an Eritrean refugee and researcher, and allowing affect to flow between us, made them feel reassured in sharing and reflecting on deep layers of experiences that are difficult to hear and tell. This, in turn, allowed the emergence of productive discomfort as participants recounted stories of arduous and perilous refuge-seeking, the loss of status, followed by ambivalence and regrets, experiences of exclusion, and daunting instances of stigma and hurdles, offering insights into their lived experiences.

1.5.4. Publicly available YouTube recordings of Zoom meetings

The data also included publicly available YouTube recordings of Zoom meetings held by Eritrean refugees in Switzerland during the Covid-19 lock down. The meetings initially took place in person to discuss various topics and exchange information to facilitate their integration. They were organised by informal Eritrean community leaders who have lived in Switzerland for a long time and have higher education backgrounds. With the lockdown, the meetings transitioned to Zoom. These recordings were examined to understand the role of emotions in 'integration' and adaptation. Emotions were a central topic of discussion and were vividly expressed and displayed, particularly during discussions about challenges such as securing employment, navigating the educational system, raising children, gaining acceptance from the host community, etc. The meetings were charged

with emotion as the participants emphasised that the 'doing' and 'undoing' of certain emotions was crucial for their 'integration.'

The meetings were held on Sunday evenings, in Tigrinya, and lasted for two hours. All participants, organisers, and presenters were Eritreans. The primary objective of the meetings was to discuss topics that facilitate their upward mobility, or in their terms 'integration', which is frustrated by underemployment and exclusions. Topics were selected by participants at the end of their meetings and communicated to the group on WhatsApp. Between 20 and 47 participants attended the meetings. The majority of participants were women, and the discussions were profoundly emotional.

11 recordings of highly emotionally charged meetings were purposefully selected for analysis and transcribed. The transcripts were annotated with nonverbal expressions, including facial expressions, body movements, and fluctuations in voice pitch, volume, and tone, based on the adaptation of the 'interviews as situated affective encounters' method (Ayata et al., 2019). The data analysis was guided by Wetherell's (2012, 2013) affective-discursive framework. Emotions, both directly and indirectly expressed, as well as the meanings intertwined with them, were analysed to identify affective-discursive practices and conflictual emotion regulation. Additional attention was given to cognitives, that state reasons, and to motives that detail intended actions and objectives, to understand how emotions engage with meaning-making and thus formulate affective-discursive practices. Further, the ways in which participants attempted to regulate their own emotions and those of others, as well as their purposes for doing so, were also analysed.

1.6. Outline of chapters

This dissertation has four chapters based on data collected for the SNF funded project. They are interconnected as they address power relations in migrant integration as informed by the main theoretical frameworks: de Certeau's practices of everyday life, Foucault's reverse discourse, and Wetherell's affective-discursive practices. The present introductory

chapter (Chapter 1) demonstrates how each framework advances the understanding of integration as power relations. The last chapter of the dissertation (Chapter 6) assembles the key empirical findings of this study based on the lived experience of Eritreans who came as forced migrants to Switzerland.

1.6.1. Sequence of chapters

Chapter	**Focus**	**Contribution to Knowledge**
Chapter 1: Introduction	Introductory chapter: provides overview of the dissertation	
Chapter 2: "Techniques to be respected as a human being!": Moving beyond the binary of strategies and tactics.	Deployment of strategies and tactics as modes of actions by migrants	The chapter empirically demonstrates that the schema of tactics and strategies forms a continuum, and identifies a novel mode of action, strategy by proxy.
Chapter 3: "What about you, are you integrated?": Resisting racial exclusion by reversing racist discourse	Resisting racist discourse using its own logic and methods	The chapter demonstrates purposeful use of language as a tool to reclaim power and redefine narratives in response to subtle and explicit racism.

Chapter 4: "May death stay away from us!": Regulating desperation and desire by Eritreans with asylum status	Affective-discursive practices and their regulation as negotiation of cultural difference and power relations	The chapter advances a concept of intercultural extrinsic emotion regulation as an other-oriented pedagogic practice to change emotional practices to fit into a new social context. It demonstrates that emotion regulation is deeply implicated in negotiations of racial hierarchies.
Chapter 5: "Are you a refugee like us: Oh then we have hope?": Affective-discursive encounters in doing insider Other research	Emotions as a sources of knowledge in research	The chapter contributes to the self-reflexivity and affective methods in migration studies research by demonstrating how discomfort in interviews conducted by a researcher as insider Other produces knowledge that deepens understanding of challenges and nuances of migrant integration.
Chapter 6: Conclusion	The dissertation's key empirical findings and major theoretical contributions to academic literature on migration studies are highlighted.	

Chapter 2

"Techniques to be respected as a human being!": moving beyond the binary of strategies and tactics

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2.1. Abstract

Migrants' actions of embedding in new ethnonational contexts have been interpreted as de Certeau's "tactics of the weak" forging new lives according to their own visions of integration in the territory of the powerful. While the concept of tactics offers a useful tool for understanding migrants as agentic, applications of tactics and strategies as a binary of contrary forms of power simplify our conceptions of how the marginalized navigate everyday life. We argue that understanding actions as tactical and/or strategic should be based in de Certeau's original distinction between lieu propre and espace, and not subjectivity. Based on our analysis of modes of action by Eritrean refugees in Switzerland, we show that they use both tactical and strategic forms of power, sometimes simultaneously and deploy power by proxy. We argue that it is more productive to see strategies and tactics as forming a continuum of modes of action.

Keywords: Integration; refugees; migration; agency; resistance; tactics and strategies

2.2. Introduction

Studies increasingly show migrants as active agents overcoming obstacles and exclusions not only in mobility, but also in longer term settlement (e.g. Conley & Shefner, 2020; Lanari, 2023; Safouane et al., 2020; Şimşek, 2018; Torok & Ball, 2021). Such efforts have been interpreted as de Certeau's tactics of "making do" by "the weak" (e.g. Hall et al., 2022; Kahveci et al., 2020; Oner, et al., 2020). While the analyses provide important insights into how the marginalised cope, they say little about how specifically these tactics are deployed and the mechanisms that make them possible. Further, the assumption that migrants are always "the weak" obscures how some mobilise various forms of power (Harrison, et al., 2012; Secor 2004). This has resulted in an impoverished understanding of power relations in migrant (dis)integrative processes that exclude visible migrants thus reproducing colonial forms of knowledge. In the European context, the silencing of "race" as category relevant to the analysis of "integration" of migrants, particularly from Africa, has come under sustained critique from scholars working within the frameworks of Black Europe, Black Mediterranean, and Black diaspora in Europe (e.g. Hawthorne, 2023; Rastas & Nikunen, 2019; Small, 2018). These scholars call for examination of the dynamics in settlement, exclusions and resistances by migrants from Africa to Europe.

Strategies and tactics are De Certeau's (1984) most celebrated concepts but have also been criticised as "too clear cut" (Ahearne, 1995, p. 163) and "confusing" (Buchanan, 2000, p. 87). De Certeau saw marginalisation as a pervasive social condition that forces the disempowered to find ways to manage and use places, products, systems, etc., produced by those more powerful. His schema offers a useful tool to address forms of resistance against exclusions, but its treatment as a binary between power and disempowerment has limited insights. However, he himself showed that the power of those producing the dominant order is differentiated and those with relatively less power resort to tactics thus indicating fluidity between and multiple deployments of tactics and strategies (Ahearne, 1995). Andres et al. (2020) demonstrated such tactical deployments

of strategic power by urban planners. This and other studies urge thinking of the relation between tactics and strategies (e.g., Buchanan, 2000; Secor, 2004).

We argue that conceptualising tactics and strategies as a continuum offers a useful heuristic for understanding how migrants deploy power and develop "techniques" to overcome or sidestep barriers, negotiate strategies of state integration, and counter racist exclusions, calculating what will work and how. Further, we detach power from subjectivity as a factor determining one's relations and practices in everyday life. Instead, we concentrate on De Certeau's (1984) distinction between lieu propre and espace as instructive to a more nuanced understanding of tactical and strategic deployments of power and their entanglements. We identify and analyse several types of tactics demonstrating how power is negotiated through them. We also show modes of strategic actions that rely on or generate authority. Further, we demonstrate how certain actions are both tactical and strategic deployments of power. Finally, we identify a novel mode of action, strategy by proxy. We thus provide empirical demonstration and theoretical elaboration of the hypothesised tactics-strategies continuum (Ahearne, 1995; Buchanan, 2000). We also contribute to reconceptualising migrant integration by centering power dynamics in analyses of relations between national "insiders" and racialized migrant "outsiders" (e.g., Dahinden, 2022; Klarenbeek, 2019). Attending to struggles with exclusions by visibilising power relations (Dahinden & Korteweg, 2023) moves us towards decolonizing knowledge of integration in Europe (Amelina, 2022). The analysis is based on 65 in-depth interviews with Eritreans who came to Switzerland as forced migrants where many experience structural exclusions. These experiences as well as actions taken to get around barriers or counteract exclusions emerged in interviews conducted by the first author, an Eritrean refugee scholar. Her insider status opened up difficult topics as the participants were surprised that "one of us" was able to study for a doctorate and presumed that she understood some of their struggles. The interviews generated negotiated knowledge from the ground of the scholar's and participants' lived realities. In what follows, we first situate our contribution in the growing research on migrants' active settlement, before presenting a detailed analysis.

2.3. Power and agency in settlement contexts

Scholarship on migrant integration has been sharply criticised, in part, for its inattention to power dynamics and reproducing stigmatising and marginalising discourses that portray migrants as passive, deficient or solely as "integrating agents," who (are supposed to) diminish their cultural differences and advance their human capital to align with the mainstream society (Klarenbeek, 2021, 910; also Favell, 2022; Rytter, 2018; Schinkel, 2018). Although those who cross the poverty threshold become invisible to scholars and policies alike, visible migrants remain stigmatised, while race was rendered irrelevant to integration in Europe (Favell, 2022; Schinkel, 2018). This makes it difficult to address racist marginalisation and perpetuates what Hawthorne, following Crenshaw (2020), calls the "unmattering of Black life" in Europe, (2023, p. 490). In recent challenges, Schinkel (2018) and Favell (2022) see integration policies and practices as racial population management rooted in colonial control of the movement of minorities from former colonies and central to maintaining Europe's self-definition as white. This limited the number of black people in Europe where they are concentrated in a few states, highly visible in urban centers, and overrepresented in low paid, part time and insecure jobs, often in the care economy (Small, 2018). In many European states– including in Switzerland, the context of this study-proclamations of a lack of direct involvement in colonialism served to silence race as a relevant social category in social life and scholarly analysis thus leaving racism unaddressed. However, the mechanisms of such occlusions are being revealed (e.g. Lentin, 2008).

Scholars argue that while nativism, manifesting itself in concerns about Überfremdung ("over-foreignization") and in Eidgenosse ("confederate"), is a key mechanism of exclusion of migrants in Switzerland (Dahinden, 2022), the presumed Swiss national is white, its meaning shaped by Swiss complicity in colonialism and its denial (Michel, 2015; Purtschert, 2015, 2019). Such recognitions prompted examination of the colonial presumptions in knowledge production as scholars working the Black Mediterranean, Black European studies and others call for attention to the marginalised

and yet central relation between (post)colonial Africa, Europe and migration (Hawthorne, 2019). Attention to "Black subjectivity, resistance, and livingness" in European contexts is crucial to the decolonial project of challenging Europe's silence about race and its white self-definition (Hawthorne, 2023, 485).

The colonialist view of forced migrants as passive recipients of assistance has been challenged by studies that show them as agentic and resilient within dominant structures of integration become entrepreneurial (Balyejjusa, 2019; Herwig, 2017; Huu, 2021; Liu et al., 2018; Şimşek, 2018; Torok & Ball, 2021). However, these analyses offer a limited picture of power relations between the embedding migrants, state institutions and the local people. Power is addressed more explicitly by studies that conceptualise migrants' actions as tactics of "the weak" within De Certeau's (1984) framework. They demonstrate its tactical deployment through a variety of actions (Fischer 2020; Hall et al., 2022; Kahveci et al.,2020; Oner, et al., 2020). Safouane et al. (2020) and Borrelli et al. (2022) combine de Certeau's tactics and strategies with Foucault's microphysics of power to understand agency "as the ability to navigate not only overarching and centralised institutional power (the state, the border regime, etc.,) but also, and mostly, the daily, meticulous and dispersed procedures of disciplining social bodies and discursively ascribing subjectivities" (p. 1144). They argue that "in a new society where one's new presence remains felt and understood as precarious" (Borrelli et al., 2022, p. 1146), migrants' tactics are "calculated small scale actions" (p. 1145) performed based on their understanding of their reality and their goals.

The duo of strategies and tactics offers a heuristic for a nuanced understanding of how migrants tactically manoeuvre through and around dominant power structures to achieve their goals. De Certeau sought to deconstruct the perception of those disempowered as passive and demonstrate their ability to convert forces of the dominant order to their advantage. However, the application of tactics and strategies as opposite forms of power and the assumptions that "strategy belongs exclusively to the host society, and migrants are relegated to the realm of tactics" limits our understanding of relations

between “outsiders” and “insiders” (Harrison et al., 2012, p. 901) and nuances of migrants’ “uses” of products, resources, discourses, etc., of the dominant society. Certain groups of migrants, particularly those who are economically strong and politically well-connected, have access to strategic forms of power. Even the marginalised can mobilise power strategically such as when Kurds in Turkey “disrupt the hegemonic strategy of citizenship” and “through spatial appropriation” strategically claim Kurdish neighbourhood or café as their places (Secor, 2004, p. 360).

Andres et al. (2020) argue that de Certeau’s distinction between lieu propre and espace is central to a more complex understanding of how power is wielded tactically and/or strategically. The term lieu propre, a proper place, refers to a demarcated territory of authority to strategically enact, rule and execute thereby maintaining stability and predictability in the social system (Andres et al., 2020; Buchanan, 2000). Lieu propre is a space of strategy, which de Certeau defines as

> the calculus of force-relationships which becomes possible when a subject of will and power (a proprietor, an enterprise, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated from an “environment”. A strategy assumes a place that can be circumscribed as proper (propre) and thus serve as the basis for generating relations with an exterior distinct from it (competitors, adversaries, “clienteles,” “targets,” or “objects” of research). (1984, p. xix)

In contrast, espace doesn’t have a terrain of its own but is fluid and contextually changing, composed of mobile elements that join forces within the constraints of time and space to execute actions (De Certeau, 1984, p. 117). It is “a practised place” where “the weak” tactically “turn to their own ends forces alien to them” not to upend the system but simply “make do” (De Certeau, 1984, p. xx). Their power is in the ability to effectively manipulate and manoeuvre around constraining forces.

> I call a "tactic," on the other hand, a calculus which cannot count on a "proper" (a spatial or institutional localization), nor thus on a border-line distinguishing the other as a visible totality. The place of a tactic belongs to the other. A tactic insinuates itself into the other's place, fragmentarily, without taking it over in its entirety, without being able to keep it at a distance. […] Whatever it wins, it does not keep. It must constantly manipulate events in order to turn them into "opportunities". (De Certeau, 1984, p. xx)

While clear at the outset, on closer look the distinction between strategies and tactics becomes fuzzy. However, Ahearne (1995) and Buchanan (2000) argue that they are formulated elusively and suggestively as "an initial schema" (De Certeau, 1984, p. 35) to create a broader framework, rather than conclusively to investigate "modes of operation or schemata of action" (ibid, p. xii). Ahearne (1995) asserts that the conceptualization allows identifying "a number of heterogeneous movements across different distributions of power," not opposing forms of power (p.163). De Certeau himself proposed that those with strategic power may at times resort to "tricks" and "deception" when faced with those with greater strategic powers (1984, p. 37). Andres et al. (2020) explicate tactical actions by those working within lieu propre of strategies, and argue that it is important to look closely at the circumstances in which a particular action is executed to understand tactics and strategies (also Buchanan, 2000; Secor, 2004). We thus closely examined practices by people who arrived as forced migrants from Eritrea.

2.4. Eritreans who came to Switzerland as forced migrants

Eritreans began to arrive in Switzerland, a country with a "miniscule" black presence and indirect links to colonisation (Small, 2018, p. 3; see also e.g. Michel, 2015, Purschert, 2015) in 1980s and 1990s fleeing political repression, indefinite military service and border conflict with Ethiopia (Kibreab, 2009). The initially restricted numbers increased after the revision of the asylum act in 2009 reaching a peak in 2015 and 2016 (Swiss Federal Office of Statistics, 2022b). Eritreans make up the largest non-European refugee

group of approximately 40,969 among the 8 million population in Switzerland (Swiss Federal Office of Statistics, 2022b). They are the largest group of refugees who depend on social welfare living below the poverty line due to high unemployment and insufficient income (Swiss Federal Statistical Office, 2022a). Poor education, language barriers, difficulty accessing training and a lack of recognition of diplomas are primary obstacles hindering mobility upward. However, those with good education and showing social "integration" still face structural exclusions limiting their upward mobility (Eyer & Schweizer, 2010).

2.5. Methods

The analysis draws from 65 in-depth semi-structured interviews with Eritreans who came to Switzerland as forced migrants conducted by the first author. Participants from diverse backgrounds and migration cohorts were recruited across Switzerland to understand the breadth of experiences with settlement. They were between 28 and 60 years old, 30 were female, 35 were male, and lived in Switzerland between 7 and 40 years, with most settled for 14–25 years. 18 held Swiss citizenship. 25 held permanent residency C permits granted after holding a B permit for 5 or 10 years and demonstrating "successful integration". 19 held B permits granted to asylum seekers recognized as refugees and allowing a permanent stay but subject to renewal every 1-2 years. 3 held a provisional F residency permit for 11, 13 and 15 years. The F permit prevents deportation as long as the situation in their home country is unchanged and while it allows work, potential employers tend to be reluctant to hire F permit holders. Participants were identified through personal and social networks of the first author and subsequently through snowballing. The interviews, held in Tigrinya, the lingua franca of Eritrea, lasted 2-3 hours, were recorded and transcribed. The interviews focused on their experiences in Switzerland, although many began by recounting their refuge seeking journeys. Statement of Ethics. The research project was approved by the Università della Svizzera italiana Ethics Committee in February 2020. The participants were informed of their rights. All but one declined to sign the consent form opting instead to give verbal consent for fear of a paper trail that could be used against

them by the Eritrean or Swiss government. All quotes in this paper are anonymized and potentially identifying details duly omitted.

The first author came to Switzerland from Eritrea as a student in 2010 and obtained refugee status in 2014. While she shared her status with the participants, many repeatedly asked how she managed to become a doctoral student while they were struggling to secure survival. Her tacit knowledge of a refugee experience allowed her to understand their fears, suspicions and hesitation to share experiences. She reassured participants that political topics were off limits. Taking part in community activities, sharing her status and predicaments, and answering their questions helped her assuage their trepidations and create rapport thereby turning the interviews into guided conversations. While this did not completely balance the power relations between her and the participants, it facilitated frank exploration of experiences with exclusion and various efforts to overcome them. The second author is an academic white repeat migrant who designed and directed the project. Early, she saw the importance of collaborating with a scholar from the community when in a pilot study interlocutors seemed anxious to stress that "everything was fine" but shared only sparse details about their lives.

The focus on tactics and strategies emerged during a broader inductive data analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Reading through the transcripts, we noted various practices the participants undertook to overcome barriers and solve problems. We turned to De Certeau's (1984) tactics and strategies to elucidate the nature of these practices and analysed the data by progressively comparing our insights with other research (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

2.6. Findings

The participants used both tactics and strategies, sometimes simultaneously. Some of their actions had elements of both. We also identified tactical mobilisation of strategies by

proxy. Below we demonstrate that migrants have access to strategic power and that their practices move on a continuum between tactics and strategies.

2.6.1. Discursive and practical tactics

The participants recounted many stories of bureaucratic obstacles, structural exclusions and episodic racism that impeded their upward mobility. They responded to various expressions of racism with indirect and humorous resignifications, sarcasm, ironic flips and "linguistics altercations" (De Certeau, 1984, p. 40) that we classified as discursive tactics. Such responses contested or subverted domination allowing the participants to salvage some dignity, even if momentarily. They also went around barriers or requirements by finding "cracks", loopholes or weak links in the system, fudged, and otherwise "made do" to access resources. They worked within the established order by momentarily subverting rules, exclusions or offensive attacks. We classified these "schemata of actions" as tactically practical manoeuvres (De Certeau, 1984, p. xvi). These practical and discursive tactics are "on the watch for the opportunities that must be seized 'on the wing'" (De Certeau, 1984, p. xx). Such actions allowed survival and small steps towards finding jobs, training, housing or subverting exclusions through creative usurping of power in a system that marginalised them.

Having heard many offensive statements, some participants developed tactics of defensively reversing them. Here we analyse one type of reversal, an ironic flip, that substituted categories in the original statement to apply it to the offenders. A participant who lived in Switzerland for 14 years recounted:

> I am the only black who works there. It is a job that is reserved only for white people. You know that there are specific jobs only for whites and certain jobs only for blacks. The people who work there are Italians, Portuguese and Swiss. It is unthinkable for a black man to work there. […] Now, I am fully aware that I will be called black, and I made myself ready for that. Before, I used to confront and

> fight and quit working when white people disparagingly called me black. Now when at work, they call me "hey, you black," I call them back saying, "hey, you white." However, they say that as a form of a joke because they know they can be penalised. Pretending it is a joke, they tell me: "we are not racist. We are working with a black man". Then I respond, pretending to joke, "I am not a racist. I am working only with whites (with laughter)". So it appears as a joke. They know they cannot say something like this in a serious tone.

He used humour and ironically flipped the black and white categories to tactically contest statements that, in his perception, asserted superiority of whites and his inferiority as a black person. We interpret an ironic flip as a form of reversal discourse, a term first coined by Foucault (1990) to show various forms of discursive resistance to power relations (Lilja, 2022). The substitution of "white" for "black" visibilized racism in the original statement that only "makes sense" from the position of whiteness (Dahinden & Korteweg, 2023). It further turned the original offender into the butt of the joke. The participant resisted discursive subjugation that relegated him to an inferior social position and claimed equal status through humour knowing that if the original statement was defended as "a joke", the colleagues could not object on those same terms. His response is a form of trickery relying on it being fast on the spot for its fleeting effectiveness. While it chips away at the raised boundaries, it does not prevent repetitions that raise the boundaries again thus requiring a sustained effort.

When performing practical manoeuvres, the participants "subvert(ed) barriers or exclusions not by rejecting or altering them" but by looking for opportunities, circumventing barriers and transforming setbacks into opportunities (De Certeau, 1984, p. xiv). They performed tricks such as fudging information about residence permits to gain access to employment, registered businesses under different names and/or in different cantons to avoid bureaucratic administrative laws, accepted jobs paying "under the table" or procured sick leave certificates to avoid toxic work environments. When a participant's

recommendation for a friend's citizenship application was rejected because she was a naturalised citizen, she maneuverer to help her friend:

> They didn't accept my name. They told the woman that my nationality was not by birth, but by naturalisation. […] Then I had to find a solution to help the woman not to miss the opportunity of obtaining citizenship. I had to find another Swiss woman, who never knew the applicant. So, the name of that woman had to be submitted on the application and the applicant eventually obtained citizenship. In reality, I know the other Eritrean woman more than the Swiss person, but they don't trust you, as if you could never have an objective opinion on any issue.

Her realisation that her naturalised citizenship was not seen as equal to that of "native" Swiss by the state apparatus that defines recommendation from a naturalised citizen as evidence of a lack of integration and thus a ground for rejecting a citizenship application. Degraded as a citizen, she nevertheless found a way to help her friend by recruiting a citizen "by blood" to provide a recommendation letter. The recommender's familiarity with the applicant was never verified and this "crack" made poaching the recommendation possible (De Certeau, 1984, p. 37-39). Contra strategic power from the lieu propre of the state apparatus that relegated her to espace, she tactically exercised her power to procure a recommendation.

While many participants were supported by their social workers, others spoke in desperation about those who were unhelpful or even prevented them from pursuing opportunities. A participant recounted:

> www, these people [the assistants] are very cruel [with frustration and anger]. These people do not want us to be independent. They want us to live under social assistance. First of all, I was not allowed to continue with the French lessons. Then they told me that I had acquired enough knowledge, so all I had to do was to practise communication. Imagine, I only did A1[entry level] [with astonishment

and anger]. I was sent to a refugee camp. At first, she told me to work there only for three weeks, but I worked for three months. When she asked me how my French was, I told her I learned Arabic [with anger]. Everybody spoke Arabic, but nobody spoke French, and it did not help me improve my language. The funny thing was that all the people working there had N permits [asylum application under review]. I was the only one with a B permit. The other funny thing was that I worked full time and did not get any salary. I was considered under social assistance. They are used to free labour. They don't want to hire people with a proper salary [angrily]. So they always try to fill the gap by bringing people like me. And my colleagues were making fun of me, asking why I was working with them while having a B permit. When I told her, she just refused. Then I left the job [with sadness and anger]. She threatened me, saying that there was nothing I could do without her. After that, I could not work or learn French. Finally, I learned French for a year paying for it myself from the money we got for food. Then I learned to drive. After getting my driving licence, I studied and took the Uber test. I passed and started working as an Uber driver. They were not happy about it. Then after a year, they started sending many bills just to discourage me. Usually, you expect them to encourage someone trying to be independent. However, all they try to do is to discourage us. Now we have overcome all these challenges and become independent. We are doing very well now. The participant already had a residence work permit but was unable to find a job. Expressing his negative emotions through a paralinguistic "www" and the word "cruel," he speculated that social assistants exploited refugees' dependence to assert their dominance instead of facilitating their independence from social welfare. He saw coercion to work in the camp where he could not advance his French, a threat to halt his social assistance payments, and denial of access to free language courses as mistreatment and abuse of power due to his vulnerability.

He took a risky step of quitting his assigned but non-remunerated job and persisted by paying for language courses from his food allowance. We suspect that from lieu propre

he was likely seen as difficult, irrational or belligerent. But from his espace of the weak, he refused to be docile and further hurt his long term prospects, and instead engaged in actions according to his own operational logic (De Certeau, 1984). While he had no means to directly contest the social worker's assignment and get a different one, he went around it, for a while even increasing his vulnerability. He subverted the restrictions by using the food allowance towards obtaining what he wanted, an outcome the social care system had no choice but to accept.

2.6.2. Strategies

Some participants were able to exercise power from lieu propre that sometimes they created themselves. In cases when racist colleagues or customers questioned their social position, potential or belonging, they wielded their institutional powers to contest racialization and exclusion. They invoked institutional laws or used their institutional authority. A participant who worked as a master bike mechanic recounted how he retaliated against a racist client:

> My colleagues call me "Jimi" and so the client did not expect a black man. To avoid me, she went to my colleagues. She was sent back to me. My colleagues are supportive of me. And according to the rule, they cannot receive a client unless it goes through me. I didn't show her emotions, but I didn't want to do favours that I usually do for my clients. In our business, we do favours for people who don't have money. I charged her a lot. I know how to deal with these types of people without being aggressive or showing them emotions.

The participant had strategic discretionary power due to the workplace policy and the support of his colleagues. When a client tried to avoid dealing with him, the black bike mechanic, he used his discretionary power derived from lieu propre that granted him authority to penalise the customer. This strategic "dirty work of boundary maintenance" (Yuval-Davis, 2006; p. 204) against him evoked strong emotions that he had to manage to

not reveal them. His strategy of offence as the best defence originated from lieu propre whose rules as well as colleagues' support forced the customer to deal with the black bike mechanic across the boundary she tried to reinforce.

While this could be seen as only a momentary boundary lowering, the institutional support offers possibilities of chipping at boundaries, if not structural change. Participants recounted stories of finding out which restaurants or bars did not welcome them and avoiding such places. However, some "forced" inclusion, such as a participant who wanted to socialise with a group of friends in a nearby restaurant where the owner tried to make them feel unwelcome:

> In the beginning he was showing us arrogance. We forced our way and we were chatting. Then he would tell us to not talk loudly. He used to complain. But we wanted to show him that we are equal to any other Swiss people in this place and we confronted him. He used to tell us that the place was reserved, when it was not. We told him we had the right to sit and that we live like any other people by paying taxes. Nobody is dependent on social welfare. We are all living while paying our taxes like any other Swiss person. Our constant confrontation attracted the attention of other people as well. So he started to be concerned about that. He finally gave up because he was afraid to have a problem. Because some people started also to notice.

When the owner tried to exclude them from the restaurant, the group persistently confronted his lies about reservations and his complaints about noise. While the owner operated in lieu propre, the group was able to assert their right to its use from the lieu propre of citizenship and paying taxes "like other Swiss people". Their claim of paying taxes challenged discourses of refugees' dependence on social assistance and a burden to taxpayers that are persistent in Switzerland. This was not a tactical act of "making do" but rather a strategic persistent spatial staking out of a claim to a semi-public place that attracted other customers' attention and eventually broke through the boundary. While

their assertion of paying taxes could be viewed as reproducing a discourse of "good vs. bad" refugees that devalues Eritreans unable to find jobs, such a reading limits understanding power dynamics and reduces agency to emancipation (Safouane et al., 2020). Rather, their assertions are means of moving from *espace* of black refugees disempowered by perceptions of dependency on welfare to *lieu propre* where citizenship rights can be exercised through persistence and the restaurant owner's authority can be challenged. These participants strategically, not tactically, exercised their agency with pragmatism fitting the specific situation to appropriate space for themselves within dominant power structures (Safouane et al., 2020; see also Secor, 2004).

2.6.3. Between tactics and strategies

Some participants, particularly those with long residency and who arrived as children, were empowered by their citizenship, educational credentials from Eritrea or Switzerland, and advanced professional employment. They still faced acts of exclusion and mobilised different forms of power in response. A naturalised citizen who resided in Switzerland for over 26 years and worked in a government office where she experienced racist exclusion, explained with anger ringing in her voice: "Because I am black and a lady! They don't have any reason! My name is Arayabrhan not Depan! [a typical French-Swiss surname]". Their ability to exercise power as citizens was curtailed by the lack of symbolic recognition owing to raced nativism (Dahinden, 2022, p. 8). When they encountered racialization and systemic exclusions, they engaged in actions that were partially strategically derived from lieu propre and tactically from espace demonstrating that actions can have elements of strategies and tactics. Below we show that strategies and tactics are not necessarily opposite forms of power but form a continuum allowing for a more complex understanding of actions (Ahearne, 1995; Buchanan, 2000). A participant who worked as a school teacher at the time of the interview recounted her daughter's experience of racism and the techniques she employed to contest prejudice and negotiate acceptance.

> …my daughter was excellent in her class. […] one teacher doubted how she could get better grades than Swiss students. Another teacher came from a different canton and said my daughter got good grades because she cheated. She always punished her. […] I intentionally used my professional email to ask for an appointment. […] It was a way of telling her where I work. During the meeting, I skilfully & deliberately started the conversation in a friendly tone, discussing everyday life, my background before I came to Switzerland, what I do for a living, the challenges I have been through. I perfectly speak five languages. I did not go and quarrel. As much as possible, I managed the situation peacefully. I spoke about myself to make her see the type of people my daughter is surrounded by. The teacher, in return, started sharing negative experiences she encountered in her professional life when moving from one canton to another. I told her that even though my daughter is black, she came from a family with a strong background. Without confrontation, I made her understand that we are not just refugees and the kind of family my daughter is surrounded by. The following day she spoke with my daughter with a friendly attitude. […] There is racism at school.

Faced with explicit discrimination from a teacher, the participant made a calculation of what power was available to her. She concluded the teacher's actions were racist and that this would affect how she would be received. Calculating that a direct challenge to charges of cheating would not have worked, she strategically derived power from her professional status which she indirectly communicated through her professional email address. Having put herself on the same professional level as the teacher, she then tactically engaged her in a cordial and friendly conversation to present herself and her family as not "just refugees". The meeting was no longer between a teacher and a black refugee in a disempowered position (De Certeau ,1984) but between two teachers who shared experiences. Her action had both strategic and tactical elements that cannot be separated out but instead combine to place the action somewhere between a tactical and strategic enactment of power cobbled up from different sources.

Another participant, a naturalised citizen with considerable strategic power by virtue of his professional position, consciously developed "techniques" to not just cope with but to change the power dynamics that marginalised him at his workplace. He used his advanced position in lieu propre to tactically pose a technical question about something he had expert knowledge to expose the chief's ignorance.

> I am the only black in the office […] Sometimes some people when they see you at a meeting they get shocked but they control their emotion, although you can see it from their body language. You can feel that they are wondering though. […] You can call it racism. There are also other instances, which are not explicit or verbally communicated. In anything related to my job, I always strive to know more than what they know. Some supervisors may not even know a lot about the job. Others can be high officials assigned from above and they may think that they are invincible. There was one man, the chief of the department, who later became assigned to a higher position. But he was not a nice person. […] I cannot say anything concrete, but he has an attitude, difficult to explain. You can challenge such kind of people by asking technical aspects about which they are less knowledgeable. For example, in a meeting setting you can expose them by raising technical questions for which they don't know the answer. That way you can devastate them. Then they start respecting you…So, instead of telling people "you are a racist," you can communicate your message in a way that is more meaningful. If you do it that way, you can win […] I am trying to tell you about some techniques to make sure that you are respected in your work place. If you do that, they don't even remember you are a black person. They start to respect you as a human being, because at that stage they start to care more about their own self.

As the only black professional at his workplace, the participant was adept at reading indirect expressions of racism. When he sensed racist disregard from his boss, he tossed out a surprise technical question that others could not answer thereby revealing his higher expertise. He saw his knowledge as his protective resource and understood that

enhancing it was a technique to protect himself against marginalisation. While by virtue of his position as an expert in the institution he held strategic power, he was nevertheless subject to pervasive racialization. He strategically calculated and exercised the power of his expertise from lieu propre by tactically posing a question aimed to indirectly "devastate" his boss and earn his respect without explicitly challenging him. The indirectness of exclusionary attitudes made it impossible to directly challenge them, but the participant maneuverer strategically and tactically to win respect as "a human being".

2.6.4. Strategies by proxy

Many participants found it very difficult to secure employment or job training, rent apartments or even buy mobile subscription. One explained:

> I have with me more than 500 apartment application forms. I kept them all. I wanted to use them to explain how difficult Switzerland is for refugees. You apply and keep applying and get no response.

Facing such daunting rejections and not finding sufficient institutional assistance, they felt powerless as outsiders to enter into the space of the insiders. They understood that the insiders, or local people, whether social workers, neighbours or friends, had access to such spaces and could help them. A statement such as: "Mrs. X is clever, all of her friends are locals" was common among the community members longing for such contacts. Certainly, most of the time, most local people are themselves de Certeau's weak tactically moving through spaces designed or controlled by those with strategic powers. However, to those who arrived as refugees and faced structural exclusions, they appeared to be powerful actors with access to rights, resources and networks. Some participants bet that befriending locals could open up opportunities and attempted to meet local people to create networks. Much research shows the importance of networks and the help of locals as fundamental to settlement (Ager & Strang, 2008; Wessendorfand & Phillimore, 2019).

The participants reported many examples of insider friends helping them secure employment, accommodations and influence, or convince administrative entities or other insiders to make favourable decisions. However, where and how to meet locals was a challenge as the participants saw the space of the locals closed off by social boundaries with few bridges. With despair, they asked the interviewer: "where can you find natives?" A participant explained that she tried to make local friends by "trial and error" approaching people in public spaces such as neighbourhoods, churches, work places or even public transport and, e.g. making open comments about the weather to a person sitting next to her on a train, hoping that someone would respond and a conversation ensue. Such tactics sometimes paid off creating looser social relations or friendships and allowing the participants to "poach" the local acquaintances' or friends' strategic powers.

Many participants explained that when local people see their motivation to adapt, learn the language, and find employment quickly, they are willing to help. This self-presentation contra popular stereotypes of welfare dependency becomes a tactical deployment of power. Local peoples' privileged insider position, identity and knowledge were viewed as instrumental assets that give them power to influence and change decisions of state or none state actors. This does not mean that all contacts and friendships were only instrumental or somehow not genuine. But those friendships served an important role in overcoming exclusions. They are also seen as such by the Swiss state apparatus which requires friendships with locals as evidence of integration. We demonstrate how friendships and acquaintances made it possible for the participants who could not act strategically to use strategies by proxy. We argue that tactics and strategies should not be understood only as forms of power performed by a single individual and that their use "by proxy" is a deployment of power.

Churches provide opportunities for meeting people due to their communal character. Some reported that local worshipers stared at them in church and did not approach. Other participants did not go to non-orthodox churches. However, some saw churches as opportunities. A participant explained that to make friends, she attended a

non-orthodox church, knowing that her transgression was perceived as outrageous in her circle.

> After absorbing this country and understanding the challenges, the first thing I did was I tried my best to meet local people and create a network. […] You know my religion is orthodox but unlike many Eritreans, I don't restrict myself from going to other churches. I go to the Catholic church on Sundays when they have mass to meet new people. I approach them and introduce myself. Who cares about denominations. I have my belief and it doesn't matter where I go and pray. That is the problem with Eritreans. They don't grab opportunities to establish networks in their surroundings. I am a very open person. I am not a conservative person. I tell them all my background and my history without any reservation. I try my best to earn their trust. I have now a lot of friends, who call and help me with everything, like finding an apartment.

Frustrated by barriers, she made a choice that she believed to be crucial to overcome them and achieve her goals, such as finding a job and accommodations. Keeping her "beliefs to herself," she attended a different church to meet local people with access to resources she lacked. Once she entered an enclave of locals, she started building friendships by providing information about her background. Attending a church of different denomination where she was more likely to meet locals and approaching them was tactical based on her observations of daily life and her conclusion that others from Eritrea were limiting themselves and not pursuing opportunities actively enough. Her actions allowed her to make friends and use their connections, knowledge, local accent and insider status to gain access to the labour market, housing and other resources. This is illustrated by another participant who explained how her insider friend helped her secure a rental apartment:

> When I called a woman to rent an apartment, she asked me if I was a refugee. When I said yes, she said they rent apartments only to Swiss people. I said ok and told my Swiss female friends. When I told them, their "blood boiled". […] They

said that it was unacceptable and described the behaviour of the woman as undisciplined. When I got my permit, my Swiss friend from church helped me look for an apartment in a local newspaper. Most of the time, they don't rent apartments like this to Africans. They give you negative responses and all kinds of excuses, such as you are unemployed, under social welfare, or something like that. Before we contacted the advertising agency, my friend personally met with the landlord. She told him about me, saying all the nice things about my daughter and me. He asked her to meet with me. I visited the apartment, and I was able to rent it.

When she experienced discrimination in the housing market because of her status and skin colour, she reached out to her Swiss friends. The strong bond she established with them helped her overcome discrimination that angered them. Rejecting her application because she was not Swiss was not only judged as wrong by her friends but evoked anger and incited commitment to help her rent an apartment. Her friend's going around the rental agency was tactical and approaching the landlord directly was strategic based on her insider knowledge and national identity. It is from this position that the friend's "blood boiled" and she judged the landlady's behaviour as "unacceptable" and "undisciplined". It also gave her access to the lieu propre of the landlord who had power to determine access. The participant engaged her friend's powers thereby using what was not initially hers but became hers.

Repeated rejections of participants' job applications by employers due to their unwillingness to hire people with F refugee provisional permit or a lack of awareness that the law allows it, was sometimes an insurmountable problem. Some participants mobilised tactics and strategies by proxy concurrently to circumvent the exclusion. A participant, who struggled to find a job with an F permit, fudged information about his residence status to an interested employer.

> The woman asked me about my permit, and I lied about it. I told her that my permit was B. Because I had experienced a lot of problems because of my permit. Employers refuse to offer jobs to refugees with an F permit. […] They don't know the permit. So because I was aware of this, I said I had a B permit. After a one-day probation period, the woman agreed to take me. Then when I told my assistant, he proposed to go with me. Then the owner of the restaurant told him about her intention to hire me […] Then when we were about to sign the contract, she asked me for my permit. When she saw my permit, the owner was shocked: "Is your permit F?" I kept quiet. Then my assistant said: "so what is your problem, yes, his permit was F". He explained to her that I am a refugee who is supported by [organisation]. He also told her about the possibility of changing the F permit to a B permit. Then he asked her if she wanted to hire me, and she said yes. So I got hired.

The participant was well aware that his chance of securing a job with the F permit was slim. When a potential employer showed interest in hiring him, he knew his permit would be a reason for the employer to withdraw the offer. However, he saw the employer's carelessness in verifying his residence permit up front as a "crack" that he could leverage. Cracks are viewed as opportunities by those disempowered, they thus "vigilantly make use of them by poaching and creating surprises in them" (De Certeau 1984, p. 37). His initial lie about his permit was a trick to get further into the process when he could recruit the strategic power of his social worker to support him. After having lost other job opportunities, he resorted to trickery. Tricks are used by the weak when they realise they are their "only possibility, as a 'last resort'" (De Certeau, 1984, p. 37). He then involved his social assistant who had strategic power by virtue of his position to convince the employer about the rights of the F permit holders. While the strategic power was not his, he recruited the authority of his social worker. He thus mobilized both tactics and strategies by proxy as complementary forms of authority.

2.7. Conclusions

This study expands de Certeau's framework of strategies and tactics to understand how those who arrived as forced migrants mobilise and deploy different forms of power in longer term settlement. While studies recognized that migrants deploy power tactically to successfully overcome obstacles and exclusions, their analyses limited migrants' practices to tactics by virtue of migrant outsider status and marginalisation. Instead, we take de Certeau's two forms of power as an initial distinction to understand its varied deployments by migrants in the practice of everyday life. We showed how participants tactically exploited cracks, poached and played tricks through practical and discursive manoeuvres from *espace* of the marginalised, in distinction from deployments of strategic power by participants who derived it from their institutional positions or group organisation. To be sure, this does not mean that those participants are all powerful and thus do not experience marginalisation but rather that they were able to counteract it to a greater or lesser extent on the basis of their institutional positions. This points towards possibilities of structural changes, however modest, in distinction to the fleeting effects of tactics. We also demonstrate that the participants found ways of mobilising strategic power by proxy as they recruited insider friends with more knowledge and access to the dominant social structures to act on their behalf.

A key to recognizing actions as tactical, strategic or mixed lies in the distinction between the places from which power is exercised: lieu propre or espace, and not based on agents' subjectivity that runs counter to de Certeau's own formulations. If we detach power from subjectivity, we can see that the participants were not fixed in a marginalised position. Some were able to snatch some power in *espace*. Others had formal access to lieu propre by virtue of their employment or claimed it through skilful appeals to laws or group organisation, however their positions in lieu propre were differentiated affording degrees of, rather than absolute, authority. In daily practices, some moved among multiple spaces where power calculations changed. Further, we demonstrate that some actions have elements of tactics and strategies and argue for conceiving them as a continuum rather

than opposite forms of power. While those who arrived as forced migrants experience marginalisation in various forms, it is important to not see them all as "the weak" "outsiders" who can only "make do" in the territory of the powerful. Understanding how those structurally disempowered "make do" and those with authority counteract exclusions requires attention to the sources of power and the manner in which it is deployed. The practices we highlighted here do not change the system or demolish the boundaries excluding them. Even if they allow only survival or salvaging some dignity, they are significant precisely as coping mechanisms, and should be viewed as agentic. We thereby extend Safouane, et al. (2020) important contribution on migrant agency by pointing to various sources and forms of power mobilised by migrants facing systemic racism. Although there was no space to explore it here, many participants avoided or even refused to describe their exclusions as racists. While this is problematic, their tactical "making do" and strategic counteractions carry them through experiences of everyday racism whether they acknowledge them as such or not.

Our study contributes to rethinking the much embattled concept of "migrant integration" as power laden (Klarenbeek, 2021) and differentiated through race based exclusions (Dahinden, 2022; Favell, 2022). As we show, we should neither assume that forced black migrants do not have access to power sources, nor romanticise their power to overcome exclusions while settling down in a different ethnonational context. Our study demonstrates that the process of embedding is a power struggle where different understandings of situational particularities, conflictual visions of success, individual reasoning by migrants, bureaucrats and social workers, practical expediencies as well as government integration regime align, collide and become entangled in tense configurations that are shaped by racial, religious and other exclusionary logics to various effects. This is particularly pronounced in the case of forced migrants, most of whom are visible minorities in Europe, who must depend on and are constrained by state institutions. Attention to the multidimensionality of practices will go a long way towards understanding the actual conditions of racist and other marginalisations, migrant agency

(Safouane et al., 2020) and “livingness” of migrants from Africa in Europe (Hawthorne, 2023, p. 2).

Chapter 3

‘What about you, are you integrated?’

Resisting racial exclusion by reversing racist discourse

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3.1. Abstract

Studies of responses to racial exclusion in communication studies focus predominantly on US-based racial minorities. In European contexts, however, visible migrants' negotiations of inclusion and exclusion in response to racism are constrained by different dynamics that involve a reluctance to acknowledge 'race,' and thus racism. This study highlights the importance of understanding the mechanisms of resistance against racism deployed by migrants from Africa to Europe, as fundamental to decolonizing knowledge about migrant integration that has silenced race. Drawing on the frameworks of reverse discourse the study analyses 65 in-depth interviews with Eritreans who arrived as forced migrants in Switzerland. It explores the communicative dynamics of resistance and the appropriation of derogatory discourses to reclaim power and redefine narratives. This analysis emphasizes the strategic use of language as a tool for empowerment and resistance in dispersed forms of resistance. The study identifies four reverse discourse strategies: mirror reflection, ironic repetition, ironic redirecting and ironic re-articulation.

Keywords: Reverse discourse, racism, resistance, forced black migrants, Europe

3.2. Introduction

Alem, a naturalized citizen and the only black teacher at her school, recounted how a colleague's response to her greeting on a tram confused her. When she expressed her confusion, the colleague replied, "Oh, sorry, I confused you with my friend's maid." With anger ringing in her voice, Alem told me in our interview: "Can you imagine? She is a colleague! If you are black, they automatically think you are a maid or cleaner." Since that incident, whenever they see each other, Alem greets her colleague with a smile and pointedly asks, "What about now, do you recognize me?"

What does the repetition of "What about now, do you recognize me?" in every encounter do to the original misrecognition of her as a maid? Does it change the power dynamics in her workplace? How? How is this repetition animated by affect? Her response and its repetition reverses the racist colonialist logic of the stated misrecognition of her as a black professional and a colleague. Anger played a key role in this reversal, animating her everyday resistance against racism. She turned the offender's logic back on her, seizing every encounter as an opportunity to remind the colleague of her racial bias and demand recognition as a professional. The repetition, steeped in irony, disrupts the power dynamics of the initial offense by eliciting discomfort and compelling recognition. This practice of resistance through reverse discourse was first conceptualized by Foucault to elucidate how dominant discourses can be resisted using the very logics that produced them through reiteration, re-articulation, or repetition, subtly altering the original meanings (Foucault, 1990; Lilja, 2018). Recent studies show how "humor and ironic twists" are a form of a reverse discourse strategy (Baaz & Lilja, 2022).

This study further expands the repertoire of reverse discourse strategies in its application to discursive resistance against racism. It offers a detailed analysis of how black migrants challenge racist discourses by using their own logics during interpersonal interactions. It also shows how strategies of reverse discourse revert the affective flows in such interactions. The analysis provides insights into power relations, agency, and

discourse by revealing the communicative complexity and dynamics of such interactions. While previous studies have primarily applied reverse discourse to analyze organized forms of resistance against oppression and discrimination (Baaz & Lilja, 2022; Lija, 2022; Towns, 2022), this paper also expands its application by examining how individuals respond to everyday racism in dispersed resistance, i.e., unorganized, individual-oriented, and unhidden forms of resistance (Lilja & Vinthagen, 2018). It analyzes accounts of racist encounters by Eritreans who arrived as forced migrants and constitute the largest black minority in Switzerland.

Intercultural communication research on responses to racial exclusion in face-to-face situations has primarily focused on U.S.-based racial minorities (Camara & Orbe, 2010; Davis, 2018; Parker, 2002) and Asian immigrants (Chen & Lawless, 2018; Jun et al., 2021). More recently, scholars turned their attention to how black African immigrants in the U.S. negotiate racialization (Acheme & Cionea, 2014) and stereotyping (Acheme, 2023). This study advances the understanding of responses to racism in intercultural communication by focusing on a European context where the regime of 'racelessness' renders race irrelevant as a social category (Michel, 2015) and the discourse of "Überfremdung" ('over-foreignization') excludes all migrants from national belonging (Dahinden, 2023). Some ethnic studies examined forced migrants' struggles with exclusion and their responses to it in European contexts, only a small number addressed the experiences of black African migrants (Mahama et al., 2024; Sætermo et al., 2024) and their responses to everyday racism (Ellfsen et al., 2022). Racism, often characterized as individual actions in European contexts, is primarily addressed in the context of Muslims rather than blacks (Small, 2018). This is partly due to the reluctance to acknowledge the significance of 'race' as a relevant social category in most of continental Europe (Hawthorne, 2023; Rastas & Nikunen, 2019; Small, 2018). Scholars of the Black Mediterranean, Black Europe, and the Black Diaspora call for scholarly attention to black African migrants' experiences in European contexts as a move to decolonize knowledge about their experiences shaped by the silencing of race (ibid). This study responds to their call by examining the resistance strategies deployed by black migrants against racism in a

European context. It proposes that the framework of reverse discourse offers insights into how black migrants respond to racist exclusion, challenging colonial narratives that depict them as powerless victims. The analysis expands the framework of reverse discourse and provides insights into power relations, agency, and discourse by revealing the communicative complexity and dynamics of such interactions. It further aims to show how black migrants reclaim power by appropriating derogatory discourses and redefining narratives. This analysis highlights the strategic use of language as a tool for empowerment. It identified four reverse discourse strategies that expand the repertoire of reverse discourse: mirror reflection, ironic repetition, ironic redirecting, and ironic rearticulation.

3.3. Responses to racism

Intercultural communication studies have examined how racialized minorities (Camara & Orbe, 2010; Castle Bell & Hastings, 2011; Parker, 2002; Rossing, 2016) and Asian immigrants (Chen & Lawless, 2018; Jun et al., 2021) respond to both direct and subtle forms of racism in the U.S. context. These studies highlight the strategic use of confrontational and subtler, yet direct, responses to subtle or overt racist encounters. For instance, retaliation, expressing discomfort, and reporting were identified as confrontational strategies (Chen & Lawless, 2018; Parker, 2002), while "performing confidence," voicing ideas, nonverbal stares, or "performing blackness" were seen as direct but non-confrontational responses to discrimination (Davis, 2018, p. 308). In contrast, when the prejudicial encounter is subtle, the offended avoids confrontation and instead uses unassertive communication strategies that are congruent with their circumstances (Bell & Hastings, 2011; Camara & Orbe, 2010; Davis, 2018; Jun, 2012; Parker, 2002). These may take the form of ignoring, telling oneself to get used to it, rationalizing, changing workplaces, assimilation to the dominant social class, etc. (Chen & Lawless, 2018; Davis, 2018; Jun et al., 2021). Humor is another strategy used by the targeted to contest racism (Parker, 2002; Rossing, 2016). Recent studies on black African immigrants, a group understudied in intercultural communication research (Acheme &

Cionea, 2024; Acheme, 2023), examine how this group negotiates stereotypes and racial categorization shaped by the dominant racial gaze in the U.S. (ibid). These studies identify coping strategies such as adjusting behavior to counter perceptions of being uneducated, such as avoiding slang, and adopting an ambassadorship role to project a positive national identity. Other strategies include emphasizing national identity, defying stereotypes through hard work, and focusing on personal merit to maintain self-worth, all employing non-confrontational responses to racialization (Acheme, 2023).

While intercultural communication studies have not examined the dynamics of racial exclusion in European contexts, ethnic studies have addressed migrants' reactions to social exclusion arising from cultural and religious differences (Hametner, 2014; Çelik, 2015; Kaiser et al., 2023), with only a few studies addressing responses to racism against black people (Ellefsen et al., 2020; Omeni, 2016). These studies demonstrated how migrants react to racist comments prompted by assumptions that they do not 'integrate' because they retain their cultural and religious identities (Hametner, 2014; Çelik, 2015; Kaiser et al., 2023). Their responses include confronting racist teachers and developing oppositional belonging among second-generation Turkish migrants in Germany (Çelik, 2015), and ironic responses to racist stereotypes by Turkish migrants in Austria (Hametner, 2014). Kaiser et al. (2023) identified withdrawal as a strategic response to prejudice by Turkish migrants in Germany when confrontation yields no positive outcomes. Herwig (2017) identified seemingly trivial yet effective strategies, such as ironic humor and passing, used by Syrian women forced migrants to challenge violence in precarious settlements in Turkey. Studies that examine black people's responses to racism focused on the resistance practices mobilized to challenge racism or diffuse tensions (Ellefsen et al., 2020; Omeni, 2016). Omeni (2016) explored these dynamics among black students in Poland and identified responses such as verbal confrontation, physical altercation, avoiding dangerous areas, social withdrawal, and normalizing racism as an emotional coping mechanism. Ellefsen et al. (2020) focused on black racial minorities in Norway and identified direct confrontation, incident reporting, and ignoring as common responses to racism. While these studies demonstrated black migrants' agency

by identifying various resistance practices, they offer limited insights into power dynamics in resistance. This study demonstrates how the framework of reverse discourse offers a useful lens for understanding micro dynamics of communicative dispersed resistance strategies against everyday racism in contexts where 'race' is seemingly silenced.

The denial of the relevance of race in social relations and analysis of migrant 'integration' in European contexts has been critiqued for limiting scholarly attention to the experiences of black migrants (Hawthorne, 2023; Rastas & Nikunen, 2019; Small, 2018). This study focuses on Switzerland, which represents countries with a very small number of black people, the majority of whom are immigrants (Small, 2018). Switzerland's lack of direct colonial past is invoked to deny the relevance of race and racism in social life and in scholarly analysis. Critical scholars argue that Switzerland's indirect involvement in colonialism shaped its identity as a white nation (Lavanchy, 2014; Purtschert, 2015). They also critique how this denial is reinforced by a "regime of racelessness," which makes race invisible and hard to discuss publicly (Michel, 2015, p. 411). Unlike the U.S. framework of colorblind racism, which dismisses the importance of race by claiming society has entered a post-racial era to avoid addressing systemic inequalities (Bonilla-Silva, 2006), the regime of racelessness removes race as a relevant category altogether, making conversations about racial issues in public spaces difficult (Purtschert, 2019). While race is considered taboo, racism persists in political discourse, such as the Swiss People's Party campaign posters of a white sheep kicking out a black sheep (Michel, 2015), detergent ads turning a brown bear white (Purtschert, 2019), and the discourse of *Überfremdung* ('overforeignization') in German, perpetuated by populist parties to restrict migration from both Europe and outside Europe (Dahinden, 2023; Michel, 2015).

3.4. Communicative resistance

Drawing on Scott's (1986) concept of "weapons of the weak," resistance has been conceptualized as unconventional tactics by the subaltern, aiming to remedy, contest, or prevent oppression (Scott, 1986; Shi, 2008). This type of resistance is every day, ordinary,

and petty, often hidden under a surface of conformity. While it may not yield structural changes, it shields the marginalized from humiliation and exploitation. Studies also conceived resistance as a performative act where the marginalized strategically employ discourse, inherently intertwined with power, through "vernacular performances" and "communicative practices" to navigate oppressive systems (Davis, 2018, p. 304). This conceptualizes power as something that can be challenged discursively through "speech acts," particularly when the subjugated are aware of how they are positioned within specific societal structures (Davis, 2018, p. 303). Some studies also view resistances as embodied actions and discursive practices, where individuals use their personal experiences and bodies to challenge dominant racial narratives, resist simplified racial categorizations, and educate others about the nuances of multiracial identities Maragh-Lloyd & L'Pree Corsbie-Massay; 2022). Resistance is also enacted through "dissent" against domination that oppresses minority voices, with the marginalized constructing arguments, forging alliances, and asserting their viewpoints (Ciszek & Rodriguez, 2020, p. 540), to achieve their goals (Chioneso et al., 2020; Monier, 2023). This may involve understanding dominant norms to strategically subvert them, even when it entails taking risks (Labrador & Zhang, 2021). Practices such as building alliances with external groups, humour, and creative arts are further identified as "strategic tactics of resistance" used by the marginalized to counter othering (Collins & Boumechaal, 2024, p. 338). Its dynamic is captured by "dispersed resistance," which embodies an unorganized mode of resistance enacted by one or a few people and can be either "glaring or hidden" (Lilja & Vinthagen, 2018; p. 217). This type of resistance is executed "according to different scripts, with different aims and techniques depending on what form of power it is reacting against" (ibid). This study advances the understanding of reverse discourse through the lens of dispersed resistance (Foucault, 1990).

3.5. Reverse discourse

Reverse discourse is a specific form of discursive resistance that strategically contests discourses using their logic and methods (Foucault, 1990b; Butler, 1995; Lilja, 2018).

Resistance in reverse discourse occurs through "reiteration, re- articulation or repetition of the dominant discourse" by slightly changing its original meaning (Lilja, 2018, p. 427). The aim is not to replace the original discourse but to modify its meaning, assigning value without necessarily subverting it. Change emerges gradually through reiteration over time (Lilja & Vinthagen, 2018; Lilja, 2018). It points to a direct and symbiotic relationship that exists between the dominant discourse and the discourse it intends to subvert. The interrelation between dominant and subversive discourses, which imbues reverse discourse with a "parasitic" characteristic, shows the entwinement of power and resistance (Lilja, 2018, p. 427). Resistance through reverse discourse offers an analytical lens on micro-dynamics of contesting power in response to racism (Lilja & Vinthagen, 2018).

Resistance through reverse discourse becomes productive, when deployed pragmatically and strategically (Mark Haugaard, 2022). Scholars argue that the relationship between dominant and reverse discourse is not strictly binary, instead, it can be complex, mixed and ambiguous (Baaz & Lilja, 2022; Lilja, 2022; Seppälä, 2022; Towns, 2022). It might emerge in cracks and contradictions within a reverse discourse, tweaking the dominant discourse (Towns, 2022). Sometimes, it manifests as a "humorous and ironic twist," maintaining the visibility of the dominant discourse (Baaz & Lilja, 2022, p. 331). Baaz & Lilja (2022) contend that focusing on non-binary strategies and considering social issues, historical context, and temporality expands the repertoire of reverse discourse. Most research on reverse discourse focuses on organised forms of resistance through social movements or networks (Lilja, 2022; Town, 2022), activism (Baaz & Lilja, 2022& Seppälä, 2022) or organised grassroots activities (Íñiguez de Heredia Sunyé, 2022). Studies have not addressed how reverse discourse might work as a forms of everyday dispersed resistance (Lilja & Vinthagen, 2018).

3.6. Eritreans who came to Switzerland as forced migrants

Eritreans started to arrive in Switzerland since 1980, fleeing persecution and indefinite military service (Kibreab, 2009; Hepner & Tecle, 2013). They are the largest non-

European migrant group, with approximately 40,969 among the 8 million Swiss population (Swiss Federal Office of Statistics, 2022a). They are marginalized, with many living below the poverty line Eyer & Schweizer, 2010) and largely depending on social welfare (Swiss Federal Office of Statistics, 2022b). While poor education, language barriers, difficulty accessing training, and a lack of recognition of academic certificates restricted many from securing well-paying jobs, structural barriers and systemic exclusions limit the upward mobility of even those with higher levels of education (Eyer & Schweizer, 2010).

3.7. Methods

The paper is based on 65 in-depth semi-structured interviews with Eritreans who came to Switzerland as forced migrants and lived between 7 to 40 years ago. Participants (30 women and 35 men) were recruited through the author's personal contacts, community networks, and snowballing (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), as well as contacts with associations, and attending events and churches to reach a broader range of participants. They ranged in age from 28 to 60 years old. Among them, 18 were naturalized citizens, 25 held permanent residency C permits, 19 were recognized refugees with B permits, and 3 were admitted provisionally as refugees with F residency permits for 11, 13, and 15 years. Initially, recruiting women was challenging, but the support of associations working with migrant women allowed me recruit more women. The interviews, conducted in 2020 in Tigrinya, which is widely spoken in Eritrea, lasted 2-4 hours and were conducted in quiet cafés, participants' homes, and video calls. They started with general questions about their experiences, and as the conversations unfolded, issues of racism emerged. Follow-up questions further explored these themes. Some participants hesitated to label encounters as racist, opting for euphemisms or rationalizations. This required careful probing to clarify their responses and encourage deeper reflection. The analysis was conducted in Tigrigna, the author's mother tongue, and the excerpts used in this paper were translated into English.

The concept of reverse discourse was identified as a match during the constant comparative analysis of inductive derived categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). I first observed specific discursive mechanisms participants used in response to racial exclusions, expressions of social contempt, and structural barriers, and turned to Foucault's concept of reverse discourse. I scrutinized micro-level language use to identify new forms of reverse discourse strategies. I began by examining participants' descriptions of specific encounters and identified a dynamic of appropriation, resignification and rearticulation of domain discourses. When examining appropriation more closely, I noticed instances where participants slightly altered elements of the dominant discourse to assert a new truth. In addition, I further analysed resignification, where participants redefined terms or ideas used to marginalize them, reclaiming offensive language and altering its meaning to challenge the dominant narrative. Next, I examined instances of rearticulation that combined elements from the dominant discourse to create complex responses that resisted racialization. Additionally, I analyzed participants' tactical engagements with racist discourse, focusing on irony, flipping, and humor (Baaz & Lilja, 2022), as well as cracks and contradictions in the discourse that participants exploited to expose inconsistencies and challenge power dynamics (Towns, 2022). I coded the specific discursive mechanisms used to challenge the exercise of domination.

My intersectional identity, which oscillated along an insider-outsider continuum as a researcher, positioned me as an insider Other to the research participants (Carling et al., 2014). I came to Switzerland from Eritrea as a graduate student in 2010 and secured refugee status in 2014. While my ethno-national identity and refugee status significantly blurred the boundary between the participants and me, granting me privileged access to their intimate stories, there were also significant differences between us. Many asked repeatedly if I were a refugee from Eritrea like them, wondering how I could be a doctoral student while they found enrolling in vocational training difficult. To assuage their discomfort, I shared my experience and approached the interviewees as a friendly chat between two refugees, creating a space for a candid exchange of experiences mediated by

a “productive discomfort” (Sereke, 2023, p. 2). Throughout the analysis, I kept journaling to ‘bracket off’ my personal experiences to focus on participants’ accounts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3.8. Reverse discourse strategies

The analysis identified four new forms of reverse discourse strategies in response to racism: mirror reflection, ironic repetition, ironic redirecting, and ironic rearticulation. These strategies were deployed to counter racist discourses that communicate themes such as racialized occupational inferiority and workplace condescension, hygiene-based racial dehumanization, racialized criminalization, misrecognition, the perpetual foreigner stereotype, and overt racial hostility. The analysis further highlights that while the dominant discourse in Switzerland is ‘racelessness’, participants encountered raced racism. These various forms of discursive maneuvers expand the repertoire of reverse discourse and advance the understanding of power dynamics in interpersonal interactions within intercultural settings shaped by racial differences and power hierarchies.

3.8.1. Mirror reflection

Mirror reflection appropriates dehumanizing discourses and reflects them around to mirror the contradictions or flawed assumptions within the discourse, compelling offenders to confront the flaws in their own logic, thereby reverting the affect flow of contempt back onto them. Some participants working in menial jobs experienced dehumanizing racial contempt from their colleagues. An example illustrating this in action comes from a participant who works in a menial job along with young people whose parents migrated from Albania.

> In my new job, I met young Albanians […]. One of them said, “The thing I hate the most in my life is black people.” […] I was working quietly as if I didn’t hear. It happened for the second and third time. Finally, I said to him, “Look, you are

22, doing a job meant for someone with no other skills. You were born and raised in Switzerland. You are not supposed to work here with me (*forceful tone, moving his head, glaring, and with a frown face*). This was a very strong comment to him, and he felt humiliated. […] I don't wish this job for my son.

The young co-worker's explicit expression of "hate" reveals racial contempt, signalling the perceived inferiority of black people. Likely seeking to elevate his own status within a racial hierarchy that views him as less than native Swiss through the discourse of *Überfremdung*, he resorted to blatant racism to push the participant further down—not just as a foreigner but as a black person. People with Albanian backgrounds face discrimination in Switzerland (Fibbi et al., 2006), which may have fuelled his need to assert racial dominance through the expression of racial animosity. After initially deciding to remain quiet, as the racial assault persisted, the participant reacted by mirroring the co-worker's contempt and redirected it towards him. When recounting the event, the participant expressed anger with a forceful tone and body gestures, as though he were reliving the experience. As Ahmed argues, for the marginalized, anger serves as a powerful force, pushing them to resist racialization and assert their dignity (Ahmed, 20024). In this case, the participant's anger at the racial contempt pushed him to counter the insult by pointing out that the offender's sense of superiority does not match his current humble employment.

As "hate" was used to inflict inferiority, the participant reacted by highlighting the offender's low-paying job, reframing it as a personal failure despite his privileged background that should have allowed him to have better opportunities. Affect as a force shapes this interaction where "bodies become organized and a situation is formulated, evaluated, negotiated, and crucially, communicated" (Wetherell, 2012, p. 6). The anger felt due to the co-worker's disdain for black people provoked the communication of the perceived irony, i.e., being seen as inferior by a young man who, despite a promising future, is employed in a job undervalued by the white majority alongside people who have limited opportunities due to their refugee status. The strategy employed to confront disdain

for black people is a form of mirror reflection. It appropriated the disdain and turned it around, producing a counter-narrative in which the dominant is imbued with characteristics that mirror the offender's social position. The offended seized the offense and reversed it to highlight the irony of the offender assuming himself superior while stagnating in a low-paying job with those he perceived as inferior. The strategy served not only to highlight the offender's lower social position but also as a pedagogic moment, emphasizing the need to focus on self-improvement over demeaning refugees who are striving to make ends meet. This strategy also reversed the affective flow. The feeling of superiority collided with a counter-truth that became visible through the strategy, magnifying their shared social position and turning the contempt back on the offender, which then caused humiliation in the co-worker. Such a strategy emerged from hurt and served to shift power dynamics by redirecting the contempt intended to cause humiliation back to the offender. The participant's counter-response to challenge the disdain, while it discounts the systemic exclusion faced by people with a migrant background, should be seen as a means to shield himself from episodic dehumanization and humiliation because of his skin colour.

Disdain was mirrored and its affective flow reversed by a participant who worked in a restaurant and was turned into an object of bad feelings from his white colleagues who repeatedly associated bad smells with their black African colleagues. He tried repeatedly to explain to them that hygiene is personal and that other white colleagues also smelled, but the stereotype persisted. Expressing his anger, he described a moment when, after a sewage truck left a foul odor, a French colleague publicly mocked him, saying: "Call me; I'll give you a shower" to humiliate him. As Ahmed argues, racial interactions are shaped by "past histories that *stick* to the present" (Ahmed, 2004, p. 11). The stickiness of this stereotype, linking blackness with bad smell, reinforces racial hierarchies by associating cleanliness and moral superiority with whiteness (McClintock, 1995). This ongoing association angered the participant, prompting him to respond: "You French are the last to talk about hygiene! Your King Louis XIV hated baths, and his doctor had to prescribe showers." The participant's response employed a mirror reflection strategy to dismantle

the offender's racial insult asserting racial superiority. He challenged the dehumanization and subverted the intended humiliation by mirroring the accusation of bad hygiene with a reference to King Louis XIV's poor hygiene thus turning the insult back onto the offender. This historical reference mirrored the offensive assumption that hygiene is tied to race by presenting it as tied to nationality. By asking: "If your king was like that, how are you any different?" the participant forced the offender to confront the inconsistency in his racist logic, disrupting his attempt at racial superiority. As Butler notes, power can be resisted through appropriation, where dominant discourses are reconfigured and exposed (Butler, 1997). The response further allowed reversing the affective flow. It shifted the contempt back onto the offender and transformed the moment of humiliation into one of solidarity. His African colleagues, long subjected to similar stereotypes, "applauded with happiness," and even his French colleagues confronted the offender, saying, "Was it worth it? You got what you deserved." By reversing the discourse and the affective flow, the participant successfully rejected the racial insult and strengthened group solidarity (Bonilla-Silva, 2006).

3.8.2. Ironic repetition

Ironic repetition is a reverse discourse strategy that involves the use of irony, persistent reiteration, and the flipping of offensive statements made by the offender. Participants deployed this strategy to challenge misrecognition, racialized occupational inferiority, and workplace condescension. A participant, who is a naturalized citizen and works as a teacher, shared to a racist encounter with her colleague.

> I ran into my colleague on a bus. She mistook me for her friend's maid. She was talking nonsense, and I asked her what she was talking about because I didn't understand. Then she said, "Oh, sorry, I confused you with my friend's maid." And she's a colleague! (*nodding her head with astonishment and anger*). If you're black, they automatically think you're a maid or cleaner. They don't think a black person could be a colleague. You know! She is in room number [X], and I'm in

> room number [Y]. Whenever I see her, I ask her, "What about now? Do you recognize me now?"

Her anger and astonishment revealed the deep hurt caused by her colleagues' misrecognition, reducing her identity to a stereotypical role of a maid, which denied her professional status and reinforced racialized assumptions. These emotions were not just ignited by the contempt of being mistaken for a maid; rather, they were stirred by the demeaning implications of this misrecognition, which undermined her professional identity. She saw this incident as a reflection of how black people are stereotypically perceived within the Swiss social structure. Several studies show that migrants who visibly stand out in terms of skin color are conceived as "inferior" (Heller, 2014, p. 309), less intelligent, lower class, etc. (Cretton, 2018; Udah & Singh, 2019). Her strong emphasis on the term colleague and the declarative "If you are black, they automatically think you're a maid or cleaner" reveals her awareness of a larger problem, where racial stereotypes extend to professional settings. As the only black professional in the building, whose office is right next to her colleague's, she found the explanation hard to accept. The proximity of their offices made the misrecognition seem less like an innocent mistake and more like a reflection of ingrained racial stereotypes. She perceived it as an attempt to deny her recognition as a colleague. Interpreting the explanation as a perpetuation of stereotypical discursive constructions of black people and as a systemic denial of recognition animated her resistance, employing ironic repetition as a strategy. Her repetition of the statement at every subsequent encounter: "What about now, do you recognize me?" enacted resistance through reverse discourse. Adopting a guise of innocence akin to the offender's statement yet steeped in irony and repetition, this response strategically transformed every meeting into a moment of resistance. By inverting the binary 'confusion to recognition' and persistently reiterating it, she continuously reminded her offender of her presence as a professional and colleague. The repetition, steeped in irony, disrupted the power flow, allowing her to assert her recognition and salvage her dignity.

Ironic repetition was also employed by a participant who worked in a metal workshop and shared how his white colleagues often dismissed his professional opinions with remarks like, “Is that how you do things in Africa?” This demonstrated racialized devaluation based on assumptions of African inferiority that were used to undermine his competence. As Essed explains, everyday racism is a recurrent process embedded in daily interactions, perpetuating racial hierarchies and the perception of non-white individuals as backward (Essed, 2019). He then explained how he shifted from feeling “angry and wanting to fight” to responding with irony, repeating, “Is that how you do it in France or Portugal?” whenever his colleagues made mistakes. Such response appropriated the insult with a slight change and turned it back on them to subvert their attempt at racial dominance by exposing their incompetence. His repeated use of this ironic remark each time they erred changed the power dynamic, gradually undermining their authority and destabilizing the racial hierarchy they had tried to maintain. Through this strategic repetition, he channelled his anger into taking an assertive stance, challenging racial power dynamics in everyday interactions. This shift allowed him to reclaim power by turning what was meant to demean him into an opportunity to transform a moment of racial humiliation into one of empowerment and resistance.

3.8.3. Ironic redirecting

Ironic redirecting is another strategy of reverse discourse, where the targeted redirects racializing discourse back to the offender by signaling the opposite meaning of the discourse while keeping the dominant visible. This strategy is deployed to challenge racialized misrecognition through institutional and everyday integration discourses that deny naturalized citizens both symbolic and legal recognition as citizens, which they earned by proving successful integration to the state, and to resist racial profiling by police and racial policing by ordinary people. The following excerpt shows the reaction of a naturalized participant to a neighbor, a white naturalized citizen who, while considering himself Swiss, referred to the participant’s wife—who has lived in Switzerland for over 40 years and is also a naturalized citizen—as an integrating individual.

> Our neighbor asked my wife where they were coming from. She told, "from a training session in preparation for the [local holiday]", and the man said: oh, that is a good thing for integration. And my wife said to him: "What about you, are you integrated or not?" He was shocked by the response. He understood that he made a mistake because he knew that she was more [city A] than him. The man actually came from [country B]. He thinks he is a very progressive man […] Once the words slipped out and my wife responded to him the way she did, he was so embarrassed. He thought that his hypocrisy was exposed […]

The participant noted the subtle ways he and his family are constructed as 'integrating subjects' because of their skin color despite their long-term settlement, economic success and sense of belonging. Integration discourse produced by the state sets the criteria for citizenship and higher-level residency permits or denial of rights, downgrading, or withdrawal of residency Manser-Egli, 2023). The participant recounted the incident, expressing linguistically powerful expressions but with a constrained affective display. Being referred to as "integrating agents," a term that implies the necessity for outsiders to learn the cultural norms of their host society, triggered feelings of exclusion and devaluation as citizens (Klarenbeek, 2021, p. 910). The appropriation of this discourse, especially by a peer, who himself is a naturalized citizen whose naturalization depended on being judged by the state as integrated, was viewed as a projection of superiority, compelling her to express dissent—ironically, in a wry yet non-confrontational tone that made the person immediately aware of his discriminatory remark. Offended by the veiled racism of the integrationist remark, she strategically redirected it back to her offender. Infused with irony, while the redirection kept the dominant discourse visible, it also signaled its opposite meaning. In doing so, the strategy also reversed the affective flow. Feeling exposed by his subtle perception of black people as outsiders needing integration left him embarrassed. In her refusal to be denigrated as an integrating subject, she also challenged the "integration dispensation," a privileged exemption from integration granted to white citizens, while problematizing the migrant

Other who stood out differently in terms of race (Schinkel, 2018, p. 17). The participant and his wife are aware of the prevalence of the "dirty work of boundary maintenance" in Switzerland (Yuval-Davis, 2006). While naturalization grants formal recognition as a citizen, it does not guarantee symbolic recognition as "*Eidgenosse*," a term used widely to denote a native status (Dahinden, 2023, p. 1616). In this example, resistance through reverse discourse was carried out by appropriating the discourse of integration, which diminishes the citizenship status of black people, and redirecting it back to the offender to challenge the discriminatory discourse.

Ironic redirecting as a reverse discourse strategy was also deployed to resist racial profiling by police. Studies show that racial profiling of black people in Switzerland is prevalent (Schilliger, 2020). Some male participants recounted unfair police ID checks and invasive public searches. While some confronted officers, others used alternative resistance strategies to avoid reprisals. A participant, tired of being repeatedly targeted by the police for ID checks, recounted how, while sitting in a park, officers asked, "What are you doing here?" He cleverly redirected the question with a subtle, ironic response: "Like everyone else, I'm just enjoying myself." By equating his presence in the park with that of others, his response reframed his presence as ordinary, subtly exposing the racial bias behind their scrutiny. Without directly accusing the police of racism, which as he mentioned, could provoke unwarranted repercussions, his response cleverly revealed the arbitrariness of their actions. It also disrupted established patterns of racial power by rejecting the implicit assumption that his presence required justification. Instead of complying with the racialized expectation of providing specific details, he reclaimed his right to occupy public space as freely as anyone else. This type of response serves as a subtle yet powerful means of resisting racial power hierarchies, as it undermines the authority of those enforcing racialized scrutiny. It also functions as an effective strategy for the subaltern to negotiate their rights within oppressive structures.

3.8.4. Ironic rearticulation

Ironic rearticulation is a form of reverse discourse in which the targeted seize the dominant discourse to deconstruct its dominant meaning through irony, thereby suggesting alternative resignification. This strategy is deployed to challenge statements, which on the surface, appear neutral but deny symbolic recognition as citizens. Many participants perceived that questions like "where is your country of origin?", "you speak good German," "but why did you choose Switzerland?" or "when do you plan to return?" as communication strategies that enact 'Othering.' Consider, for instance, a participant who is a naturalized citizen and came to Switzerland when she was 17 years old in 1984:

> I struggle with the racism virus (hehe, with a sarcastic laugh) […]. In some ways, I feel more Swiss than the Swiss, but they do not see me that way. When asked where I am from, I used to say from Eritrea. When I asked them back, they got irritated and said, "from this country, of course, can't you see?" I would reply, "it is not written on your forehead." That is my way of saying skin color does not define origin. Many in this city are third or fourth-generation Swiss […] They came yesterday, and we came today. We should not feel inferior.

The quote highlighted instances of "white dispensation" where some white Swiss interlocutors refused to reciprocate questions about their country of origin yet expected people with different phenotypes to respond. As someone who has long lived in one of Switzerland's most diverse cities, the participant is aware that most people or their ancestors have origins elsewhere. Thus, enacting white dispensation in their answers was animated by the dominant white ethno-national identity of Switzerland to other those who were racially marked as Other. The display of irritation and the performance of whiteness to assert native status were interpreted as manifestations of superiority. This sentiment was poignantly enfolded in her statement.

Denying black Swiss symbolic recognition as citizens is prevalent in Switzerland, a nation predominantly white and defined by nativist ideals and whiteness (Dahinden, 2023). Performing whiteness to claim native Swiss status reinforced this discourse, eliciting disappointment. This emotion was implicitly manifested through laughter and in her opening statement. The sarcastic laughter was not a neutral reaction; it was instead imbued with disappointment. This feeling propelled her into rebuttal, employing reverse discourse. Her statement, "It's not written on your forehead," directly contradicts the "Can't you see it?" response, thereby ironically challenging the performance of whiteness and white dispensation. Steeped in irony, her statement redefined whiteness as an empty discursive mode, thus deconstructing its symbolic power. Further, it unsettled the dominant view of black people as outsiders, thus being subject to scrutiny.

Similarly, another participant was surprised by a woman's shock and resistance to answering his question about her country of origin thereby asserting native status by performing whiteness. In response, he redefined whiteness as ambiguous and devoid of the power to definitively denote Swiss native identity using the same reverse discourse strategy. He said:

> P: When people ask where I'm from, I ask them back. […] A woman didn't know what to say. Her face turned red, and she pointed to her face, asking if it was not visible. I told her, "No, you could be South African, Swedish, Portuguese. I don't know. So, where do you come from?" I asked her again […] Then, I said to her, "if you don't feel comfortable, then take it easy. For me it is a simple exchange of information."

The woman's emotional reaction and her resistance to reciprocation reflect nativist ideals, reinforcing automatic recognition and entitlement to ask while denying the same right to the 'black Swiss'. Perhaps, perceived as an outsider, he was expected to be submissive. When he asked her to reciprocate a similar question, it was translated as shameless audacity and stirred negative emotions. While her outburst puzzled him, it also

evoked disappointment, as manifested in his linguistically powerful statements animated "dynamic, blossoming patchworks of neural firing" (Wetherell et al., 2020, p. 3). Her emotional reaction spurred him to refuse to be silenced and to continue rearticulating whiteness differently from how she presented it, which propagated the discourse of *Eidgenoss*. Hence, using irony, he redefined it as ambiguous and devoid of power to denote Swiss native identity definitively. He undermined her claim by contrasting her white body with other non-Swiss white bodies, suggesting that she could also be from elsewhere. Whiteness, which could also suggest being European, does not suggest "Swiss native and thus *Eidgenosse*" (Dahinden, 2023, p. 1616). Further, the symbolic value the interlocutor placed on 'country of origin,' which, for her as a white person, served as a mechanism of claiming nativeness and, in turn, excluded and racialized the black Swiss as outsiders, was dismissed by the participant as insignificant information, thereby subverting the power dynamics at play. Rendering the symbolic value of 'country of origin' to challenge racialization and exclusion involved resignifying meaning through ironic subversion and articulation.

3.9. Conclusions

This study advances the understanding of micro-level power dynamics of resistance against subtle and explicit racism in intercultural communication studies by introducing and applying the framework of reverse of discourse (Foucault, 1990) as well as examining a European context of refugee adaptation that has not been previously addressed by intercultural communication scholars to deepen understanding of "race" and racism as formed and enacted contextually. While prior studies in intercultural communication (Acheme, 2023; Acheme and Cionea, 2024) and in related field (Çelik, 2015, Ellefsen et al., 2020; Hametner, 2014; Kaiser et al., 2023; Omeni, 2016) have identified types of responses to racism, this article offers insights into discursive micro dynamics of communicative resistance against racism through the framework of reverse discourse. While demonstrating how the framework deepens understanding of

interactional intercultural dynamics, the study also expands the framework by applying it to a new context and a new form of resistance. I identified four reverse discourse strategies: mirror reflection, ironic repetition, ironic redirecting, and ironic rearticulation, each contributing uniquely to the repertoire of reverse discourse in response to racism. Central to these strategies is the use of irony, except in mirror reflection. Together with other strategies, irony enabled participants to express their resistance to subtle and overt racism in an assertive and effective way, without escalating into direct conflict. Mirror reflection strategically appropriates dehumanizing discourse to show contradictions in their assumptions through their own logic. In doing so, it reverses both the discourse and the affective flows, inducing humiliation in those who maintain colonial narratives of superiority and inferiority. The paper thus offers a further contribution to the understanding of the racial dynamics of reverse discourse but explicating how affective flows animate discursive reversals and are themselves reversed.

Reverse discourse is a specific mechanism of discursive resistance that challenges power by appropriating its own logic and elements (Foucault, 1990). Although the concept has primarily been applied to macro-level resistance, (Baaz and Lilja , 2022; Lilja, 2028), Lilja & Vinthagen (2018) propose its potential application to dispersed forms of resistance. This paper took up this proposal and extended its application to dispersed everyday forms of resistance against racism and expanded its repertoire of strategies. It also highlighted its significance as a strategic tool for the subaltern to resist and navigate domination at the micro-levels of discourse in interpersonal interactions. The analysis shows how the strategies disrupt the power flow, empowering the subaltern to gain recognition and reclaim dignity, even if momentarily. Resistance through reverse discourse is not inherently subversive and does not warrant immediate structural changes. However, it allows the subaltern to reverse the power dynamic, thereby wielding power in the moment to fight off racism and, at times, take on disciplinary characteristics. Therefore, it is agentic. The potential of dispersed resistance, employing reverse discourse as a strategic tool of resistance to effect social change over time, and its potential evolution into macro-level resistance to address social justice against racism requires further research. Such

investigations would deepen our understanding of the incremental and transformative impacts of these resistive strategies against racial injustices within the broader social context.

This study addressed a European context where the significance of race is denied but where racial difference shapes everyday interactions. Scholars have argued that the limited scholarly focus on black people's experiences is largely due to the denial of race as a relevant social and analytical category in Europe (Hawthorne, 2023; Rastas & Nikunen, 2019; Small, 2018). In Switzerland, scholars have highlighted how the European discourse of racelessness limited attention to racially based forms of exclusion (Michel, 2015). This paper demonstrates that under the layer of the discourse of racelessness, racism enacts exclusions in both subtle and explicit ways thus manifesting the relevance of 'race' to everyday life of people of color and whites alike. Most participants experienced race-based racism (raced racism), in which race was explicitly or implicitly made visible and central to the interaction. This shows that race remains highly relevant in shaping black people's social interactions with the settled white majority. Therefore, the paper adds nuance to the understanding of how discourses of racelessness slide over and disguise racist exclusions.

The findings have also practical implications. They help Integration Offices, anti-racism initiatives, and racism monitoring bodies understand that race shapes daily interactions and remains relevant despite the discourse of racelessness. With this understanding, these organizations can integrate the insights from the findings into public events like "week against racism" day, inform policymakers to develop policies addressing race-based racism, and empower black migrants with strategies to navigate and resist racism, while also designing more effective policies to combat racism in Switzerland.

Chapter 4

‘May death stay away from us!’

Regulating desperation and desire by Eritreans with asylum status

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4.1. Abstract

This paper advances the understanding of migrant adaptation by elucidating the role of emotions and their regulation in negotiations of cultural differences and power relations. We propose a concept of intercultural extrinsic emotion regulation as an other-oriented pedagogic practice that attempts to change emotions to fit a new context and implicates different forms of cultural and racial subjection. The practice emerged from our analysis of transcripts of Zoom meetings by Eritreans who came to Switzerland as refugees. The analysis was informed by the affective-discursive framework (Wetherell, 2012). We identified affective-discursive practices in participants' diagnoses of problematic emotions, their efforts to regulate them, as well as their descriptions and discussions of their experiences. The analysis shows emotion regulation as a dynamic and conflictual communication practice aiming to shape others' emotions to fit the new cultural context, overcome structural barriers and respond to exclusions. We demonstrate connections between emotions, social structures and racial ideological views that animate conflicts over what emotional practices are best suited to respond to episodic and structural racism, and achieve upward mobility and inclusion. The paper advances the understanding of migrant adaptation to racial dynamics of exclusion.

Keywords: Affect, emotion regulation, adaptation, refugees, migration

4.2. Introduction

> I think we should not be demoralised. Because we want to live, we have to work. Furthermore, we have to say we have to live or be able to live. May death stay away from us! We will work and live (Tesfa).

Tesfa participated in a Zoom meeting of Eritreans who came to Switzerland as forced migrants, where she struggled to contain her worry as she tried to encourage those who are giving up searching for training and work, discouraged by various obstacles. She sought to ward off their social death with a phrase used habitually to encourage those gravely ill. Emotional intensity permeated the meetings that offered advice on how to find jobs, access training and adapt to different cultural norms. The meetings began in person and continued on Zoom during the Covid lockdown in response to questions and anxieties about accessing social services and practical aspects of everyday life in the new country. They were organised by informal Eritrean community leaders who have resided in Switzerland for a long time, have higher education backgrounds, and provided information to more recent arrivals struggling with adjustment or un(der)employment. The discussions of various practical topics not only reverberated with emotions but turned to the subject of emotions themselves, whereby certain habitual emotional practices were identified as impeding the participants' upward mobility. The organisers and presenters attempted to regulate these practices as means towards upward mobility, while some participants challenged the diagnoses of their marginalisation and disagreed about best emotional responses to exclusions.

Scholars have charged that ignoring the "messy complexity of emotions" in migrant (dis)embodiment and (dis)embeddedness, and then re-embodying and re-embedding, has resulted in a simplified understanding of adaptive processes and identities (Boccagni & Baldassar, 2015, p. 4). While much research examines migrants' emotional practices on social media, studies of migrants' offline emotional practices during adaptive processes have been scarce in the field of intercultural communication (but see Kinefuchi,

2010; Labador & Zhang, 2023; Oloruntobi, 2022; Sarabia et al., 2022). This study advances critical intercultural communication studies of migrant adaptive processes and racial incorporation dynamics (De La Garza & Ono, 2015; Drzewiecka & Steyn, 2009, 2012) by examining emotional practices of forced migrants settling down in the country of refuge. We demonstrate how attention to emotions, informed by the affective-discursive framework (Wetherell, 2012, 2013), allows insights into power relations and subjections in migrant adaptive negotiations of cultural differences and racial exclusions. We focus on black forced migrants who struggle through state integration procedures and requirements, as well as adjustments to daily life and exclusions in majority white environments. They face misrecognitions and racism that affect them powerfully and force them to manage their emotions in contexts where they are predominantly perceived as out of place and become targets of negative emotions from the majority (Ahmed, 2004). In many European countries, denials of the significance of race to social relations, and migrant integration specifically, limited attention to the experiences of black migrants. We thus also contribute to the frameworks of Black Europe and Black diaspora that challenge this lacuna calling for scholarship on "Black subjectivity, resistance, and livingness" in Europe as fundamental to decolonizing knowledge about migration (Hawthorne, 2022, p. 485, see also, Hawthorne, 2023; Rastas & Nikunen, 2019; Small, 2018).

We analyse the YouTube recordings of Eritrean community Zoom meetings to understand the role of emotional practices and their conflicting interpretations in negotiations of cultural differences and structural inequalities. We analyse affective-discursive practices and efforts to modify them that emerged from our analysis. We conceptualise these efforts as *intercultural extrinsic emotion regulation* that aims to regulate emotions of others in a communal setting to make them culturally appropriate and effective in a new cultural environment and structural power hierarchies. The affective-discursive framework (McConville, et al., 2020; Wetherell, 2012, 2013, 2014) shapes our understanding of emotions and emotion regulation as habituated practices grounded in meaning-making that are implicated in social positioning and reproduction of social (dis)advantage. We examine emotional practices to gain greater insight into migrants'

subjections, resistances and negotiations within new cultural formations and their power regimes. We thus illuminate what is at stake in emotion regulation done for the benefit of others while navigating a different cultural terrain, institutional barriers, and prejudices. Our analysis demonstrates that emotion regulation involves diagnosing problems in emotional practices and efforts to change them through cultural translations, reappraisal of relevant situations and suppressions. The intercultural extrinsic emotion regulation in the meetings was permeated by conflicts about which emotional practices were most useful in the context of exclusions. We thus show migrants as active agents managing their own and others' emotions in ways that both limit and advance their emancipation (Safouane et al., 2020).

4.3. Migration and affect

Critical intercultural communication studies conceive migrant adaptation as a complex and variable process of change through negotiating relations with host groups, global and local material resources and conditions, categories of belonging, inclusion/exclusion and discourses circulating in the sites of settlement sites (e.g., Acheme, 2023; Chen & Lawless, 2018; De La Garza & Ono, 2015; Drzewiecka & Steyn, 2009, 2012; Labador & Zhang, 2023; Shrikant, 2018). Adaptation proceeds through diverse paths shaped by intricate interplays between power, agency and discursive frameworks (De La Garza & Ono, 2015). A few studies point to emotions in their examination of migrant belonging and embodiment. Kinefuchi (2010) and Sarabia et al. (2022) show that a migrants' sense of belonging and attachment involves feeling safe and at home, whereas feelings of abjection and fear marginalise and provoke resistance. New cultural formations discipline migrant bodies of colour, subjecting them to new categories of difference through the estranging racializing gaze of the dominant white population that is felt in the body (Labador & Zhang, 2023; Oloruntobi, 2022; Sekimoto, 2012). Under pressure to assimilate, migrants struggle with ambivalent feelings about the consequences for their senses of self (Labador & Zhang, 2023). These studies show migrants grappling with their feelings in the processes of adaptation, however, they do not address the role of emotions in adaptations

theoretically. They prompt us to ask if and how emotions are patterned and what these patterns can tell us about how migrants negotiate between social structures and the self. Further, we inquire how migrants manage their emotions in the contexts of different cultural norms and in response to exclusions.

To address these questions, we turn to the affective-discursive framework and emotion management. Based on Bourdieu's practice theory, Margaret Wetherell conceptualised affective-discursive practices as embodied, situated, and dynamic figurations of bodily habits and capacities intertwined with meaning making, cultural formations, and social structures (McConville, et al., 2020; Wetherell, 2013, 2014; Wetherell et al, 2019). The framework conceives affect as a force arising from the body that is inseparable from meaning making and thus differs significantly from Cultural Studies approaches to affect as an intensity outside of discourse. Wetherell (2012) argues that discourse is not simply an expression of affect; communication formulates and completes affect and gives it power as a means through which it spreads. Affect is a persuasive force because it is social and relational and thus can be transmitted to others who can be pulled into an affective practice.

While emotions are open, dynamic and even unruly—their spontaneous arrival might be unwelcome and they might escape our efforts to control them—they are also something we 'do,' i.e., they are practices that are patterned, situated and habituated. Thus, emotions show the limits and capacity of human agency caught up in relations of power and social structures. Based on the practice theory approach, each performance of an affective-discursive practice is both new and a reenactment of social and cultural patterns performed by agents who are constituted as such by repeating and habituating practices (Wetherell, 2013). Patterns of practices are shaped by cultural norms that tend to differ by gender, class, race, sexuality, etc., whereby emotions serve as "a central mechanism of social reproduction" (Hemmings, 2005, p. 551), subjecting us at the intersection of our social positions (Scheer, 2012). Emotions are deeply implicated in negotiations of privilege, power, and dis/advantage (Wetherell, et al., 2019).

In migrant adaptation contexts, frictions emerge when "actors/bodies enact cultural scripts out of place" (Scheer, 2012, p. 204). Migrants not only habituate new emotional practices, but are also subjected as loci of emotions from others (Ahmed, 2004) feeling social valuing and differentiation in their bodies, e.g., when forced migrants are directed to cleaning jobs against desires and higher qualifications provoking individual feelings of shame, humiliation and abjection. For Ahmed (2004), who follows Franz Fanon, white affect towards black people constitutes them as recognizable racial objects. For migrants of colour, this misrecognition instantiates processes of becoming differently in new racial and cultural contexts (Oloruntobi, 2022; Sekimoto, 2012). How emotions are managed offers insight into negotiations of power relations in adaptation.

Practices of emotion management are part of the social patterning of affect and give insight into negotiations of cultural subjection (Wetherell, et al., 2019). Building on Arlie Hochschild's (1983) work, Wetherell et al. (2019) argue for examining the social uses of emotion regulation performed to comply with perceived cultural rules and/or to benefit others. Most work on the management of emotions focuses on regulating one's own emotions, or intrinsic regulation, while extrinsic regulation of emotions has received attention only more recently. Extrinsic emotion regulation is "an action performed with the goal of influencing another person's emotion trajectory" towards a desired emotional state (Nozaki & Mikolajczak, 2020, p. 10). We build on this concept to elucidate communal emotion regulation that emerged from our data analysis. This form of regulation is not dyadic in the sense of providing social support or changing emotions of a person in an interpersonal relationship. Instead, extrinsic emotion regulation is directed at and by a group constituted by their experiences, structural positioning, and identifications. It is aimed at developing new cultural emotional dispositions, rather than episodic regulations of feelings in the moment. We see this practice as performed and embedded within specific cultural contexts and social structures where it is implicated in forms of subjection, reproduction and/or resistance to those structures.

4.4. Eritreans refugees in Switzerland

Eritreans began to seek refuge in Switzerland due to political repression, the 1998-2000 border conflict with Ethiopia, and the indefinite military service (Kibreab, 2009). The revision of Swiss restrictive asylum policy in 2009 increased the numbers of admissions which reached a peak in 2015 and 2016 (Swiss Federal Office of Statistics, 2022). Approximately 40,969 Eritreans live among Switzerland's 8 million population, constituting the largest non-European migrant group (ibid). They are also the largest group of refugees living on social welfare owing to poor education and language barriers as well as difficulties accessing training, lack of recognition of diplomas and structural exclusions (Eyer & Schweizer, 2010; Fibbi, et al., 2003). These factors motivated the community meetings, that the participants described as self-help, first in person and then on Zoom.

The European context is relatively underexplored in intercultural communication studies. Switzerland is one of the European countries with a very small black population; migrants from Africa and their descendants are estimated to be 2.6% of the population (Klebo, et al., 2023). Immigration control contributed to Europe's self-definition as white (Small, 2018). The silencing of 'race' as a significant social category produced "unmattering of black life" in public life and theory (Hawthorne, 2023, p. 490, see also Rastas & Nikunen, 2019; Small, 2018). Swiss dominant discourses claim irrelevance of 'race' and deny racism based on not having had formal colonies, however, more or less indirect links to colonialism shaped colonial understandings of racial difference (Dahinden, 2022; Michel, 2015; Purtschert, 2015, 2019). Nativism, manifesting itself in concerns about Überfremdung ('over-foreignization') and in Eidgenosse ('confederate'), is the key mechanism of exclusion of migrants in Switzerland (Dahinden, 2022; Michel, 2015). While 'foreigners' are broadly excluded from national belonging, the presumed Swiss national is white, and the 'regime of racelessness' makes 'race' unmentionable rendering discussions of racial issues more difficult (Michel, 2015; Purtschert, 2019). Non-white migrants have been shown to adopt dominant discourses of racelessness as

means of incorporating themselves through alignment with Swiss whiteness (Cretton, 2018).

4.5. Methods

We analysed publicly available YouTube recordings of Zoom meetings of Eritreans who had been granted refugee status in Switzerland. The meetings were conducted in Tigrigna on Sunday evenings and attended by twenty to forty-seven participants. Each session began with a presentation on a topic requested by participants who communicated on WhatsApp. The topics covered included information about residence permit procedures, job search strategies, cultural norms and behaviour in Switzerland, as well as issues related to child rearing, schools, coping with PTSD, etc. Participants asked specific questions, such as, how to respond when a job interviewer asks about one's own weaknesses. Political and religious topics deemed potentially divisive were excluded to allow for free exchange and public accessibility of the recordings. Usually, between seven to nine participants kept their cameras on. The majority of the participants were women who turned their cameras on only to ask questions, stating that they wanted to keep their concurrent motherly duties off-screen.

Examining the recordings for topics discussed, we observed that the meetings were highly emotional and emotions themselves were a frequent topic of conversation. We focused on emotions and purposefully identified eleven recordings where emotions were explicitly addressed in the context of discussions about job searching, navigating the educational system, child rearing, gaining acceptance from the host community, etc. The recordings were transcribed, and the transcripts were annotated with nonverbal expressions, detailing changes in participants' facial expressions, body movements, and fluctuations in voice pitch, volume, and tone.

Following the affective-discursive framework (Wetherell, 2012, 2013), we 'read' emotions by examining *emotives* that name emotions to identify which ones were

diagnosed as problematic by the participants. We also examined how emotions were expressed indirectly, i.e. without being named. As Wetherrell (2012) argues, it is statements other than emotives, such as *cognitives* and *motives*, that often manifest emotions more powerfully as they reflexively reconstitute experiences and are made possible by specific emotional regimes. We thus 'read' *cognitives* that formulate reasons and thoughts, and *motives* that lay out action plans and goals, to understand what meanings where intertwined with emotions, thus forming affective-discursive practices. We also identified how the participants attempted to regulate these emotions and towards what ends. Next, we identified points of tension and conflict about what emotional practices were most appropriate and beneficial. Conflictual emotion regulation emerged as a central dynamic and we honed in on identifying its characteristics. After finalising the categories of affective-discursive practices and modes of regulation, we coded the rest of the 26 recordings. We found that the categories held up, with no new categories emerging, indicating the point of redundancy (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

We conducted the analysis as a team. The first author, who is from Eritrea and received refugee status in Switzerland, had the cultural, linguistic and tacit knowledge that guided the interpretations. She shares many experiences with the participants, including going through the asylum process, searching for housing, dealing with social services, and coping with racist exclusions, which gives her insight into the nuances of refugee experiences. However, unlike most participants, she did not cross the Sahara desert and/or the Mediterranean, which places her in a relatively privileged position, as does her graduate degree and studying in Switzerland. The latter also gives her the necessary scholarly distance to bracket off her personal experiences. She conducted the first rounds of open coding. As a bilingual speaker, she was able to address the deeper layers of signification in Tigrigna and convey them in English. Then, both authors closely collaborated on the analysis through linguistic and cultural translation to formulate and refine the categories and relations among them. We discussed transcripts at length considering other possible translations and interpretations, emotional expressions, and deeper meanings. We also reflected on our emotions arising during the analysis and the

insights they provided. The second author is a privileged repeat professional white immigrant to Switzerland who contributed her theoretical knowledge to form the categories and map out links between them.

4.6. Regulating and mobilising emotions

The Zoom discussions were permeated by intense emotions, revealing a great concern for community wellbeing. The participants diagnosed certain emotional practices as impediments to upward mobility and attempted to regulate them, revealing different understanding and conflicts about how to achieve inclusion. The analysis identified affective-discursive practices of 'timidity and passivity,' 'apathy and despair,' 'frustration and demoralization,' 'patience and perseverance,' and 'confidence and courage.' We also distinguished modes of regulation of these practices: cultural translation, reframing, and inspiring stories.

4.6.1. Regulating emotions out of place: towards new cultural dispositions

The moderator, presenters, and some participants (hereafter MPP's) identified timidity and passivity which, in turn, affect desperation and apathy, as pervasive emotions that hinder 'integration' and upward mobility. They attempted to mobilise confidence through cultural translation and perseverance through reappraisals and inspiring stories. Below, we identify the affective-discursive practices manifested in the diagnosis of 'problematic' emotions, the modes of their regulation, and their implications.

4.6.1.1. Timidity and passivity

The MPPs diagnosed timidity as rooted in Eritrean cultural practices that value modesty and encourage 'social discipline.' 'Talking up' one's skills, qualifications and accomplishments is seen as bragging, while direct eye contact are considered disrespectful and undisciplined. Further, passivity is shaped by government's control of schooling and

employment, which does not allow many Eritreans to plan their career paths. The MPPs explained that displaying timidity and passivity in Switzerland is inappropriate in situations such as job interviews or interactions with schools, because it hampers accessing opportunities for advancement and pursuing options. These arguments resonated with the participants who attributed their disconnection from the host community, their children's underperformance in school, and unfavourable perceptions about them to timidity. Their descriptions revealed timidity and passivity as an embodied affective-discursive practice wherein these emotions are intertwined with cultural meanings that allowed the participants to accomplish certain ends in Eritrea but hindered them in the settlement context.

4.6.1.2. Mobilising confidence through cultural translation

MPPs attempted to regulate timidity and passivity by mobilising confidence, self-assertion and desire through cultural translation. They explained cultural norms and expectations, how displays of emotions are interpreted, and which emotions are appropriate in certain situations, particularly job interviews. During a meeting on the importance of acquiring soft skills and multitasking to gain a competitive advantage in the job market, the presenter explained the cultural differences:

> Passiveness is not viewed as a good behaviour here. Yes, it is positive in our country, but here it does not work. Instead, we should be active.

What is named 'being disciplined' and humble in Eritrea, the presenter, while speaking Tigrinya, already resignified as 'passive' through the semiotic means of the Swiss cultural context, where it conflicts with the expectations of displays of confidence in job interviews. This was not a linguistic translation, but a translational resignification, expressed in a passionate tone that revealed a desire to persuade participants of the importance of changing how they feel and communicate their feelings to present themselves in advantageous ways and achieve what they desire. MPPs sought to mobilise

desire by urging the participants to know and express what they want, speak about their qualifications, talents and aspirations, and insisted that it is not productive to say that they will take any available job--a common statement Swiss social workers complain about and ask if Eritreans know why they came to Switzerland, according to a presenter. They attempted to instil feeling and expressing desire for specific goals in life to propel participants to meet local people to develop networks that are crucial to finding jobs and other opportunities, as well as show interest in school meetings and their children's homework to motivate their children to work hard.

Translating emotional practices also included instructions on their bodily expression. A presenter, who spoke about job searching and interview preparation, smiled empathetically as she calmly admonished participants:

> During a job interview, it is important to look directly into the eyes. Furthermore, do not bend your necks. I know it is considered respect in Eritrea, but that is not the case here. If you do that, they will assume that you lack confidence or have low self-esteem.

She explained how to communicate confidence through body posture and eye contact. Having lived in Switzerland for a long time and fluent in its language of emotional embodiment and body knowledge, she instructed the participants on bodily performance to show confidence in ways that are intelligible in the Swiss cultural context. As Sekimoto (2012) argued, learning to embody new cultural codes produces a new materiality of the self. Here, the presenter attempted to mobilise the embodiment of emotions that might not feel 'right' as a strategy to eventually not only show but also feel them. Cultural translation of meanings and embodiment aimed to produce a new sense-making to drive new emotional practices (Schatzki, 2017). It directed participants towards habituating new dispositions to communicate emotions appropriate to the context and advantageous to them in transactional interactions.

4.6.1.3. Apathy and despair

MPPs identified apathy and despair as chronic states afflicting those Eritreans who have given up hope for a better life. They argued that the prolonged passivity precipitates apathy and despair, affecting the entire community. The discussions revealed that apathy and despair, as an affective-discursive practice, were engendered by thwarted hopes of finding jobs and a good life after traumatic experiences in their homeland and during refuge seeking. A participant spoke about how discouragement in Eritrea was compounded by disappointments in Switzerland and affected many to give up :

> We could not achieve our childhood dreams because of the obvious political situation in our country. We get discouraged from pursuing our dreams when we see those we consider our role models dispersing in various military camps (in a calm tone). When we come here, we again continue to give up because we arrive at an old age and find the language challenging (in a sad calm tone). So what do you think those who are giving up should do? How should they face the challenges in front of them? (while calm his tone rang with desperation).

The participant explained how restrictions and the compulsory military inscriptions in Eritrea, followed by challenges in Switzerland, discouraged dreams and desires. Whatever hopes drove them to migrate were drained by structural restrictions such as age limits on professional training, limited access to language courses and the difficulty of learning French or Swiss German, which has several spoken dialect forms that vary significantly from high German used as the written language. This participant was one of the relatively younger members whose apathy is a central concern for the community. He and other forced migrants 'do' apathy and despair as an affective-discursive practice intertwining emotions with their interpretations of their circumstances (Schatzki, 2001). Nevertheless, his plea for help showed that his despair was interlaced with desire for moving forward.

In response, many participants began to make facial grimaces expressing disagreement and anger and tried to speak at the same time. Some criticised the community for succumbing to apathy. A participant expressed sadness about the devastating effects of losing hope but also criticised the community for giving up too quickly:

> As the presenter said, giving up after applying 6 or 4 times is ravaging us. Many people simply complain, saying they are rejected because they don't know the language well. I have a lot of friends who say that. I myself applied for more than 100 vacancies without giving up. Some friends encouraged me, but many discouraged me, telling me, "Oh, you don't give up or are not discouraged? Why don't you just take whatever (with sad incredulity).” But if you know what you want, you should pursue it without giving up.

The highly emotive phrase "ravaging us" highlighted the negative effects of giving up. The participant also expressed sadness about community members disseminating misinformation to their own detriment. Other participants talked about being affected by the negative phrases “what’s the use?” and “for what in this country,” habitually repeated by other Eritreans in response to suggestions about job or training seeking and language learning. One admitted that "it is depressing to meet with Eritreans because not only are they desperate, but they influence each other." She demonstrated her disappointment and anger—in her tone of voice, a furrowed brow and hand and body movements—at the contagious spread of apathy and its persuasive effects. Other participants also shared their experiences of how much discouragement they endured from their Eritrean friends when striving to get placement in vocational schools. These experiences manifested apathy and despair as an affective-discursive practice that pulls in others through dissemination of misinformation about what institutional processes, job opportunities, and educational pathways critical for personal advancement. A participant stated that “it makes you feel down. Sometimes it pushes you to the point that you forget about your existence,” expressing disappointment and disgust in facial expressions and gestures.

4.6.1.4. Mobilising perseverance

MPPs attempted to mobilise perseverance by telling stories of their own determination rewarded to reframe the participants' interpretation of their situation. One offered a story of pursuing her dream:

> I always dreamed of working in one beautiful flower shop in Asmara. After my arrival, I wished to work in a flower place. But the problem is they do not want you to work in professions you choose to work in. They want me to work in the cleaning industry, to clean toilets (with a firm tone of disapproval). And what should I do? I should be firm and work hard to achieve my goals (in a defiant tone). And thanks to God, I worked in a flower place here. You said after 30 years we are too old to go to school. No, we should say we should plan to live after 30 years (in a disapproving but also encouraging tone)! We should not plan to depart this life after 30 (in an encouraging emotional tone). We see 50, 60, even 90-year-old people working in this country. I think we should not be demoralized (with encouragement). Because we want to live, we have to work. Furthermore, we have to say we have to live or be able to live. May death stay away from us! We will work and live (struggling to speak with voice trembling with emotions).

This participant told her story of persisting and achieving her goal of working in a flower shop, even though she was initially directed to cleaning jobs. She admonished others for saying that at 30 they were too old to pursue education. Her defiant tone and escalation of working age to the improbable 90 aimed to inspire and encourage pursuing seemingly unlimited possibilities. The phrase, "we should say we have to live, not depart," usually told to the elderly or the seriously ill on the verge of death, linked giving up to death and revealed the high stakes in continued perseverance to find meaningful work as a means to live. However, when the participant stated that, "they [social workers] do not want you to work in professions you choose to work in," she troubled the diagnosis of culturally based passivity and ensuing apathy as the sole reason for the lack of

advancement, pointing to structural forces that delimit life possibilities and affect apathy. Other participants discussed various barriers, including experiences of racism, and challenged the MPPs focus on individual emotions as the means of reaching upward mobility.

4.6.2. Regulating emotional responses to racism

Systematic exclusions, the emotions they elicit, and how best to regulate them were subjects of intense discussions. Some participants assertively argued that it was not their passivity but the structural barriers of the state integration system, negative attitudes towards Eritreans and, specifically, racism that prevent them from reaching their educational and professional goals. They showed frustration and demoralisation. The MPPs advocated patience and perseverance while others argued that courage and confidence were necessary to challenge prejudices and forge a place for themselves in the country of settlement.

4.6.2.1. Frustration and demoralisation

The discussions revealed an affective-discursive practice of frustration and demoralisation shaped by experiences of systemic exclusions. A participants described how her endeavours to find placement in a vocational school were repeatedly thwarted:

> We have a lot of pressure in this country. When I wanted to do an apprenticeship in September, I was first told to try mathematics and computers. I did everything as I was told. Then they told me to work on my communication skills, and I did that too. They keep trying to find excuses after excuses to exclude me from participating in the apprenticeship. In this country, they try to demoralise us and make us feel down. One or two people can strive without giving up, but most of us give up hope after trying for so long. You just get frustrated and demoralised.

> They always say negative things about us without taking responsibility for their weaknesses. Who can advocate for us and speak up for us?

The phrase "we have a lot of pressure in this country," similar to another phrase used frequently, "this country is difficult," is a euphemism for prejudice, expressing its emotional impact but also reluctance to specifically name it. The participant challenged the MPP's diagnosis of timidity and passivity as the reasons for the lack of advancement, explaining the barriers she experienced. While initially calm, the participant visibly struggled to control rising emotions as she spoke, communicating a sense of helplessness affected by her feeling that she was in a hostile territory of social workers with malign motivations. She echoed other participants' calls for an advocate and help beyond the Zoom meetings. The virtual room became emotionally tense, when several other participants followed with stories of racist experiences, particularly when trying to access vocational training, showing accumulation of negative affects among them. While trying to enact the cultural norms of emotional restraint, many expressed emotions that formed an affective-discursive practice of frustration, demoralisation, humiliation and anger intertwined with their understanding of the barriers and exclusions which affected them.

4.6.2.2. Mobilising patience and perseverance through reappraisals

The MPPs tried to regulate frustrations and anger by reappraising situations described by the participants to mobilise their patience. They were unconvinced by the negative stories about social workers and attempted to encourage trust. A participant who runs integration courses reinterpreted the negative stories as mistakes due to social workers' incompetency or cultural misunderstandings, rather than prejudice.

> It is difficult for me to think that eeeeee [paralinguistic expression of doubt], they are purposely creating obstacles (with emphasis). However, there is a lot of information they themselves as employees do not know. So I do not think they do it purposely. It could be because Swiss people do not emphasise education a lot.

> Therefore, they find it challenging to see refugees trying to enrol in higher or vocational education (with emphasis).

Her affective reaction underscored her rejection of the denunciations of social workers, reframing the incidents described by other participants as mistakes or incompetence. She also corrected negative perceptions of the vocational training explaining that it is a strong element of the Swiss educational system and leads to well-paid employment. The reappraisal attempted to change the understanding--the practical intelligibility--that links actions in practices and shapes what emotions it makes sense to 'do' (Schatzki, 2001; McConville, et al., 2020). It aimed to change feelings about a situation through a different interpretation (Nozaki & Mikolajczak, 2020) and thus change emotions towards social workers. While ostensibly 'defending' social workers, this participant and others tried to lessen the feelings of injury, vulnerability and anger at being targeted and humiliated by racist responses towards their struggles that reverberated through participants' stories.

The reappraisal of situations also involved encouraging the participants to reframe their understanding of their own qualifications. After a participant expressed his disappointment and anger at his internship employer reneging on an earlier verbal promise of sponsoring him for vocational training, a presenter on job searching encouraged him to consider that maybe he was not fully qualified for the position:

> Employers don't do favours. It is a business and takes someone if he thinks that person has potential. You may think your German is good enough for the job, but that might not be the reality. To be honest, in general, we mostly overestimate our skills. I don't know how and why we have this in our society (with astonishment & troubled tone). So if your employer asks you to do an additional internship, maybe your language competence is not enough. There are many reasons, and it is a competition. […] However, you should try to compensate for your limitations by being motivated, punctual, etc.

In his attempt to reframe the problem from prejudice to unrealistic valuation of one's qualifications, he encouraged participants to assess their potential as part of reappraising their encounters with employers. His troubled tone and astonishment about overinflation of skills expressed disapproval of the assumptions that not being hired was always due to prejudice and feeling demoralised as a result. In these reappraisals, words were animated by powerful expressions of emotions communicating the urgency and importance of changing interpretations, behaviours and feelings. However, this form of emotion regulation limited understanding when prejudice or overvaluing of qualifications play a role in particular situations or how the two might be entangled.

Stories of racist experiences were generally dismissed and/or reframed in favour of obedience to and working within the dominant socio-cultural system that not only disciplines the cultural bodily performances of emotions but also targets them as objects of negative emotions. MPPs were particularly assertive in advocating against talking about racism with children, fearing that they would develop a 'negative' attitude. When other participants rejected various reappraisals of their experiences of exclusions, one acknowledged in an exasperated tone: "*We all know that racism exists. All of us who live here, we know that racism exists. We fight against racism daily*" but then immediately followed with advice to not focus on that but instead continue to actively pursue opportunities. Speaking animatedly, the moderator admitted that "*We are like a black dot dropped on a white paper*," her voice trembled with emotion as she tapped her finger for emphasis, acknowledging the isolated and marginal situation of Eritreans in Switzerland. She admitted that negative perceptions and media representations affect the community but asserted that there was "nobody to advocate on our behalf." When she asserted that the only option is for Eritreans to change by being more active, her emotional expressions showed desperation and hesitation that betrayed an insufficiency of insisting on perseverance against prejudice. Nevertheless, she emphasised:

> if you try hard with persistence and without despair, you can show them on the ground that you can achieve. Therefore, what I am saying is that we should not give up so easily when obstacles come our way.

While euphemistically acknowledging "obstacles," the moderator attempted to suppress despair and mobilise perseverance to overcome prejudice and gain recognition from 'them.' Another participant implored others:

> The only alternative is when they try to undermine us, we have to work harder with all our power to exceed their expectations (with emphasis). And the objective of this program is to remind us that we should not give up hope. We are in a country of refuge, and in the country of refuge, we have to convert the challenges to our advantage (with emphasis). To convert challenges to our advantage, we have to be patient and tolerant.

The construction of 'them' as those who "try to undermine us" and nevertheless have "expectations" that 'we' should be exceeded evoked precarity and vulnerability in the country of refuge. While exhibiting care and concern for other participants, the appeal to work harder in such conditions could hardly assure success. Persevering can be an agentic effort, however, practising patience and tolerance in insecure conditions reduces refugees to "integrating agents" (Klarenbeek, 2021, p. 910) solely carrying the burden of integration with the settled majority that is ambivalent towards them.

Perseverance, as well as patience and tolerance, feature prominently in the Eritrean state discourses that interprellate Eritreans as citizens to persist through the political and economic turmoil to defy the state's enemies. This widely circulated national discourse promotes these emotions in the service of building a sovereign nation and national identity. Some participants evoked the state discourse to portray losing hope as antithetical to Eritrean identity.

It is astonishing to see a hopeful person in Eritrea losing hope here. Where does this behaviour come from? Are Eritreans known for losing hope? No! We are hopeful and hard-working people even when facing difficult situations. Eritreans can overcome challenging circumstances such as war and famine. This is who we are as people.

The MPPs recontextualised the Eritrean state discourse in the Swiss context to mobilise the participants to enact their agency through perseverance against racist exclusions. The euphemism "difficult situations" was betrayed by the comparison to war and famine revealing the strain and toll of such challenges. The calls for obedience to power hierarchies discouraged the participants from challenging structural exclusions, in effect, disempowering them. The call to align themselves with the subjectivity ascribed by the state constrained their agency from taking a stance against prejudice and directed them towards perseverance as survival (Safouane et al., 2020).

The contrast between the mobilisation of feelings of desire for professional goals and the suppression of desire for recognition and equal treatment in favour of docility was striking. While ostensibly aimed at improving chances of finding employment, the MPPs' emotion regulation worked to fashion emotional practices to not only be culturally appropriate but also conform to social power structures. It worked with race and racism denial discourse prevalent in Switzerland that, in effect, makes black migrants responsible for systemic failures, thereby preserving them. Nevertheless, some participants persisted in recounting stories of racist experiences and pushing against attempts to redirect the discussion away from racism, which led to heated exchanges as others advocated confronting prejudice with courage.

4.6.2.3. Mobilising confidence and courage

Some participants demonstrated and advocated for an affective-discursive practice of confidence, assertiveness and courage contra racism. They described how they challenged and confronted prejudice, rejecting submission implied by patience and perseverance.

They urged others to take an active stance against mistreatment by showing confidence and courage. A participant forcefully asserted:

> I think we should try to burst out by ourselves. If the teacher ignores your question, you have to speak to her alone, address the issue and challenge her (some participants nodded their heads). We should not ignore mistreatments (with an emphasis). What I observed from white people is that if you ignore problems or issues (with emphasis), they consider you a worthless person. That is my experience. You have to challenge them (his tone rising with ardour). If they do not listen to you, you go to institutions or social systems to file a complaint.

The participant contended that ignoring prejudice diminishes one as a person who is then perceived as worthless. He thus advocated taking action and being assiduous in responding to mistreatment, driven by a sense of self-worth. While MMPs attempted to mobilise persevering in all aspects of life, but in responses to racism, when one should be docile, this participant advocated for self-respect and vigilance in standing up for oneself. He thus urged other participants to turn their anger into resistance against exclusion rather than succumb to demoralisation.

> Another participant told a personal story of taking a firm stance against prejudice: My daughter told us that the teacher hates, ignores, and blocks her, threatens her with her eyes or words, etc. (expressing disappointment and sadness in her tone of voice, facial expressions and gestures). The issue with the teacher is still pending. We should not be discouraged and give up. We should challenge them. There are institutions where we can seek help (with a forceful tone). I found them very helpful.

She recounted her daughter's painful experience of being the only child in class segregated by a teacher for being 'naughty,' and how she challenged it by speaking with the school and seeking help from nonprofit legal organisations. She spoke with a mix of

emotions expressing pain, bitterness and frustration, ending her contribution by saying that "from my own experience, we should not accept whatever they say, we should fight for our kids and for the truth." She then provided the names of institutions that offer free legal aid to stimulate the participants to seek legal recourse and reassure them that they would not be alone in the process. She offered a counterpoint to the MPPs' insistence on docility in the face of discrimination, demonstrating through her story that not only can mistreatment be challenged, but also that there are resources outside of the community that provide assistance. She demonstrated a different performance of agency whereby emotions felt in response to mistreatment are not suppressed but instead animate counter actions towards remediation of suffered insults and exclusions. While taking an active stance was consistent with the MPPs calls to be active and desiring, the necessity to actively battle prejudice points to the profound emotional costs of migrant adaptation.

4.7. Discussion

This study advances the understanding of emotions in intercultural communication by elucidating how cultural changes and experiences of exclusion shape affective-discursive practices and modes of regulating them. The participants themselves identified 'doing' certain emotions as necessary to their adaptation, which evoked intense emotions during their discussions underscoring the high stakes for a community suffering from under- and unemployment and, as diagnosed by participants, afflicted by communally spread despair and apathy. We identified five interrelated affective-discursive practices: timidity and passivity, apathy and despair, frustration and demoralisation, patience and perseverance, and assertiveness and courage. These practices were shaped by how the participants interpreted their circumstances and racial relations, cultural and ideological rules for expressions of emotions, and an orientation to achieving upward mobility and inclusion. This "practical intelligibility" (Schatzki, 2001, p. 51) shaped how they 'did' emotions in response to exclusions and to achieve upward mobility. The affective-discursive practice framework allowed us to tease out the entanglements of emotions and meanings as participants navigated different rules for emotional expressions and negotiated their racial

marginalisation. Extending this framework to a migrant adaptation context, we show how discursive-affective practices are shaped by new cultural norms and different orientations towards structures of exclusion.

We introduce the concept of *intercultural extrinsic emotion regulation* to address the dynamics of emotion regulation by migrants confronting cultural differences, systemic differences, and structural exclusions during embedding in a new cultural environment. The *intercultural extrinsic emotion regulation* is an other-oriented pedagogic intervention aiming to change group's habituated emotional practices as a strategy of overcoming the lack of upward mobility and exclusion in a new socio-cultural context. We show that emotion regulation involved *diagnosing and naming* certain emotions as problematic, *culturally translating* the meanings of emotions, *reframing* and *inspirational stories*. *Cultural translation* resignified certain habituated emotions as inappropriate, undesirable and obstacles in the new cultural setting while also instructing on the proper embodiment of emotions deemed culturally appropriate in interactions with others. The emotion regulation involved *reappraising* interpretations of specific events and the broader cultural context. *Inspirational stories* encouraged envisioning and pursuing different opportunities. Finally, expressions of emotions such as disappointment or defiance was a form of mobilisation of emotional practices viewed as desirable.

We show that the intercultural extrinsic emotion regulation was conflictual as it was underpinned by different ideological viewpoints on one's position in racial hierarchies and ways to overcome marginalisation and vulnerability. Efforts to regulate emotions aimed to change how participants are constituted within power structures as informed by conflicting ideas: perseverance and courage. The perseverance practice centered on an active subject driven by desire and hope to constantly search for opportunities, whether educational or professional, without giving up. It diagnosed a lack of economic advancement as an individual failure to overcome structural barriers and a lack of desire for specific goals. It attempted to stimulate perseverance and patience to win approval and inclusion from the white majority, thus motivating reenactment and embodiment of the

colonising ideology that sees the black subject as not inherently worthy but needing to prove him/herself. It promoted a vision of the system in which it is possible to overcome structural obstacles, thus serving the interests of the dominant society. This position was akin to the 'politics of respectability' advocated by other groups, notably African Americans in the USA (Pitcan el at., 2018). In contrast, the courage and assertiveness practice shaped the insistence on challenging discrimination and saw inclusion as something that has to be fought for, rather than being granted as a reward for demonstrating one is worthy. The perseverance approach reinforced the logic of exclusion, the courage approach advocated resistance and self-assertion. While each effort was agentic, agency is not inherently resistive or unrestrained, as agents respond to immediate exigencies, they may undermine their own long term (Safouane, et al., 2020).

The naturalistic setting of the emotional expressions and regulation is the strength of our study. There are, however, also limitations. The Zoom recordings did not allow questioning the participants about their experiences in different situations, clarifications or demographic information. We could not see all participants' nonverbal emotional expressions since some turned their video off. Further, our study focuses on one particular group, we thus call for more research on affective-discursive practices of differently situated groups to understand how and what emotions they deploy to overcome exclusions and/or secure privileges.

Chapter 5

‘Are you a refugee like us? Oh then we have hope!’ Affective discursive encounters in doing insider Other research

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5.1. Abstract

In this article, I reflect on how paying attention to the flow of affect between participants and the researcher during interviews unveils knowledge that highlights inequalities and advances a decolonial approach. I specifically discuss the capacity of productive discomfort in revealing valuable insights about the lived experiences of forced migrants and in uncovering knowledge that might otherwise stay hidden. In doing so, I demonstrate how my positionality as an 'insider Other' and my approach to interviews as affective encounters open up profound layers of experiences and sense-making. Expanding upon this, the study presents a unique framework that combines the method of interviews, conceptualised as situated affective encounters, with an affective-discursive analytical framework that views affect as intertwined with meaning and discourse. This fusion emphasises the significance of emotions as a source of knowledge in the research process. The study highlights how this approach contributes to the reflexivity turn in migration studies and elucidates how the combined framework can guide researchers to work with discomfort. This can be a source of insight, as demonstrated by reflecting on my own research on the lived experiences of Eritrean migrants. I use several excerpts from my data to demonstrate how viewing emotions as meaningful leads to nuanced interpretations, thereby enriching insights into the living conditions of those who arrived as forced migrants.

Keywords: Discomfort; affective-discursive encounters; decolonial knowledge; forced migrants; reflexivity.

5.2. Introduction

This article presents my reflections on how attending to the flow of affect between participants and the researcher during interviews generates routes to knowledge that foreground inequalities and advance a decolonial approach (Amelina, 2022; Mayblin & Turner 2021). Specifically, I argue that productive discomfort emerging during situated affective interview encounters opens up deep layers of experiences and sense-making and generates knowledge that might otherwise remain inaccessible. I demonstrate this emotional dynamic by reflecting on how productive discomfort emerged relationally between the participants and me as an insider Other researcher in a project on the experiences of Eritreans who arrived as refugees and settled in Switzerland. While most qualitative inter- view manuals rightly stress the importance of making participants comfortable, my field-work experience provided unique insights about the capacity of discomfort to generate insights. I show how the method of approaching interviews as a 'situated affective encounter' (Ayata et al., 2019) made me attentive to how productive discomfort emerged from comfort and how the affective discursive framework (Wetherell, 2012) animated an analysis of the varied emotional expressions of discomfort to generate new insights about life experiences of forced migrants.

The burgeoning reflexive turn in migration studies sparked critical scrutiny of the theoretical and ideological frameworks underlying knowledge production (Amelina, 2020; Dahinden, Fischer, & Menet, 2021; Favell, 2022; Schinkel, 2018; Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2003). The affective turn in cultural studies and social sciences led scholars to recognize the relevance of emotions in research (e.g., Bondi, 2005; Dickson-Swift et al., 2009). While some emphasise the role of emotions in knowledge production (e.g., Behar, 1996; Bondi, 2005; England, 1994; Hubbard, Backett-Milburn, & Kemmer, 2001; Moss, 2005; Widdowfield, 2000), others frame them as subjective experiences requiring careful management (Dickson-Swift et al., 2009; McKenzie, 2017; Ratnam, 2019). However, rather than managing discomfort away, Chadwick (2021) and Schmidt, van der Weele, and Sebrechts (2023) argue that staying and working with uncomfortable feelings to

examine and constructively engage with them leads to reflections that enrich the findings. I built on these insights to extend the understanding of the role of emotions in migration studies (Franca, 2023; Gray, 2008; Wajsberg, 2020). I elucidate how discomfort and willingness to be unguarded lead to frank explorations and unique insights that challenge what Amelina calls a reproduction of 'occidentalist colonial traces of knowledge about migrant inferiority' (2022: 15). The discomfort emerged as my participants recounted emotionally charged stories of lost opportunities, misunderstandings, failures, exclusions, and insurmountable obstacles that are difficult to tell and hear, yet result from affective openness and, in turn, open up avenues for analysis.

I argue that combining the interviews as an affective encounter method (Ayata et al., 2019: 67) with the affective-discursive analytical framework that sees affect as intertwined with meaning (Wetherell 2012, 2013, 2014) leads analytical attention to emotions as a source of knowledge in the process of research. I first show how this approach contributes to the reflexivity turn in migration studies by highlighting the role of emotions in research. I then demonstrate how the combined framework can guide researchers to 'staying with discomfort' (Chadwick 2021: 5) and working with emotional entanglements as sources of insight by reflecting on my own research on the lived experiences of Eritrean migrants. I offer analyses of several excerpts from my data to highlight how conceiving emotions as meaningful leads to rich and nuanced interpretations, enriching insights into the living conditions of people who arrived as forced migrants.

5.3. Reflexivity and emotions

The reflexive turn in migration studies urges decentring received concepts, theories, and categories that reproduce hegemonic ways of knowing and developing alternatives (Amelina, 2020, 2022; Astolfo & Allsopp, 2023; Dahinden, Fischer, & Menet, 2021; Favell, 2022; Schinkel, 2018). As part of broader reflexivity, self-reflexivity refers to critical assessment of how researcher's beliefs, positionality, and education shape interactions with participants and subsequent data interpretations (e.g. Berger, 2015; Crean, 2018). Scholars in social sciences have been reflecting on how emotions of the participants and the researchers arise in and shape the research process as part of the affective turn (e.g., Behar, 1996; Bondi, 2005; Dickson-Swift et al., 2009; England, 1994; Hubbard, Backett-Milburn, & Kemmer, 2001; Moss, 2005; Widdowfield, 2000). Emotions shape the data collection process and motivate data interpretation (e.g., Drozdzewski & Dominey-Howes, 2015; Lee-Treweek & Linkogle, 2000; Lund, 2012). Emphasising the relationality of emotions, Bondi (2005) argues that data emerge from multiple interview encounters interwoven with emotions. Reflecting on these emotions allows for discerning power dynamics as part of an ethical approach towards study participants (Meloni, 2020).

In migration studies, scholars have begun reflecting on emotional entanglements in re- search (Francs, 2023). Wajsberg (2020) argues for attention to how fatigue experienced by migrant communities who feel over-researched may impact the quality of findings. Other scholars argue for reflecting on researcher's emotions. As Gray (2008) argues, emotions are not fleeting but are deeply entwined with culture and society and drive action. Consequently, researchers' emotional attachments to the object of study shape how they perceive and frame their research. Franca (2023) argues that when participants make statements that differ ideologically from the researcher's views, the emotions emerging in response should be controlled to maintain research integrity. This is aligned with the position of some scholars in the broader social sciences who argue that when powerful and difficult emotions emerge during fieldwork they should be managed

to prevent them from influencing research outcomes (McKenzie, 2017) or compromising the well-being of researchers (e.g., Dickson-Swift et al., 2009; Drozdzewski & Dominey-Howes, 2015; Ratnam, 2019).

However, recently, scholars called attention to the value of discomfort in research. Chadwick (2021) highlights the significance of working with discomfort to not reproduce colonial knowledge about her black participants in South Africa. She views discomfort as an 'epistemic resource for knowledge production and theory-making' to halt the reproduction of colonial knowledge (p. 2). Framing discomfort as 'awkwardness', Schmidt, van der Weele, and Sebrechts (2023) posit that such attention illuminates relational concepts and reveals the often-unnoticed emotional work during fieldwork. I contribute to the understanding of the value of discomfort by reflecting on how its emergence in my research project was shaped by the situated affective encounters method (Ayata et al. 2019) and informed by the affective-discursive framework Wetherell (2012, 2013, 2014) allowed the emergence of otherwise shunned topics and development of deeper insights about the experiences and subjectivity of forced migrants settling in conditions of deep structural inequalities.

5.4. Situated affective-discursive encounters in fieldwork

Ayata et al. (2019) propose a method of interviews as 'situated affective encounters', thus expanding Haraway's concept of interviews as 'situated encounters'. The authors argue that interviews are shaped by affect, among other factors. They invite researchers to pay attention to non-verbal communication and rigorously document their own and the participants' emotions during interviews in field notes and diaries to reflect on embodied data (Ayata et al., 2019: 67). By doing so, researchers can contextualise and analyse interviews more comprehensively, going beyond the textual analysis of transcripts. While Ayata et al. (2019) provide a valuable method for reflecting on affect in interviews, their understanding of affect as non-discursive, that is, as an impulse that 'constantly travels be-tween or among people and artefacts and is registered in varying degrees of intensities,

resonances or dissonances' (68) limits interpretive possibilities. I show that infusing their framework with the notion of affect as enmeshed with meaning-making, as proposed by Wetherell (2012, 2013, 2015) offers a more robust approach to analysing emotions as sources of knowledge.

The affective-discursive framework views emotions as embodied, situated, dynamic, and patterned practices. Wetherell (2012) bridges the Cultural Studies notions of affect as embodied with a discursive approach arguing that affect is a 'figuration where body possibilities and routines are intertwined with meaning-making and other social and material figurations' (Wetherell, 2012: 17). As social and relational, affect circulates between people, including during interview encounters drawing the researcher and the participants into emotional entanglements and interpretations (Wetherell 2012). While compatible with the interviews as affective encounters method, Wetherell (2015) moves beyond the notion of affect as solely bodily intensities to pay attention to its expressions in narratives where emotions 'bubble up' as we ruminate about past events or narrate our experiences (2). She thus offers a method of analysing emotions as meaning making by taking into ac- count the historical, social, and ideological contexts of their expression in specific social environments. I argue that the combined framework of 'interviews as situated affective discursive encounters' enables researchers to document emotions, interpreting them based on the situation, verbal data, and cultural knowledge. Focusing on emotions in research requires self-reflection about the researcher's relation to the participants.

5.5. Emotion-evoking positionality: insider Other

Researcher positionality is "context-specific and relational" and not reducible to an insider-outsider binary (Carling et al., 2014, p. 44). Despite sharing many characteristics with my study participants, I struggled to claim an insider position. Although I am an 'Eritrean' with a 'refuge' status, I describe my relationship with my participants as that of an 'insider Other'. I share cultural and linguistic knowledge from Eritrea which positions

me as an insider (Carling et al., 2014; Collet, 2008; Ryan, 2015). However, while my identity, experience, and 'social and epistemic location' (Grosfoguel, 2009, p. 7) converge with theirs in some ways, there are also divergences due to my unique trajectory. My unique trajectory of arriving to Switzerland as an international student, later obtaining refugee status in a process which is markedly different from that of my participants and pursuing a PhD in Switzerland, places me in relation of an 'Other' to the vast majority of Eritreans in Switzerland. Compared to my participants, I did not experience the arduous travel along perilous routes in search of refuge. I did not cross the Sahara Desert and the Mediterranean Sea risking my life, nor stayed in a detention-like refugee camp facilities. I have been afforded the opportunity to pursue higher education, an opportunity not available to many in similar circumstances. Having studied in inter- national Geneva, I have expanded my social circle beyond my ethnic community. Leveraging my international professional network enabled me to avoid the menial jobs many participants do. These privileges positioned me as the participants' Other, allowing me to access spaces that were not available to many of them. My affiliation with an elite institute served as a protective zone. However, once outside this protective bubble, the realities of the 'refugee' label became apparent.

Although arriving as an international student granted me many advantages, I share with my participants epistemic and social location as a visible subaltern black African refugee in a predominantly white country that defines itself through nativist ideals and whiteness (Dahinden, 2022) but denies the significance of race (Lentin, 2008; Purtschert, 2019). While I had the privilege to study at elite institutions for my Master's and my doctorate, I was one of the few black students in the international programme and later, the sole black student pursuing a doctorate at my university. I thus shared racial hypervisibility (Small, 2018) with my participants even as the academic institutions protected me from racist exclusions. I have also experienced some barriers to accessing social services and other hardships that are endured by the participants after I applied for refugee status upon the completion of my Master's and before I began my doctorate studies a few years later. My studies did not fully spare me from prejudice. Notably, having a non-

European name posed obstacles to my accessing employment, particularly internships. Following a job-search consultant's recommendation to alter my first name to better appeal to European recruiters, I changed it and felt the loss of meaning and significance that I cherished. This experience forced me to 'un-become' myself, losing a part of my identity to fit into the expectations of an otherizing labour market, only to 'become' myself again later when I reclaimed my original name, encouraged by my PhD supervisor. Despite the challenges, I was able to access internships through my professors' networks.

In light of the discussions presented above, attempting to rigidly categorise myself as either an insider or outsider risks oversimplifying the multifaceted identity and experiences that shaped my role as a researcher. I am not fully an insider but rather an 'apparent in- sider', as Carling et al. (2014: 51) put it. Similarly, claiming an outsider position would overlook my shared identity with the participants. Instead, my complex identity and experience oscillating between the insider and outsider categories position me on the 'insider-outsider continuum' (Carling et al., 2014). Hence, rather than viewing myself as either an insider or outsider, I embrace my positionality as an insider Other. My personal experience of forced migration informs my scholarly pursuits, placing discourses about migrants and the attendant integration close to my skin and driving my focus on their lived experiences and emotions. I draw inspiration from Ahmed (2004), who argues that 'Histories are bound up with emotions precisely insofar as it is a question of *what sticks*, of what connections are lived as the most intense or intimate, as being closer to the skin' (p. 54). However, I am very aware that I have to critically self-reflect on my experience and emotions as resources that guide my understanding to not turn my scholarly work into a self-narration and individualist story-telling.

5.6. Creating rapport: confusion, disbelief, and fear

My doctoral research project explored the experiences of sixty-five Eritreans who came to Switzerland as refugees, were aged 28–60 years, and were in residence from 7 to 40 years. Thirty were females and thirty-five were males. Eighteen held Swiss citizenship, twenty-

five had C permanent residency permits, nineteen had B residency permits subject to renewal every 1–2 years, and three were on provisional F residency permits that protect asylum seekers who do not meeting the criteria for refugee status from immediate deportation. I recruited participants with diverse backgrounds for in-depth interviews that were conducted in Tigrinya and lasted 2–3 hours. I use the label 'Eritreans who came as refugees' to include participants with permanent residence and naturalised citizens. This is done with an awareness of how such categorization can carry essentialist ideas and inadvertently reproduce the exclusion of already marginalised groups (Dahinden et al, 2021).

Prior to and during my fieldwork, I adopted a reflexive approach by acknowledging my positionality and openly discussing my background with my participants. Doing so elicited affect-loaded responses (Wetherell, 2012, 2013, 2014) that from the outset engulfed my relationship with them in emotional entanglements (Ayata et al., 2019). Sharing information about my background and research elicited fear, disbelief, and confusion. Introducing myself as a researcher while simultaneously identifying as an Eritrean refugee evoked a sense of affective-discursive puzzlement (Wetherell, 2012, 2013, 2014). Many repeatedly asked me how I managed to become a doctoral student while they struggled to secure survival. Others wanted to verify my Eritrean identity. When those with whom I established rapport introduced me to potential participants, they often referred to me as 'she is our Eritrean sister, let us help her'. However, I soon realised that potential participants were expecting a young second-generation Eritrean student, not an adult refugee woman pursuing a doctoral degree. Many reiterated the question, 'So are you born here or are you a refugee like us?' While some of the participants were genuinely curious, others appeared to be somewhat sceptical of my actual identity.

These episodes illuminate how participants' negative experiences, due to structural constraints, inform their understanding of who fits under the category of a refugee. Many Eritreans are concentrated in menial jobs due to poor education, language barriers, and societal structural inequalities (Eyer & Schweizer ,2010). Their position within the social and economic structures in Switzerland influenced their reactions to me

and shaped their interpretations of who a refugee is. None of my participants had ever encountered an Eritrean refugee woman pursuing a PhD.

Approaching interviews as situated affective discursive encounters allowed me to focus on emotions as forces shaping the interviews as well as in the interpretations of the data (Ayata et al., 2019; Wetherell, 2012, 2013, 2014; see also Wetherell, et al., 2020). This reflection helped me to "cultivate self-knowledge" as a researcher and develop strategies to engage with participants, including identifying sensitive topics they may be reluctant to discuss (Gould, 2009: 30) or pushing beyond their comfort with expected cultural scripts. To assuage their fears and establish rapport, I assured them that certain topics would not be discussed and framed the interviews as casual conversations, which created a friendly environment at the start. I informed participants of their rights and my readiness to answer their questions. Holding an honest and transparent conversation about my life trajectory allowed participants to share their experiences unguardedly. Sharing my experience prompted affect-laden comments such as *emo tesfa alena*, meaning 'oh, then we have hope'. Encountering me not only challenged their self-definition of a refugee, but forced them to re-evaluate their way of 'seeing, feeling, and being' as refugees (Wetherell, et al., 2020: 11). Although the approach I took did not completely balance the power relations, it facilitated unguarded exploration of experiences as discussed below.

5.7. Interviews as situated affective-discursive encounter

Most qualitative methods instructions emphasise the importance of making participants comfortable to share their subjective experiences. My efforts to make the participants comfortable from my 'insider Other' position and being "open to be affected" to participants' emotions (Ayata et al., 2019: 68) allowed for the emergence of the participants' and mine feelings of discomfort. This led to deeper reflections on their experiences, losses, and uneasy gains, thwarted hopes, and new ideas about life. It also troubled their identifications and the cultural scripts through which they initially spoke. Throughout the analysis, I will illustrate how documenting emotions and self-reflexivity

produced embodied data (Ayata et al., 2019) and how the affective-discursive framework powered my analysis into the deep layers of meaning (Wetherell, 2012, 2013, 2014).

5.7.1. Loss of status

Sharing my own experiences and predicaments encouraged participants to open up and be unguarded. The excerpt below shows how answering a curious participant's question, prompted him to discuss his frustration with a loss of social status and identity.

> P: Where did you study?
> R: I did my LLB in Asmara University. I joined in 2002.
> P: Really? You studied in Asmara? Because I did [name of specialisation withheld] in Asmara university and I was working in the office of [name withheld], department of [name withheld].
> R: Oh, really, wow!! You must be one of those smart students then. P: Yes, I was.
> R: Nice. And what do you do now?
> P: Hmm, *refae*. (His sadness and hopelessness came through as he quickly blurts out the word in a hushed tone. He looked at me as he said it, his eyes filled with shame and degradation).
> R: (I was silent for a few seconds, emotionally overwhelmed, I was lost for words, finally, with a trembling voice I said) Don't say that. You still can make it. You came with a good background and have potential.
> P: How are you able to continue your education? I am wondering.

Hearing the word come out of his mouth left me speechless and in shock (Ayata et al., 2019). I looked down, caught between feelings of discomfort and compassion. I noted his intense emotions as he said *refae*, documented his bodily gestures and my reactions in notes taken immediately after the interview and later in the interview script following the interviews as affective encounter method (Ayata et al., 2019). The emotions underlined the significance of the term calling for an analytical focus. My analysis then

employed the affective-discursive framework (Wetherell, 2012, 2013, 2014), as I probed into the meaning of the term as used in the Eritrean cultural–linguistic context and its referent in Switzerland as well as how it linked up to the participant's description of his life to under- stand the function of its affective load. The term *refae*, in Tigrigna is comparable to that of 'coolie' in English. In its denotative meaning, it refers to people working in menial jobs. As a pejorative term, it is part of an affective-discursive practice that humiliates people working on construction sites, as porters (who carry loads on their heads and shoulders), in the cleaning industry, etc., thus expressing and protecting the privilege of those higher in the economic structures. It attaches the stigma of dishonour and shame to manual labour. Before the 1998–2000 border conflict with Ethiopia, these types of jobs were predominantly occupied by a particular ethnic group coming from Ethiopia. Thus, the term also has an element of an anti-migrant ethnic slur.

The participant did not use this term to describe his job, but rather to express his loss of status, his marginalisation, and the attendant emotions of despair, defeat, and degradation. These emotions were further conveyed through paralinguistic cues like furrowed brows, squinted eyes, and a tilted head. *refae* is also part of affective-discursive practices among refugees internalising the dominant view of them as unentitled and relegated to less skilled jobs despised by the privileged white citizens. While some resisted the system that marginalised them (Sereke & Drzewiecka, 2023), others, such as this participant, internalised it. The affective-discursive practices of marginalisation incorporate feelings of exclusion, undesirability, and powerlessness (Mowat, 2015). This participant lost his social status and educational opportunities while gaining political safety; the feeling of political safety linked up with the feelings of degradation and loss so that safety is now interwoven with hopelessness. He understands his menial job as not only a low-status position in Switzerland but, and more powerfully, as a loss of his prior status in Eritrea. The discomfort arose from his choice of language that reflected a classist disdain towards menial labour and now expressed his loss of his prior class position. Initially, the classist anti-ethnic and anti-migrant sting of the term was less apparent to me

as I felt compassion for a peer student at my former university who was not able to pursue his professional dreams.

As we delved deeper into the topic of pursuing education in Switzerland, he expressed his desire for further education but mentioned that it was curtailed by misinformation. When I inquired about his source of information, his response revealed the effects of the community's affective-discursive practices on him:

> You aspire to get an education, but you are misinformed in this country. *Habesha* (Eritrean) people are our sources of information, and they tell you to work in a factory because there are no educational opportunities after 35.

He revealed that he stopped pursuing opportunities as he was affected by the communal practice conveying feelings of apathy and expressed by repetitive talk about the 'lack of opportunities' and 'giving up' as the only option. Upon learning about my doctoral studies, he realised how deeply he was affected by the communities affective-discursive practice and that perhaps he gave up too quickly. His puzzlement, expressed in 'really?' and 'I am wondering' and his reference to his interrupted studies showed him trying to make sense of his experience. He revealed his entanglement in the affective-discursive practices of the Eritrean community discouraged from pursuing opportunities by fruitless efforts and various structural barriers.

Affected by the participant's emotions, I expressed my encouragement in a trembling voice. I recognized that my role as a refugee researcher and my inquiry about his profession elicited difficult emotions. Sharing the same ethnonational identity, and refugee status, along with transparent engagement during the conversation, created a sense of comfort that paved the way for discomfort to emerge, allowing him to open up and be unguarded to express his emotions. However, my experience as a researcher placed me as his 'Other', prompting discomfort that led him to use a self-demeaning term to identify himself.

Approaching interviews as situated affective-discursive encounters allowed me to capture what Maclure (2013, as cited in Chadwick, 2021: 2) refers to as 'data that glows'. This kind of data stimulates curiosity and invites deeper exploration and thorough analysis. Through this method, I was able to discern the dynamic interplay between the structural barriers and the community that affected by them reproduces hopelessness and low status. Both elements played significant roles in his feelings of disempowerment and the emergence of a self-demeaning identity. Transparent conversations led to moments of discomfort, fostering a space where the participant felt more open and less guarded. My position as an 'insider Other' added another layer to these interactions, facilitating a heightened sense of discomfort.

5.7.2. Speaking the unspeakable

In an encounter that was profoundly uncomfortable and deeply devastating, a female participant shared her experience of conjugal violence:

> You know the problem of Eritrean men. They don't integrate. They still want to maintain their patriarchal privileges (*in a calm tone displaying dismay*). Maybe you know him. That is how I know you. His name is [withheld]. He abuses me verbally and physical. Now we are separated. He calls me names such as ("*gohaf"*, garbage, "*ebet"*, bull shit, *shermuta*, "prostitute,") etc. (*in a calm and hushed tone of voice*). I feel very destroyed when he calls me names. My younger daughter once asked me what "*gohaf"*, garbage means. She was shocked when I told her the meaning because she usually calls me "*alemey"*, meaning my world [...] The pro- longed suppression of my emotions has caused me health issues, including persistent leg pain, chronic headaches, and other related symptoms. What I disliked most is his sexual abuse [...] (displaying hopelessness, frustration and desperation in her a calm and hushed tone of voice, nodding head and frowning her face).

Listening to her emotionally charged account of abuse deeply affected me. It was a challenge to contain my emotions, and at times, tears rolled down my face. I reacted with shock, sadness, and anger. As I was expressing these emotions, she continued adding to her story of abuse, with affective expressions noted above, yet in a calm and hushed tone of voice. Through attentive observation of her bodily gestures, such as her nodding head and frowning face and linguistic articulation, I could discern the hopelessness, frustration, and desperation, aversion she felt. I noted these emotions and the emotions she expressed such as 'I feel destroyed', 'she was shocked', and 'What I disliked' along with my emotion- al responses both during our conversation and afterward during transcription (Ayata et al., 2019). I then analysed her emotions and her statements to understand her struggle and her subjectivity as a woman in a Swiss cultural context.

As she recounted her experience of abuse, she revealed emotional distress. Her statement 'I feel destroyed' is an emotion that transcends mere despair or sadness. It highlighted the defeat she felt in the face of the abuse, and the extent to which the derogatory terms eroded her self-worth. While discussing her daughter's reaction to the abuse, she not only highlighted the impact on the child but also unveiled her own struggle with conflicting narratives about self-worth. She grappled with oscillating feelings of being valued by her daughter and feeling devalued in her relationship with her partner.

Despite my understanding of the prevalence of domestic violence in the community, I was unprepared for how devastated I felt by her personal account. When she stated his name, I was shocked, exclaiming, 'Him!?' I knew the man from my past involvement in human rights advocacy work but was unaware that he was an abuser. Her willingness to disclose his identity and open up about uncomfortable subjects, providing insights into her life, was prompted not only by my insider status but also by my 'Other' position. My role in advocacy work and my education, in contrast to her struggles balancing mother- hood and abuse as a housewife positioned me as her 'Other'. Her desire to share her experience then was derived from an urgent need to reveal a jarring contradiction to expose a man who outwardly stands for human rights in Eritrea and

decries tyranny, but who privately assumes the role of a tyrant within his own home. My positionality, a nuanced blend of similarity and difference, facilitated her sharing something often considered unspeakable in Eritrean society and stigmatised women for their own oppression. Before our meeting ended, I pleaded with her not to return to him. In retrospect, as I reflected on my interaction with her (Ayata et al., 2019), I questioned whether I had overstepped my role as a researcher by offering advice on her personal situation.

After reflecting on the flow of emotions between us, I delved into her opening sentence, 'men don't integrate', which caught my attention from the onset. Discourses of integration problematize migrants as deficient and in need of changing to fit normative cultural and economic expectations. Safouane et al. (2020) showed that migrants sometimes appropriate dominant discourses, even when they are complicit with their own marginalisation. While the language of integration problematizes the migrant and thus this participant, she seized it to problematize the patriarchal males. Her statement about men not integrating and her description of abuse highlighted not only her personal struggle with an abusive relationship but the larger structures of male hegemony rooted in Eritrea's patriarchal society that subject women to continuing subordination, a pattern that persists even in their new social context. This new cultural context changed her understanding of gender relations and evoked a desire for a change in her partner and other men.

Discussing experiences of domestic abuse in many parts of Eritrean society is viewed as shameful and often labels women as improper. Women are typically expected to endure in silence. This affective-discursive practice, which silences women from revealing abuse, embodies both shame and the fear of stigmatisation and ostracization. Her story of abuse and references to the prevalence of such practices among men in the new social context were imbued with despair and frustration, combined with condemnation, to emphasise the need for men to unlearn old habits and adapt to their new surroundings. The participant interpreted her abusive marriage in the terms of her current cultural context which made it possible to feel differently about it than how women are

supposed to feel about it according to Eritrean cultural norms that define good wives as selfless nurturers, tolerant, and champions of household harmony even in the face of adversity and marital abuse. Thus, her interpretation of abuse as a manifestation of failed integration and her emotions highlighted her departure from traditional norms that uphold patriarchy and resistance to it. However, this perspective tends to overlook the broader structural and gender power dynamics, as domestic violence remains a significant issue even within the Swiss context (Federal Statistical Office, 2023). This may stem from misinformation or a lack of awareness about domestic violence in the country of settlement, as well as an internalized belief rooted in colonial hierarchies (Fanon, 1952) that positions dominant societies as more civilized, where gender equality is upheld, patriarchy is diminished, and women are treated with respect.

Allowing for affect to flow between us and my positionality cultivated a space for productive discomfort to surface, thereby providing embodied data (Ayata et al., 2019). Employing the affective-discursive practice framework (Wetherell, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2019) revealed the predicament of a woman transitioning from a habitus she believed was shaped solely by patriarchal structures specific to her cultural context, without recognizing their persistence in other social settings. This framework illuminated how her emotions expressed a rejection of cultural norms and gender power dynamics that had long silenced women, while also highlighting her acts of resistance as she confronted these issues in a new social structure.

5.7.3. Deconstructing colonial perceptions

Many participants recounted experiences of marginalisation when struggling to find employment and/or housing and receiving feelings of social contempt. These post-arrival experiences contrasted their pre-migration imaginations of Europe as a land of opportunity and equality. To navigate these challenges, some participants adopted specific coping strategies. A former prominent personality in Eritrea, now juggling low-paying jobs, shared her story:

> For about two and a half years after my arrival, I lived in a shared apartment in a refugee shelter [...] Although I had no precious belongings, I feared my diary, where I documented everything that had happened to us during our trip to Europe might be lost or stolen (overwhelmed with deep sadness, struggling to hold back her tears and at times wiping them away). I approached the manager to give me a key for the bedroom. Do you know what he said? (with a forceful tone, moving her arm back and forth and nodding her head with anger), "back in your countries, you use large stones to lock your doors. You come here and would like to live like a king or queen. Some of you demand keys, whereas others couch." When I heard this, I was engulfed with anger. My blood boiled. I said to him, "you don't know about Eritrea. You know nothing. Period! If you think I am living a good life here, you are wrong. I left behind a big bed, a big house, and most of all, a loving family. I came here because I have a political problem in my country." I really did feel bad at that moment (with a loud voice in anger).
>
> Without prompting, she continued:
>
> You ask yourself. Everything I came through was for this, to be disrespected, to become a helpless refugee? To be honest with you, as a refugee, you have to live by killing your confidence (with a forceful tone and furrowed brow, moving her arms here and there with frustration). If you were a strong and confident person, you would become alarmed [...]

While feeling deeply sad and empathic during the interview, I quickly jotted down her bodily gestures and paralinguistic cues expressing her emotions in my notebook. I also noted her conflicting emotions and regrets about coming to Switzerland and the affect loaded statement 'killing your confidence'. I included these emotions in the transcript and along with my own emotions in response to what she said (Ayata et al., 2019). In my analysis, I worked to unpack the flow of emotions between us and their intertwining with

meaning to gain insight into the power regimes that shape forced migrants' experiences of marginalisation in settlement (Wetherell, 2012, 2013, 2014).

The participant's profound anger, evocatively described as 'my blood boiled', was ignited not only by the stark denial of a simple request for a key, a basic necessity she took for granted in Eritrea but also by the manager's response seething with contempt steeped in colonial imagination of Africa. Her visceral anger at the racism she experienced and the painful emotions flowing between us illuminated the emotional costs of 'misanthropic scepticism' (Maldonado-Torres, 2007, p. 246). Introduced by Nelson Maldonado-Torres, the concept of misanthropic scepticism envisions the racial Other as less human, uncivilised, irrational, and undeserving. Positioned within the framework of coloniality, the enduring structures and legacies of power and knowledge that persist even after the end of formal colonial administrations, Maldonado-Torres draws attention to the dark side of European modernity, where the narratives of progress and enlightenment were often built on the dehumanisation and marginalisation of colonised peoples. He elucidates how, despite the dissolution of formal colonial regimes, the promotion of a racial hierarchy that relegates the racial Other as 'sub-Others' persists (p. 255). In the contemporary anti-black world, the experiences of racialized people continue to be shaped by the shadows of misanthropic scepticism and racism (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). While studies have highlighted the bureaucratic categorization of migrants and their ties to colonial remnants (Gutiérrez Rodríguez, 2018), the ensuing analysis offers a distinctive perspective. By applying the concept of misanthropic scepticism to an asylum seeker's experience, I illuminate how the participant's interactions with a state migration and integration employee appear to subjugate her as a racialized refugee to colonial hierarchies steeped in misanthropic scepticism. This process effectively renders her humanity invisible and casts her as un- deserving of the benefits of European modernity.

The manager's attitude seemed to convey that her very existence as a human being was insignificant, exacerbating her sense of marginalisation and perceived inferiority within the Swiss social structure. The encounter deeply stirred her anger and resistance,

compel- ling her to confront racism and misanthropic scepticism by challenging the manager's colonial imagination, pointing out that she did not come from the primitive jungles as he might have imagined. The response misconstrued her social, cultural, and economic position, assuming that she came from poverty and a lack of basic amenities. The implication was that her escape from persecution was mere opportunism, galvanising her to clarify her reasons for seeking asylum and to refute assumptions about her pursuit of resources perceived to be exclusive to Switzerland. For a moment, I could feel the power of her defiant response. However, when she followed with the admission that it was necessary for her to 'kill her confidences' to avoid living in constant 'alarm', the full effects of experiencing misanthropic scepticism became clear.

While reflecting on the administrator's colonialist response, the participant also expressed ambivalence and regret about her decision to come to Switzerland, that I could also read in her paralinguistic cues and bodily gestures. Such emotions are normally suppressed by refugees expected to perform gratefulness and resilience (Moulin, 2012). As she talked about having different expectations about Europe in general and Switzerland in particular, I reflected on how those expectations were steeped in the legacy of colonial imagery that Europeans imposed on the African colonies. Revealing ambivalence and regret about having sought refuge after having suffered significant losses as a result, can be deeply uncomfortable. In the safe space of our interview between two refugees, this discomfort allowed for abandoning the 'grateful refugee' position that became productive of a deeper understanding of the violent confrontation between the colonial imageries that present Europe as civilised and African people as not. While our shared experience of being a refugee from Eritrea, even as I was ever mindful that my own search for refuge was not as arduous as hers, established an understanding that refuge has its costs that might over- whelm the gains. The expression of gratitude for a life free from persecution and stability in Europe is expected by the host and the refugee community, although for different rea- sons, and inhibits admissions of ambivalence that bring up a possibility that perhaps one left a situation that was not so dire after all and is not a genuine refugee.

Such perilous and costly admissions were animated by productive discomfort that emerged between us as two refugees producing insight into the loss of dignity by refugees faced with misanthropic scepticism. As an insider, I understood that the price of a refugee status is a death of subjectivity as an Eritrean professional woman that changes one's perspective on the life-threatening dangers prior to refuge seeking. The positionality I embodied was both familiar and unfamiliar to her. Our shared gender, nationality, and refugee status built a foundation of trust and kindled her eagerness to share her experiences, provided her anonymity was ensured. As a researcher, a role she viewed as typically reserved for white non-refugees prompted her to share her feelings and convey 'her truth' revealing details she claimed to have shared with no one else. I could feel the desire, both hers and mine, to know the depths of abjection experienced in refugee settlements. Even though I am an insider, the stories she shared were unknown to me.

5.8. Conclusions

My interviews with participants who came as forced migrants about difficult experiences and reflections were deeply enmeshed in emotional entanglements of comfort and discomfort. I embraced this relational discomfort and saw how it enriched the data and interpretation, while it also raised some difficulties and posed various dilemmas about finding the appropriate response after hearing their poignant stories and how to reciprocate for their invaluable contributions. While scholars recognized the value of discomfort during fieldwork (Chadwick, 2021; Schmidt et al., 2023), they focused on researchers' emotions. This article, however, approaches discomfort as a relation between participants who shared nationality and ethnicity as well as some experiences, but not all, with me as an 'insider Other' researcher. I have illustrated how delving into mutual discomfort and its interpretations was instrumental in unveiling knowledge that foregrounded inequalities and advancing decolonial perspectives (Amelina, 2022; Mayblin &Turner, 2021). I have demonstrated how my inter- sectional identity, fluctuating along the insider-outsider spectrum (Carling et al., 2014: 51), positioned me as an 'insider Other' that made the participants feel comfortable enough to recount stories imbued with discomfort while

sometimes feeling discomfort owing to our differences. This distinctive positionality relationally evoked a myriad of emotions in the interview encounters, enabling the revelation of deep layers of experiences and interpretations that might otherwise remain obscured.

I demonstrated how merging the 'situated affective encounters' method (Ayata et al., 2019) with Wetherell's 'affective-discursive practice framework' (2012, 2013, 2014), enabled not only attention to emotions for subsequent reflection but also an analytical approach that revealed depths of experience that otherwise remain hidden, either protected by the participants as shameful to uncomfortable or inaccessible to them during interviews. This approach views interviews as 'situated affective-discursive encounters', highlighting the central role of emotion as a form of meaning making. The proposed framework, in tandem with my unique positionality, enabled the garnering of 'data that glows', as described by Maclure (2013, as cited in Chadwick, 2021, p. 2), data that not only captures attention but also beckons for a deeper and more nuanced analysis. Following the method, I demonstrated how documenting emotions expressed verbally as well as through bodily gestures and paralinguistic cues during the interview and later at the transcript phase makes them available for reflection and analysis. This allowed for deep understanding of the lived experiences and subjectivity of participants and how they make sense of their emotions in their new social contexts (Wetherell, 2012, 2013, 2014).

Based on my analysis, I offer the following observations towards a deeper understanding of the role of emotions and the value of discomfort in interviews. First, emotional entanglements with participants can arise even before the commencement of formal interviews, specifically during rapport-building stages. This is especially prevalent when researching marginalised minorities, and becomes even more pronounced if the researcher's positionality represents an intersectional identity that blurs the line between insider-outsider binary. Such dynamics can provoke discomfort, often manifesting as fear or confusion. Reflecting on and interpreting these emotions enables researchers to discern participants' positioning within distinct social, cultural, and ideological frameworks, thus

uncovering the roots of their discomfort. These emotions serve as pivotal insights, shedding light on participants' self-perceptions in relation to researcher's identity. By leveraging this understanding, researchers can 'cultivate self-knowledge' (Gould, 2009, p. 30) which allows them to develop strategies to approach participants effectively and identify sensitive questions that might discourage them. Framing inter- views as situated affective-discursive encounters and engaging with discomfort not only provides insights into participants' lived experiences but also facilitates engagement.

Second, the proposed framework requires attending to uncomfortable revelations during interviews, documenting and analysing them. This approach allows researchers to un- pack what these emotions entail such as: How do they elucidate the ways in which forced migrants position themselves in their new social and cultural environments compared to their standings before migration? What insights do these emotionally charged conversations offer regarding the possible transformation or loss of their subjectivity in new cultural contexts? And how do these affective-discursive practices of forced migrants in their countries of settlement intersect with structural barriers, subsequently shaping their interpretation and understating of their subjectivity in the new socio-cultural terrains?

Third, allowing emotions to flow between participants and researchers during inter- views, and transparently addressing participants' questions, cultivates a space where productive discomfort can emerge, yielding rich embodied data. As I have demonstrated, my positionality combined with my willingness to be affected by and transparently respond to participants' inquiries, often sparked by curiosity, encouraged them to open up and be unguarded. These facilitated discussions about loss of status, sharing stories of domestic abuse breaking patriarchal cultural norms that silence women, and revealing perilous, costly admissions animated by productive discomfort producing insight into the loss of dignity by refugees faced with misanthropic scepticism.

By focusing on both the feelings of the participants and the researchers, and attending to emotions in conversations about difficult topics unique analytical and

theoretical insights can be gained. Employing the 'situated affective-discursive encounters' paradigm directs attention to emotions as productive of knowledge, rather than something one should minimise and guard against. This approach emphasises not only the significance of participants' discomfort and emotions for deeper analytical and theoretical insights. In the case of research on forced migrants, unpacking meaning entangled in emotions allows unpacking the influence of Europe's colonial representations on refugees' destination choices as well as the impact of lingering misanthropic scepticism on refugees. In harnessing this framework, I have been able to shed light on the lasting impacts of the colonial legacy, giving voice to the subaltern expected to speak through the scripts of grateful refugees. Thus attention to emotions, in any research context, might allow moving beyond cultural scripts and performances of expected hegemonic identities.

Finally, although the emergence of productive discomfort was facilitated by the provision of a safe space, delving into discomforting emotions could potentially trigger and overwhelm participants. Thus, it is imperative to ensure an environment conducive to open interaction and reflection to put the participants at ease to embrace their discomfort. But in some cases, it might be useful to induce discomfort with specific participants who, in this case, spoke smoothly through the scripts of 'good refugees' in ways that I could tell they omitted some experiences and repressed some issues. This was crucial to prevent the reproduction of colonial narratives that expect refugees to be merely grateful, striving to seamlessly integrate into their host communities. One participant, for instance, insisted that his training and employment journey was hassle-free. However, upon prompting with more probing questions, it became apparent that his journey was not as smooth as initially presented. He initially worked as a factory cleaner for several years before being offered a mechanic's vocational training by an Italian boss. This boss, familiar with the Italian colonial legacy in Eritrea, recognized the mechanical skills many Eritreans acquired during that period and extended the training opportunity. This revelation not only highlighted the significance of inducing discomfort to un- cover obscured knowledge but also shed light on the lingering influence of colonial ties in determining the roles refugees assume in their destination countries.

While productive in this case, it is crucial to introduce discomfort carefully. Granting participants autonomy in leading the conversation is essential. Responding to their inquiries, even personal ones, to the extent researchers feel comfortable, forges a stronger bond. Sharing mutual challenges, especially when they express feelings of shame or fear, can assuage these emotions. Demonstrating empathy and encouraging them to seek support makes them feel acknowledged and validated. It is crucial to be attuned to their emotional state, proposing pauses during particularly intense segments and inquiring about their feelings to maintain their comfort. In situations where participants seem to be withholding the truth, eliciting a touch of discomfort by sharing insights from the researcher's own experiences, combined with a light-hearted or informal conversational style, can often break barriers. Finally, offering or connecting them with relevant support networks is advisable. Such gestures ensure their well-being beyond the interview. My commitment to participants transcends the interview sessions. Specifically, for a few participants, predominantly women, I communicated my readiness to accompany them should they opt to seek medical or legal assistance. I stayed in touch with several participants, ensuring I was updated on their situation and providing information when required.

This study contributes to migration research by emphasising the importance of attending to affect and framing interviews as affective-discursive encounters when examining the experiences of forced migrants. Emotions are perceived not only as embodied but also as discursive, playing a pivotal role in meaning-making. This approach highlights not only the importance of participants' discomfort and emotions for deeper analytical and theoretical insights but also their value in revealing hidden knowledge and unpacking the influence of colonial legacies, thereby advancing decolonial approaches (Amelina 2022; Mayblin and Turner 2021).

Chapter 6

Discussions and Conclusions

Negotiating power relations while navigating exclusions

The dissertation examined how Eritreans who arrived in Switzerland as forced migrants (EFMs) overcome everyday exclusions and obstacles that hinder their embedding in Switzerland. It demonstrated that while they are perceived as subjects of integration and expected to advance their human capital by achieving outcomes set by integration policy, they face substantial barriers and racist exclusions from state administrative institutions, social workers, colleagues, and the general public, rendering their inclusion and social mobility challenging. The central question is how EFMs negotiate power relations and structures of exclusion through practices of everyday life, communicative verbal resistance, and the regulation of their and others' emotions to access resources and opportunities, gain recognition, and salvage dignity, thereby advancing their inclusion.

The inattention to power relations between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' in integration studies has been criticised for producing knowledge that stigmatises forced migrants, particularly visible minorities, as deficient and passive subjects (Favell, 2022; Klarenbeek, 2021; Schinkel, 2018). The chapters in this dissertation show that EFMs actively advance their 'integration' by negotiating power relations to overcome exclusions as informed by the theoretical frameworks of practices of everyday life (de Certeau, 1984), reverse discourse (Foucault, 1990), and affective-discursive practices (Wetherell, 2012, 2013, 2015). In doing so it advances the understanding of integration as a relational process and power struggle between 'insiders' and migrant 'outsiders' (Klarenbeek, 202, 2024). These three frameworks allowed us to address everyday practices, responses to racism, and emotions and their regulation.

Chapter 2 examined how EFMs negotiated various exclusions that impeded their social mobility through practices of everyday life (de Certeau, 1984). It demonstrated the various concrete practices they deployed to navigate, overcome, or sidestep barriers and racial exclusion. The chapter showed how some of their practices involved tactical manoeuvres, while others enacted constrained strategic power derived from their institutional positions. It also identified a novel mode of action called 'strategy by proxy' and provided empirical demonstration and theoretical elaboration on the use of 'tactics

and strategies as a continuum' rather than separate forms of power to negotiate exclusions. In doing so, the chapter advanced the concept of integration as overcoming various forms of obstacles and exclusions.

Chapter 3 provided insights into the understanding of integration as a relational process where inclusion is negotiated by resisting verbal racist statements communicated to 'outsiders' in interpersonal interactions through various types of discursive reversals (Foucault, 1990). It elucidated how discursive reversals allow targeted individuals to challenge and renegotiate relationships that manifest racial hierarchies and how these responses alter the dynamics of these interactions. The chapter identified five novel modes of discursive reversals that expand the repertoire of reverse discourse and advance the concept of integration as a process whereby recognition is negotiated by disrupting and altering power dynamics through discursive and affective reversals.

Chapter 4 adds another layer to the conceptualisation of integration and adaptation as relational by identifying a communal form of emotion regulation. It demonstrated how participants' differing ideological viewpoints regarding racial hierarchies and relations animate different ideas for how integration can be accomplished and what emotions are appropriate to this end. The chapter examined the emotions EFMs identified as problematic for their integration and analysed how they regulated these emotions in relation to cultural norms of the dominant society. It introduced the concept of 'intercultural extrinsic emotion regulation,' which advances the understanding of emotion regulation as an other-oriented pedagogic process. This concept illustrates how migrants, situated within structural inequalities and cultural differences, negotiate them through emotion regulation aimed at altering their emotional practices.

Lastly, Chapter 5 discussed the complex positionality of a 'refugee scholar' in a field primarily dominated by non-refugee scholars. Despite sharing an ethnonational identity and refugee status with study participants, refugee scholars can still hold an outsider position. This dual positionality evokes discomfort during interactions and

interviews with the participants. By framing this discomfort as a source of knowledge, the chapter argued that analysing these feelings provides insights into the lived experiences of refugees. It highlighted the importance of attending to and analysing productive discomfort, which emerged relationally during interviews, to gain insights into the experiences of forced migrants settling in and negotiating conditions of deep structural inequalities. It showed how discomfort can unlock deeper layers of experience and generate knowledge that might otherwise remain hidden.

Overall, this dissertation advanced the understanding of integration as a power struggle between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' (Klarenbeek, 2021, 2024) by examining the practices EFMs employed to overcome structures of exclusion and racism. It analysed how they navigate exclusions and negotiate inclusions by focusing on power dynamics. This work contributed to the ongoing efforts to decolonise knowledge about migrant integration in Europe by demonstrating how the marginalised negotiate power relations and exclusions in everyday life by making power visible in the analysis (Amelina, 2022). The discussions highlighted that inattention to power dynamics between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' has led to the reproduction of knowledge that stigmatises migrants (Klarenbeek, 2021; Favel, 2022; Schinkel, 2018). By demonstrating how EFMs negotiated power relations, systemic and structural barriers, racism, cultural differences, misrecognition, and devaluation, this dissertation moved beyond portrayals of migrants as inferior and passive subjects.

Crucially, this dissertation focused on the experiences of black people in European contexts, who have received limited attention from researchers contributing to the denial of the significance of race in social life and theory. Inattention to the experiences of black people limits our understanding of the exclusions they face due to racism in European contexts. By recognising the importance of race and showing how EFMs navigate racial discrimination through daily practices, discursive resistance, and emotion regulation, the dissertation produced insights that transcend hegemonic knowledge, which perceives visible migrants as inferior and passive (Amelina, 2022). In doing so, it contributed to the

decolonisation of knowledge about visible minorities in European contexts, as called for by scholars of Black Mediterranean, Black Europe, and the Black diaspora (Hawthorne, 2022; Hawthorne, 2023; Rastas & Nikunen, 2019; Small, 2018) (see Chapters 1, 2, 3 & 4).

The key conceptual contributions to advancing the understanding of integration as a relational power laden process consist in: (1) providing empirical evidence and theoretical elaboration on the complexity of forced migrants' practices of negotiating structures of exclusions, demonstrating the sources and forms of power available to them and their entanglements; (2) identifying five novel types of discursive reversals animated by affect in response to everyday racism at the micro-level, thereby expanding the repertoire of reverse discourse; (3) advancing the understanding of emotion as central to integration, offering insights into how emotions are managed to negotiate cultural differences and systemic and structural exclusions, and introducing a concept that explains extrinsic regulation of others' emotions; and (4) providing insights into how attending to and analysing uncomfortable emotions as a source of knowledge is fundamental to producing knowledge that foregrounds inequalities and advances a decolonial approach.

6.1. Key findings and conceptual contributions

6.1.1. Forms of negotiating exclusions

While most studies show migrants solely employ tactics to access resources, products, systems, and rights to ensure survival in their integration (e.g., Fischer, 2020; Hall et al., 2020; Kahveci et al., 2020; Oner et al., 2020), Chapters 2 and 3 demonstrated the deployment of diverse and complex practices and communicative resistance by EFMs to negotiate power relations while navigating exclusions. Chapter 2 is anchored in de Certeau's (1984) important but often overlooked distinction between *lieu propre* and *espace*. This distinction is instrumental to detaching power from subjectivity and focusing on the concrete and discursive practices employed by the marginalised to counter

structures of exclusion and racism. By analysing these practices, the findings demonstrated that the deployment of tactics and strategies as both entangled and distinct forms of negotiating power relations, deriving from different sources of power available to the marginalised. Chapter 3 showed the enactment of dynamic communicative resistance through discursive reversals in response to racism in interpersonal interactions with the dominant society (Foucault, 1990).

6.1.2. Tactics and strategies as continuum forms of negotiating power

Chapter 2 contributed to the conceptualising migrant integration as a power struggle between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' by centering power dynamics in the analysis of how EFMs overcome exclusions created by the dominant society and its institutions in their everyday life. The findings demonstrated EFMs deployed not only tactics, but also, albeit to a lesser extent, strategies. It also showed that tactic and strategies were not opposite forms of power as certain practices have elements of both thus demonstrating that they are better understood as connected on a continuum, instead of as a binary. Further, while deprived of access to *lieu propre*, some EFMs recruited help of local 'insiders' with such access, thus using their strategies by proxy.

The chapter showed how participants deploy tactics from *espace* to overcome exclusionary practices of bureaucratic state integration institutions, structural barriers, and systemic racial exclusions. The analysis elucidated the use of strategies to combat racism in workplaces or semi-public places. Further, migrants access *lieu propre* through their institutional power or by fleetingly asserting their rights derived from *lieu propre* based on their citizenship and tax contributions, criteria the dominant society uses to imply their reliance on social welfare, thereby limiting their rights. The analysis further showed the deployment of tactics and strategies as a continuum rather than as opposing binaries to overcome racial exclusion at work and the racism directed at children in school. As demonstrated in the findings, those with access to strategic power by virtue of their professional status mobilised both tactics and strategies by calculating what actions will

work and how in order to achieve optimal outcomes when confronting racist individuals. The deployment of both forms of power as intertwined forms reframed the interaction and attained the desired outcomes without directly confronting individuals who indirectly manifested racism. This combination of strategic planning and tactical execution not only allowed the targeted to challenge racism but also helped them earn respect. The use of tactics and strategies as a continuum provides insight into the complex ways in which forced migrants negotiate power relations by drawing power from various sources to which they have access.

Another novel contribution of the chapter is the identification of strategy by proxy. This mode of action is employed by participants who did not have direct access to strategic power and recruited the strategic power of others to overcome different forms of exclusions. The chapter demonstrated that exclusionary practices, such as barriers to employment, housing discrimination, and a lack of institutional support, compelled the marginalised to recruit the strategic power of local friends and social workers to overcome these barriers. The discussion first outlined the tactical manoeuvres the marginalised employed to gain access to the strategic power of locals and social workers.

As demonstrated in the findings, participants shared their difficulties in forming relationships with locals, whom they believe are crucial for their social and economic inclusion. They employed various tactics, such as joining church denominations, to meet locals and gain entry into local circles. While they understood that getting to know local people is going to be helpful, they developed genuine relationships as they met them, which subsequently allowed them to use their power. Once these relationships were established, the locals' insider status and knowledge became crucial in helping to overcome exclusions. The mode of action, 'strategy by proxy,' advances the understanding of the role of relationships with 'insiders' in facilitating inclusion by countering exclusions (Ager & Strang, 2008; Wessendorf & Phillimore, 2019). It demonstrates how migrants, as active agents, can recruit the power of insiders to challenge racist exclusions. While the marginalised do rely on external support, their agency is

demonstrated through their proactive role in activating these relationships and their ability to access power that was not initially theirs, but making it their own to overcome exclusions.

In addition to using the power of friends by proxy, some participants recruited social workers to intervene on their behalf. As a mode of action, 'strategic power by proxy' shows migrant agency in mobilising state institutions to prevent exclusions. In doing so, it also enhances our understanding of the role of state administrative institutions in facilitating the inclusion of forced migrants, particularly in accessing employment in the process of settlement in a new social environment (Ager & Strang, 2008). These institutions help prevent discrimination, reduce social friction, and inequality. Moreover, strategic power by proxy highlights the importance of social relationships and networks in overcoming exclusions in integration.

Finally, the chapter demonstrates that the use of strategies by proxy expands the application of these strategies and tactics beyond binary opposites (de Certeau, 1984). The chapter argues that tactics and strategies should not be understood only as forms of power exercised by a single individual and that their use 'by proxy' is a deployment of power. Their use 'by proxy' shows that the marginalised can draw power from sources that were not initially theirs and enact it through these channels to achieve their goals. This highlights the complexity of migrants' practices in navigating exclusions and the deployment of tactics and strategies as complementary forms of power.

6.1.3. Resisting racism with discursive reversals

Chapter 3 adds a crucial layer to our understanding of how power relations are negotiated by demonstrating the complex dynamics of communicative resistance against subtle and overt racism in everyday practices. As demonstrated in the chapter, participants recounted experiences of racism communicated directly or indirectly by colleagues, peers, ordinary people, and employees of state institutions in interpersonal interactions. Some instances

of racism were intended to inflict humiliation, while others aimed to deny individuals recognition as professionals and their social standing as citizens. Additionally, racial profiling was a common practice faced by male participants. The chapter highlighted the various ways in which racism manifests and affects participants emotionally in their process of embedding within a society marked by racial hierarchies. It analysed how they resist racism verbally communicated to them to negotiate recognition, challenge prejudice, assert new truths, invalidate racist comments, correct insults, and salvage some dignity, using the methods of racist discourses themselves.

By analysing discursive resistance through reverse discourse, the chapter revealed not only the communicative dynamics of resistance in everyday life at the micro-level but also illustrated how the marginalised momentarily gain power by appropriating derogatory discourses directed to them and converting them into tools of resistance using their own logic and methods. The findings elucidate the purposive use of language as a tool for empowerment, providing deeper insights into how forced migrants negotiate racist exclusion by reversing racist discourses and their affective flow. As shown in the discussion, this way of negotiating racism allows migrants to momentarily unsettle power moves, thereby earning recognition and salvaging some dignity, even if it does not change deeply ingrained racism.

Further, the chapter makes a unique contribution to the understanding of negotiating racism through reverse discourse by examining the role of emotions in resistance and how emotions and their interpretations draw participants into acts of resistance through reverse discourse (Wetherell, 2012, 2013). While reverse discourse has been used in organised forms of resistance, the chapter extends its application to understand unorganised and unhidden forms of everyday resistance against racism ((Lilja & Vinthagen, 2018). Consequently, the analysis provides deeper insights into the complex ways in which power relations are negotiated and contested in practices of everyday life. The findings highlight five novel types of discursive reversals animated by affect: mirror

reflection, ironic repetition, ironic redirecting, ironic rearticulation, and ironic subtle provocation. These discursive reversals also expand the repertoire of reverse discourse.

As shown in the discussion, *mirror reflection* is a discursive reversal that turns dehumanising discourses back onto offenders, compelling them to confront their own biases, by reversing the intended humiliation. When offenders explicitly make humiliating statements, the offended reverse the intended humiliation by pointing out characteristics that the offenders possess to humiliate them back, thereby undermining their attempt to assert superiority. This type of discursive reversal disrupts power dynamics by reversing the discourse and its affective flow. *Ironic repetition* involves using irony and persistent repetition of a response to the initial offensive statements made to flip against the offenders. This discursive reversal highlights misrecognition of black people through racial stereotypes. The repeating of a response that contradicts the initial insult insists on correcting it. *Ironic redirecting* is a form of discursive reversal that sends back the racist insult to the offender with an ironic twist to expose prejudice and challenge perceived superiority. The analysis demonstrated how a participant used this type of discursive reversal to challenge misrecognition as a citizen and the reduction to a subject of integration. Through *ironic rearticulation*, participants resist racialisation by deconstructing the meanings attached in a way presents an alternative interpretation to dominant discourses and suggesting alternative interpretations. Finally, *ironic subtle provocation* challenges the validity of racist statements by indirectly and ironically questioning their underlying assumptions. It disrupts established patterns and routines without causing overt conflict. Resistance through discourse reversal demonstrates that, despite their formal status as citizens, black people face a lack of symbolic recognition owing to racialized nativism (Dahinden, 2022). Nevertheless, they continue to fight for recognition as citizens by challenging prejudicial comments in their everyday lives. This persistence in seeking recognition through discursive resistance, despite facing misrecognition, advances the understanding of the concept of integration as relational and involves an ongoing power struggle, even at a micro-level.

The discursive reversals collectively demonstrate the active negotiation of power relations between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' through communicative resistance, providing deeper insights into the complex dynamics at play. They are used to challenge racist discourses expressed in various forms. While resistive, they are deployed in ways that enable interactive dialogue and discussion with individuals who reproduce racist discourses, whether knowingly or unknowingly, aiming to correct and educate them, thereby changing interpersonal dynamics. These strategies are not directed at changing the system but focus on changing the dynamics of interpersonal interactions. Resistance through discursive reversals enhances our understanding of the concept of integration as a relational process and a power struggle. The different types of discursive resistance help us understand that integration involves power struggles even at the micro-level in everyday interactions with 'insiders.' In these interactions, 'outsiders' actively resist and challenge exclusionary discourses directed at them by insiders to correct prejudices and assert their place in society.

6.1.4. Negotiating power through emotion regulation

The dissertation further investigated the power dynamics of integration by focusing on emotions. Exclusions and misrecognitions discussed in Chapters 3 & 4 trigger various emotions such as confusion, anger, humiliation, courage, and persistence. While Chapter 3 focused on how emotions and their interpretations draw participants into resistance, Chapter 4 delved into conflictual emotion regulation that emerged from participants' conflicting ideological understandings about their social position, racial exclusion, and which emotional practices advance or hinder their inclusion and upward mobility, as well as how these emotions should be regulated in relation to the dominant society.

As shown in the analysis, some participants identified structural barriers and racial exclusion as the primary obstacles to their upward mobility, while others viewed cultural emotional practices such as passivity and despair and apathy as detrimental to their social and economic inclusions. For some participants, desperation and apathy result more from

racist exclusions than from passivity. Disagreements about what impedes their inclusion revealed differing understandings of how to advance their upward mobility, resulting in conflictual emotion regulation. Those who perceived racial discrimination as the primary barrier expressed affective-discursive practices of frustration and demoralisation, and pleaded to give attention to racial discrimination in their discussions. In contrast, those unconvinced that racism is the primary cause attempted to regulate these emotions by reappraising anecdotes of racism to mobilise patience and perseverance. Similarly, those who acknowledged the existence of racism but preferred to ignore it also mobilised the affective-discursive practices of patience and perseverance. Contrarily, other participants attempted to mobilise confidence and courage to resist racism based on their own experiences. These two competing and conflicting affective-discursive practices, patience and perseverance versus confidence and courage, emerged from efforts to regulate participants' emotions to change their positioning within power structures.

These findings underscore that embedding into a new social milieu is a process wherein migrants deploy conflicting emotion regulation practices to manage their own emotions and those of others while navigating various power regimes and cultural differences to achieve inclusion. This process of conflictual emotion regulation involves two distinct modes: one that empowers migrants to fight for inclusion by confronting racism, and another that encourages submission to racial hierarchies. Crucially, the analysis shows that emotions are central to integration, serving as key mechanisms through which migrants negotiate power relations and their positions within the social hierarchy. The affective-discursive practices and the conflictual emotion regulation analysed in the findings are not personal responses to marginalisation but are deeply implicated in the negotiation of power relations and in how migrants navigate their social positions to advance inclusion and achieve upward mobility at the communal level (Wetherell, 2012, 2013, 2015). The chapter introduced the concept of 'intercultural extrinsic emotion regulation,' which advances the understanding of conflictual emotion regulation by others at a communal level. It highlights that this form of emotion regulation is enacted to change the emotional practices of a community or group positioned within an unequal social

structure and cultural differences as a strategy to overcome exclusionary practices and advance social mobility in a new social context. This concept advances the understanding of integration as a relational process deeply intertwined with the dynamics of emotion regulation, shaped by migrants' different ideological viewpoints regarding racial differences, social positioning, and inclusion, and carried out to negotiate cultural differences and respond to racial exclusion. Emotion regulation deployed by visible migrants to overcome exclusions and negotiate inclusion in settlement contexts, where insiders use perceived racial differences as a mechanism of exclusion, is inherently relational. They are compelled to regulate their emotions in relation to the dominant society, either by submitting to racial power dynamics or resisting exclusions, both of which aim to advance their integration. However, emotion regulation that encourages submission to power and the suppression of emotions to advance integration is oriented toward benefiting the host community at the expense of migrants' emotional well-being.

6.2. Advancing the understanding of integration

While this dissertation agrees with the critique that the concept of integration is informed by colonial and racist underpinnings (Astolfo & Allsopp, 2023; Favell, 2022; Schinkel, 2018; Amelina, 2022), it also concurs with Klarenbeek's view that integration remains a valuable tool for examining social exclusion, hierarchies, and inequalities, particularly in the context of migration (Klarenbeek, 2024). Abandoning the term as an analytical tool is a powerful call, given how the concept has been used to perpetuate prejudicial and stigmatising views of visible migrants (Favell, 2022; Rytter, 2018; Schinkel, 2018). However, this approach does not address the ongoing issues of inequality and exclusion that they continue to face (Klarenbeek, 2024). Instead, retaining the term to examine social issues emerging from hierarchical structures and inequalities makes it a more suitable choice than alternatives like 'inclusion' or 'incorporation,' which imply a one-sided process (Klarenbeek, 2024, p. 235). Further, retaining the term prevents adding to the existing confusion over terminology and facilitates engagement with both academic and public discourses on integration (ibid). The dissertation advances the understanding of

relational integration by exploring the structural barriers and racial exclusions that EFMs encounter in their interpersonal interactions and institutional settings, and how they navigate and overcome these challenges.

The findings and conceptual contributions in this dissertation provide insights that advance the understanding of integration as a relational process and a power struggle between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' (Klarenbeek, 2021, 2024). By demonstrating the exclusions migrants encountered during the process of embedding and the practices they deployed to overcome structural barriers, racist exclusions, cultural differences, and power regimes, the dissertation shows that while 'insiders' exercise their power to include or exclude migrant 'outsiders,' the latter also actively engage in various practices to overcome exclusions and assert their place within the society. It refutes the reduction of migrants to "integrating agents" who fulfil policy requirements to advance their human capital by altering their cultural values (Klarenbeek, 2021, p. 910). Instead, integration is a complex relational and dynamic process in which migrants actively negotiate power relations and overcome exclusions reinforced by the dominant society and state administrative institutions, including those ostensibly designed to facilitate their integration. Responding to critiques of past studies seeing integration as an outcome defined in line with policies, the dissertation highlights the complex realities migrants encounter during the embedding process.

While it is assumed by scholars and policymakers that compliance with integration policy criteria leads to successful integration, in reality, migrants face numerous exclusionary practices from members of the dominant society and state institutions, which hinder their upward mobility. They encounter structural barriers, racist exclusions, and both overt and subtle racism during interpersonal interactions and at the institutional level. Challenges in accessing resources, experiences of misrecognition, prejudices, and feelings of humiliation and devaluation as well as cultural differences compel them to mobilise and deploy power in everyday practices, engage in verbal resistance, and interpret and manage their emotions. Thus, integration is not about meeting the anticipated standards or norms

set by others, nor is it a straightforward process achieved by fulfilling predefined roles and policy outcomes. It is also not something exclusively dictated by the dominant society. Instead, the dissertation advances the conceptualisation of integration as a relational process where exclusionary forces enacted by 'insiders' are actively contested by migrants, and inclusion is negotiated through overcoming these exclusions.

As shown throughout the chapters, even those who have lived in Switzerland for many years, become naturalised citizens, and achieved social mobility continue to encounter misrecognition, racism, social contempt, racial profiling, and other forms of exclusion during interpersonal interactions or interactions with bureaucrats. One participant vividly expressed her frustration with the racism she experienced despite her economic success, her voice ringing with anger: "Because I am Black and a lady! They don't have any reason! My name is Arayabrhan, not Depan!" [a typical French-Swiss surname]. This poignant expression underscores the reality faced by many, illustrating that even those who have made significant strides in their 'integration' journey continue to battle deep-seated prejudice and systemic exclusions. As demonstrated through theoretical contributions and empirical findings, migrants strive to overcome these forms of exclusion by deploying tactics and strategies both as entangled and septate form of power, devising different types of discursive reversals and interpreting and regulating emotions.

Attending to the multiplicity of practices deployed to overcome marginalisation and racial exclusion, communicative resistance against racism and the regulation of emotions to navigate cultural differences and respond to structures of exclusion also offers insights into how migrants exercise agency to negotiate power relations in the process of relational integration (Safouane et al., 2020). The analysis showed that the deployment of tactics, strategies, and discursive reversals provides insights into how forced migrants momentarily overcome exclusions, salvage dignity, and access resources, products, and rights (Chapters 2 & 3). These actions demonstrate the capacity of forced migrants to navigate and challenge the constraints imposed on them, but they do not necessarily bring about structural changes or address deeply embedded issues of racism. While these

practices demonstrate agency, they should not be romanticised to suggest that visible migrants are powerful, nor should they be viewed as powerless (Safouane et al., 2020). Further, the analysis revealed that agency is not only about resistance or emancipation. It can also manifest in ways that limit capacity and encourage submission to racial hierarchies in extrinsic emotion regulation deployed to change the emotional practices of a community positioned within structural inequality (Chapter 4) (Safouane et al., 2020). While this form of emotion regulation is agentic, it is deeply tied to migrants' differing ideological viewpoints about their social position within power structures, racial social relations, and perspectives on achieving inclusion. This entanglement leads to conflicting modes of emotion regulation, where agency can be enacted to overcome immediate challenges in ways that reinforce exclusionary discourses, even if it limits long-term capacity (Safouane et al., 2020). This indicates that agency should not always be equated with resistance.

6.3. Methodological contribution

The dissertation also makes methodological contributions. Chapter 5 contributed to the field of migration studies by demonstrating the importance of emotions as a source of knowledge within the research process. It offers insights into the capacity of discomfort to generate understanding in the context of studying refugees by a researcher who is herself a refugee. It demonstrated how having first-hand experience as a refugee not only enhanced the depth of analysis but also enriched the understanding of the intricate dynamics and lived experiences within refugee communities. This insider perspective allowed for an authentic exploration of the emotional and social realities faced by refugees, offering insights that otherwise might be inaccessible. Drawing from my dual role as a scholar and an Eritrean refugee, as well as my tacit knowledge and insider perspective, I brought a critical and empathic lens to the study. This unique combination of personal experience and scholarly insight not only enabled a more comprehensive and nuanced interpretation of the data but also profoundly influenced my approach to engaging with participants and conducting interviews. With an understanding of their experiences, I

approached participants with sensitivity and respect, creating an environment where they felt safe to share the deeper layers of their stories candidly and without reservation. This approach allowed for the emergence of 'productive discomfort,' which in turn generated valuable new insights into the complex realities faced by forced migrants.

While an insider because of my status as a refugee and ethnonational identity, I also occupied an outsider status in relation to participants (Carling et al., 2014; see also Chavez, 2008; Miled, 2019; Kusow, 2003; Tewelde, 2021; Zulfikar, 2014). As an Eritrean refugee, I shared a social and epistemological location with my participants, but my role as a PhD researcher cast me as their 'Other.' Chapter 5 delved into how my positionality as insider Other elicited productive discomfort and how attending to it from the onset, following interviews as situated affective encounters (Ayata et al., 2019) and analysing it through Wetherell's affective-discursive practices framework (2012, 2013, 2015), generated knowledge that foregrounds inequalities and advances a decolonial approach. Attending to discomfort provided insights into refugees' feelings of loss of dignity and the death of subjectivity due to the systemic and structural exclusions and racism they experienced in their new social environments. It revealed the ambivalence felt by some refugees, who realised that their colonial imagination of Europe did not align with their experiences of hostility during the refugee-seeking process. Such experiences led them to question whether the risks they took to reach Europe were worth it. These reflections were difficult and costly admissions, highlighting the deep emotional and psychological toll of their experiences. Discomfort allowed participants to share their negative experiences and emotions without adhering to the 'good refugee' narrative, which expects them to appear grateful and eager to integrate seamlessly (Moulin, 2012). By attending to and analysing feelings of discomfort, the chapter avoided reproducing colonial knowledge that perpetuates hegemonic ways of knowing about visible migrants. By focusing on discomfort, the chapter contributed to the decolonial project by producing insights that demonstrated migrants' struggles with racism, their coping mechanisms, and acts of resistance.

The analysis showed how the dual positionality I occupied shaped my interactions with participants, influencing how I approached them and the methods I employed during the interview process. This dynamic elicited discomfort from the onset and throughout the interview process, necessitating deep reflection. The significance of discomfort in providing insights that might otherwise escape researchers' attention has recently gained attention (Chadwick, 2021; Schmidt et al., 2023). This dissertation contributed to the understanding of the value of discomfort by reflecting on how its emergence in my research project allowed otherwise hidden topics to surface and led to deeper insights into the experiences and subjectivities of forced migrants settling in conditions of deep structural inequalities. The analysis illustrated that analysing the emotions, such as confusion and disbelief, which participants displayed upon encountering me, provided insights into how their lived realities as refugees shaped their understanding of what it means to be a refugee and the types of jobs refugees typically do. Reflecting on these discomforts early in the interviews helped me comprehend how structural constraints and the community's affective-discursive practices of apathy and despair limited their perceptions, often associating being a refugee with low-paying jobs. Paying attention to these emotions helped me understand that my position as a researcher, being a refugee myself, contradicted their perceptions and provoked the confusion and disbelief they experienced.

The discussion further demonstrated that attempts to make participants comfortable from an insider Other position during interviews created a space for them to share difficult stories unguardedly. This led to deeper reflections on their experiences, losses and uneasy gains, thwarted hopes, and new ideas about life. Based on my experiences as an insider Other researcher, this dissertation elucidated how the situated affective encounters method (Ayata et al., 2019), informed by the affective-discursive framework (Wetherell, 2012, 2013, 2014), directs analytical attention towards emotions as a source of knowledge in research. The finds showed how these combined frameworks allowed me to elucidate the dynamic interplay between structural barriers and the affective-discursive practices of the community, highlighting their role in reproducing

hopelessness and lose of status, thereby contributing to their disempowerment. It further clarified how using the method and my positionality revealed the perilous and costly admissions driven by productive discomfort. This revelation deepened the understanding of the loss of dignity refugees face due to misanthropic scepticism and its ongoing impact on black migrants (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). Finally, the discussion demonstrated how the combined frameworks helped to illuminate the enduring effects of the colonial legacy and give voice to the subaltern, who are often expected to conform to the narrative of grateful refugees.

6.4. Limitations and future research directions

This dissertation's insights are shaped by my unique positionality as an Eritrean refugee and researcher. This positionality shaped the sample selection process, notably affecting my ability to recruit participants who had lived in Switzerland for many years and possessed extensive experience. This limitation stemmed from the hostile and divisive politics within the Eritrean community, particularly in the canton where I reside. Individuals familiar with my political stance against the Eritrean government declined to participate in the interviews. Participants who agreed to take part were also unwilling to discuss politics. However, I reassured them we do not talk about politics. This difficulty hindered the examination of how different political orientations regarding Eritrea affect participants' integration and community formation. Due to the sensitivity and fear associated with discussing political views, many participants avoided these topics. This avoidance restricted the possibility to explore how varying political views influence integration processes, relationship with ethnic bonds, and social mobility. Fear also posed a barrier during the rapport-building phase. Despite efforts to alleviate some concerns, certain individuals, particularly women pressured by their spouses, chose not to participate. While I successfully recruited women participants in Geneva, primarily with the help of AMIC, an organisation supporting refugees, such opportunities were limited in other cantons.

Further, the interviews did not include the perspectives of young people who are experiencing despair and apathy due to lack of employment and underemployment. This exclusion is due to the dissertation's focus on participants who have been settled for a longer period. As a result, newcomers who are struggling to find employment were not included in the 65 interviews conducted for this PhD project. Future research should investigate their circumstances to further advance the understanding of the concept of integration.

Linguistic constraints further introduced some limitations. Although the interviews were conducted in Tigrigna without communication issues, certain English words and concepts lacked direct translations in Tigrigna. For participants unfamiliar with English, explaining these concepts in Tigrigna was challenging. One notable example is the word 'belonging.' The closest translation, *Yibtsehani*, conveys a different meaning in Tigrinya, which can obscure the nuanced implications of belonging. In the Tigrinya language, belonging is tied to a person's ancestral land or village of origin, which is central to defining one's identity. In Highland Eritrea, where many of the participants originate, the village of origin is connected to land rights based on kinship. A person is considered a villager (and thus Eritrean) if they can establish their right to access land in the village. Otherwise, they are considered outsiders. For example, in the ongoing social media political feud among Eritreans, when challenging a person's Eritrean identity, people often bring up the origins of their ancestors and land rights. To overcome this challenge, I used examples to illustrate the concept and posed questions that indirectly assessed participants' feelings and emotions. These strategies helped clarify the term's meaning and ensured that participants could accurately express their experiences and sense of belonging or non-belonging.

While interviews provided valuable insights in understanding lived experiences of forced migrants, they also have limitations. Some refugees tended to present themselves in ways that might downplay or alter their experiences, aiming to appear as 'grateful refugees' or avoid negative perceptions. This tendency potentially impacted the depth and

accuracy of the data collected. The technique of prompting discomfort was used cautiously to elicit more genuine responses. Additionally, participants' accounts were based on their subjective experiences and interpretations of racism and exclusion. These perspectives may differ from those of insiders and institutional representatives. Future research should explore the varying perspectives of insiders, institutions, and migrants to develop a comprehensive understanding of the interactions between migrants and the host community. Such studies could clarify how different viewpoints influence inclusion and exclusion dynamics, advancing the concept of integration through a nuanced understanding of these interactions.

Regarding the YouTube recordings, while they provided insights into emotional dynamics and regulation, the analysis was limited to the content of the recordings. It was not possible to question the participants about their experiences in different situations, seek further clarifications, or gather demographic information. Additionally, interpreting facial expressions and body language was challenging at times, as some participants turned off their videos. This dissertation also focused on one particular group, and future research should investigate affective-discursive practices of people situated in different social contexts to understand how and what emotions they deploy to navigate exclusions and/or secure privileges.

Finally, this study focused on a specific group of black people in Switzerland. Future research should explore other groups to understand how they navigate different power dynamics. Additionally, as online diaspora community networks expand, examining the affective-discursive practices of various groups could provide further insights into how they negotiate exclusions. Further, this dissertation did not examine the participants' meanings of blackness. Eritreans have a complicated relationship with blackness, which warrants further research to analyse and understand these nuances.

6.5. Personal academic growth and future research

Building on my doctoral dissertation, I am developing a research project that examines the affective-discursive practices of diasporic Eritreans in their communication with family members in Eritrea as they navigate limited access to digital media and government surveillance. The aim is to further advance the affective-discursive practices framework and the understanding of refugee affective-discursive practices in the context of transnational relations. This research will expand on previous works on transnational relations, digital media, and affect.

There has been robust scholarly work on the role of digital media in facilitating transnational emotional family ties by affording a sense of connectedness, performance of care, and sharing of emotions, but they have also created emotional challenges (Alinejad & Ponzanesi, 2020; Döveling et al., 2018; Robertson et al., 2016; Wilding et al., 2020). However, for many families in Eritrea maintaining connections with family members in the diaspora is difficult due to a digital divide. The repressive regime tightly controls access to information and lacks a national digital policy, resulting in a low internet penetration rate of 1.3%, primarily concentrated in the capital city (Bernal, 2006; Ghebregiorgis & Mhreteab, 2018). Family relations are further complicated by the disastrous effects of extensive militarisation that produced various "social anomalies" in family structures (Hirt & Mohammad, 2013).

The project aims to understand the emotional practices and interpretations among diasporic Eritreans, exploring how these constraints shape their affective-discursive practices and impact their communication with family members in Eritrea. It examines digital practices of Eritrea living in Switzerland and other European countries. When communicating with families in Eritrea, Eritreans in the diaspora resort to coded messages over digital media that afford some protection against government surveillance but also pose problems. Most people in Eritrea do not have physical access to personal computers, IT skills, private Wi-Fi, and a diversity of usage applications (Dijk, 2017). As a result,

they are compelled to depend on internet cafes in order to maintain contact with family abroad. However, the reliance on internet cafes presents several challenges. The public cafes lack privacy since the available applications are limited to Yahoo Messenger, IMO, and Facebook which are controlled by cafe owners. Further, slow internet speed only supports text messages and often results in freezing. All this elicits discomfort and fear leaving families feeling frustrated and disconnected.

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Appendices

I. Request for ethical evaluation of interview questions

Submitted to the USI ethics committee
January 2020

Migrant belonging: discourse, affect and capital

PhD Candidate: Wegahtabrhan K. Sereke
Prof. Dr. Jolanta Drzewiecka

Research description

This PhD research explores how identity capital and emotions mediate Eritrean settled migrants' articulation of their identities in Switzerland. It addresses the different forms of capital (economic, cultural, social, etc.) migrants use in positioning themselves in alignments and/or antagonisms in their local, national, and transnational contexts. The research employs an in-depth qualitative research methodology, combining open-ended interviews and ethnographic observation with discourse analysis.

Participants

The Participants are Eritrean migrants who settled in Switzerland for more than 7 years. The selection of participants will be done via purposeful sampling and snowballing, building on personal contacts of the researcher with community leaders and prominent Eritreans in Switzerland. The participants are envisioned to represent different regions, ethnicity, religions, migration generation, gender, political orientation, etc. The interview is targeted at Eritrean migrants above the age of 18, living in all Cantons of Switzerland.

Design of interview questions

The interview questions are designed in such a way that they do not cause discomfort to participants or raise any particular issue of concern. A copy of all interview questions is attached at the end of this document. Participation in this research does not cause any harm to the participants.

Data protection and confidentiality

The interviews will be conducted under strict conditions of confidentiality. Audio recordings will be deleted from the digital recorded following transfer to the server of USI as soon as possible after completion of the interview and no third parties will be allowed to access it. Only the researcher and the supervisor will have access to it. After the interview, audio recordings will be transcribed. Additional data protection requirement of USI will be strictly adhered to.

Anonymity

The identity of interviews will be anonymised. Data collected for this research will be only be used in pursuance of this research and accessed only by the researcher and the supervisor. Personal data of participants will not be recognizable in any way in any further publication (the doctoral thesis and/or other articles). Data collected in this research will not be re-assigned to any person.

Informed consent

Interviews will be done on the basis of informed consent of participants. Informed consent will be obtained at the start of each interview by explaining to each interviewee about the purpose of the research, the conditions of confidentiality, requirements of data protection and anonymity. Informed consent will be formally obtained by asking interviewees to sign a form. The standard informed consent, a copy of which is attached herewith, will include a statement that participation is completely voluntary and that participants can discontinue their participation at any time.

However, the requirement of informed consent will be implemented under careful consideration that takes into account a counter-productive effect on the recruitment strategy of participants. Most recent experience of research among migrant communities reveals that participants respond with higher levels agitation and discomfort when they are asked to sign formal documents. They are more comfortable when such consent is given verbally in the course of recording the interview. Taking this peculiar challenge into account, the consent form will be administered on a case-by-case basis, namely only in situations when participants are at ease to sign such a document. In other instances, consent will be obtained verbally during recorded interviews. Approval for this procedure is hereby formally requested from the USI Ethics Committee.

II: Participant Consent Form

Migrant Belonging: Discourse, Affect and Capital
Researcher's name: Ms. Wegahtabrhan Kiros Sereke
In signing this consent form, I confirm that:

1. The purpose of the research has been explained to me.
2. I have had the opportunity to ask questions.
3. I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.

4. I understand that my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw from the research at any stage and up to three weeks (21 days) from the date of the interview, without having to give any reason and without prejudice.
5. I understand that the interview will be recorded using digital voice recorder.
6. I understand that information gained during the research may be published, and that any information and personal data that I provide confidentially will not be published.
7. I understand that the researcher may be required to report to the authorities any significant harm to me or others that she becomes aware of during the research. I agree that such harm may violate the principle of confidentiality.
8. I agree that extracts from the interview may be quoted in any report or publication arising from the research and that they can be quoted anonymously.
9. I understand that data will be securely stored.
10. I understand that I may contact the researcher if I require further information about the research, and that I may contact the researcher's supervisors and the Ethics Committee of the university, if I wish to make a complaint.
11. I agree to take part in the above research project and I confirm that I am above the age of 18.
12.
    a. Participant's Name: _____Signature: _____Date: _____

    b. Researcher's Name: Wegahtabrhan Kiros Sereke
    Signature:_____Date:___

III: Semi-structured interview questions

1. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself? In terms of…

i. Years you lived in Switzerland?
ii. What is your educational background?
iii. Your work
iv. Marital status, children (do you need this question?)

2. What was your life before coming to Switzerland?

3. Can you tell me what motivated you to come to Switzerland?

i. Did you intend Switzerland as your final destination?

ii. (If the decision to stay was made by the participant):

a) How do you feel about your decision? Does Switzerland meet your expectations?

b) Can you describe your experience?

i. (If the decision to stay was imposed) Does that have an impact on your day to day life?

ii. How do you feel about it?

iii. Do you feel you are at home, safe and secure?

4. Can you tell me how the situation was when you first arrived in the country?

i. Where did you stay?

ii. (If in a camp) For how long and how does that feel to live in a camp (both mentally and physically)

iii. Does that affect your impression/feeling about Switzerland (negativity or possibly)? How so?

iv. How do you feel about it? (safe, secure, accepted)

v. (However they reacted) What does that feel like in your body and was there a physical sensation associated with that feeling?

4. How do you feel living in Switzerland?

5. What is your legal status? What does it mean to your integration/incorporation efforts in Switzerland?

6. Can you tell me what your day-to-day life is like?

7. Do you work?

i. (If yes), For how long and how did you manage to find a job?

ii. Can you describe the working environment?

iii. Whom do you interact with most? Least? What kind of interactions do you have?

iv. Can you describe a memorable moment that happened at work? What made it stand out in your mind? What else happened?

a) How did it make you feel?
b) (However they react) What does that feel like in your body?
c) Was there a physical sensation associated with that feeling?

v. Do you think your previous carrier/work experience or education played a role in getting a job or creating your own business?
vi. (If not), Why do you think so and what holds you back from getting a job?

8. Tell me about your social life and what do you do after work?
i. Whom do you interact with most? Least? What kind of interactions do you have?
ii. Which café/places do you go often and with whom?
9. Tell me what sort of assistance do you get from the State or the community that would help you to be part of the community (in economic, social, and other aspects)?
10. What efforts do you use on your part to help be part of the community?
11. What role does your own background (ethnic, linguistic and religious, gender, etc.) play in your effort to become part of your new community?
12. How does your ethnic/religious/linguistic/gender background affect your relationship with the host community?
13. What do you think of Eritreans who were here before you or arrived after you?
14. Can you describe a memorable moment that happened during your stay? What made it stand out in your mind? What else happened?
i. How did it make you feel?
ii. (however they react) What does that feel like in your body?
iii. Was there a physical sensation associated with that feeling?
15. Do people ever make any assumptions about you? How? Have you ever had any misunderstandings/altercations?
a) How did it make you feel?
b) Do you know why the interaction happened?
c) How did you realize?
16. Do you ever talk about your experiences as a migrant? Where? With whom?
17. How would you describe your identity?

18. Would you go back to Eritrea, if the political situation changes?
19. Do you feel secure, or do you feel you belong here, and feel accepted?

i. (If yes), How does that feel both physically and mentally?

ii. (if no), How does that feel both physically and mentally?

21. Do you have any questions for me?

Thank you for your time. If I have any questions later on, may I contact you?