Doctoral theses at NTNU, 2023:319

Oda-Kange Midtvåge Diallo

Joining in black study

Knowledge creation and black feminist critique alongside African Norwegian youth

Doctoral thesis

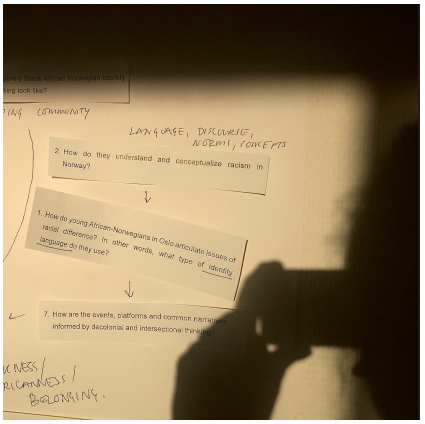
NTNU
Norwegian University of Science and Technology
Thesis for the Degree of
Philosophiae Doctor
Faculty of Humanities
Department of Interdisciplinary Studies of Culture

NTNU
Norwegian University of
Science and Technology

Oda-Kange Midtvåge Diallo

Joining in black study

Knowledge creation and black feminist critique alongside African Norwegian youth



Thesis for the Degree of Philosophiae Doctor

Trondheim, October 2023

Norwegian University of Science and Technology
Faculty of Humanities
Department of Interdisciplinary Studies of Culture

NTNU
Norwegian University of
Science and Technology

NTNU
Norwegian University of Science and Technology

Thesis for the Degree of Philosophiae Doctor

Faculty of Humanities
Department of Interdisciplinary Studies of Culture

ISBN 978-82-326-7338-4 (printed ver.)
ISBN 978-82-326-7337-7 (electronic ver.)
ISSN 1503-8181 (printed ver.)
ISSN 2703-8084 (online ver.)

Doctoral theses at NTNU, 2023:319

Printed by NTNU Grafisk senter

For my fellow Nordic black and African peers.
For those who struggle within and outside the university.
For those of us who belong anywhere and nowhere.

For my familiy.

Summary

This study is about blackness in Norway, and the implications of what I conceptualize as *black study* - a practice and analytical project that creates social change. The thesis includes four articles: two are co-authored with black feminist friends and colleagues and are based on collaborative autoethnography, and two are single authored and based primarily on conversations with study participants.

The thesis is a contribution to an underrepresented field, namely studies of blackness and the African diaspora in the Nordics. It is a study of the implications of racialization that focuses on the second generation of African Norwegians, and how they seek to theorize from their experiences, create community and knowledge as well as develop a language to analyze the oppressive structures they face. I call these practices of theorizing, community making, and knowledge + language creation, *black study*.

By joining in black study, I uncover possibilities of practicing and developing situated black feminist methodologies on the margins of the Norwegian exceptionalist Academic Industrial Complex (Bachetta et al, 2018). Exploring the radical potential of black study as practice, I think with abolition and anticolonial anthropology (Shange, 2022). I invoke abolitionist Ruth Wilson Gilmore's formulation of "noticing what people are already doing" (2022) as an entryway to thinking with, through and about black study in its different forms: from language creation to co-theorizing and counter-archiving (Haritaworn, Moussa and Ware, 2018). My understanding of study is inspired by Hammana and Klinkert's concept of returning study to common use (2021). I keep black study practices at the forefront, viewing them as modes of learning and unlearning through a queer, black feminist lens. Blackness becomes a framework, within which there is room to maneuver. Fully embodying a black feminist epistemology has meant rethinking what a PhD project can do, as well as its limits. With black study being my central contribution, practice and meditation, my main method has simply been to join in black study with other African and black Norwegians by spending time in Oslo and online, wherever study takes place.

Thus, this thesis is both a methodological and a theoretical project, and in combination a project of queering and perhaps abolishing binaries, boundaries, and hierarchies between knowledge systems - data, method, theory - as it shifts, moves, glitches (Russel, 2020) towards envisioning a black feminist liberatory approach. In this thesis I show that such an approach is key to collaborative study of the workings of blackness and antiblackness in Norway and the Nordics. In other words, a black feminist liberatory approach is key to practicing and joining in black study.

Acknowledgements

Writing this dissertation could never have happened without the help, support, and guidance of so many wonderful people. Thank you to the committee; Olivia U. Rutazibwa, Rosalba Icaza and Zoran Lee Pecic. To my supervisors: Berit Gullikstad, for valuable guidance in the first half of the process. Nana Osei-Kofi, for encouraging me to believe in my work. You were the Afro-Nordic academic auntie I needed. To Siri Øyslebø Sørensen for letting me be vulnerable, and for constant and solid support, especially in the last year, helping me dare to submit. Thank you. To everyone at KULT: To Kari, Lotte, and Åse Marit, for all help. To my office mates: Thea, for your humor, for steadily watering our friendship (even through my absences), and for making the final week so nice. Lucy, for your kindness and calmness. Thanks to Outi, Julie, Maria, Martin, Bård, Thomas and Agraphia for rooting for me. To Angelina, for being one of my first TRD friends, and for your passion. Jeeva, for our friendship theory sessions. france, for inviting me to the critical gender salon. Stine and Elisabeth, for your generosity. Mari and Rico, thank you for getting it. To my chosen colleagues and friends around the world, all integral to this work: Nico, thank you for being a huge inspiration and such a strong presence in my life and lifework. Elizabeth, thank you for leading by example, simply by being you. Jasmine, thank you for your brilliance. Teju, you continue to teach me. Waad, thank you for being such a caring friend, and for your invaluable analyses. Rahwa, I love to know and be known by you. To the River and Fire Collective, you made me want to write again. Thank you, Lena Sawyer for the collaboration and for reading the thesis with so much care. Maimuna, thank you for your counter-archive. Thank you, Janna Aldaraji for your meticulous and careful copy-editing. To Maya Acharya and Lina Mohageb for expanding my thoughts on abolition, and for friendship. Thank you, Ro, Nafeesa, and Jan of B.F.F. To Julia Suárez Krabbe for your bold critiques. To Mai Takawira, Nina Cramer, and the BIPOC office in Blågårdsgade, tak. I am thankful to my Oslo fam, who participated in my project, and helped me think along the way: Thomas, Deise, Ragnhild, Asta, Tore, Lara, Maruwa, Rahel, Mariama, Ifrah, Mohammed, Koubang, members of ARISE, ASA, Salam, Tabanka, Nordic Black, and many more. Thank you 'supertante' Elisabeth, and my Oslo-landlord Jannecke. To my family and friends in Mauritania, Senegal, Norway, Denmark and beyond: you make me who I am. To my grandparents (living and ancestral): tusen takk for alt, on jarama. Thanks to all my aunts, uncles, gogos, kaaws and cousins, and kids of cousins. To my parents, thank you for creating space for me to belong. Mamma, takk for din grundighet, styrke og utrolige støtte. Takk for å kjøre 2200 km, tudamunanbak. Baba, a wali min suudse haalde ko andumi. A jarama walude min ko soklimi fof. Dag-Yero, du er uvurderlig støtte og verdens bedste bror. Til Anja, jeg er så glad for at vi er familie. (til du som er på trapperne, vi ses om lidt <3). Til Chrissy, min valgte søster, vi to følges ad. Til Stine, Caro, Karen, Tinuke, og Sofie, I er det bedste heppekor og helt fantastiske venner. Til min svigerfamilie: Mette, Lars, Oskar, Ahrong, Saeho, og Sys, tak for at få mig til at føle mig som en del af familien med det samme. Til Konrad, min kærlighed. Jeg lovede dig at du ville blive en del af min bog, den dag vi mødtes. Jeg kunne ikke have gjort dette uden dig. Jeg elsker dig SÅ højt.

Preface

Dear reader,

What you are about to read is a PhD dissertation that in many ways looks a lot like other dissertations, but at the same time has some kinks, glitches, and resistance towards the traditional form. I hope you are willing to accept this premise as I invite you into a practice of *black study*. Black study is a method, and a mode of being and being together outside of and within the university.

This thesis is a methodological contribution. You will therefore encounter methodologial reflection throughout its course, but perhaps not in the form you are used to. Bearing in mind that this can be challenging to some conventional academic readers, I have included a method report that accounts for what is deemed research methods in an organized manner. The thesis can (and perhaps should) be read without this momentary pause in the rythym and flow.

I have written this thesis first and foremost from a personal need. As more and more people joined, I realized this need is our shared condition of being black diaspora in the Nordics. Together, we bring black study forward.

Oda-Kange Midtvåge Diallo
Trondheim, May 3rd 2023

Table of contents

Introduction

> We have to be attentive to the many many different kinds of factories, institutions, places and processes through which people come to consciousness, through fomenting liberation struggle. (Gilmore in Antipode Foundation, 2020).

This study is about blackness in Norway, and the implications of what I conceptualize as *black study* as a practice and analytical project that creates social change. I also uncover possibilities of practicing and developing situated black feminist methodologies on the margins of the Norwegian exceptionalist Academic Industrial Complex (Bachetta et al. 2018).

The thesis is a contribution to a fairly underrepresented field, geographically, namely studies of blackness and the African diaspora in the Nordics. It is a study of the implications of racialization that focuses on the 'second-generation' of African Norwegians and how they seek to theorize from their experiences, create community and knowledge, as well as develop a language to analyze the oppressive structures they face. I call these practices of theorizing, community making, and knowledge and language creation, *black study*. Black study is a transgressional, queering and potentially abolitionist practice that takes on different forms. I will move through these modes of study as they behave outside of and within the university. The thesis includes four articles that all develop black study as a practice. Each article builds on and deepens the analyses of black study, culminating in the fourth article, where I use the concept explicitly.

Developing black study as a critical, generative practice, I also tell the story of becoming a researcher. I am Fulani-Norwegian[1], a black feminist, and an anthropologist turned fugitive gender studies scholar. Since the early summer of 2018, I have been researching, studying and

[1] I am from a middle-class background, biracial, quadrilingual, and queer. My class backgorund and light skin privilege means I have had easier access to higher education than others, and I tackle questions of blackness from a multi-situated point of view. I hold dual Danish-Norwegian citizenship, which is relevant considering my insistence on remembering Denmark-Norway as colonial power and slave economy.

thinking about what blackness means, does and creates to/for those who are racialized as black[2] and have grown up in Norway. I started with an empirical inquiry, wanting to know how people identify within and against blackness as African Norwegians, and how they create community. I set up the study as a classical ethnographic exploration and planned fieldwork in Oslo as my chosen site of study. In 2018 and 2019 I spent four consecutive months plus several occasional short stays in Oslo while going to events, volunteering, and doing interviews and focus group discussions. I got to know people outside of the university who could help me in my study, either as participants, who, due to national ethics regulations, would be anonymized, or the artists and organizers[3] who supported me along the way. I also expanded my connections within the university as I formed friendships and intellectual community with other black and afro feminists, queer and queer of color researchers in the Nordics, and beyond.

In this trajectory the study changed. It evolved from the well-known and widely accepted format of a (Nordic) ethnography where the roles of researcher and *researched* are clearly defined and the relationship between the two is theoretically hierarchical, based on an idea of the researcher giving back (Tallbear, 2014). The trope to 'give back' implies an economical exchange where the *researched* gives knowledge, and the researcher 'gives back' by writing about them. Instead, I was inspired to take seriously my black feminist ethics, as well as what I have learned from organizing with black, queer and feminist groups, and expand the research practice beyond 'giving back' by momentarily 'creating space' during interviews or offering to work unpaid. It caused a deeper shift in my understanding of the analytical process of the study, where and when it happened, and who was doing it. What I mean by that is that I allowed myself to think beyond the initial questions and how people who signed up for the study answered them, and instead inquire about the premise of those questions, where they came from, and what the questions and

[2] I use black and African-Norwegian interchangeably as neither category is accepted by all or taken for granted, but often mixed and mixed up by those whom it describes, and who continue to create, mold and change what those categories mean. I do not capitalize black to come closer to a translation of "svart", and to make room for the multitudes of blackness in the Norwegian context, that are both removed from and inspired by blackness elsewhere.

[3] I would like to mention here Rahwa Tilahun Yohaness, Thomas Talawa Prestø, Waad Alrady, Asta Busingye Lydersen, Miriam Haile, Nana Kwapong, and Dubie Kwapong, as some of the many people who have helped me think, provided critique and suggestions for analyses, as well as included me in their organizing, activisms and work without being so-called study participants.

analyses of the participants were. Moreover, how that shaped my thinking to a place where we were thinking and studying alongside each other.

Fully embodying a black feminist epistemology meant rethinking what a PhD project can do, and its limits. Thus this thesis is both a methodological and a theoretical project, and in combination, a project of disrupting, destroying or perhaps abolishing binaries, boundaries and hierarchies between knowledge systems—data, method, theory—as it shifts, moves, glitches, strives towards envisioning a black feminist liberatory approach. In this thesis I show that such an approach is key to collaboratively researching the workings of blackness and antiblackness in Norway and the Nordics. In other words, this black feminist liberatory approach is central to practicing black study.

Building on a black feminist ethic

My understanding of black feminist ethics includes 1) an intersectional lens, by being attentive to the different systems of oppression that work together with and are impacted by, for example, antiblackness, patriarchy, class and cis-heteronormativity (Collins, 2000; hooks, 1984) 2) transparency as radical honesty, not necessarily towards the University Machine (Hammana & Klinkert, 2021), but always towards study participants, impacted communities and friends (Shange, 2022) 3) commitment, both personally and politically to creating knowledge that is of use to struggles for liberation (hooks, 1994).

During the time of this project, I got to know people who challenged my thinking and approach to knowledge creation and helped me see how 1) I was never the sole author of any thought, but that my analyses were always created in community with others, 2) the way I write, how I formulate myself, who I cite, and how I deal with authorship and possibilities of collaboration are as much a part of my research ethic as what I do in interactions with study participants (those who have signed consent forms and allowed me to write down their knowledge and use it to make textual arguments) and 3) what I value the most is precisely the conversations and co-theorizations with others, what such conversations in themselves create in healing and deeper understanding that cannot be directly translated onto the page. And that should not always be

given to the page[4]. Working with black feminist ethics, I also theorize researcher positionality and my personal journey throughout this study, learning to straddle the lines between research and activism.

Who is black in Norway?

In the Norwegian context, black is not simply black[5]. What I mean by this is that blackness as a racial category is not always the right descriptor for people of African descent, simply because not everyone within this group identifies as black. At the same time, blackness is not linked to one specific genealogy. Blackness is as much a self-ascribed identity as a racialized one. Young African Norwegians increasingly think of themselves as black, using blackness as a framework of common experiences, cultural and political references and as a term of solidarity (See Articles 1 and 4). The contemporary black youth generation carries a different story than for instance, black people in the US or UK. War-incited migration from Somalia, Ethiopia and Eritrea has greatly impacted this generation, along with the (often) short relationship between white Norwegian women and black African men who came to study in Norway in the 80s and became fathers to mixed children. Many of the kids that were born or came in the mid-90s to early 2000s also have the experience of growing up on the East side of Oslo or outside the city, some in 'asylmottak' (asylum centers) and/or small towns all over the country. As opposed to earlier generations of black and African diaspora in Norway who may have been organized more according to country of origin, the culture that was created in the mid-90s with organizations like Afrikan Youth in Norway and Nordic Black Theatre (dating back to the late 80s) has impacted largely how young people of African descent identify, namely within a larger diasporic blackness that take inspiration from many places and timelines at once. Therefore, my focus on the 1990 and 2000 kids is important and relevant to distinguish from the story of their parents.

Through conversations and time spent hanging out with people, I understand blackness as not a given but rather a framework within which there is room to maneuver. This maneuvering is also a way of studying, and studying as a way of creating a common language and space for

[4] E.g. Audra Simpson on ethnographic refusal (Simpson, 2007).

[5] See, for example, Essed (2009), Wekker (2009) or El-Tayeb's (2011) discussion of what 'black' means in the European context.

belonging (see Article 1). I was initially interested in configurations of blackness and the different cultural and political resources that young people use to craft their racial consciousness. My analytical focus was on blackness and/as identity in the Norwegian context, and thought of "black" as something we become. Therefore, my focus and understanding has shifted from centering blackness to centering the study of blackness, the black study that young African Norwegians engage. There is no *one* blackness, and the ways we identify with or outside of blackness are informed by many other structures of dominance such as social class, borders, war, proximity to one's 'roots', gender and sexuality. In Article 4 I suggest we think of the practice of black study in Norway as a mode of queering blackness. When we think queerly about blackness by "noticing what people are doing" (Gilmore in podcast "Millennials are Killing Capitalism", 2022), what emerges is a set of practices rather than identity.

Sharpening black study through literature

By centering knowledge and experiences of black and African Norwegian youth through critical collaborative methods, the study contributes to and engages with different critical traditions, namely African diaspora and black studies (DuBois, 1903; Fanon; 1986; Gilroy, 1993; Wright, 2004), black and transnational feminisms (hooks, 1994; Lorde, 2007/1984; Collins, 2000; Emejulu & Sobande, 2019), and theorizations of race and racism in northern Europe (Essed, 1991; Gullestad, 2006; Kilomba, 2010; Wekker, 2016; McEachrane; 2014). I locate the project theoretically within contemporary queer of color, anticolonial, and abolitionist critiques (Hammana & Klinkert, 2021; El-Tayeb, 2011; Olufemi, 2021; Gilmore, 2022; Haritaworn, Moussa and Ware, 2018; Shange, 2022). The analyses are citationally promiscuous as I pledge no loyalty to any one analytical framework. This is because this research is about developing theory alongside its participants, or rather, taking part in the theorizations that were already ongoing among black Norwegian everyday activists. I do, however, choose who I read and cite with intention, as I aim to center black feminist, queer, anticolonial and abolitionist knowledge production that comes from experience, and is primarily situated within (the margins of) Europe. I enjoy thinking with diasporic resources from the US, yet I am invested in partaking in a project of imagining a black Europe and, even more so, a black Nordics. Sawyer and Habel have underlined the importance of foregrounding "the nuances of locality and the way gender, class,

and sexuality inform, fraction, and/or can stretch to include people and communities often not included in the US-centered studies of diaspora" (Sawyer & Habel, 2014, p.3).

Exploring the radical potential of black study as practice, I think with abolition and anticolonial anthropology (Shange, 2022). I invoke abolitionist Ruth Wilson Gilmore's formulation of "noticing what people are already doing"[6] as an entryway to thinking with, through and about black study in its different forms (language creation, self-study, collaborative study, counter-archiving). Hammana and Klinkert inspire my understanding of study in their discussion of returning study to common use (2021). As mentioned earlier, keeping black study practices at the forefront of my analyses, I view these practices of learning and unlearning through a queer, black feminist lens as a way to create and make space for something new. Blackness becomes a framework, a lens within which there is room to maneuver.

Repurposing DuBois' (1903) double consciousness in combination with bell hooks' (1994) conceptualization of theory, I look into the black study practice of creating language. I write alongside black queer and queer of color critiques, as I think about how black Norwegians queer blackness, similar to El-Tayeb's notion of queering ethnicity (2011), as well as how we - as black people in the Nordics more broadly - counter dominant (national) archives as we imagine otherwise (Olufemi, 2021). Articles 2 and 3 both think with Olufemi's concept of imagining otherwise, yet I see this as an element of a black study practice in general. Black study is about imagining otherwise in an abolitionist sense: dismantling antiblackness and other forms of oppression, and building something new, a legacy or guide for the future. In Teaching to Transgress, bell hooks (1994) writes that transgression is "a movement against and beyond boundaries" (p. 12) which resonates with the movement of this thesis, as it transgresses boundaries between method, theory, data, and between research and black study. Situating Norwegian black study within its geographical context, I, together with the people with whom I've studied, theorize it as an *un*colonial practice (Adisa-Farrar, 2019). This is to say that critiques of and study practices to dismantle Norwegian antiblackness are closely interlinked with Norwegian slavery and colonialism. And further, colonial structures that target immigrant

[6] Gilmore on the podcast Millennials are Killing Capitalism, 2022

populations in Norway cannot be divorced from the continued colonization of Sápmi (Dankertsen, 2021, p. 136).

Antiblackness rather than "racism"

This project does not lean on racism as a concept due to its tendency to obscure the workings of antiblackness (Marronage x Diaspora of Critical Nomads, 2021) and racial capitalism[7] (Robinson, 2000; Gilmore; 2022) when used in Nordic analyses of (racial) oppression and difference. *Racism* has become so full of meaning, that much meaning has been lost. Mainstream media discourse often conflates 'racism' with 'discrimination' or 'prejudice'. This watered-down conceptualization of racism often omits white supremacy and the interlink between racism and capitalism: that racism together with capitalism are systems built on the exploitation of groups whose lives are controlled, excluded and exploited. Ruth Wilson Gilmore defines racism as "the state-sanctioned and/or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerabilities to premature death, in distinct yet densely interconnected political geographies" (Gilmore, 2022, p. 107). What is key in this definition is the vulnerability to premature death as well as the specificity of geographic context. In Norway, a country heavily invested in whiteness as a criteria for belonging (Gullestad, 2006) and thus rights, and a country that has a history of colonialism, slavery and investments in racial hygiene, it is crucial to decipher the ways racism works in this context. One of the pillars of Norwegian, and, by extension, Nordic racism works is through the cultivation of antiblackness, which I understand as a racial hierarchy where people who are visibly of black African descent are deemed non-belonging, always foreign, less intelligent, hypersexual, unskilled, and more likely to be criminal, thus often exposed to policing. Norwegian racism equally builds on islamophobia and anti-indigenous racism/white Norwegian ethnicism. Like one of the study participants, Asta, once explained to me in conversation, Norway's history of colonialism, slavery and antiblackness is not taught in school:

[7] Robinson: "The development, organization, and expansion of capitalist society pursued essentially racial directions, so too did social ideology. As a material force, then, it could be expected that racialism would inevitably permeate the social structures emergent from capitalism. I have used the term "racial capitalism" to refer to this development and to the subsequent structure as a historical agency". (2000, p. 2) In other words, all capitalism is racial capitalism. The two cannot be separated.

> "It isn't a coincidence that we didn't learn about The Congo Village[8], which was right here in Frognerparken. There is a lot of power in knowing your own history, as Africans, as blacks."

The specificities of Norwegian exceptionalism

In order to analyze the specificities of antiblackness that black Norwegians are subjected to, I consider it crucial to look at the racial, colonial and capitalist projects that have shaped the Norwegian state as we know it. Many different studies point to Norway's exceptionalism and 'rose-tinted' branding in areas such as gender equality, welfare, humanitarian aid, peacebuilding etc. which allows for a denial of colonialism (Dankertsen, 2021) and a reproduction of a national "white innocence" (Wekker, 2016). While Nordic exceptionalism is more widely theorized in Nordic studies of racism and coloniality, the critiques specific to Norway are mostly articulated by Sami indigenous thinkers (Dankertsen, 2021; Stubberud and Knobblock, 2022; Jensen; 2020). Theorizing Norwegian exceptionalism includes an analysis that considers how Norway victimizes itself as a country that was colon*ized* and under the control of first the Danish state for 400 years, then under Sweden for almost 100 years, and then occupied by nazis during the second world war. This creates an opportunity for Norway to opt out of any responsibility for the colonial endeavors of its former ruler, Denmark. Thus, Norway tends to downplay the joint slave and plantation economy of Denmark-Norway. Simultaneously Norway has somewhat successfully hidden the reality of the settler colonial relationship with indigenous Sámi land and peoples. By authorizing a Sámi parliament, and allowing the teaching of (mostly) northern Sámi languages in schools in Finnmark as well as other policies of tolerance, the brutal history of forced 'Norwegianization' (fornorsking) and land grabbing can remain under the surface[9]. Finally, I understand Norway's lack of EU membership as an opportunity to avoid responsibility for associating with the colonial history of European imperialism as well as Europe in general.

[8] Kongolandsbyen (The Congo Village) was a racist live human exhibition of 80 Senegalese people (adults and children) put on display in the Frogner Park in Oslo in 1914 during the 100th jubilee of the Norwegian constitution (Brinchman, 1923, p. 352).

[9] As I write this on March 1st 2023, activists are occupying the Norwegian Ministry of Petroleum and Energy for the 6th day, demanding that wind turbines at Fosen be demolished, and the land is returned to Sami reindeer herders after the Norwegian Supreme Court concluded that the windmill park is a human rights violation more than 550 days ago.

Norway can pick and choose when to take part and when to opt-out, as it has the financial means through the oil economy to do so.

A black study research project

Building on these anticolonial and anticapitalist critiques, the project seeks to formulate a black feminism that is geographically, politically and historically situated. A black feminism in Norway cannot be divorced from African continental and diaspora feminisms, from Muslim women's and queer resistance, from Norwegian queer and trans organizing, from Sami and Kven freedom struggles and land knowledge, from Afro-diasporic organizing in the 80s and 90s, or from black queer and feminist organizing in the Nordics more broadly (see Article 2).

Moving forward, I hope this initial picture I have painted will act as a guide that one can return to. During the course of this project, I have been wondering: thinking, being, and feeling with black study as a creative practice, what are its building materials, who are its builders, and what are we trying to build? In other words, my central research question is this:

> What are the methods of a black study practice? What kind of social change does black study produce?

I have grappled with these questions, resulting in the four articles and five analytical chapters I will present shortly. In Chapter 1 I introduce and summarize the four articles and their main contributions. The four articles are available at their full length at the end of the thesis, after Chapter 5. In Chapter 2, I share the story of how I joined in study, spending time in Oslo, participating in events and having many conversations with study participants. I also use Chapter 2 as an entryway into my engagement with abolition as I write out a critique of the methodological baggage I carry from anthropology. In Chapter 3 I share the center of my analysis: the practice of black study and what it produces in terms of queering of blackness and abolition. In Chapter 4 I return to the university, exploring how I've been practicing black study together with other black feminists in Nordic academia. In the final Chapter, I meditate on the future of black study in Norway and how it cannot be within academia (alone).

Chapter 1: Rethinking relationships between doing, thinking and feeling

Wanting to grasp and "name the nameless, so it can be thought" (Lorde, 1984, p.37), I have expanded my interest from the study object, which in this case is blackness in Norway, to the practice of study itself. I render this project as an exercise in rebellion (Imoud & Cordis, 2022), or perhaps rebellious study "from the margins" (hooks, 1984), as I ask the reader to follow along with the collaborative, explorative, and liberatory commitments that have created the knowledge presented here. What remains at the center is practice, what young black Norwegians do, and how they think, feel and theorize about their lives. Meaning that the format of this thesis will be recognizable depending on the willingness to move away from academic norms and towards something more experimental.

The black study experiment starts with the articles, which all use black feminist epistemology as a foundation for analysis and co-theorizing. Sharing a critique of Norwegian exceptionalism, more or less in the background, all four articles are situated in a Nordic geography, as the project is dedicated to locating theorizations of blackness and antiblackness in the Nordics, and Norway specifically. This means that I give citational privilege to formulations and theorizations that come from related and close contexts, namely the Nordics and Europe, while I allow for a continuous learning with and from black feminist and abolitionist theory from the US.

The contributions of the four articles

Article 1: "What I need is to be taught a language": double consciousness and language development among black youth in Oslo

Article 1 makes a simple argument: black Norwegians long for a language. Thus they create it themselves and teach it to one another, using resources from popular culture, social media and travel. They long for a language to talk about and analyze their experiences with antiblack racism, intersectionality, and troubles of belonging in Norway. Similarly to the way black Norwegians create their language by repurposing words and concepts from a black US-American

context, I too take a concept from US black studies, namely DuBois' double consciousness (1093) along with bell hooks' understanding of theory as healing (1994) to show how this creative language practice is a way to belong where you "hear home"[10]. The article shows how this search for language can be understood as a practice of double consciousness (DuBois, 1903), as the young African Norwegians simultaneously see their experiences through their own eyes and the white majority gaze of Norwegian society. Through excerpts from conversations, I show how creative black youth are with language as they switch between English and Norwegian and adapt, interpret and develop theoretical concepts of their experiences with being black in Norway. The language practice is, in many ways, a direct example of black study. It is a practice that is non-disciplinary, it starts with embodied knowledge and then slowly becomes collaborative; common. I show how young black Norwegians mix languages, take concepts from other places with a large black diaspora and repurpose these to fit the Norwegian context. The participants and I discuss how access to resources such as US popular culture and popularized Critical Race Theory creates the possibility of claiming a position as a legible black Norwegian subject, one that is both black and Norwegian. Diving into this practice with the use of double consciousness, it shows precisely how coming to consciousness is an active effort, a mode of labor and a strategy for creating a sustainable sense of belonging, one that is not dependent on the Norwegian nation-state.

Article 2: Theorising From our Lives: A Black Nordic Feminist Approach

In a dialogue piece based on black feminist collaborative autoethnography, my friend and colleague Rahwa and I reflect on the roots of the burnout we both have experienced in the aftermath of the 2020 Black Lives Matter uprisings. We conceptualize it as Nordic burnout, emphasizing the complex structures of Nordic exceptionalism and scarcity of widely accessible black (feminist) knowledge. Using our friendship as methodology and a "theorizing from our lives"-method, we analyze the workings of antiblackness, misogynoir, anti-queer, anti-trans, and anti-islam structures in our research and activist environments. Within academia, we argue that there is a tendency to avoid the realities of race by focusing studies on migrants/people who have

[10] 'Å høre hjemme' means to feel at home in Norwegian. When translated directly to English it becomes 'to hear home', which can be helpful in this context as we think about the uses of language. My friend, community organizer and researcher, Ro Averin, made me aware of this well-fitting translation twist. Hearing Home is the name of Ro's retreat for black women+ in Lofoten, Norway.

come to Norway from so-called non-western countries. Simultaneously the critique explores the issue of appropriation of black feminist methodologies without engaging with the politics and demands that such methodologies build on. Within activism, we uncover the workings of antiblack, anti-queer, anti-Islam, anti-trans, and ableist structures in anti-racist, feminist and black organizing. We understand these structures of erasure and exclusion as the reasons why our work isn't sustainable and leads to Nordic burnout. We also suggest methods of coalition that take our friendship as starting point: the locus from where we think and analyze the problems we face. The main contribution of the article is that the structures of the larger society are at play in gender studies and black activism as well, which is why we need a black feminist liberatory approach to our work in knowledge production and organizing. Such an approach is anticolonial, caring and coalitional, and it demands that we value our lives and by extension, deep relations in the work we do.

Article 3: Writing Letters as Counter-Archiving: A Black Nordic Feminist Care-Practice
In Article 3, Jasmine, Maimuna, Lena and I wrote letters to each other during a five-month period, meditating on the idea of counter-archiving (Haritarown, Moussa and Ware, 2018) and what it might mean in our contexts. This exchange led us to explore creative ways of making history and archiving that which our families, friends and ourselves have been involved in. Through this correspondence we invoke black feminist (Nash, 2020) and queer of color care practices and critiques of 'archive', remembrance and documentation (Olufemi, 2021; Campt, 2017), showing examples from family, personal and community archives while pushing back against Nordic exceptionalist erasure. The main argument in the article is that the African diaspora in the Nordics is an existence fraught with erasure, which is why we, as families, communities and scholars engage in counter-archival processes of documenting and remembering our lives outside of the confinements of official, colonial, national archives. Photo albums, notes, cassette tapes and storytelling are some of the methods used in our communities. We have come together as a group of four scholars to inscribe those archives within each other as we become each other's witnesses. The letter writing is thus an attempt at speaking what and who has been silenced or forgotten, as archiving what is happening now for future generations to come, as well as a care practice that allows us to feel in collectivity the longings, the grief and the erasure we face as African diaspora in the Nordics.

Article 4: Joining in black study—a black/queer ethnography alongside African Norwegian youth

In this article, I name black study as the practice I have noticed among African Norwegian youth as they try to collect experiences, think about their upbringing, and analyze the racism they face. I explore black study as a nondisciplinary, embodied, every day, and grassroots-level mode of knowledge creation. Black study develops from embodied knowledge and slowly becomes common. I analyze black study as a practice of "returning study to common use" (Hammana & Klinkert, 2021) by inviting others to join in study through "talking about it all the time" (Joof, 2018), and by creating study groups. Based on recorded conversations with study participants, a project on black queer lives in Norway, a group discussion on Western beauty standards, and personal reflections from the Black Lives Matter demonstrations of 2020, I show how black study is practiced alone and in collaboration. I argue that this practice exists as a resistance to Norwegian exceptionalism and is, in fact, a form of theorizing, which this written work builds on, as well as the suggestion that the practice of black study is a way of queering blackness, playing with Fatima El-Tayeb's notion of queering ethnicity (2011). A central takeaway from this discussion is that black study was already in place, and this research project merely joins in study.

All four articles show examples of black study: either as collaborative autoethnography, letter writing and/as counter-archiving, as double consciousness and language creation, and in its more general form from the embodied to the collective theorizations on situated blackness and antiblackness. The articles also offer discussions on what blackness does in the Nordic context. For example, how blackness acts as a framework for critique, community building and for theorizations around the specificities of being black African diaspora in Norway and the Nordics. Articles 1 and 4 are primarily located outside the university as they focus on practice and black study practitioners who study (in) their everyday lives, while Articles 2 and 3 are written partially from within the university, lurking in the corners of campus, developing black study as a method of survival and resistance among black feminists, theorizing friendship, care and counter-archiving as what I render black study methodologies. Finally, the articles show a significant temporal progression: I present them in the order they were written, as this shows

how the work of thought has progressed. Starting with the article on language, written in Norwegian for an anthology on Norwegian studies of racism[11]. This kind of chronology may not be traditional. Yet this presentation feels true to the purpose of the work: to think about what study makes, to make an argument about marginal, radical knowledge production, and to locate it outside of and in resistance to (dominant institutions like) the university.

Black study in the making

During the final year of writing, I began conceptualizing the idea of *black study,* which has become the central analytical, methodological and theoretical concept of the thesis. I came to black study by employing Gilmore's approach of "noticing what people are already doing" to undo systems of oppression, "people" here being African-Norwegian youth, as well as taking seriously the offerings from black feminism of queering the relationship between knowledge and experience. In Article 4, where I dive into black study as a practice that I notice people doing, I write:

> Black study[12] is not the same as Black Studies plural. Black study singular does not refer to anything disciplinary established within an institution or as a corpus of literature. Black study refers to the cumulative everyday practices, both individually and collaboratively, enacted by black youth, in their quest to understand blackness, what it means to be black in Norway and what black history in their context looks like. I think of black study, not as a disciplinary practice, yet a pedagogical one. Pedagogical in the sense of teaching oneself as well as teaching others with care. I view black study as a deep interest and inquiry into what it means to be black in a place like Norway. I call it study because the practice, in its many forms, is investigative, curious, analytical, sometimes a collaborative effort, sometimes introspective, sometimes it resembles

[11] I wanted to publish a text in Norwegian, written for a broader audience, which would be published before the thesis. Regardless of my desire to make it accessible, the thesis is still a long academic text written in academic English.

[12] The formulation "Black Study" singular, is also used in analyses of black studies traditions in the United States such as Harney and Moten's "The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study" (2013) or the recently published "Of Black Study" by Joshua Myers (2023). In these works, "Black Study" also refers to Black Studies (plural), the research practice of black scholars whose names we can know, read and cite, and not the type of practice I am showing here, which is primarily removed from the academy, publishing and idea ownership. I will elaborate more on the difference between their and my use of the term "black study" in Chapter 3.

> research, sometimes teaching, and sometimes it can take a therapeutic shape. Black study names/describes/gives word to a specific lens or way of analyzing and thinking about things through the specter of blackness.

Articles 1 and 4 are more directly focused on practices of black study, where Article 1 discusses how black Norwegian youth create and search for a language to conceptualize their experiences with antiblack racism and growing up as African diaspora in Norway. Article 4 explores the practice of black study more broadly drawing in examples from community events and personal accounts of analyzing experiences. I have, however, also used examples of black study practices, without naming it as such, in the two co-authored articles (Articles 2 and 3). Here black study is explored through a collaborative autoethnography where we write to and with each other as we theorize from experiences doing black feminist analyses in our respective contexts: geographically, institutionally and communally. Black study becomes a practice of survival *in* the academy as well as *outside* of it.

Black study is a concept that has felt like a tingling sensation on the tip of my tongue; the idea has continued to linger in the background. Early on, speaking to many different people about my project, I became interested in why and how young African Norwegians were learning about blackness, structural racism, colonial history etc., in such a deliberate way.
I remember asking several participants in the project "what makes people so interested in these questions? What ties together such a fragmented group of people? What is it they do?"
By doing this work of black study, I join black Norwegian youth in their efforts to connect the black minority in Norway with a global black diaspora, as well as the Norwegian nation-state with Europe and its ingrained white colonial Western project. Cedric Robinson stated that black studies is a critique of the West, which resonates with the nondisciplinary practice of black study in Norway that maintains the critique of Norway at its core. During conversations with people who volunteered to help with my research, I picked up on a certain atmosphere that formed, a kind of intensity or urgency to speak, share, and ask questions, or to co-theorize what it means to be black as well as the antiblack structures we face. I noticed and kept returning to these two different streams (the knowledge that people carried and the sense of urgency to co-theorize), as I was simultaneously going to events and meetings as well as following discussions and story

streams on social media. And so, I came to "black study" as a useful formulation. I think of study in relation to the way my friends and colleagues Hammana and Klinkert (2021) describe study as "a way of being, and being together". Here, this includes practices that are carried out with the purpose of creating (black) space.

The black study I conceptualize in this thesis is a practice I have named by noticing what black Norwegians do to learn about blackness and to unlearn antiblackness. As a way to create space for themselves within blackness as a framework, while simultaneously claiming belonging in Norway. My concept of black study is, first and foremost, un-academic, nondisciplinary, not published or publishable, but a practice happening among people with knowledge from their lives. I consider the making of the co-authored articles as a practice of black study that was independent of the academic texts we wrote. What I mean by this is that black study is about the theorizations that happen within and between black people who grow up in Norway (and the Nordics), as an act of affirmation. Therefore, the way I think about black study is related to, but not the same as the way it has been articulated by Black Studies scholars who think and write about the tradition of black studies and some of its main scholarly characters in the US[13]. The black study I consider here is, primarily, based on practice, noticing practice and joining in practice. In order to think through black study in a larger context, I have found theoretical resources in different radical traditions.

Strengthening the field of Afro Nordic studies

This thesis contributes to the field of Afro Nordic studies, which currently has its center in Sweden, where most academic texts have been produced and published. It is also where the most Afro Nordic scholars have permanent positions within the university. A couple of important publications that deal specifically with the African diaspora in the Nordic countries are the anthology Afro Nordic Landscapes from 2014, edited by Michael McEachrane, the special issue on Nordic Reflections of African and Black Diaspora edited by Lena Sawyer and Ylva Habel (2014), and the recent issue on "Sorthed" (Blackness) of the Danish art journal Periskop, edited

[13] Central Black Studies thinkers who are often mentioned could be W.E.B. DuBois, Cedric Robinson, Hortense Spillers, and Sylvia Wynter, to name a few. See Joshua Myers "Of Black Study" (2023), or Robin D. Kelley "Black Study, Black Struggle" (2018) for reference. In Article 4, and in Chapter 3 of the thesis I dive deeper into this distinction between what I call black study (singular) and Black Studies (plural).

by Cramer and Elg (2021). The field, which has been developing during the past 15-20 years, is still very marginal within academia[14].

Most research and knowledge production on/from the African diaspora and the black Nordic condition is on the grassroots level or in the arts. Hiphop is and has been for a long time, a site of black knowledge production in the Nordics (Kelekay, 2019; 2022), as well as independent publications of activist groups and community initiatives such as the decolonial feminist collective Marronage (2017) in Denmark who have published several independent journals and a book together with Diaspora of Critical Nomads (2021) that interprets and critiques Afro-Pessimism in a Danish context. In Norway Tabanka Dance ensemble with their independent publication Hårsår (2017, 2018) have taken up questions of black bodily autonomy, anticolonial movement, and black history in Norway. Therefore the project is also relying heavily on the resources that are available outside of the university in the form of zines, booklets, and discussions in online forums, which is a core part of the contribution: challenging dichotomies between what is rendered 'knowledge' and what is so-called 'experience'.
Thus there is not much academic literature that deals with blackness and antiblackness in Norway, let alone the Nordics, which is citable. There is even less so written and researched by Afro Nordic scholars themselves[15]. This is also the case for Afro-European studies, which are not institutionally recognized anywhere in continental Europe (El-Tayeb, 2022), with very few Black Studies departments in the UK.

Many studies of racialization in Norway and the neighboring countries tend to build on empirical evidence of the occurrence of racism, which is equally important, but can also play into the demand for proof that many encounter when trying to raise an anti-racist critique. That without continuous 'evidence' racism does not exist and is never systemic. Rahwa and I write about this

[14] I would like to mention Afro Nordic scholars whose work deals with blackness and antiblackness such as Prisca Bruno Massao, Deise Nunes, Michelle Tisdel from Norway. Nana Osei-Kofi, Anna Adenji, Lena Sawyer, Ylva Habel, Maimuna Abdullahi and Micheal McEachrane from Sweden. Jasmine Kelekay, Alemanji Aminkeng Atabong from Finland. Elizabeth Löwe Hunter and Nina Cramer from Denmark. Finally, there are the studies that have been carried out by black scholars from the US, Canada and the UK who have lived in the Nordics (McIntosh, 2015; kennedy-macfoy, 2014; Mendes, 2021; Miller, 2017)

[15] There are some Master's theses worth mentioning such as artist Frida Orupabo's Master's thesis (2011) and journalist Ranghild Njie's Master's thesis (2017).

in our co-authored piece (see Article 2). My theoretical understanding of the workings of race and racism is that it is woven into the very fabric of Norway, as in other Western nation-states. In the Norwegian case, that project has been through building a nationalism that erases and forcefully assimilates indigenous populations and settles its state control onto indigenous land (Dankertsen, 2021; Gullestad, 2006; Svendsen, 2014).

In understanding systemic racism and antiblackness, it is crucial to analyze Norway as a part of Europe and the European imagination of innocence. Here I wish to highlight black European thinkers who have theorized the workings of whiteness, nationalism and antiblackness in Europe, such as Wekker's *White Innocence* (2016), Kilomba's *Plantation Memories* (2010), Essed's *Understanding Everyday Racism* (1991), El-Tayeb's *European Others* (2011), and the anthologies *Showing our Colors: Black German Women Speak Out* (Optiz et al. 1986), *Black Europe and the African Diaspora* (Hine et al. 2009), and *To Exist is to Resist: Black feminism in Europe* (Emejulu & Sobande, 2019). These publications tackle the complex interlocking systems of anti-immigrant politics, islamophobia, antiblackness, colonial amnesia, European whiteness and homonationalism and have been created under different circumstances, either through the university or without it. Fatima El-Tayeb (2022) reflects on the field of Black German studies, which she argues cannot be in academia alone. This is because knowledge production of black Germans happens mostly at the grassroots level, and the academic field itself does not have institutional support in Germany. El-Tayeb, a black German working in the United States, notices how institutional black German studies in the US is potentially a site of erasure of the local knowledge production among black German grassroots thinkers and groups. It is therefore important to consider the consequences of bringing black study into the university, which I will discuss at the end of the thesis.

Theorizing from our lives through counter-archiving

The project has several methodological contributions; it is as much a methodological project as it is empirical or ethnographic. What I mean by that is that during the five years I have been doing this work, I have become increasingly interested in thinking critically about processes of knowledge production, analysis and theorization within gender studies and studies of racism in

the Nordics. Two of the four articles have an explicit methodological focus, as I in collaboration with other black feminists develop black feminist methodologies that are specific to our current time, political and geographical context in the Nordics. In Article 2 Rahwa Yohannes and I offer friendship between black feminists as a methodology that allows for deep relations and deep analysis. We develop these methodologies, not with the purpose of producing for the Academic Industrial Complex (AIC), but to sustain ourselves and each other. In Article 3, together with Jasmine Kelekay, Maimuna Abdullahi and Lena Sawyer, I have been engaging in a letter correspondence during which we realized the potential of such a method for theorizing collectively while also caring for one another. This methodology was grounded in black feminist traditions of care (Nash, 2019), and QTBIPOC[16] practices of counter-archiving (Haritaworn, Moussa and Ware, 2018; Olufemi, 2021), as well as black transnational feminist analyses of Euro-American politics of remembrance (Campt, 2017; Ehlers & Belle, 2018; El-Tayeb; 2008). Care, too, is essential to the transgressional practice of the larger study, and the relationships I have built with participants. In the next chapter I will tell the story of how I nurtured these relations by joining in black study.

[16] Queer, Trans, Black, Indigenous, People of Color

Chapter 2: Joining in study

In this chapter I ask you, the reader, to join me in an exercise of black study as practiced by me, someone who is straddling the lines between black study and research. The type of black study I discuss here might resemble an ethnography, fieldwork or participant observation, but that is not exactly what it is. Instead, it is a story of slowly shedding the layers of academic socializing and simply joining *in study,* as messy as it might be. In this work, I am inspired to rehearse a type of radical honesty, as Savannah Shange describes it, an approach that combines three essential practices: "truth-telling, valuing personal experience, and taking action." (Shange, 2022, p. 195). As I have been joining in black study, I have also contributed to its development, and my methods, questions and analytical tools have been influenced by and have influenced those of my black study peers who include study participants and the communities and relationships they think from and alongside, as well as friends and colleagues.

Abolition (of) anthropology (and the AIC in general)

Taking a black feminist transgressional approach to study, I simultaneously go through a reckoning with my anthropological background. This means that my approach to this work and my critiques of the AIC come from studying and slowly unraveling the coloniality of the methods, tropes and canonized theories of the anthropological discipline as well as the social sciences in general. I am trained as a social anthropologist from the Scandinavian tradition, which means that my presumed anthropological ancestors are mostly white, cis, and straight.

My struggle comes from trying to work within and against a set of rules, knowledge regimes that require closeness, yet distance, mistrust of people and trust in academia, publish publish publish, intersectionality as a list of guilts, method is this, *not that*, theory is this, *not that*, research is this, *not that*. Gain access, and leave again. Who suffers most? Find them and extract their knowledge. Write so just a few will understand. Publish publish publish.

In this project I use ethnography, and despite my struggles with the discipline of anthropology, I still believe that ethnography can be a liberating tool for knowledge creation. Black feminist and

abolitionist anthropologists have taught me the liberating and abolitionist potential of ethnography when practiced using black feminist ethics of care (Shange, 2018, 2019, 2022; Campt et al., 2008). I render ethnography a way of learning about people's lives and communities through their own way of presenting their stories. It can be a tool for centering the relations we build in knowledge creation and theorizing. Shange (2022) writes that "Ethnographic practice is a technique of attending to life as it is in this moment, one that has the potential to attune us to world-making everywhere that it is happening." (p. 188) Ethnography can, if done with transparency and integrity, be truly collaborative. By collaborative, I suggest that all social science research is derived from several people's thoughts and ideas that collide. Whether through verbal communication, through archives, or other interactions of ideas, it is never only the author of an academic text that is, in essence, the sole author of that work. The Black, queer US-American anthropologist Jafari Allen writes about an ethnography of black/queer which is:

> constituted by the conjuncture of scholarly literatures, theoretical frameworks, and sites of struggle and cultural production. Primary among these is a commitment to the quotidian serious games of Black folks, here and there. Another is a reworking of anthropological traditions, and of queer theory. (...) [T]he articulation Black/queer is most profitably thought of as a *habit of mind*—a way of seeing and saying as much as a mode of thinking or doing. (Allen, 2016, p.620)

This remix of resources and ways of knowing, based on the everyday practices (games) of young black Norwegians captures my approach to joining in black study. By employing a black/queer and black feminist liberatory approach to research, the collaborative process is not only revealed, but is central and fundamental to the research and the knowledge itself. I encounter many social science projects that follow standard protocol concealing where ideas have come from and reduce their process of knowledge production to either 'data' or 'literature'. Such tropes obscure the people that have helped us think differently, helped us understand texts and concepts in a new light, asked questions back to us, suggested and presented ways of analyzing an issue that we (the researchers or authors) did not come up with alone. Once given the role of either researcher or 'informant' something happens in the way research is presented, and some of those

details of the process, the situations in which roles are reversed or blended, become hidden, and unmentionable. Savannah Shange (2022) offers a radical honesty for feminist ethnographers "as a compass for ethical action"(p.195). In this she suggests not trying to fix the "incommensurability of abolitionist work and our waged disciplinary labor with ever more inclusive research statements and accounts of service to the profession." (Shange, 2022, p. 195). A black feminist liberatory approach can hold several truths at once. I think with Audre Lorde (1984), who encouraged us to create coalitions across differences, and to see the gifts in difference instead of seeking to streamline our movements and theories in ways that erase our individuality and our specific struggles. In my context, this means that my ethnographic work does not have to 'represent' a narrative that every black person in Norway can see themselves in. Rather, I see my work as a careful documentation of the conversations we are having across differences in a time where we share some of the same challenges while also being differently positioned to combat these challenges. It is also my priority to be transparent in my standpoint, and about the processes of labor behind a text, to stay true to my commitments to black liberation and to be open to my chosen, and often non-academic, colleagues' feedback and critique. Perhaps these words from Savannah Shange (2018)can offer a mood-setting:

> Abolition is not a synonym for resistance; it encompasses the ways in which Black people and our accomplices work within, against, and beyond the state in the service of collective liberation. (p.10)

I note and continue to think with this idea of working "within, against and beyond the state". Shange (2018) continues:

> As an analytic, abolition demands specificity — the very kinds of granularity that ethnography offers as an accounting of the daily practices that facilitate Black material and symbolic death. Abolitionist anthropology, then, is an ethic and a scholarly mode that attends to the interface between the multisited anti-Black state and those who seek to survive it. (p.10)

What I take from this is the demand for specificity in abolitionist projects to undo systems of harm, and that ethnography can help unlock specific realities so that we, as accomplices in struggle, can figure out what is to be done (Gilmore, 2022, p.39). Perhaps then what I align myself with is an abolition(ist) (of) anthropology, that emerges "from deep relationality with ancestors and contemporaries, its practice is a mode of reparative caring that seeks to be accountable to what is unaccounted for in social reform schemes" (Shange, 2018, p.10) as Shange puts it. She encourages (ex)anthropologists to "*care* more than we can *know*, to extend our analyses past the ruins of the world (and the discipline) as we know it" (Shange, 2018, p.10). I will leave the anthropology discussion here and instead let it serve as a backdrop or an entry point into my critical practice of black study. I aim to practice black study as I write it out. Harboring the abolition of anthropology, black feminism and a radically honest approach, I share the story of how this study came to be. Sharing this story, I think about these questions: If we think of black study as a nondisciplinary practice, does it have any guidelines? And if so, what are they? What might be the ethics of black study, and how have I practiced such ethics? How does black study relate to black feminist methodologies?

Joining in study, as study goes on

In this section I will draw out how the research transformed along the way. As I alluded to in the introduction, the study developed from a more traditional ethnography with clear boundaries between researcher and researched to a deep engagement with black study through a black feminist approach. As I was preparing this study, I quickly realized that young black Norwegians already had their own study in place. Black study was going on online, in art, music, among friends, and in political organizing. Prior to my ten-week stay in Oslo, I had spent a lot of time surfing social media spaces where black Norwegian youth were active and posting frequently. The role of social media is very important in this recent 'uprising', as it is a space for creating communities that stretch wider geographically and where people can share knowledge and experiences without being in the same place (Mainsah, 2014). It has been my way to get to know people, places and connections. I used Facebook to get to know where people gathered, the events happening and the profiles that were most often involved in initiatives that centered black experience, antiblack racism, and black identity in/from Norway. I used Instagram to follow different profiles that had larger engagement. I listened to the podcast "Ekkokammer" hosted by the Gambian-Norwegian

screenwriter, director and actor Amy Black Ndiaye. In a few episodes, she had African Norwegian actors, rappers and bloggers joining her, sharing their experiences of growing up in Norway. They were joking around while simultaneously providing analyses of class, gender oppression and nationalism. They were not researchers, but they demonstrated clearly how these were not just random thoughts but reflections and theories based on lived life; on black study. I treated these podcasts like vital material, and followed the participants' names like references. Simultaneously, I discovered the NRK series Rot, a family show about a black Norwegian family in Oslo with three kids navigating blackness and Africanness in different ways. The mother in the series was played by Asta Busingye Lydersen, who I later learned was one of the founders and previous leaders of African Youth in Norway (AYIN), an organization that worked for the self-determination and liberation of Afro-diasporic kids in Norway from the 90s until 2013. Asta became an important co-theorizer, and we met several times at performances, conferences and exhibitions, discussing my project, how I could go about it and how it was related to or different from previous research on African Norwegian youth. From my online research, I also found Thomas Talawa Prestø, the artistic leader of Tabanka Dance Ensemble, and another central figure of the AYIN community. Thomas had also been visible in the media and participated in interviews and debates on racism and diversity in the arts. I reached out to Thomas, and we agreed to meet in Oslo when I first came there in August 2018 to volunteer for an African arts festival. Thomas generously shared his own activist research, documentation, and recognition of all the black and African diaspora organizing that had taken place in the past and is taking place now. He suggested names I could contact. Quickly, a space of trust was formed between us, as we had so much in common through our double heritage, as Thomas would frame it, our love of dance and of theorizing, and the way we both were searching constantly to make sense of things. I told Thomas about growing up in Denmark, why I wanted to do this study, my insecurities, and what I needed from him. We spoke for hours, and I understood that he had been doing his own research for a long time. Documenting, systematically formulating, thinking and rethinking his politics, methods and approaches. This practice of creating a space of trust became important as I spoke to more and more people, and it was precisely why the research developed into a collaborative black study.

At the festival, I made friends with the festival volunteer coordinator, who was Gambian-Norwegian. There was again this feeling of recognition— of having something deep in common. We were putting up posters and handing out flyers in the areas of Grønland and Tøyen, when we

passed a white mother with a black mixed-race child in a stroller. The child looked like both of us. "There are so many of them now!" I burst out, and she corrected me "There are so many of *us* now", she said with a smile. It felt like an important moment. There is an *us*, I thought.

I made a lot of friends at this festival, talking with other volunteers, analyzing how the festival functioned, who worked where, and who was in the audience. I learned how the board and the few paid employees were all white, while the volunteers were mostly black and people of color. I told the other volunteers about my research project about blackness and black community building in Norway. I wasn't quite sure what to look for other than hoping that I would get a sense of community. I understood that several people who were volunteering didn't necessarily know each other. They were also there, searching. I picked up on this sense of urgency to connect, to gather and to think out loud. So much knowledge was implicit. Dance moves from viral afrobeat videos, references to Twitter threads, and so many other diasporic resources (Brown, 2005, p.42) that we shared. I met the volunteer Amanda and her friends, Mohammed and Refel. They loved Sean Paul and Burna Boy and would stay up to dance all night.

As I picked up on these embodied articulations of black study, the shared references and moves, I was also attuned to following how embodied study was also common. I connected with everyone I met on social media, as I knew this would be an essential arena for me to continue my learning. I also knew that this would be a way of getting to know more names and people, spread the word about my project, and make myself visible and available for conversations. I was using my personal profile to not hide anything or create a barrier, and instead show people who they would be sharing their knowledge with if they eventually signed up. I wouldn't disappear suddenly, and they could follow what I was up to just as much as I could follow them. Recognizing that knowledge creation and co-theorizing was happening online, I included permission to screenshot posts on Facebook and Instagram in the consent form, with continuous written or oral consent.

The festival helped me get to know my way around Oslo and what were some places of gathering. Since the festival was spread out across Grønland[17], I got to know more places where

[17] Grønland is a central part of Oslo East, historically a working class neighborhood, which has been populated by many black and brown immigrants since the 1980's. Grønland is also the location of the Nordic Black Theatre.

people used to meet, organize and be together. I would keep using social media and Google Maps to mark these places and build a map of significance, a geography of black Oslo[18]. I learned how people knew each other, and how generations interconnected. At this point, I wasn't taking notes systematically but instead tried to focus on relations. I would keep up the habit of taking small notes on my phone and follow up when people reached out to avoid losing an opportunity to keep the conversation going. I began returning to Oslo more frequently. In between visits, I continued being active online, following conversations, events and posts. I spoke to Thomas on the phone quite often. He told me how a US-centric blackness was dominating together with a West-African and Caribbean perspective and cultural productions. He saw this acted out through the clothing style and musical interests of young men coming from East Africa. I had noticed this transatlantic inspiration in the language of the people I had talked to at the festival and the threads I was following online. It was widespread to weave English sentences or expressions into the language. This mixing of languages and words was a way of learning and creating a new language that is entirely specific to the Norwegian context (see Article 1).

In our conversations, Thomas also told me about his work before the upcoming show. Tabanka was producing an issue of their magazine Hårsår[19], and I was asked to write a piece for the magazine. It was the first time I wrote anything personal that would also be published. I wrote a poem and reflective piece about growing up West African and Norwegian in Denmark, being neither nor, both *black and* (see Article 2). It poured out of me during half an hour. I wrote the first paragraphs on the bus in Trondheim, counting how many black people I saw[20]. One day, I saw 12, which was a record. I was in this state of hyper-alertness, deep learning and vulnerability. I was willing and able to dig into these parts of myself that I hadn't truly allowed

[18] The mapping practice was important, yet not developed to its full potential. I mention it here as it seemed inevitable to think about blackness in Oslo through space and geography, as differences between Oslo West (rich neighborhoods with predominantly white population) and Oslo East (large working class and immigrant population, with increased police control and gentrification). Project participants would mention specific areas of Oslo to explain their background and 'access' to black and African communities growing up.

[19] Hårsår means "overly sensitive" in Norwegian, but it also alludes to being sensitive when someone pulls your hair.

[20] Trondheim, the third largest city in Norway is relatively small (approx 200.000). Although it has the country's largest university (NTNU) and a quite large Ethiopian and Eritrean community, it is still much less diverse compared to Oslo. However, during my PhD project, initiatives and communities of minority youth have been increasing and are much more visible now, in 2023, than five years ago.

before. Only this time, I had somewhere to direct this energy. I sent it off, and returned to Oslo in time for the performance. I went alone to the show, hopeful. I looked around and saw myself mirrored in the audience. *There is a community*, I thought. Growing up in Denmark, I only connected with other African Norwegians as I began the PhD journey. I found a copy of the magazine in the restroom and felt the glossy paper in my hands. I opened it and saw my name mentioned in the list of contributors. The text was surrounded by other texts written only by black and Afro-diasporic people in Norway. One was about clothing, one about hair, one about movement and ancestral knowledge, and about the history of AYIN and black organizing in Oslo. I thought this was a good way for me to be in conversation with people, not only verbally, but also in the written word.

As a way to get to know Oslo as an arena for black and African organizing and community building, I started connecting with some of the people who have been active organizers and members for a long time, who are partly seen and consider themselves as 'the older generation'. One of these activists, the Afro-Brazilian feminist Deise Nunes, who came to Norway 20 years ago, said in the spring of 2019 that "there is no Afro-Norwegian movement in Norway yet", but that "we are working on it". Thomas equally expressed that "we are a few people who have been doing this work for a long time, and we are tired", while a third community pillar and leader of the Nordic Black Theatre, Cliff Moustache, told me that "those of us who have been doing this for years now, know a lot, but we are also lacking in creativity. The new generation are not letting anyone tell them what to do, they do things their own way. All that we 'elders' have to do is to support them".

A black renaissance in Norway?

From March to June 2019, I stayed in Oslo. I spent four months attending events, having conversations and facilitating group discussions. During the first month I spent in Oslo, there was more than one happening with a theme related to blackness, antiblack racism and African diasporic culture every day. Several of the people I've talked to told me that this is a new development and that many of these gatherings were not happening just a couple of years ago. For example, a friend who has been active in the community for a long time, and who creates content on black feminism and structural racism online, said to me that, "In Oslo we are enough

in the sense that you don't have to be the only black person in a friend group anymore. We are here, we are visible and we can easily be found 'click, click, click'". She mimicked the clicking sound of going on Facebook and finding Black events, groups and conversations. Another friend, Ingvild, described this time (spring 2019) as "a black renaissance!"

One of the first events I joined was about Afro hair, hosted by the African Student Association at UiO. This event became one of the most important during my entire stay in Oslo because it attuned me to central issues and because it gave me important contacts, friendships and an overall impression of what would be possible and relevant to talk about and achieve going further (for example in group discussions). Being in that room with 40 young people confirmed my thesis that the younger (1990-2000s) generation of Afro-diasporic kids in Oslo had access to (deliberate, curated) spaces where they could be around others like themselves. At least if you were active online and knew where to look, such spaces would be there to be found. Therefore, along with my method of following and getting to know the research participants, I was also going to get to know the places: the 'black' spaces of Oslo. The online and offline spaces of the African Student Association (ASA) thus became some of those spaces in that I engaged. My first impression online of the ASA was that it was for exchange students from African countries. However, I quickly learned that the majority were Afro-diaspora Norwegians who had been looking for a space to belong at campus and beyond. I noticed their choice of English language, which was a way to include international members and to create space for more free expression of experiences with racism and explorations of blackness through using words from a US-black vocabulary. As I mentioned earlier, mixing language and the use of English was more than a question of words. As they played with language, they created their own, which was a way of claiming space. This momentary space creation became another thread for me to pick up. I would see it happen in spontaneous meetings, exchanged looks, bigger performances like Tabanka, and smaller performances on dance floors in the night.

I knew that being vocal about one's identity and experiences with antiblack racism would be more difficult for some than others. For this reason, I valued and spent time on more intimate one-on-one conversations. These conversations would often go on for hours, changing shape between a hangout between friends, a therapeutic space, a theoretical work session and

everything in-between. This was especially the case in my friendship with Buhle, who invited me to her home every week. We would sit at her kitchen table, eating all kinds of baked goods that she had made, talking and theorizing about our different African diasporic backgrounds, and how they were entangled. The space we created between us, the participants and I, was sacred. In the conversation space, radical honesty was the most important ethic, *to care* more than I wanted *to know*. What emerged was an opportunity for the participants to shift the focus from them to me and our shared experiences, and back again if it felt right. Listening to each other with care, we allowed space for vulnerability. It is these conversations that were most important to me, and it is these conversations that I will never be able to translate onto the page in their fullness.

As I joined in study, I also participated in some practical organizing around events such as writing invitations, planning, spreading the word on social media, and setting up and cooking for those who came to participate. These are small contributions that are outside the practice of *doing research.* I cannot simply sit back and observe how different people do and say different things. I also have opinions about what I think makes a generative, healing and caring African/black community. This includes speaking up against words, sentiments and structures that marginalize LGBTQIA+ people, suggesting ways of practicing solidarity across borders and centering women, femmes, nonbinary and trans people who often do 'invisible' labor, but rarely are given credit for their/our initiatives within black organizing (see Article 2 "Theorising from our lives").

I too, have been practicing black study

I describe and analyze this work, these different examples of scholarly and interpersonal methods, modes of learning and thinking while being affiliated with the university through a black feminist abolitionist lens. My understanding of black study comes from, first and foremost, the practices I've noticed among black people who are not in the university. But this is also a research project, and I am a researcher, someone who is trying to do the work within the university, while simultaneously conspiring[21] to undo it. Recognizing that black study is a

[21] Black feminist abolitionist scholars Aimee Cox, Savannah Shange, Christen Smith and Deborah Thomas talked about conspiring together as an abolitionist practice during a zoom talk on anthropology of abolition/liberation (Cox et al, 2022).

practice I have engaged in before becoming a researcher, what happens to black study when I do it as a researcher? Not everything can be known by research. Joining in black study includes being weary of what I share with the university and in this thesis. Black study as a practice does not need the university to go on, it is rather the other way around, and black study happens completely independently of any institution. After having gone through the process of creating and writing four articles, I view my research practices in a new light. Through this meditation, I realized I was doing black study all along. Perhaps as a way to resist dogmatic and normative research practices? In the next chapter, I dive deeper into the practices that are black study, as well as their queering and abolitionist potential.

Chapter 3: Black study from wonder to practice

In the following section, I will move between the doing, the thinking and the feeling of black study in a state of what Legacy Russel (2020) might call remixing. I mean to discuss first the practices of black study, their form (creating language, counter-archiving, co-theorizing), and then to meditate on the different ways I have been thinking about, through and from black study, both in and apart from collaborations: what black study produces (abolition, queering of blackness, an uncolonial approach). During this thought practice, I have sought to find ways to understand black study at the conjunction of black feminism, abolition, critical pedagogy, queer of color critique and uncolonial thought. I ask the following questions: What are the elements or modes of a black study practice? What does a black study practice produce?

Unfolding these questions, I exemplify various modes of remixing, changing, and trying to practice black study among research participants and colleagues. These practices queer blackness through study. Not everything about this practice can be recorded and known by research, as I, like Katherine McKittrick, "imperfectly draw attention to how seeking liberation, and reinventing the terms of black life outside normatively negative conceptions of blackness, is onerous, joyful, and difficult, yet unmeasured and unmeasurable" (McKittrick, 2021, p. 3). As I wrote in the introduction, I am preoccupied with blackness as a framework that entails a set of "practices rather than identity", and I direct my focus away from collecting proof of oppression to joining in black study. Referencing the opening citation of the thesis, I am interested in how people come to consciousness through rehearsal (Gilmore, 2020, Harney & Moten, 2013) and wonder (McKittrick, 2021), which is also study. I rehearse this analysis by uplifting examples of the development of a group-based consciousness and collective analysis, which is integral to black study. These examples come from the material of the articles as well as nuggets and clippings from my study archive, such as screenshots from social media. Following different strands of grassroots theorizations across time, I've seen how collective conversations change and become crosscutting. The material I use here is centered on practices of theorizing and collective thought processes both in self-study, between friends, at meetings and in larger communities. I investigate black study as a theorizing practice, one in which theory is deeply interlinked with experience and developed in order to grasp and make sense of what is going on

around us, as well as guides to action and world-making. Theory is, llike Gilmore explains, also method (Gilmore, 2022, p. 96). I conceptualize black study as a queering of blackness—inspired by El-Tayeb's (2011) queering ethnicity—black method/science and wonder (McKittrick, 2021), as abolition (Gilmore, 2022), and as returning study to common use (Hammana & Klinkert, 2021).

In this chapter, I focus on practices.The black study practices I have noticed and engaged in are 1) learning a language, 2) self-study: theorizing from our lives 3) collaborative study: counter-archiving and creating space. All articles show examples of each mode of study, and I will use examples from the articles to theorize these study modes a step further.

A note on study

In Article 4, I unfold and discuss the practices and ways of being together that I have conceptualized as black study. I approach the methods of thinkning, doing and feeling that black Norwegians practice as study, because these different practices are all directed towards a need to make sense of what it means to be black in Norway. I give examples from many different everyday practices of black study, such as conversations that happen again and again, retrospective analyses of antiblackness in childhood, and events that center black and African experiences. In a transcribed dialogue, Fred Moten says to his co-author Stefano Harney about study:

> When I think about the way we use the term 'study,' I think we are committed to the idea that study is what you do with other people. It's talking and walking around with other people, working, dancing, suffering, some irreducible convergence of all three, held under the name of speculative practice. The notion of a rehearsal – being in a kind of workshop, playing in a band, in a jam session, or old men sitting on a porch, or people working together in a factory – there are these various modes of activity. The point of calling it 'study' is to mark that the incessant and irreversible intellectuality of these activities is already present. These activities aren't ennobled by the fact that we now say, "oh, if you did these things in a certain way, you could be said to have been studying. To

> do these things is to be involved in a kind of common intellectual practice. (Moten in Harney & Moten, 2012, p. 110)

Moten and Harney discuss study as a word for all kinds of sociality. Their choice of the word "study" is a means of framing activities such as working together, playing music, and sitting on a porch as an intellectual practice. In this work, I conceptualize the "study" in black study in a way that is related to Moten and Harney's description of a quotidian intellectual practice (Harney & Moten, 2013, p. 1001), or a mode of "being, and being together" (Hammana & Klinkert, 2021). However, Moten and Harney's concept of study is still developed in relation to the university and the Undercommons of the university. What I try to think about and name with "black study" is a practice, first and foremost, happening among those who are racialized as black in a country that claims colonial innocence and race-blindness. Here black study is a study of blackness and antiblackness practiced by those who need to study (themselves) in order to belong. My conceptualization of black study is particular because it stems from noticing practices among specifically African Norwegian youth that are investigative, analytical and theoretical. These practices resemble a more common understanding of what study might be: deliberately learning something by gathering information, continuously thinking and talking about it, joining groups of other people interested in the same thing and moving closer to answering some questions—to making theory. The "black" in black study is the study subject. What they study is very specific: they/we study blackness. What I draw out from joining in these practices, thinking and writing about them, is that some level of black study is necessary for those who grow up in a place like Norway, where the reality of race is ignored, yet it heavily structures society. Where belonging is dependent on presumed Norwegian heritage, on whiteness (Gullestad, 2006; McIntosh, 2015). "It comes with the skin color", as Araweelo states in Article 4.

Coming to consciousness is the pre-stage to change

Ruth Wilson Gilmore reminds us to be attentive towards the many ways people come to consciousness as they work towards liberation, and I want to use this reminder analytically. During the past 4-5 years of research, I have noticed that the way young black Norwegians talk, think and analyze is constantly evolving. And black study is a driving force in that development. I think of black study as a form of undoing or rather unlearning dominant narratives of white

supremacy and, in this case, Norwegian exceptionalism, as well as learning and creating something new: a future free from oppression. I think of black study, the act of searching for alternatives to create change, as something fundamentally uncolonial[22], collective and possibly as an abolitionist project.

There is a change in the common analyses that young black Norwegians make, which are increasingly coalitional, abolitionist, and feminist in addition to the more general anti-racist struggle. This shift in consciousness is a redirection from a focus on intersectionality to the potentials for abolition; to demands for change. Michelle Tisdel also shows this in her analysis of the cultural and political production of knowledge and demands during and in the aftermath of the Black Lives Matter protests of 2020 (Tisdel, 2023). In other words, these collective analyses are not only uncovering and exposing intricate oppressive systems, but intend to formulate strategies and work and organize actively to undo those systems. This means is that it is not as easy to dismiss feminist, queer and Muslim critiques alongside black critique. The heavy influence from both sides of the Middle Passage that have dictated which theories and cultural references have been dominant are changing. The large groups of second-generation immigrants from the Horn of Africa put anti-war, anti-border, and anti-islamophobia at the center of black study in Norway. Moreover, the children of East African immigrants increasingly identify with blackness in the Norwegian context. Because blackness creates study, and black study is a way of being, and being together, it is not in danger of stagnating or forming canons. The references shared and used are always evolving, and so are the collective analyses. These analyses are in and of their time. We are moving away from simply acknowledging that we are here, away from simply surviving, and towards thriving (Love, 2019). Towards abolition, towards liberation.

I think of black study practices as theorizations that might have led to the eruption of Black Lives Matter demonstrations and anti-police mobilizations during the summer of 2020 and onwards. What I saw then was not only an act of solidarity towards victims of police violence in the US but that the analyses being created are conjunctural, as Gilmore would call them. These analyses are conjunctural because they think across different systems of power and timelines.

[22] (Adisa-Farrar, 2019). I return to uncolonial knowledge creation in Chapter 4.

They think back to different struggles through time as well as histories and systems of oppression that might tell us why we are in the situation that we're in. When black youth in Norway engage with the revolution in Sudan, the police violence in the US and Norway, the history of the Norwegian slave trade and colonialism, and the workplace racisms of their everyday lives, it is because they are seeing how these things are connected. When 15,000 people showed up to protest police violence, it was also because they had already been doing the work of making these connections. Because so many of those who showed up had either themselves or knew someone who had been stopped and searched by police or worse. They had already learned the name Eugene Obiora. They had already understood how this was a local problem and for them to use the opportunity of global uprisings and broad analyses that were already going on, they could mobilize. To push for change in how black and brown youth are racially profiled by Norwegian police. However, this was more than a protest about and against police violence. It was also a moment during which it became clear to those who took part how many were ready to mobilize and to demand change.

Creating language and collective consciousness as black study

> To heal the splitting in mind and body, we marginalized and oppressed people attempt to recover ourselves and our experiences in language. We seek to make a place for intimacy. (hooks, 1994, p.175)

One of the main practices of black study is creating and learning a language. In article 1 I look into language and the desire to create and learn a language that can help put words to experiences with antiblack racism and black Norwegian belonging. I have taken one of the most used theoretical concepts of Critical Race Theory and US Black Studies, namely W.E.B. DuBois' double consciousness and repurposed it for the Norwegian context. I chose double consciousness and rethought it in combination with bell hooks' (1994, p.59) rendering of theory as healing and Audre Lorde's understanding of poetry as a way to "name the nameless, so it can be thought" (Lorde, 1984, p.37).

To take concepts from elsewhere and repurpose them here is a black study practice. I saw this when Hope[23] shared her way of learning and reusing terms like 'microaggressions' when talking to her younger brother about his encounters with racial profiling from the police. This work of rethinking and translating analytical concepts also came up when Meron, a young woman whose analyses have been central to my thinking, talked about how she felt split in two, demonstrating her awareness of a double consciousness. Meron said that one part of her two-split mind was not yet "infiltrated with wokeness". What she meant was that she simultaneously was able to notice oppressive structures, and access the mainstream white analysis of the same structures. She could anticipate how she would be silenced if she tried to teach her white peers about racism. This aspect of double consciousness in the case of black Norwegians could also be conceptualized as racialized forecasting (Yang, 2021), the anticipation of racism in particular contexts. In DuBois' original text, double consciousness describes a particular black way of being in the world, the carrying of a veil that makes it impossible for black people, especially African Americans, to have a true self-consciousness, but that they instead view themselves through the eyes of the surrounding antiblack world (DuBois, 1903/2012, p.9). DuBois states that the black American wants to exist fully in this two-ness, as black *and* US-American. In Norway, black means child of African/black immigrant(s) *and* Norwegian. It is perhaps a triple (instead of double) consciousness, to view oneself through multiple lenses at once, being present as an impossible presence (McIntosh, 2015).

The position of black and/as 'utlending'[24] produces an acute awareness of the inaccuracy of the resources available to legitimate a black Western subject, namely the cultural resources from the US such as hip hop and the words of black civil rights movements. At the same time, young black Norwegians have a great appreciation for and give credit to these diasporic resources in their analyses of their self-learning trajectories. For example, as children born in the mid 90s to early 2000s, many watched US-American black TV-shows and listened to hip hop which provided a language to conceptualize blackness, antiblack racism and class (Khadijah shares her reflection on this in Article 1). However, these resources may not have been consumed

[23] Hope and Meron share their knowledge in Articles 1 and 4.

[24] 'Utlending' means foreigner, and is a term used by black and brown youth themselves to foster collective solidarity. The instagram account "@utlending_memes" uses memes to express critiques of spatio-geographical classism and racism in Oslo.

intentionally, as many only understand their impact later in life, after having what could be termed a racialized awakening.

Black study repurposes and remakes/remixes a double consciousness grounded in the reality of a blackness tied to migration, war and specifically the position as second-generation of 'non-western' background. Thus, instead of 'black' meaning African descendant, it becomes something more in the Norwegian context, as it is simultaneously a racialized position and a framework for self-identification, which can lead to community building. This is clear in articles 1 and 4, that deal with learning a language and the practice of black study, respectively. In the first article, I present excerpts of conversations with Khadijah, Meron, Hope, and Kai, who all share the different resources they have used to develop a language, often from popular culture and from being around other black youth— as well as their desire to keep learning and sharing their knowledge with others. This language is not so clearly defined, but a way to conceptualize how we can talk and think about our experiences growing up and living in Norway as black African diaspora and as a way theorizing antiblackness at its multiple intersections.

Creating language is central to black study, a grasping at something that is already deeply felt. This language, conceptualized as theory and as poetry, is about much more than words. It is another aspect of coming to consciousness, of harnessing the two-ness or triple-ness of being black, and Norwegian and (child of) migrant. It is an insistence on speaking out loud the silenced parts of us, what we know but cannot know within Norwegian exceptionalism and global antiblackness. Speaking this language as we create it, we study together, we theorize together, we begin to comprehend, "to grasp what was happening around and within [us]," as hooks (1994, p. 59) put it, and possibly finding healing.

Self-study: theorizing from our lives, continued

Black study is a counter-practice to silencing, colorblindness and denial. In most conversations I've had with study participants, friends and colleagues of black study, we have shared analyses from our personal self-study. From this sharing comes what Rahwa and I have called *theorizing from our lives*. As introduced earlier, this method drives black study forward. Practicing black

study teaches us to listen to the gut feeling that many African Norwegians have growing up, experiencing antiblack racism from a very young age without it being recognized as such. While growing up and being taught the logic of egalitarian Scandinavian exceptionalism, we learn to suppress our own experiences and knowledge. However, this doesn't mean that this knowledge ever really leaves us. Even though we have not been allowed to speak of racialization and racism, it is still deeply felt. And it is this emotional knowledge that can be harnessed when stepping into an active and conscious practice of black study. What is interesting about the practice is that it can remain hidden from the white majority population, also from the non-black friends of black Norwegians . I have spoken to many who do not share everything with their white peers but instead seek new relationships with other black Norwegians to engage in common analysis. "There are things I could easily tell another black person that I'd never tell my white friends" Khadijah told me at our first meeting. We talked about what it meant to have safer spaces for sharing information that could potentially be used against us elsewhere. Sharing experiences that we would normally withold from others created a sense of community. This delicate and complex issue of trust and relationality has been carried through in many of the theorizing relationships I built during this study. This potential to create a space of trust was present in almost every conversation I participated in, large or small. I noticed it as a set of expectations already in the air when a group of black people were gathered, formally or informally. Participants expected that now that we were amongst ourselves, we could finally talk. In engaging a collaborative black study practice, trust is essential as we build relationships for and through study. It is precisely through building relationships and centring the theorizations that have unfolded within those relationships that I have transgressed boundaries between these traditional elements of research such as 'methodology' and 'theory'.

I felt that black spaces could allow people to at least speak freely about antiblackness and to dare to dive into deeper analyses of what they had encountered. This contrasts experiences in predominantly white spaces where they would often be dismissed and/or expected to teach if given a chance to speak at all. In Article 4, I write about a sense of urgency, a drive that propels black study forward, nurtures it, and makes large mobilizations possible because of a shared everyday practice and interest. I've noticed this need to share, need to talk, need to compare and make sense of what is happening around us. Somehow the mere potential of speaking without

being silenced creates a possibility of collective theorizing in the moment. This sense of urgency is not unlike what Katherine McKittrick deems "the desire to know" in her meditation on what she calls black science (knowing), and black method (McKittrick, 2021, p. 5). Thinking with black and anticolonial intellectual traditions, McKittrick (2021) describes a methodology that is rigorous, "precise, detailed, coded, long, and forever"(p. 5), while simultaneously driven by wonder. This drive or internal force of black study as an everyday practice is present in both the co-authored and the single-authored articles. And it is this kind of theoretical practice that I have also noticed among the study participants. A continuous study is ongoing, a continuous curiosity to conceptualize what is happening around us. If I tie these points back to the process of coming to consciousness and creation of language, what comes to mind Is Gilmore's (2022) concept "infrastructure of feeling". She writes,

> In the material world, infrastructure underlies productivity—it speeds some processes and slows down others, setting agendas, producing isolation, enabling cooperation. The infrastructure of feeling is material too, in the sense that ideology becomes material as do the actions that feelings enable or constrain. (p.490)

What Gilmore (2022) means is that feelings are material; they bind us together and act as a "consciousness-foundation, sturdy but not static, that underlies our capacity to recognize viscerally (no less than prudently) immanent possibility as we select and reselect liberatory lineages" (p.489). I think black youth in Norway, and their accomplices, are also loosely bound by such infrastructure of feeling, a sense of urgency, that something is wrong. This is what creates the "needing to know‘'', which Sey talks about in Article 4, or the almost manic need to document, and write things down, which I reflect on in Article 2, using the Gambian-Norwegian author Camara Joof's (2018) articulation of this feeling[25].

[25] Go to Chapter 4, subsection "Holding space as a black study method" for more on this excerpt from Joof.

Collaborative study: creating space for co-theozing

The infrastructure of feeling is shared, the basis of how many people come to consciousness and begin to work together to understand how to undo a harmful system— to study towards liberation. In this section, I move further into the collaborative aspects of black study, which can be helped along by the way Hammana and Klinkert describe study as a mode that "combines thinking, learning, theory, practice and teaching. Study is a way of being, and being together, but also a way of doing and feeling." (2021, p.38). As mentioned earlier in this chapter, this formulation resonates with my reason for choosing the word "study" to describe the practice I have noticed among black youth in Oslo: a way of being together, doing and feeling. The way of being together is exemplified in the collective study sessions I have participated in, such as the event of western beauty standards organized by the African Student Association, and the events on Black Love organized by ARISE. These types of events have a clear educational purpose, despite there being no defined 'teachers' and 'students', and no set 'curriculum'. Instead, it is a communal practice happening in public spaces such as university classrooms accessed and shared by those enrolled in the university with those who are not, and in free community spaces owned by the municipality or larger organizations. More often than not, black study happens in fleeting moments, conversations between friends, in someone's bedroom, researching online, or internally, analyzing what goes on when we are subjected to antiblack racism (what I called self-study above). I remember one meeting with ARISE, during which they planned an event on black love and communication.

One member said that he was worried it would come off as a boring conference and wanted a 'sexier' title for the gathering. His worries were not fulfilled, as many people showed up and hung out for hours, talking about ways to communicate in platonic, family and romantic relationships as well as ways to deal with antiblackness at work. In a later discussion, he reflected "anything advertised for us, no matter what we are going to discuss, it could even be pizza topping, Africans will show up". This statement says that the reason for gathering is not always important. Young black people crave connection: to have space to just be without having to deal with racism. This is when blackness acts as a framework within which there is room to maneuver. I also saw this during the group discussions I organized. One time a group of participants who largely did not know each other began discussing whether and how they

identified with blackness. One person said that he did not think of himself as black, which triggered a big reaction from the group, who wanted to know why. For some in this group, calling themselves black was a way to solidify a set of experiences as well as a particular political perspective. For others, it was about solidarity and connection to a larger black diaspora. Some felt that blackness was ascribed to them first, which then led to a discovery of their personal relationship with blackness. Everyone in the room was at the edge of their seat, eager to participate in the discussion and analyze why they felt so differently about this. In the end, they all wanted to continue, as they felt that this type of discussion was so rare. This feeling of scarcity and urgency drives black study forward as new methods, theories and practices keep developing. What seems to be common is the urge to find spaces where black study can be practiced with others, where momentary black spaces can be formed.

Black study as counter-archiving

In Article 3, the authors and I think about counter-archiving and how we might engage with this idea in our work. Counter-archiving is a QTBIPOC methodology of remembering those who have been erased and the knowledge and resistances that have been silenced in dominant, white, cis-heteropatriarchal archives (Haritaworn, Moussa & Ware, 2018). We bring together stories of our lives, the lives of our families and communities of African diaspora in the Nordics by approaching the idea of counter-archiving as not only resistance to dominant, colonial and national archives that erase us but simultaneously as a practice of creating and imagining otherwise (Olufemi, 2021)— as we leave behind something for the future. I consider counter-archiving as a practice of black study and a practice of remembrance. El-Tayeb explains the importance of memory and history-making for black Europeans:

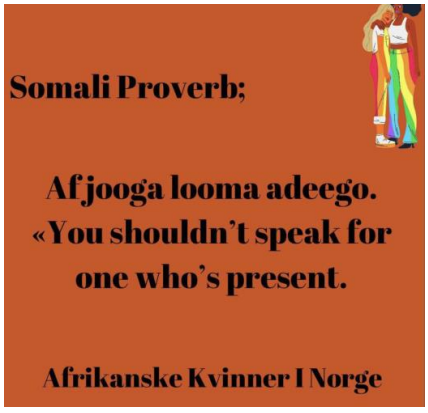
> The notion of memory and its role in not only shaping a community's history, but also, at least as important, its present and future, is central to diasporic identity. Black Europeans seem to be doubly disadvantaged in this regard: they often are perceived as marginal with regard to the key memory trope of the black diaspora in the West, that is, the Middle Passage, while at the same time having in common with other Europeans of color the expulsion from the continent's remembered past. Accordingly, counter-memory

> discourses and the (re)discovery of narratives of past agency are central concerns for European minority activists. (El-Tayeb, 2011, p. 78).

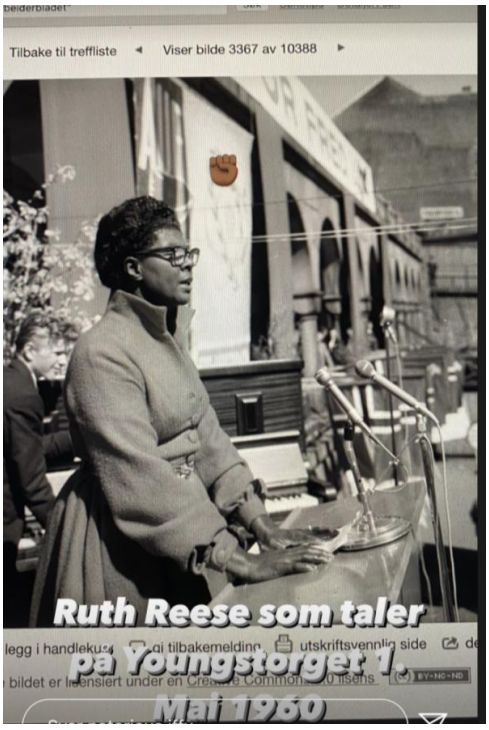
Building on this desire for history-making and world-making, I view black study as a practice of unlearning and undoing hierarchies of knowledge and of remembrance or archiving. How? Because black study is inherently non-institutional, non-established, non-disciplinary, and non-restrictive, as in there are no rules. It is not defined, yet whenever I have talked with black Norwegians about it, it is instantly recognizable as something being done. Perhaps because this study is a particular kind of quotidian labor you cannot stop doing once you've started. Black study is common, public, communal and collaborative. It challenges structures of antiblackness and white supremacy, Nordic exceptionalism, colonial amnesia and gaslighting/denial. Black study is created from a need to figure out what is wrong around us and from that consciousness to build what we desire.

Online black study: analyses from social media

Meme from @utlending.memes: Image of former prime minister Erna Solberg making a peace sign with the caption: "When you are worried about what happened in the US, but keep giving millions in state support to right wing extremist organizations in Norway."

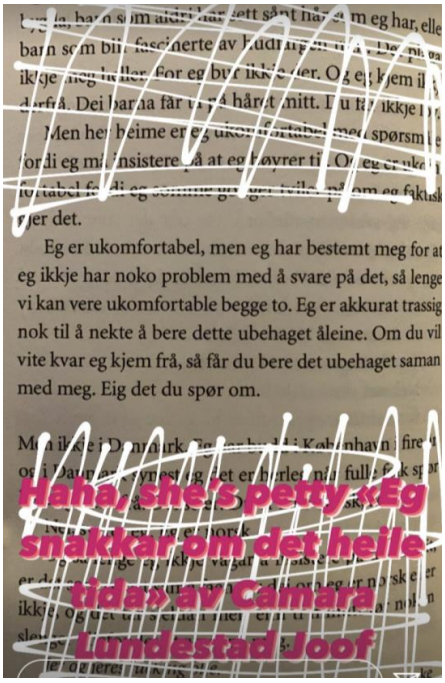


Screenshot from @AfrikanskeKvinnerINorge (African women in Norway) With a somali proverb that reads "You shouldn't speak for one who's present".



AFTENPOSTEN.NO

Rasismen frarøvet meg muligheten til å utvikle et sunt forhold til meg selv



Top left corner: the artist and TikTok'er Chika Dole making a peace sign with the caption "Norway is a homogenous society"
Me:
(*there's been Africans in Norway for over 400 years)[26]

Top right corner: personal Instagram story from study participant Araweelo with an image of the black US-American singer and activist Ruth Reese who lived and worked in Norway, giving a speech during the International Worker's Day, May 1st 1960 at the central square in Oslo, Youngstorget. Araweelo also added a small black power fist in the center of the image.

Bottom left corner: Screenshot from a Facebook post by study participant Kemet. He has shared an article written by the Nigerian-Norwegian author Lisa Esohel Knudsen titled "Racism took away my ability to develop a healthy relationship with myself". Kemet wrote in the caption "Yes, it is hell growing up black and African in Norway. "Those who feels it knows it".

Bottom right corner: Another personal Instagram story from study participant Araweelo, who has taken a picture of a page in Camara Joof's book, highlighting the following quote "I am uncomfortable, but I have decided that I have no problem answering the question, as long as we are both uncomfortable. I am just difficult enough to refuse to carry the discomfort alone. If you want to know where I come from, then you must carry the discomfort with me. Own what you ask."
This is followed by a text in pink letters "Haha she's petty "Eg snakkar om det heile tida (I talk about it all the time)" by Camara Lundestad Joof".

These screenshots are just a small fraction of the vast black study happening online. These images are analyses in their own right, I leave them here to speak alongside my points on coming to consciousness, language creation, co-theorizing and counter-archiving. In Article 3, I write about the online black study archives in a letter to Lena, Jasmine and Maimuna:

I think about how young people of African descent in Norway are creating their own archives, online and between each other, by telling and retelling stories that have been forgotten or erased, denied or silenced. Stories that help them understand their realities in Norway and the genealogies of blackness that they are also a product of.

[26] I have permission from Chika Dole to use this screenshot in my thesis, despite her not having participated in the project. You can listen to Chika's music anywhere online and follow her analyses of Norwegian antiblack racism on TikTok and Instagram.

Black study as framework for critique: queering blackness and/as abolition

> Abolition geography takes feeling and agency to be constitutive of, no less than constrained by, structure. In other words, it's a way of studying, and of doing political organizing, and of being in the world, and of worlding ourselves. (Gilmore, 2022, 491).

In this section, I discuss black study as a framework for creating critique. Generative critique is not necessarily 'productive' in the sense that it is vulnerable to being consumed and co-opted by the University Machine, the media or mainstream/reformist political initiatives. As black study transgresses boundaries between theory, method, and data/knowing/experience, I bring what people are already doing into conversation with analyses from struggles elsewhere. As African diaspora in Norway, a country where black people are rendered non-belonging, identifying within a framework of blackness and black diaspora can create possibilities of understanding one's position, noticing structural discrimination and creating communities of critique. Black study spills over and into other liberation struggles: cheap housing (such as the instagram account 'min drittleilighet'), disability justice (Steatornis), freedom of art (Critical Friends and the Afro Nordic performance platform) freedom of religion and anti-islamophobia (Salam), citizenship, and civil rights (OMOD), anti-war, anti-colonial struggle, queer liberation, trans liberation and women's liberation.

I have written about the methods of black study and the different ways that black study is practiced: creating language and space, theorizing from our lives, and counter-archiving. What do these practices produce? In Article 4 I analyze black study as a practice of queering blackness, to change, expand, and mold a blackness that makes sense in the Norwegian context, taking migration from so-called 'non-Western' countries, class, anti-Islam structures, queer and trans critiques and local decolonial feminisms into account. Thinking performatively about black study, I could use many different black, queer and transnational feminist resources to unfold what this queering of blackness is about. Black study as a type of enactment could be a version of creolization (El-Tayeb, 2011), of disidentification (Munoz, 1999), of mestizaje (Anzaldúa, 1986), of imagining otherwise (Olufemi, 2021), or of rehearsal (Gilmore, 2021). What is common about these different offerings, from black feminism, queer of color critique,

transnational and chicana feminisms, and abolition geography, is the practice of imagining a different future while we build it. In Glitch Feminism, Russel writes:

> We are building a future where we can have the broad range we deserve. We refuse to shrink ourselves, refuse to fit. Fluid, insistent, we refuse to stand still: we slip, we slide. We recognize the contributions of blackness toward liberatory queerness, and the contributions of queerness toward liberatory blackness. We fail to function for a machine that was not built for us. (Russel, 2020, p. 166).

Through a mosaic of practices, I have painted a picture of black study and how young African Norwegians as well as black feminists in Nordic academia practice it internally and together. Black study as a common practice that can be done in a multitude of ways, seems to always have an element of critique. The glitch is a useful analogy when thinking about black study in the university, and I go further into the glitch in the next chapter. I will however repeat that the way I learned the practice of black study was outside the university. It makes sense to understand black study as a queering practice, a slipping and sliding within blackness as framework, with the help of Fatima El-Tayeb, who explains that:

> The return to black feminist intersectional analysis, a focus on class as a central category in the production of queer subjects, and an understanding of queerness that is not restricted to sexual identities, makes queer of color critique immensely applicable in the context of European racializations and cultures of resistance. (El-Tayeb, 2011, p. xxxiii)

In this way, I view the mix of resources, references and ways of knowing that are black study through a queer lens. We (who share experiences and an interest in the matter) can never fully arrive at a point where a European, Nordic, or Norwegian blackness is clearly defined. It is neither the goal. Instead, when we focus on practice, what people do, so many creative ways of being together, of knowing, learning, and sharing knowledge emerge. This project is merely a snapshot from a specific time, and these critiques will keep developing. What is important to note is that the interest in ‘fixing’ racism is decreasing, and young people are moving towards an

unfixing instead. An example is the reluctance to identify as 'anti-racist', which I have discussed with many study participants.

Having previously made the connection between black feminism, queer of color critique and abolition, I'd like to continue it here. Shange reminds readers that "Abolition is not a fix—it is the reverse: an unfixing in the sense of disrupting both the locus and the function of captivity." (Shange, 2022, p. 188). Abolition as a theory of change comes from prison abolition and the abolition of slavery, and it has gained popular momentum as a movement following the Black Lives Matter uprisings in 2020 (Shange, 2022). In Norway, activist groups such as Comrades Inc, Assata activist library, and the queer Muslim organization Salam amongst others have begun using abolitionist thinking in their organizing.

Abolition and the way it is theorized across liberation struggles think beyond ending these two systems of captivity (slavery and prisons): we can and must abolish all the systems that keep us from living our lives. I learn about abolition through the work of black feminists. My reading is two-fold: abolition as a means of undoing harmful systems and institutions, and as making life-affirming institutions, building worlds for us all (Gilmore, 2007, 2022). Gilmore's understanding of abolition is to "change everything" through a mode of "thorough reconfiguration", always with liberation as the end goal.

My gradual shift from an intersectional anti-racism approach to an abolitionist approach means to completely giving up any hope of 'fixing' racism with research and instead 'gearing down', noticing what people are doing, and following along in the slowness and creativity of world-building. Savannah Shange (2022) presents the five gears of abolition, in which she clearly warns us: "abolition is not a metaphor" (p. 188) much like Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang stated in their 2012 article "decolonisation is not a metaphor". What Shange is worried about is the use of abolition merely as an idea that can be engaged for the purpose of writing and theorizing without any commitment to doing the work of undoing captivity and of world-making. Shange (2022) writes: "Abolition invites us to downshift into the sticky, slow terrain of world-building and give up on fixing "broken" systems that are, in fact, deadly by design" (p.196).

One of the tools of abolition that Shange highlights is deep systems analysis. I understand the practice of black study as potentially inclusive of several of Shange's five abolition gears, such as state critique, rupture, and healing justice. For example, I see the interest in understanding antiblackness in conjunction with class discrimination, anti-immigration policies, Islamophobia, cis heteropatriarchy, ableism and Norwegian colonialism as a deep systems analysis and as critique of the Norwegian nation-state. I see this happening online, at demonstrations, in conversations and in how events are changing. Further, I see examples of healing in the intimacies of relationships that people build from a desire to create black, queer, feminist communities that act as localities for study: spaces where we can share our knowledge and experience to think about them together. This work is also at the center of my practice: to create space, albeit sometimes fleeting, for black study, by letting people speak, by listening, and by bringing people together to speak and listen collectively. With healing comes care. The practice of theorizing from our lives can be viewed as abolitionist practice. This is because we (friends, colleagues, co-theorizers and I) think about struggle, movement and change and try to make an argument that renders different oppressive systems as dependent on each other, as well as a call to organize across differences through friendship and care. Black study needs care, and caring can be abolitionist. How so? Learning through black study, I also learn how care practices are essential for co-theorizing. Checking in with each other, attending to each other, we create space to theorize. A black feminist care practice recognizes that in order to create knowledge, we need each other, and we need to be well. Using Shange's words again: we must care more than we know. To care in study is also to go against the hoarding mentality of the AIC. No one can own black study since it is something lived. Caring about what people do, being attentive to the way they come to consciousness, I join people in building a movement.

Black study has the potential to be, and is already in some aspects, an abolitionist practice. At the same time, there is still a mainstream antiracism, feminism and queer movement that dominates. The theorizations that tend to be shared often stem from social media and possibly also from realities that are different from the local context of Norway. Sometimes blackness in such contexts can become dogmatic, bringing us back to critique. In this current moment, there is no one big movement that builds on all of these intersecting critiques. Instead, it is many smaller movements, some only consisting of a couple of people, who are slowly but surely working their

way between cracks and glitches in the mainstream, as they find each other and connect. The desire for knowing and knowing with feeling is there, and so are the tools.

Chapter 4: Study to transgress, embody the glitch

Black study is a practice that transgresses boundaries between theory/method/data. What lies at the base of such a transgression is my flirtatious relationship with theoretical tools from anti-oppression movements such as black feminism, decolonial and indigenous thought, queer of color critique, and abolition. Doing black study in the academy is a way to survive the academy. Writing about black study I uncover a practice that I have largely been doing in secret, on the fringes of 'official' research practices. In uncovering practices of knowledge creation that are glitches in the University Machine (Hammana & Klinkert, 2021), I also think about what it means to embody the glitch.

Embodying the glitch

> Glitch is all about traversing along edges and stepping to the limits, those we occupy and push through, on our journey to defining ourselves. Glitch is also about claiming our right to complexity, to range, within and beyond the proverbial margins. (Russel, 2020, p. 42)
>
> The glitch challenges us to consider how we can "penetrate … break … puncture … tear" the material of the institution, and, by extension, the institution of the body. (Russel, 2020, p. 44.)

Immersing myself in a black study mode, I've simultaneously gone through a reckoning with the disciplines I know and work in: anthropology and gender studies. I write about abolition and/of anthropology in Chapter 2, and my critiques of gender studies in the co-authored article with Rahwa Yohaness (Article 2). My critiques of the knowledge regimes in these two disciplines are not limited to anthropology and gender studies. However, they are instead a queer black feminist critique of disciplinarity and the university in itself. The University Machine, also known as the Academic Industrial Complex, is built on so many rules and barriers, inaccessible physically and socially for most, posing as a place of change and progress. Nevetheless, the machine has flaws, glitches, and so do its disciplines. One of the tropes I work to crack open, melt (down), pulverize, burn, and flood is the insider/outsider dichotomy: doing ethnographic work as someone who is

simultaneously an outsider in the university and an insider among the people who participate in research I am uninterested in viewing this as a hindrance. Instead, I see it for the gift it is. This is double consciousness. This is what it means to embody the glitch.
Further in this chapter, I look into what the position as "Decorative Beast" (Gilmore, 2022) can generate by centering care, holding space and using black study as a mode of transgressing academic boundaries. In the background of this chapter there is a scratching sound, the sound of glitching, aided by Legacy Russel's glitch feminism (2020), Ruth Gilmore's abolition geography (2022) and Hammana and Klinkert's critiques of anthropology. Russel (2020) writes: "Thus, glitch is something that extends beyond the most literal technological mechanics: it helps us to celebrate failure as a generative force, a new way to take on the world." (p.50).
Hammana and Klinkert (2021) take it further, showing us the decolonizing potentials of the glitch: "Delving into the possibility of errors we believe that we can and have been, using these errors ourselves, to 'decolonise' (anthropological) study through what we call glitching study back to (its) common use." (p. 42).

Black study against, under, over and through the university

I intend for this academic contribution to be affirming, acknowledging and supportive of the work done and knowledge produced outside academia by, for and about black/African/Afro-descendant people in Norway. Is this possible, and is an academic contribution really what black communities in Norway need? Believing that I create knowledge *with and for* 'the community', then what am I doing in academia, other than perhaps furthering my own career? Audre Lorde said "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House" (Lorde 1984). Ruth Wilson Gilmore writes that the apostrophe in the possibly over-quoted sentence is the most important: who owns and controls the tools, and to what end? If we can dismantle the master's house, we can reuse those tools and materials to create "institutions of our own design, usable by all to produce new and liberating work" (Gilmore, 2022, p. 79).

I learn (and keep learning) that substantial and sustainable social change cannot only happen within the academy. However, I am increasingly interested in what a critical way of being and knowing within and on the margins of the academy might look like, perhaps as embodying the

glitch. Black study in one of its forms can be a way to exist and to theorize within the undercommons of the academy (Harney & Moten, 2013) or through the glitches of the University Machine (Hammana & Klinkert, 2021), as we seize materials and tools of the university, and of research to mold our collectives of thought after our own rules. An example of this can be redirecting money from the university back to community organizers and grassroots theorists. It can be taking time from the university to be together in unproductive ways (Diallo & Miskow Friborg, 2021).

As I explained in Chapter 2, it is not only the study participants that engage in black study. It is also something that has been happening personally for me long before I started this research, as well as a practice I have noticed playing out in my collaborations with other African diaspora feminists, thinkers, and community members whom I have worked with during this time.
As I discuss in Chapter 1, my work cannot be reduced to fieldwork, participant observation or anthropology; it is something else. First of all, I seek to challenge dominant conceptualizations within social sciences of how theory is developed by grounding the theoretical process in collaboration and what Ruth Wilson Gilmore (2022) might call "what people are already doing" (Gilmore in podcast "Millennials are Killing Capitalism", 2022). This is what I have called joining in study. I challenge the Western colonial university's need for classification, hierarchy and order. I transgress boundaries between knowledge and experience and between black study and research.

Navigating the Academy as Decorative Beasts

In this thesis, a central methodological question is about doing black feminist research on blackness in the Nordics. I have explored this question throughout all four articles, with a more explicit investigation together with black feminist colleagues in two articles: first the exploration of friendship between black feminists as a locus of theorization (Article 2), and second, a letter-writing practice of counter-archiving and care among a group of four African diaspora feminist from Norway, Sweden and Finland (Article 3). In both texts, we discuss the current times, the Covid-19 pandemic, the global Black Lives Matter uprisings of 2020, and how those events have shaped the way we think about our work in the context of Nordic exceptionalism. In Article 2, I

reflect on the implications of doing black feminist work in Norwegian gender studies as a black person. This position is marked by isolation, both academically and politically. It is partly this isolation that has drawn me to collaborations outside of the AIC and across borders and disciplines.

In a recent sparring session with black feminist researcher at Høgskolen i Innlandet, Prisca Bruno Massao, I was telling her about the concept of black study and we quickly realized that we were doing it too. We had arranged a call to give each other feedback on our chapters in a Norwegian book on racism (Article 1 in this thesis). Instead, we dove into an analysis of the erasure of black scholars in Norwegian academia, especially black feminists. We talked about our journeys into research and about how it was possible that I had not heard of Prisca's work on antiblack racism in Norwegian sports, which she began publishing in 2010 (Massao & Fasting, 2010; Massao, 2016), while some of her work is taught at Swedish universities. I had experienced a similar thing regarding my work on misogynoir in Danish academia, which is also taught at university courses in Norway, but hardly known in Denmark. Gilmore (2022) calls the roles of black women in academia Decorative Beasts, which is building on Collins' concept of Outsider Within (2000) among others. Gilmore argues that Decorative Beasts are alibis for the Academy, or commodities that can support the Academy's ideologies of production, capitalism, equality, diversity and so on. At the same time, Decorative Beasts are fighting to change the academy, or perhaps undo it so it can be done differently. We must shift the perspective from viewing Decorative Beasts as objects or alibis to subjects and as agents of disruption. This is how we, according to Gilmore, "become able to negotiate positions from which to disarticulate the power of the alibi - through our goals and actions to instigate insurgency and provoke transformation." (Gilmore, 2022, p. 52). Gilmore continues her argument, stating "Decorative Beasts are fighting for power in the Academy in crisis. The stakes are the control of epistemology: *Who teaches? What is taught? Who learns?*" (Gilmore, 2022, p. 75). The crisis of the Academy, which Gilmore originally wrote about when she published this piece in 1991, might be similar to the current crises in Scandinavian academia today. The (reactions to the) anti-gender movement, the (reactions to the) decolonizing academia debate, and the many many white cis tears and political targeting of critical scholars that have taken up much space in Norway and Denmark in the past 5 years come to mind. Gilmore (2022) urges Decorative Beasts

to use the crisis, to embody the glitch by accessing "the money, time, space, books, and equipment, and people constitutive of and constructed by the academy" (p. 52).

Holding space as a black study method

What does black study offer to decorative beasts? What happens when we employ the methods we use in our lives, outside and within the university? What happens when we trust ourselves, collaborate, hold space for and uplift each other, as well as theorize together? Then something different arises—an opening, and possibly a way for us to use the university, its resources (buildings, books, money and time), for our own liberation?

As I was seeking a black Nordic feminist analytical community, I got involved with the co-authors of the third article. The four of us all needed intellectual and communal exchange of ideas, thoughts and emotions in a time of struggle. As we began writing to each other, a special atmosphere was created. We could hold space for each of our theoretical interests and analytical engagements, as well as our personal stories and reflections on our work and its connection to our families. Cultivating a black feminist care practice we could think together about the violent structures of Nordic exceptionalism, the specificities of Nordic antiblackness, and the erasure of the African diaspora in Nordic archives (national, cultural, public). This collaboration also illustrates a process of co-theorizing in action. We let the conversation flow, in and out of personal testimony, black feminist concepts, family storytelling, and ethnographies of contemporary black resistance movements in our countries while picking up on threads and tying together patterns, overlaps and silences. What unfolded was a theorizing that could not happen in isolation, but springs from collaboration.

In Article 3, I write to Lena, Maimuna and Jasmine:

> I think you are right, Lena, when you suggest that there is an archival practice happening inward, silently, through our emotions, and I find it very comforting to know that some of our emotions are shared. I remember a passage from the black, biracial, bisexual writer Camara Joof's (2018: 74) book of prose: *Eg snakkar om det heile tida* (*I Talk about It All the Time*), in which she writes: "MANI. Eg er besett av detaljer. Eg må hugse alt. Eg har

> med meg ei notatbok overalt. Skriv ting ned." ("Mania. I am obsessed with details. I must remember everything. I bring a notebook with me everywhere. Write things down", translated by the author.) Joof's words resonate with me because I too have been writing things down to make sure I would remember what happens. The emotional state Joof associates with this practice seems to be desperation, mania. The notes app in my phone is filled with little observations, thoughts, descriptions of situations and feelings. My own little archive. But this practice of archiving has gone from documenting everyday encounters with racism and antiblackness, mostly, to a more pleasurable, explorative practice in which I archive so much more. Ideas. Poetry. Theory. Life. I wonder if this is a particularly 'black in the Nordics' kind of thing? Or is it a researcher thing? Or perhaps, is it so that we have become researchers/archivists because we are (have the experience of being) black in the Nordics?

Black feminism is present at the margins of Nordic gender studies, but what happens when we take it further, into our methods, the way we learn to know and to create knowledge together? A black feminist liberatory approach, then, is a combination of *many knowledges* that center a black feminist standpoint. Black understood in the broader sense, as African and the diaspora, as migrants and as descendants of people who were enslaved, as born here, and born there. It is feminist because it understands liberation as an interconnected effort and emancipation from everything, "Change everything", as Gilmore stated recently in a talk with Paul Gilroy (2020). Care practices include holding space. In Article 3, Jasmine, Lena, Maimuna, and I conceptualized letter writing as a black feminist care practice. We think and demonstrate care and caring as central to our relationship and theorizing. Our collective thought process and witnessing of each other's archival resistance and reflection is a caring in itself. As we became a collective, we cultivated a practice in which how we feel, and how we are was always relevant. The act of listening to each other and reading each other's words was done carefully, as we gradually built a space of trust.

Communities of care: A black feminist liberatory approach

I have intentionally included co-authored texts in the thesis to show how the process of analysis that this project builds on is collaborative and is also part of the work that grounds the two

articles where I am the sole credited author. I think of this collaborative analytical process as a practice of black study. In Article 2, Rahwa Yohaness and I write:

> Our friendship is our methodology, not only of survival but it is a grounding from which we create (disobedient) knowledge. Our knowledge isn't always documented but developed through our experience. We honour Black feminist traditions of what we can call *theorising from our lives* as we refuse to centre white supremacist capitalist patriarchy (hooks 2014, Lorde 1984, Olufemi 2020, Jobe 2021). Our knowledge creation is grounded in the embodied, shared knowing between Black feminists, a state of deep relation where we only have to say a few words to know what the other is thinking. We write, think and work together to heal ourselves, and to let other Black feminists in the Nordics know that they are not alone (Kelekay 2021). This is the kind of *theorising* we see Black feminists doing across the Nordics, at home, online, between friends, partners and comrades. We question mainstream academic premises for theory and knowledge as we *insist* on existing and theorising and creating (knowledge) on our own terms (Nunes 2019).

In Article 2, we offer a practice of black study as it includes thinking from and with embodied knowledge, experiences with antiblackness and navigating within the framework of blackness in our Nordic context. Rahwa and I write both from our individual experiences and our collective experience, knowledge which we lift in conversation with black feminist resources from our context and elsewhere. This weaving and braiding together of knowledge that is shared and developed in friendship shows an example of a black study practice. My collaboration with Rahwa Yohannes is based on a black feminist politic of care, which we also write about in our text on black feminist praxis of survival. Rahwa and I are differently engaged through activism and research, and sometimes our work overlaps. We support each other in our work and lives through friendship and our way of helping each other deal with and solve the problems we face. When I am unsure how to tackle barriers in the academy or how to write in ways that are true yet mindful of my responsibilities to our communities, I call Rahwa and she advises me. She challenges my views, tells me when I'm wrong, and encourages me, most importantly, when the token fatigue gets the best of me. When Rahwa deals with conflicting agendas of anti-racist

activists and the systemic racism of media/NGOs/funds, she calls me, and we reflect together. How to move forward? Why are people reacting the way they do? How to bring the cause to the front? How to be careful and mindful of intersecting power relations and representations?

Doing black feminist research is both healing and tolling at the same time. The same logics and taboos that I critique in this thesis are at play within my own research environment. During the course of the PhD, I turned more and more towards collaborators outside of my immediate field of gender studies. Studying blackness and antiblackness in a very white, cis and normative academic space, while being subjected to those very structures is challenging, and I needed all the help I could get. When I was halfway through the project, the pandemic hit, and with it came increased isolation, followed by a global uprising for black lives. Until that point, I had been working, writing, teaching and learning in a manner that was clearly separated, as if I was simultanously existing in two different worlds. This meant that my practice of collaborative study was restricted to my time spent with people during events, interviews, and in my free time, while my teaching, conferencing, and writing was happening very much on my own. These two worlds were the University, and the Outside. When the Black Lives Matter uprisings erupted in Norway, suddenly the floodgates opened, and what had been small cracks, streams and drops suddenly broke open, rose and spilled over as my two worlds combined. The emotions I had been careful not to show or share in the University burst out, and I was grieving publicly. I organized and joined in protests, I wept, I was constantly contacted by journalists, panels on antiblackness and structural racism were everywhere, I went overboard, crashed and burned out. After a long period of sick leave, I began wanting to think, theorize and write again, but I was not going to do it alone. It became clear that I needed more explicit and credited collaboration to make it through in a manner that felt true to my ethics.

Building a black feminist archive

A black feminist liberatory approach is also a way of digging up different stories. Stories that exist but that have become whispers in the Euro-patriarchal archive. Some of these stories are about the first labor revolt in Danish-Norwegian history, the Fireburn, led by ‘Queen Mary’ who together with her comrades burned down plantations to demand workers’ rights in the Danish (former Denmark-Norway) colony St. Croix.

Being trained as an anthropologist in the Nordics, I was hardly introduced to any critical race theory or black feminism. I was never taught by or presented with literature from black women and indigenous anthropologists (or black thinkers in general). This was knowledge I had to find on my own. I use black feminist and anticolonial citational politics as a deliberate practice of decentering dominant and traditional hegemonic voices and disciplinary perspectives.
As I read and cite black feminist thinkers, I try to avoid cherry-picking, like indigenous anthropologist Zoe Todd warns against. Instead, I am interested in acknowledging the contributions of black feminists to the (anthropological) archive/canon. It is about understanding how black feminist epistemologies shape the way many do fieldwork and how we theorize from lived experiences: privileging language and understandings from those who *know what it's like.*
Looking around, I see black feminism being used a lot, not only in anthropology but most social sciences, such as the concept of intersectionality, a pillar in black feminist thought. Intersectionality, a theory of interlocking systems of power, has been transferred/co-opted by the AIC and now figures, often without or only referencing Crenshaw (1989), who coined the term, leaving out other black feminist, womanist, lesbian, and queer thinkers who developed this theoretical and methodological approach (Combahee River Collective, 1978; Davis, 1981; hooks, 1981). The appropriation of black feminist thought without citing and centering black women's lives and knowledge is a problem. How do we, as black and Nordic feminists, use these gifts respectfully and responsibly in our context?

In Article 2, Rahwa and I use Wekker's (2016) arguments to help us critique exclusion and co-optation in Norwegian gender studies. As someone who is racialized as black and 'non-western', I am also aware of my geographical location and historical reality. When I borrow concepts from the US, I do translation work, which I must do transparently. This is also important when using indigenous thought from Turtle Island. I study in Norway, which has colonial power over Sami lands, and I have a responsibility to learn about the decolonial thought developed here from Sami thinkers and feminists such as Dankertsen (2021), Stubberud and Knobblock (2022), Ellen Marie Jensen (2020), Liisa Rávna Finborg (2021) and May-Britt Öhman (2021) from the present, and Elsa Laula Renberg (1904) and Karin Stenberg (Stenberg and Lindholm, 1920) from the past (Svendsen, 2021). Black feminism, in the broad, transnational sense (much like Audre Lorde's

interaction with black queer women in Berlin), tells me to learn about the world I inhabit through listening to people's stories. My starting point in learning to think with black feminism is because I am interested in blackness in Norway and the Nordic context and to understand how racializing processes work here, as well as, political processes of community building and counter hegemonic knowledge creation. I use creation, and not production, to not play into the need for production in the academic industrial complex.

Black feminism allows several contradictions to be true at the same time. For example, it is true that gender studies are under attack and that gender studies are marginalized within the (Nordic) Academic Industrial Complex. Yet it is also true that gender studies are populated mainly by white, cis women and that trans, non-binary, indigenous, disabled, black and people of color, whose knowledge the field builds on, are systematically excluded from the discipline, the jobs, citations and acknowledgements. These things are true at the same time. Black feminism allows me to hold these truths simultaneously and to employ a queer 'both and' approach to knowledge creation instead of the binary thinking of white Western cis-heteronormative patriarchal knowledge systems.

Some of us are vulnerable to research

Being subject to structural antiblackness makes us vulnerable, but it also makes some of us tough and strong, sometimes timid and secretive about our true feelings. Growing up in a society like Norway that does not understand racism or antiblackness beyond the spectacle or single incident, never as a structural issue and a fact of life, is gaslighting and makes us constantly question our experiences and feelings. I know this, and therefore I also learned how important it would be to create space for vulnerability and reflect the stories people shared with me by listening with care and sharing stories of my own. The mere experience of meeting someone who does not question the legitimacy of your narrative but listens, takes it seriously and has experienced something similar is powerful. The feeling of sitting opposite someone who is both black and speaks your language can be special and for some, rare. Being aware of this reality, I found that with some of the tools I had learned from ethnography, along with black feminist and indigenous methodologies, I and, ultimately, *we* could create the necessary space for learning and thinking together.

Refusing research

Working from a point of having to acknowledge the political and historical power of the institution I am in and the practice of social science research as historically exploitative, harmful, and extractive of local knowledge. Something particularly important in this regard is not to be blinded by 'optimism', as I come to at the end of this thesis. Feminist anti-racist scholar Diana Mulinari also talked about the danger of optimism in her keynote at the NORA conference in Iceland May 2019. She said that instead of optimism, which she finds useless and impossible in this current political climate, we should cultivate hopeful knowledge production, which to her signifies a practice of "imagining better futures". Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) has taught us that there is a deep connection between research and coloniality. Tuck and Yang (2012), who wrote the famous intervention "Decolonization is not a metaphor", which reminds us how decolonization is first about land rights, have written extensively about indigenous knowledge production and anticolonial ethics. I draw on their 2014 article, where they introduce a politic of refusal, specifically refusing *research* and the academe, an institution and a knowledge system, which is inherently settler colonial and an extension of the Western nation-state (Tuck & Yang, 2014, p. 232). This stance of refusal, they say, can be both a theory and a methodology. The article is built on three axioms in their anticolonial research practice: 1) The subaltern can speak but is only invited to speak her/our pain, 2) there are some forms of knowledge that the academy doesn't deserve, and 3) research may not be the intervention that is needed. (Tuck and Yang, 2014, p. 224). The point is to explore ways to practice *research* without continuing the histories of exploitation and domination of colonized peoples. How this is done is not easy or straightforward, but Tuck and Yang discuss different actions within research that are ultimately a refusal of research as we've been taught to practice it. They show examples of refusal through the works of indigenous scholar Audra Simpson.

Simpson (2007), who interviewed people in her own community of Kahnawake, was mindful in her ways of listening without recording, overhearing without taking notes, and knowing that there are things that have been understood for generations that should not be known by research. She simply refuses to document everything that is known and instead asks "Can I do this and still come home; what am I revealing here and why? (…) Who benefits from this and why?" (Simpson in Tuck and Yang, 2014, p. 234). Another point is taking seriously how we are

positioned in the communities we research and in the academe. Thinking through the work of Simpson, Tuck and Yang, I ask: What does it mean to theorize *with* and to theorize *as* at the same time? In other words, what does it mean to theorize with and as black people in Norway? This is what black study is. Tuck and Yang suggest an alternative to what they characterize as the colonial academe's fetishization of damaged communities and pain, namely a knowledge production guided by desire. Desire does, as Tuck and Yang explain it, not ignore the reality of suffering and oppression, but it enables us to catch the complexities of a people, group, individual or community's life, and from there on, imagine our futures. Desire is also a form of refusal, a refusal of the settler colonial knowledge system, in which colonized people, migrants and racial minorities only speak through narratives of suffering. Like critique, refusal is generative, and a politic of refusal comes from anticolonial critique.

Black study as *un*colonial practice

In this section, I explore the *un*colonial characteristics of black study as well as the potential dangers of practicing black study in the University Machine by way of this PhD-project. I think with the work of friends from the River and Fire Collective, Hammana and Klinkert, in their discussion of returning study to common use (2021), as an entryway to thinking with, through and about black study on the borders of the university. And finally, I ask, using my friend and Jamaican-American black geographer Teju Adisa Farrar's idea of *un*colonial knowledge production, whether black study can be seen as uncolonial, that is a practice of undoing colonial knowledge regimes. Teju (2019) writes:

> I've been considering **un**colonization rather than **de**colonization**.** The reason I prefer to use *uncolonial* as opposed to *decolonial* is because I do not believe we can, should, or need to try to reverse colonialism. The latin prefix 'de-' connotes reversal. We cannot and are not to reverse colonization, rather we need to undo it from our bodies. We must shed the layers of colonization from our mind. We must rebuild institutions with colonial foundations. Reminding ourselves of the uncoloniality of our ancestors. The indigenous and first nations peoples around the globe and those who populated the ancient civilizations on the continent of Africa, were uncolonized. Uncoloniality starts from indigeneity. (para. 8)

At a conference in 2019, Teju explained why she was not focused on publishing her work in academia because of the restrictions and controlling technologies that, as an example, require us to anonymize people we work with. Something that would make her unable to shout-out the black women, femmes and nonbinary activists and artists whose work she learns from. Teju describes the aim of her practice as *uncolonial*, in the sense that decolonization (understood as *reversal* of the violence done by European settlers to lands, animals and peoples) is not possible, but that we can work to *undo* colonial systems, thought patterns and ways of being in the world from our bodies and relations to other people (Adisa-Farrar, 2019). This issue with anonymization feels somewhat unresolved in this project. I have anonymized everyone who signed up as research participants. The broad spectrum of participants in my project does in many ways call for anonymization, as there are not only people who are active and publicly vocal about their experiences and political ideologies but also people who are in and out of groups and who have expressed their need to talk to someone about their experiences and the antiblackness, anti-queer structures and misogyny they endure without it being overheard. At the same time, I feel uneasy about not giving people written credit for their contributions to this thesis. This is where I find solace in black feminism, particularly in articulations of opacity and refusal: insisting on resisting the academy's 'need to know' and instead focusing on the relationships built outside the perimeters of research. The time spent with African and black people in Oslo has been as much about sharing knowledge and experiences as it has been about creating bonds. And these bonds go beyond the initial reason for our encounter, beyond the research.

Returning black study to common use

Two River and Fire Collective members, Hammana and Klinkert, discuss the possibility of returning anthropological study to common use in their piece Glitching the University Machine. Hammana and Klinkert take up the notion of *al masha* (Petti and Hilal, 2019), collective land cultivation, in dialogue with glitch feminism (Russel, 2020), in their pursuit of the possibility of decolonizing anthropological study by returning it to common use.

> This return(ing) to common use is a way to resist the ongoing violent separation, divide, break-down and individuation that happens within, and also because of, the western modern anthropological discipline(s).(Hammana & Klinkert, 2021, p. 38).

This project is not about anthropological study, but the notion of returning study to common use resonates because of the common nature of black study. Several examples in all four articles point to a kind of starvation of knowledge, a sense of urgency to learn what we were not taught in school as black children growing up in Norway. Black study is already a common practice, in the sense that it is a way of individually and collectively searching for and studying what it means to be black by looking through archives, personal stories and collaborative theorizing, as well as sharing with others in a context where antiblack racism is denied, yet historically woven into the fabric of the country and culture you have grown up in.

Hammana and Klinkert (2021) write about the classic anthropological problem of access, saying:

> It is not a question of access in the sense of having to access the University Machine before you are able to join (in) study, it is the contrary, the study we are referring to has been moving, moves, and will continue to move outside of, underneath, over and through the University Machine. If any, us 'academics' have difficulty 'accessing' study. To be able to have access to study would mean that study is demarcated and bordered, closed off and territorialized, this would be antithetical to what study is, which is to say, in a sense, that we cannot access study because study is not accessible. It is not accessible because it is not closed off. (p.38)

Black study is not closed off either, or perhaps it is so to the university machine, as it recognizes the harmful potential of co-optation within the AIC. Yet, black study is a sometimes undefined practice of survival for those of us who are black and working in academia. Without the simultaneous analysis of structures of domination in the university carried out with other black feminists and friends, I would not have been able to withstand this position as a decorative beast. Instead, I have, by engaging in life-affirming black study and black feminist care, been able to craft a research practice that transgresses boundaries and creates space for something new.

Concluding thoughts: The future of black study in Norway cannot be within academia (alone)

In this thesis, I have asked the following questions: What are the methods of a black study practice, and what kind of social change does black study produce? On my journey to answering these questions, I have reflected on how study becomes instrumental to movement. Black study is a practice that goes on within and among people who have grown up in Norway while being racialized as black. The study practices take on many forms, from language creation to counter-archiving and co-theorizing. I have argued that black study can be a form of queering blackness as well as a potential abolitionist project. The works of Fatima El-Tayeb, Savannah Shange, Ruth Wilson Gilmore, Legacy Russel and more have helped me think along the way. I have particularly been interested in the notion of study and its common use via Hammana and Klinkert's article from 2021. Thinking, feeling and being with black study practices as I've seen friends, colleagues and myself, do them, this research project inevitably became about critiquing the university and the disciplines I know.

I have shown how black study works both outside of and within the university. There is, however, a potential extractivism of bringing black study into the University Machine. As a trained anthropologist, I have been interested in the anticolonial possibilities of anthropological study (River and Fire Collective, 2021; Diallo and Miskow Friborg, 2021) alongside my work with black study in Norway.

The future(s) of black study in Norway

In this final section, I would like to pick up different strands of previous discussions, think through them and tie them together. How can we think about black study as a practice of transgressing boundaries between knowledge regimes? How can we understand black study as a way of returning study to common use and by extension as an uncolonial endeavor?

> In considering where Black German studies as a field is now, I immediately got stuck on the question of *what* and *if* it is. What is Black German studies if there is still no

> Black studies at German universities (not to mention schools)? Who owns Black German studies? Or, put differently, who does it cater to? Who *should* it cater to? (El-Tayeb, 2022, p.412)

Fatima El-Tayeb recently contributed to a special issue on Black German Studies with this opening statement. Some might argue that Germany is 'further ahead' in its development of black studies and of black liberation struggle than Norway because of the size of the movement and larger initiatives from the 80s and 90s led by black queer feminists such as May Ayim and Katarina Oguntoye, which are meaningful references to black and Afro-Europeans generally. However, as El-Tayeb's op-ed tells us, Black German Studies remain marginal (if at all) in universities and schools, like the state of institutionalized black studies across Europe. El-Tayeb's questions are relevant to this project in a number of ways. First, I too am interested in figuring out *what* and *if* there is such a thing as Black Norwegian Studies. Secondly, the question of ownership is unanswered here as well. And finally, who does/should it cater to?

El-Tayeb's concern lies within the problem of Black German Studies existing either as institutionally supported outside of Germany, namely in the United States, or as grassroots knowledge production, which then raises the question of the role of academia and the fact that "The Future of Black German Studies cannot Be Within Academia Alone" (El-Tayeb, 2022).

Gilmore has said numerous times that she believes in public education and that universities, like many other institutions, are crossroads, places where people who might not otherwise have met, meet. I do not think we can rely solely on the university as a site of struggle. Still I do think the university and its resources can be taken, reused and reshaped into tools for liberation if we work together against the neoliberal University Machine. My concern lies within the problems of this project potentially and accidentally converting black study, a non-institutional, non-disciplinary, collective, mundane yet politically powerful practice into an institutionalized Black Norwegian Studies within the University Machine. What really comes with institutional co-optation? An example is intersectionality; what has come of it after decades of being watered down and changed to fit any and all questions of 'difference' and 'identity' in the social sciences? (Erel et al. 2018). This is especially evident in the Scandinavian context, where intersectionality is used

frequently without any race analysis. A local example might be the use of the term ‘melaninrik’, coined by Thomas Talawa Prestø, which has been adopted into mainstream discourse, and as a result, now often refers to anyone not white. What Tabanka writes in their own magazine, is that ‘melaninrik’, which translates directly to ‘melanin rich’, is a “neutral term referring to people with darker skin tones” (Tabanka Dance Ensemble, 2018). Whether the mainstream use of the word is a case of co-optation or of pollinating or colonizing in reverse, as Tabanka calls it, I am not sure. What I do know is that using terms developed by black and African diasporic artists, scholars and grassroots organizers cannot result in ever more ways of erasing this group.

Black study and black archival practices in Norway have always been rooted in everyday practice and community, and its strength is that it has no rules or rulers. Rather its theories and methods come from experience and are developed communally and personally. No one owns black study in the capitalist sense.

The future of black study is already here. As I write this, people are theorizing. The formulations that become shared language are already being spoken out loud. This does not mean that this knowledge will be known by any and all. The glitches in the University Machine are multiplying, and the cracks are widening. Black study will continue as long as it is needed.

...

Method report

Planning my research, I wanted to do a black feminist, critical ethnography as what transnational black feminist Vanessa Thompson from Germany had described in her study of black activism in France, where she engaged equally and transparently with her participants, being open about her opinions and standpoint (Thompson, 2015). Vanessa's approach resonated with me, but still left me with questions and room for creativity and explorations in my specific context. Despite having these black feminist ideals, I had still designed the project quite traditionally with fieldwork, qualitative interviews, focus group discussions and participant observation. As I explain in the Introduction and Chapter 2 these methods were quickly dissolved, mixed, and changed. Thus, in this method report I will account for the way my research was conducted to enable evaluation according to the conventional norms for assessing qualitative research. I present this method report here somewhat ambivalently, as I recognize that it is relevant to establish validity and verifiability of the research within the official requirements of a PhD thesis. I believe we as researchers must explain thoroughly how we come to know things, and this is what I have done throughout the thesis, honoring a black feminist ethic of radical honesty (Shange, 2022).

In the thesis I have decided to write in a way that feels the truest to the analytical process (which has been ongoing and collaborative), and in a way that emphasizes how black study transcends institutionalized binaries between theory and method, between researcher and *researched,* and between knowledge and experience. This means I have not included the typical categorizations, tables and descriptions that would be found in a standard methods chapter. I have neither named the practices of knowledge creation that I engaged in as 'semi-structured interviews' (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015), 'participant observation' (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011), 'thematic analysis' (Braun & Clarke, 2006), and such. As a trained anthropologist I am inevitably influenced by these methods and concepts. However, by leaning further into teachings from black feminism, black/queer studies and anticolonial thought, I have been unlearning some of these rules throughout the process of "joining in black study". As the project developed, method, methodology, theory and data meddled with each other and were soon no longer separable. It is not a unique experience for social science researchers who employ qualitative methods to experience the messiness of methods (Law, 2004), especially when working from a feminist

standpoint. Still, I think researchers tend to 'clean up' their mess and hold on to these categories to uphold criteria of what is deemed 'academic knowledge' and the structures of the University Machine (Hammana & Klinkert, 2021) itself. As soon as I began involving people in the project, many of these rules, structures and ideals were broken. What emerged was conversations where roles of researcher and informant were changed, where analysis was already there, where theory was co-created.

Preparing for fieldwork, creating relationships

The project builds on 4 months of ethnographic fieldwork in Oslo, which took place during the spring of 2019. Before the fieldwork I had been traveling to Oslo from Trondheim (where I was living and working), to participate in different events and to expand my network. I started out spending a lot of time on social media, learning about current debates and happenings within the larger African Norwegian community. This is how I learned about some of the more active people and groups that later helped me in my research. In August 2018, a couple of months after starting the PhD, I participated in the Oslo Afro Arts festival, where I got to know several volunteers, musicians, and artists. I also met up with people I had connected with online, such as the director of Tabanka Dance Ensemble, Thomas Talawa Prestø, with whom I had many important analytical conversations. Thomas invited me to write a piece for Tabanka's magazine "Hårsår", which would be released with their upcoming performance I:Object in October 2018. During the autumn of 2018, and early winter months of 2019, I was getting to know more people and taking the train to Oslo to go to performances and meetings. I saw I:Object in October, and in January I joined an event of Black Love organized by ARISE, who also later became a community I learned a lot from.

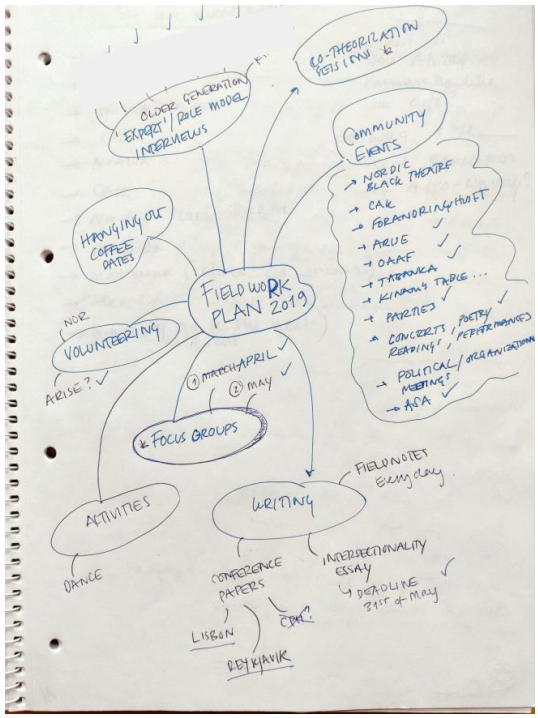
Finding participants

As soon as I got my approval from the NSD (Norwegian center for research data), I posted a call for participants on Facebook, asking for people who identified broadly with being black, African Norwegian or of African descent and having grown up in Norway. The participants had to be between the ages of 18-35, living in or close to Oslo, and interested in issues of community building, belonging, racism and identity. I was curious about this age group, whose lives were entangled with social media, as they were of a younger generation than those who were

politically and organizationally active in the 1990's and early 2000. Advertising my project online proved to be a successful method as I got between almost 30 emails from people who wanted to join. I ended up having 22 official participants (see overview further down), who had signed a consent form, and then many more whose knowledge I was privileged to engage with in more informal settings. In the thesis I also include a few names of people who have been instrumental to building my network, helping with practicalities of finding rooms for group discussions and general analytical as well as moral support for the process.

Fieldwork

From March to June 2019, I stayed in Oslo for fieldwork. During this time, I spent every day doing one-on-one interviews, facilitating focus group discussions, participating in events, meetings, and gatherings, and countless informal hangouts and conversations. As mentioned previously I went to Oslo for events and meetings before that, and I also traveled there several times during the summer and autumn of 2019 for relevant events with friends and chosen colleagues. I had originally planned to spend more time in Oslo during the spring of 2020, but it was impossible due to covid-19 lockdown. During the spring of 2019 I was the most active, participating in almost all events that were related to black and African identity, antiblack racism, and many events on racism in Norway more broadly. On an average there were 3 events of that nature every week during the months I spent in Oslo, which is remarkable considering that it is a relatively small city and the black/African population even smaller. I kept a journal which was a combination of fieldnotes, interview notes and



personal reflections. This journal in many ways was just as eclectic in its genre mixing as my overall approach to this study and what developed as my understanding of black study.

Planned and unplanned conversations

When people contacted me to join the research, I planned to meet up with them, often just the two of us, sometimes in a group with others. For those initial meetings we would talk about the project, get to know each other and the other person would get the opportunity to formally join the project by signing the consent form. The first conversation would rarely be recorded, unless it felt right, but I often took notes to remember what we had talked about. Afterwards I would meet people again, this time often with a recorder on the table, and we would continue where we left off. The conversations would range from 1,5 to 3 hours and did not resemble the structure of a traditional qualitative interview. I rarely followed an interview guide, but instead had thought of some themes I was interested in. As soon as I met people, I realized that I did not need an interview guide at all. Most of the conversations flowed naturally without me probing in any sense. There was so much that the participants and I needed to get out, to say out loud and ask me as well as each other. Often the participant would question me as much as I interviewed them. The planned and recorded conversations were useful as I could transcribe them and include people's direct quotes when writing articles later. However, most of the conversations I've had were unplanned, unstructured, not recorded, and not for the research to co-opt in the traditional sense. Instead, most of these conversations (planned and unplanned) were a practice of black study, and their purpose was fulfilled while they were happening. It is almost impossible to translate the atmosphere and co-theorizing that happened in conversations with people, which in the end was not as important as having the conversations in the first place. Honoring this, I've decided to write this method report separately from the thesis, as I felt this kind of text became a disruption to the flow. This disruption was enforcing a distance between me as researcher and the study participants, obscuring the ways that we have been creating knowledge and studying together.

Group discussions

During my stay in Oslo, I organized 3 group discussions in addition to one-on-one conversations and participation in events. I did this because I wanted to create space for discussing experiences

and observations that I knew people carried, but that they rarely got to think about out loud. Regardless of the many events that were happening in Oslo at the time of my research stay, it was almost during every conversation I had with a participant that they told me "I never have these kinds of discussions". Talking about and listening to the stories and analyses of other African Norwegians is a scarcity. When I then brought people together, these group discussions became a locus for co-theorizing, and my understanding of black study was crystalized further. Two of the group discussions were put together by me, where some did not know each other personally. There were between 7-9 participants in those two discussions, and I had them in a university classroom with a recorder on the table. The third group discussion was with ARISE where we talked about their organizing as a group as well as the individual embodied knowledge of the members. All three group discussions were extremely dense, and long. There was so much to talk about. I had the role of note-taker, facilitator, and snack provider. I was not as verbally active in the group discussions as I was in conversations with one other person. Here, I was focused on letting everyone speak, and sometimes asking follow-up questions. Often, it was not necessary for me to ask many questions, as the discussions were developing as the participants themselves asked each other questions, followed up and built on what the others said. There was a lot of loud agreement, sometimes disagreement, and a vibrant atmosphere. One of the group discussions developed into a social hangout at a bar afterwards, where the conversation kept on going. The participants said they were sad when a conversation ended and wished they had more of this. I transcribed all three group discussions. The group discussions were a chance for me to understand how the participants created knowledge together, despite them not knowing each other very well. I learned about which questions generated more debate and how they handled conflict and disagreement as well as vulnerability and doubt. The intensity of the atmosphere underlined how passionate many were about coming to a deeper understanding of what blackness and African Norwegian belonging might be.

Events, meetings, and activity participation

I have participated in a lot of events, either with friends or joining alone and making friends there. At events I would sometimes take notes, and I had a weekly journal jotting down my experiences. I cannot mention every event I participated in, but here are some examples:

Poetry readings with Camara Joof, Guro Jabulisile Sibeko, Rahel Beraki etc

Black Love events with ARISE

Events on Western beauty standards, sexual trauma, mental health, African politics, black women's circle online meetings, and social nights with African Student Association (ASA)

Black Lives Matter demonstrations (both online and offline)

Dance performances with Tabanka

Parties at Khartoum Contemporary Art Center

Art exhibition with Frida Orupabo

Concerts with Queendom, Kamara, Myra etc.

Salsa nights at Café Sør

Volunteering for Oslo Afro Arts and Selemo festivals

African student organizing in Trondheim

Kwanzaa celebration with ARISE

Summer community party with ASA and ARISE

Stand-up comedy shows

Open mic nights at Art bar

Black women's healing with ARISE, which I helped organizing

Afrobeats dance classes at Tøyen community center

Intersectional feminism debates

Stolt og Høylytt, celebrating black queer voices, feedback group and launch event

Oslo Pride with Salam

Trondheim Pride: Panel on black queer experiences

Sápmi Pride: Panel on solidarity between queer minorities

8th of March at Melahuset

Book launches "Third Culture Kids" and "Ungdommen nå til Dax" (Agenda X)

Anti-racism conferences in Oslo and Utøya

Theater performances and Art nights at Nordic Black Theatre

African dinners with friends

Online engagement

Online engagement has been central from start to finish of this process. During these almost 5 years I have become a member of many different online communities with other African diaspora in Norway, and the Nordics. I also made friends with and started following accounts where people posted content related to blackness and black study. My approach could be categorized as a kind of digital ethnography (Pink et al, 2016), with digital participant observation as my main approach to the online spaces I was a part of. Pink et al (2016) present five key principles of digital ethnography which I recognize in my own study: "multiplicity, non-digital-centric-ness, openness, reflexivity and unorthodox" (p. 26).

I did not record data systematically from these platforms, but instead I had a loose approach of engagement, following discussions, noticing story-links (when people post each other's stories and continue reflecting on a given issue), and occasionally taking screenshots of pictures, memes, and captions of particular interest with permission from the owner (also mentioned in the consent form). What my online engagement gave me was knowledge about events that were happening, debates people were interested in and a lot of visual black study material such as memes. The online curriculums would change with the times and would often revolve around specific cases of antiblack racism in Norway. When the revolution in Sudan broke out, many people were posting about it, which told me something about a political interest in and solidarity with struggles happening on the African continent. During the summer of 2020, people posted and shared so much knowledge about their own experiences, about structural antiblackness, critiques of police, Norwegian history of racism and colonialism, campaigns to support victims of hate crimes and so much more. The online study I had already been following for a couple of years culminated and was suddenly everywhere. In addition to learning about what was going on in terms of events and political debates, my online engagement was a direct interaction with black study in practice. Following the ways people were posting, sharing, and interacting with each other's material, I saw how study was always a driving force: wanting to know, wanting to learn, and wanting to share experiences with others.

Overview of participants, activities, material and themes

Participant	Format of material and activities	Themes
Josephine woman, early 20s	2 recordings from interview + handwritten notes Transcribed (2 planned conversations, 1 group discussion, several hangouts)	Mixed identity, finding community Blackness and black events Oslo vs provincial Norway Navigating white friends Learning about racism
Buhle woman, late 20s	3 recordings from interviews + handwritten notes Partially transcribed (4 planned conversations, several hangouts)	Pan Africanism? Global blackness Ancestors and cultural practices African diaspora dance and music Parents and heritage
Kemet man, early 20s	Recording from interview + handwritten notes Partially transcribed (1 planned conversation, 1 group discussion, many events, meetings)	Africanness vs blackness Learning from books Anger, pain and activism Community resources Research ethics Whiteness and colonialism
Danielle woman, late 20s	Recording from interview + handwritten notes Partially transcribed (2 planned conversations, 1 group discussion, several hangouts, debates, parties)	Global African diaspora Online communities Mainstream feminism US blackness Nightlife and dating Black history
Khadijah woman, late 20s	Recording 2 hours, handwritten notes from two conversations Transcribed (2 planned conversations, 2 group discussions, hangouts, events)	US blackness Class Immigrant parents Pop culture + TV Black? Pan Africanism Gender, sexuality and love
Kai nonbinary, late 20s	Recording from interview + handwritten notes Transcribed (1 planned conversation, 1 group discussion, events and meetings)	Blackness and africanness Black communities in Norway Mixed identity and belonging Organizing Self-learning, language, and theory
Hope woman, late 20s	Recording from interview + handwritten notes Transcribed (1	Language and theory Blackness or Africanness

	planned conversation, 1 group discussion, events)	Black consciousness in Norway vs. other European countries
Gabriel man, late 20s	Recording from interview + handwritten notes Partially transcribed (2 planned conversations, 1 group discussion, events)	Class and racial consicousness US vs Norwegian blackness Being African and Norwegian (black here, white there) Mixed identity Gender and movements Black and other labels
Asta woman, late 20s	Recording from interview + handwritten notes Transcribed (2 planned conversations, 1 group discussion, events)	Black events in Oslo Travel to find community. Norwegian colonial history Denial of antiblackness Blackness as framework
Momo man, early 20s	2 recordings from interview Partially transcribed (1 planned conversation, 1 group discussion, events, hangouts)	Blackness and community Criteria for belonging. Joking with whiteness Blackness and performance
Meron woman, early 20s	2 recordings from interview + handwritten notes Transcribed (2 planned conversations, 1 group discussion, events, hangouts, conference, feedback)	Learning a language Analyzing past experiences Navigating everyday racism US Blackness Pop culture Anti-racism
Ingvild woman, late 20s	2 recordings from interview + handwritten notes Transcribed (2 planned conversations, 1 group discussion, countless hangouts, events, calls, feedback)	Antiblackness Misogynoir and exotification Hair politics and experience Love, relationships, friends Travel to find belonging. Parents, upbringing, and mixed identity
Sey woman, early 20s	Recording from interview + handwritten notes Transcribed (1 planned conversation, 1 group discussion, events, volunteering together, messages, feedback)	Racism and antiblackness at work and in school Missing community Growing up without access to one's culture. Learning from activists online
Angela woman, late teens	Recording	Afro hair and black beauty US Blackness Pop culture

	(1 planned conversation, 1 group discussion, events, I gave her an interview)	Black internet culture
Araweelo woman, early 20s	Handwritten notes from first meeting Zoom recording from conversation in 2021 Partially transcribed (2 planned conversations, 1 group discussion, events, volunteering together, messages, feedback)	Activism and community Black feminism, role models Black art and social media Anti-islam and anti-blackness Gender and dating Learning to speak up Navigating racism in friendships with white Norwegians
Morrison woman, early 20s	1 focus group discussion 1 conference Organizing an event together Informal hangouts, events	Antiracism vs pro-black approach Black children and pedagogy Community and care
Ifechi man, mid 30s	1 focus group discussion 2 meetings 3 events Informal hangouts	Childhood and mixed heritage Teenage anger and awakening Hip hop. Black community building Finding space to breathe
John man, mid 30s	1 focus group discussion 2 meetings 3 events Informal conversations	Discovering black radical thought Growing up in a provincial town Pain, anger, looking for theory
Yvette woman, late 20s	1 focus group discussion Several meetings Organizing an event together	Coming to Norway in childhood Loneliness Finding community with other black women
Yusuf man, early 20s	1 focus group discussion	Antiblack racism at university When to speak up?
James man, early 20s	1 focus group discussion 1 meeting talking about the progress of the research	Learning about colonialism Research African identity
Jonas man, early 20s	1 focus group discussion	What is black? African identity as a mixed kid Class Belonging Responsibility to teach others

Focus group discussions		
FGD 1 (9 participants)	recording + handwritten notes Transcribed	Being the pedagogue for white ignorance speaking up against antiblackness in school, at work, towards friends Identifying as black? learning a language
FGD 2 (8 participants)	Recording + handwritten notes Transcribed	creating community blackness and/as consciousness blackness and intersectionality
FGD with ARISE	Recording + handwritten notes Transcribed	Research critique Organizing for community Each member's personal story and reason for joining. Plans for the future

Working with materials, re-reading, re-listening and analysis

As I explain in the thesis chapter 1, the central concept of black study was a practice I noticed very early in the process, but I did not name it as such until the final year of writing. In order to arrive at this point of synthesis I went back and forth between notes, scribbles, half written documents and transcribed conversations several rounds. Using an eclectic approach to thematic analysis, I read and re-read my fieldnotes, transcriptions and handwritten notes searching for recurring links, themes, and vibes. My method of working with the recorded conversations has been a mix of listening and note-taking as well as full transcriptions. I have also been writing up handwritten notes, allowing for multiple interpretations of the material. What is most important to mention is my continuous conversation with some of the project participants, who have helped me think further as I have gone through the recorded materials. What has ended up in the dissertation reflects the current status of my thought process, and the people, places, and texts that have influenced me up until this point.

Co-authorship, collaboration, and feedback

As I became increasingly aware of how a traditional approach to the writing process might obscure the collaboration and co-theorizing the thesis was built on, I decided to pursue two co-authored articles. Both articles use a kind of collaborative autoethnography (Chang, Ngunjiri, &

Hernandez, 2013), as we write from our personal experiences with and to each other. One article was co-authored with a central figure in the project and my close friend, Rahwa Tilahun Yohaness, who is a grassroots organizer and overall incredible black feminist. The other co-authored article is a letter-correspondence with three colleagues and friends from Sweden and Finland: Jasmine Kelekay, Maimuna Abdullahi and Lena Sawyer, who are all Nordic black feminist researchers, working in academia. As I had to anonymize the project participants, I could not credit them in the same way as what became possible when co-authoring articles. This was also my reason for choosing an article-based thesis, as I then could have more authors credited instead of being the only one.

Another way of involving people in the otherwise lonely process of writing, was by asking friends and study participants to read texts and give me their feedback. I did not ask everyone this, but those with whom I had a closer relationship and who had been the most interested in the project's development. Not everyone I asked had time, but I did get some good feedback on what resonated, what could be added, and so on. Mostly this practice was a way for me to feel less alone in the writing.

Ethical considerations

All project participants have signed a consent form after having an initial conversation with me about the project. I have attached the consent form in another appendix. There were some key ethical considerations to be made carrying out this study. First, I thought about the fact that I would be speaking to people about sensitive subjects, particularly episodes of racial profiling, violence, and marginalization. I also quickly understood that several participants had not had anyone to talk to in depth about what it meant for them to be racialized as black in Norway, and that they were carrying real trauma that sometimes resurfaced in our conversations. One participant, Momo said to me in passing that he thought of the conversations I was having with people as a kind of 'race therapy'. he said this smilingly, however still sincerely, alluding to the therapeutic potential of speaking about your experiences with antiblackness with someone who understands. What this meant ethically is that a lot of the stories and knowledge that was shared with me stays between me and the person who shared. Secondly, my positionality as a researcher was important to consider. I write about this in the thesis chapter 2 using Savannah Shange's

reflections on radical honesty. What it means it to think about how to explain the obscurities of research and academia to the research participants, and to care about them more than I want to know, and thus let the Academy know. Finally, I have anonymized the participants, but with ambivalence. This is a way of protecting people at the same time as it can hide who owns the knowledge. I do not have a final standpoint on anonymization, but I think it deserves some further study.

References

Adisa-Farrar, T. (2019). Positionality Statement. Take Space. https://www.tejuadisafarrar.com/positionalitystatement

Allen, J. (2016). One View from a Deterritorialized Realm: How Black/Queer Renarrativizes Anthropological Analysis. *Cultural Anthropology*, 31(4), pp. 617–626. https://doi.org/10.14506/ca31.4.10.

Anzaldua, G. (2012). *Borderlands. La Frontera. The New Mestiza* (4th edition). Aunt Lute Books (Original work published 1987).

Bacchetta, P., El-Tayeb, F., Haritaworn J., Hernandez, J., Smythe, S., Thompson, V. E. & Willoughby-Herard, T. (2018). Queer of Color Space-Making in and beyond the Academic Industrial Complex. *Critical Ethnic Studies*, 4(1), pp. 44–63. https://doi.org/10.5749/jcritethnstud.4.1.0044

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

Brichmann, N. A. (1923). *Norges junilæumsutstilling 1914, officiel beretning, D 1.* Grøndahl & sønn boktrykkeri. https://www.nb.no/items/URN:NBN:nonb_digibok_2013020106034?page=355&searchText=kongo

Brown, J. N. (2005). *Dropping Anchor, Setting Sail. Geographies of Race in Black Liverpool.* Princeton University Press.

Campt, T. (2017). *Listening to Images*. Duke University Press.

Chang, H., Ngunjiri, F., & Hernandez, K.-A.C. (2013). Collaborative Autoethnography (1st ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315432137

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum Vol 1989* (1), pp. 139–167. DOI: http://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8

Collins, P.H. (2000). *Black Feminist Thought* (2nd ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203900055

Combahee River Collective. (1983). The Combahee River collective statement. In B. Smith (Ed.), Home Girls, a Black Feminist Anthology (pp. 264–274). Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press. Rutgers University Press. (Original work published 1978)

Cox, A., Shange, S., Smith, C. & Thomas, D. (2022, March 31). Endeavors: An Anthropology of Abolition/Liberation with Amiee M. Cox. [Video]. Yale University. https://afamstudies.yale.edu/media-gallery/endeavors-anthropology-abolitionliberation-amiee-m-cox

Cramer, N., Elg, E., Jørgensen, A. V. (Eds). (2021). Sorthed. Special Issue. *Periskop* 25.

Dankertsen, A. (2021). Indigenising Nordic Feminism. A Sámi Decolonial Critique. In S. Keskinen, P. Stoltz & D. Mulinari (Eds.), *Feminisms in the Nordic Region: Neoliberalism, Nationalism and Decolonial Critique* (pp. 135–154). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-53464-6_7

Davis, A. Y. (1981). *Women, Race & Class.* Random House.

DeWalt, K. M. & DeWalt, B. R. (2011). *Participant Observation. A Guide for Fieldworkers.* (2nd ed.). Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.

Diallo, O-K. M. (2022). "Det jeg savner, er å bli lært et slags språk". Dobbelt bevissthet og språkutvikling blant svarte ungdommer i Oslo. In C. A. Døving (Ed.) *Rasisme. Fenomenet, forskningen, erfaringene* (pp. 345–368). Universitetsforlaget. (Article 1 in the thesis)

Diallo, O-K. M. & Yohaness, R. T. (Forthcoming). Theorising From Our Lives. A Black Nordic Feminist Approach. In S. Keskinen, M. Seikkula & A. A. Alemanji (Eds.) *Race, Bordering and Disobedient Knowledge: Activism and Everyday Struggles in Europe.* Manchester University Press. (Article 2 in the thesis)

Diallo, O-K. M. & Miskow Friborg, N. (2021). Subverting the white cis gaze: Toward a pedagogy of discomfort, accountability and care in the anthropology classroom. *Teaching Anthropology* 10(4), pp. 17–35. https://doi.org/10.22582/ta.v10i4.622

Diallo, O-K. M. (2019). At the Margins of Whiteness: Black Women in Danish Academia. I A. Emejulu & F. Sobande (Eds.) *To Exist is to Resist: Black Feminism in Europe* (pp. 219–228). Pluto Press.

DuBois, W.E.B. (with Keenan, R. & Gilkes, C. T.). (2012). *The Souls of Black Folk* (1995 edition). Signet Classics. (Original work published 1903).

Ehlers, J. & Belle, L. (2018). Background. https://www.iamqueenmary.com/history

El-Tayeb, F. (2008). 'The Birth of a European Public': Migration, Postnationality, and Race in the Uniting of Europe. *American Quarterly,* 60(3), pp. 649–70. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40068519

El-Tayeb, F. (2011). *European Others. Queering Ethnicity in Postnational Europe.* University of Minnesota Press.
El-Tayeb, F. (2022). The Future of Black German Studies Cannot Be Within Academia Alone. *The German Quarterly* 95(49, pp. 412–414. https://doi.org/10.1111/gequ.12300

Emejulu, A. & Sobande, F. (2019). Introduction. On the Problems and Possibilities of European Black Feminism and Afrofeminism. In A. Emejulu & F. Sobande (Eds) *To Exist is to Resist. Black Feminism in Europe*, (pp. 3–10). Pluto Press.

Erel, U., Haritaworn, J., Rodríquez, E. G. & Klesse, C. (2011). On the Depoliticisation of Intersectionality Talk: Conceptualising Multiple Oppressions in Critical Sexuality Studies. In Y. Taylor, S. Hines & M. E. Casey (Eds.) *Theorizing Intersectionality and Sexuality*, (pp. 56–78). Palgrave MacMillan.

Essed, P. (1991). *Understanding Everyday Racism: An interdisciplinary theory* (2nd ed.). Saw. http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781483345239

Essed, P. (2009). Foreword. In D. C. Hine, T. D. Keaton & S. Small (Eds) *Black Europe and the African Diaspora,* (pp. ix–xv). University of Illinois Press.

Fanon, F. (with Bhabha, H.). (1986). *Black Skin White Masks.* Pluto Press. (Original work published 1952).

Finbog, L. R. (2020). It speaks to you: making kin of people, duodji and stories in Sámi museums. [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of Oslo.

Gilmore, R. W. (2020, June 1). Geographies of Racial Capitalism with Ruth Wilson Gilmore – An Antipode Foundation film [Video] YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2CS627aKrJI&ab_channel=antipodeonline.

Gilmore, R. W. (2022). *Abolition Geography*. Verso.

Gilmore, R. W. (2007). *Golden Gulag. Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California*. University of California Press.

Gilroy, P. (1993). *The Black Atlantic. Modernity and Double Consciousness.* Verso.

Gilroy, P. Gilmore, R.W. (2020). Transcript: In conversation with Ruth Wilson Gilmore. https://www.ucl.ac.uk/racism-racialisation/transcript-conversation-ruth-wilson-gilmore

Gullestad, M. (2006). *Plausible Prejudice. Everyday Experiences and Social Images of Nation, Culture and Race.* Universitetsforlaget.

Habel, Y. (2011). Challenging Swedish exceptionalism? Teaching while Black. In K. Freeman & E. Johnson (Eds.), *Education in the Black diaspora: Perspectives, challenges, prospects* (pp. 99–122). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203152973

Hammana, Z. & Klinkert, V. L. (2021). Glitching the University Machine. Teaching Anthropology 10(4), pp. 36–46. https://doi.org/10.22582/ta.v10i4.621

Haritaworn, J, Moussa, G & Ware, S. M. (2018). *Marvellous Grounds: Queer of Colour Histories of Toronto.* Between the Lines.

Harney, S. & Moten, F. (2013). *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study*. Minor Compositions.

Hine, D. C., Keaton, T. D. & Small, S. (Eds.). (2009). *Black Europe and the African Diaspora*. University of Illinois Press.

hooks, b. (1981). *Ain't I a Woman? Black Women and Feminism.* South End Press.

hooks, b. (1987/2015). *Talking Back. Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black.* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

hooks, b. (2014). *Teaching to Transgress. Education as the Practice of Freedom.* (Original work published 1994). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.43 24/9780203700280

Hunter, E. L. (2021). Diasporiske perspektiver på racialiseringens kolonialitet i Danmark. *Periskop 25*, pp. 88–111.

Ihmoud, S., & Cordis, S. (2022). A poetics of living rebellion: Sociocultural anthropology in 2021. *American Anthropologist* 124(4), pp. 813–829. https://doi.org/10.1111/aman.13788

Jensen, E. M. (2020). Conceptualizing Oktavuohta as a Storytelling Methodology in Sámi Research. *Dutkansearvvi dieđalaš áigečála* 4 (1), pp. 4–27.

Jobe, M. (2020). *En Svart Flickas Handbok.* Type & Tell

Joof, C. L. (2018). *Eg Snakkar Om Det Heile Tida.* Samlaget.

Kelekay, J. (2021). Svart Feminism i Norden: Ledare. *Astra* 103(1), pp. 4–6.

Kelekay, J. (2019). "Too Dark to Support the Lions, But Light Enough for the Frontlines": Negotiating Race, Place, and Nation in Afro-Finnish Hip Hop". *Open Cultural Studies* 3(1), pp. 386–401. https://doi.org/10.1515/culture-2019-0033

Kelley, R. D. (2018). Black Study, Black Struggle. *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies*, 40(2) pp. 153–168. https://doi.org/10.5070/F7402040947

Kelley, R. D. (2020). "Western Civilization is Neither": Black Studies' Epistemic Revolution. *The Black Scholar 2020*, 50(3): pp. 4–10. https://doi.org/10.1080/00064246.2020.1780862

Kennedy-Macfoy, M. (2014). Queendom: On Being Black, Feminist Norwegian Women. In M. McEachrane (ed.) *Afro Nordic Landscapes: Equality and Race in Northern Europe,* (pp. 39–56). Routledge.

Kilomba, G. (2010). *Plantation Memories: Episodes of Everyday Racism*. (2nd ed.) UNRAST-Verlag.

Knobblock, I. & Stubberud, E. (2021). Bortom gränserna : Ett brevsamtal om språk, tillhörighet och dekolonisering. *Tidskrift för genusvetenskap* 42(4), pp. 5–30.

Knudsen, L. E. (2022). *Det er personlig: Om rasisme og ytringsfrihet.* Res Publika.

Kollektiv Omsorg: Diallo, O-K. M., Kelekay, J., Abdullahi, M. & Sawyer, L. (Forthcoming). Writing Letters as Counter-Archiving: An Afro-Nordic Feminist Care Practice. *Meridians* 22(11), pp.180–203. (Article 3 in the thesis)

Kvale, S. & Brinkmann, S. (2015). *Det kvalitative forskningsintervju*. (3rd ed.). Gyldendal.

Larsen, N. (1928). *Quicksand*. A. A. Knopf.

Laula, E. (1902). *Inför lif eller död: Sanningsord i de lappska förhållandena*. Wilhelmssons Boktryckeri.

Lift Every Voice. (2022). *Our mission.* https://www.lev-no.org/mission

Lorde, A. (2007). *Sister Outsider.* Crossing Press. (Original work published 1984)

Love, B. (2019). *We Want to Do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom.* Beacon Press

Lydersen, A. B. (2017). *Afropolitt*. Aschehoug.

Mainsah, H. (2014). Young African Norwegian Women and Diaspora: Negotiating Identity and Community Through Digital Social Networks. *Crossings: Journal of Migration & Culture* 5 (1), pp. 105–119. https://doi.org/10.1386/cjmc.5.1.105_1

Marronage (2017). Marronage #1, #2, #3. Marronage. https://marronage.dk/

Marronage & Diaspora of Critical Nomads. (2021). *Vi vil mere end at overleve. Opgør med en antisort verden.* Eks-Skolens Trykkeri.

Massao, P. B. & Fasting, K. (2010). Race and Racism: Experiences of Black Norwegian Athletes. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport 4*5(2), pp. 147–162
DOI: 10.1177/1012690210368233

Massao, P. B. (2016). Sport, Race and Gender: The Experiences of Black Norwegian Athletes. [doctoral dissertation, The Norwegian School of Sport Science]. NIH Brage.
http://hdl.handle.net/11250/2394759

Massao, P. B. (2022). Rasialisering: Et begrep for norsk samfunns- og utdanningsforskning? In C. A. Døving (Ed.) *Rasisme: Fenomenet, forskningen, erfaringene* (pp. 107–120). Universitetsforlaget.

McEachrane, M. (Ed.) (2014). *Afro Nordic Landscapes: Equality and Race in Northern Europe.* Routledge.

McKittrick, K. (2021). *Dear Science and Other Stories*. Duke University Press.

McIntosh, L. (2015). Impossible presence: race, nation and the cultural politics of 'being Norwegian'. *Ethnic and Racial Studies 38*(2), pp. 309–325, doi:10.1080/01419870.2013.868017

Mendes, J. T. (2021). Black Death, Mourning and The Terror of Black Reproduction: Aborting the Black Muslim Self, Becoming the Assimilated Subject. Souls 22 (1), pp. 56–70. https://doi.org/10.1080/10999949.2020.1804803

Miller, M. (2017). Figuring Blackness in a Place Without Race: Sweden, Recently. *ELH (English Literary History)* 84(2) pp. 377–97. https://www.jstor.org/stable/44630928

Muñoz, J. E. (1999) *Disidentifications. Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics.* University of Minnesota Press.

Myers, J. (2023). *Of Black Study.* Pluto Press.

Nash, J. C. (2018). *Black Feminism Reimagined: After Intersectionality*. Duke University Press.

Nash, J. C. (2020). Practicing Love: Black Feminism, Love-Politics, and Post-Intersectionality. *Meridians* 19 (2020), pp. 439–462. https://doi.org/10.1215/15366936-8566089

Njie, R. A. (2017). *I wear my afro with pride. Renegotiating racialised identities in Norway.* [Unpublished master thesis]. University of Copenhagen.

Nunes, D. (2019). Allow me to insist. In N. Josef (Ed.), *Actualise Utopia. From dreams to reality. "An anthology about racial barriers in the structure of the Nordic arts field"* (pp. 95–98). Arts Council Norway.

Olufemi, L. (2021). *Experiments in Imagining Otherwise*. Hajar Press.

Optiz, M., Oguntoye, K. & Shultz, D. (1986/1992). *Showing our Colors: Afro-German Women Speak Out.* University of Massachusetts Press. (Original work published 1986)

Orupabo, F. N. S. (2011). *«Å banke på stengte dører». En kvalitativ studie av organiserte afrikanske og norskafrikanske kvinners syn på rasisme, feminisme og kjønnslikestilling i Norge*. [Master thesis, University of Oslo]. UiO DUO Vitensarkiv. http://urn.nb.no/URN:NBN:no-30137

Osei-Kofi, N., Licona, A. C. & Chávez, K. R. (2018). From Afro-Sweden with Defiance: The Clenched Fist as Coalitional Gesture? *New Political Science* 40, pp. 137–150. https://doi.org/10.1080/07393148.2017.1418576

Petti, A., and Hilal, S. (2013). *Beyond the Public, A common space in Fawaar refugee camp*. Beyond the Public, pp. 45–58.

Pink, S., Horst, H., Postill, J., Hjorth, L., Lewis, T. & Tacchi, J. (2016). *Digital Ethnography Principles and Practice.* Sage.

Robinson, C. J. (with Kelley, R. D. G.). (2000). *Black Marxism. The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*. University of North Carolina Press. (Original work published 1983)

Russel, L. (2020). *Glitch Feminism. A Manifesto.* Verso.

Sawyer, L. & Habel, Y. (2014). Refracting African and Black diaspora through the Nordic region. *African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal*, 7(1), pp. 1–6. https://doi.org/10.1080/17528631.2013.861235

Shange, S. (2018). Progressive Dystopia. Abolition, Antiblackness + Schooling in San Francisco. Duke University Press.

Shange, S. (2019). Black Girl Ordinary: Flesh, Carcerality and Refusal of Ethnography. *Transforming Anthropology* 27(1), pp. 3–21. https://doi.org/10.1111/traa.12143
Shange, S. (2022). Abolition in the Clutch: Shifting Through the Gears with Anthropology. *Feminist Anthropology* 3, pp. 187–197. https://doi.org/10.1002/fea2.12101

Simpson, A. (2007). On Ethnographic Refusal: Indigeneity, 'Voice' and Colonial Citizenship *Junctures* 9, 67–80. Smith, L. T. (1999). *Decolonising Methodologies. Research and Indigenous Peoples*. University of Otago Press.

Svendsen, S. B. (2014). Learning racism in the absence of 'race'. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 21(1), pp. 9–24. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350506813507717

Svendsen, S. H. B. (2021). Saami Women at the Threshold of Disappearance: Elsa Laula Renberg (1877–1931) and Karin Stenberg's (1884–1969) Challenges to Nordic Feminism. In S. Keskinen, P. Stoltz & D. Mulinari (Eds.) *Feminisms in the Nordic Region. Neoliberalism, Nationalism and Decolonial Critique,* (pp. 155–176). Palgrave Macmillan.

Stenberg, K. & Lindholm, V. (1920). *Det är vår vilja. Dat läh mijen situd. En vädjan till den Svenska nationen från samefolket.* Svenska förlaget.

Tabanka Dance Ensemble. (2018). Hårsår. I: Object. [Self-published magazine].

TallBear, K. (2014). Standing with and speaking as faith: A feminist-indigenous approach to inquiry [Research note]', Journal of Research Practice, 10(2), Article N17. http://jrp.icaap.org/index.php/jrp/article/view/405/371

Tate, S. A. (2014). Racial affective economies, disalienation and 'race made ordinary'. *Ethnic and Racial Studies,* 37(13), pp. 2475–2490. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2013.821146

Tate, S. A. (2016). 'I can't quite put my finger on it': Racism's touch. *Ethnicities*, 16(1), pp. 68–85. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468796814564626 Olufemi, L. (2020). *Feminism Interrupted*. Pluto Press.

Thomas, D., Campt, T. M., Mahon, M. & Sawyer, L. (2008). Diasporic Hegemonies: Popular Culture and Transnational Blackness. Transforming Anthropology 15(1), pp. 50–62. https://doi.org/10.1525/tran.2007.15.1.50

Thompson, V. E. (2021). Policing in Europe: disability justice and abolitionist intersectional care. *Race & Class* 62(3), pp. 61–76. https://doi.org/10.1177/0306396820966463

Tisdel, M. (2023). 'Dette er ingen båt!' Svart definisjonsmakt og meningsproduksjon i Norge. In S. Alghasi & T. H. Eriksen (eds.) *Flerkulturelle scenarioer: Mur, bro eller båt?* (pp. 130–159). Capellen Damm.

Todd, Z. (2016). An Indigenous Feminist's take on the Ontological Turn: 'Ontology' is just another word for Colonialism. Journal of Historical Sociology, 29(1), pp. 4–22. https://doi.org/10.1111/johs.12124

Tuck, E. & Yang, K. W. (2012). Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1(1), pp. 1–40.

Tuck, E. & Yang, K.W. (2014). 'R-Words: Refusing Research' in D. Paris and M. T. Winn (Eds.) *Humanizing Research: Decolonizing Qualitative Inquiry with Youth and Communities.* (pp. 223–247). Sage Publications. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781544329611

Wekker, G. (2009). Another Dream of a Common Language. In D. C. Hine, T.D. Keaton & S. Small (eds.), *Black Europe and the African Diaspora* (pp. 277–289). University of Illinois Press.

Wekker, G. (2016). *White Innocence: Paradoxes of Colonialism and Race.* Duke University Press. https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822374565

Wright, M. M. (2004). *Becoming Black*. Creating Identity in the African Diaspora. Duke University Press

Yang, A. (2021). Racialized Forecasting. Understanding race through children's (to-be) lived experiences in a Danish school context. *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy* 7(3), pp.169-178. https://doi.org/10.1080/20020317.2021.1995141

Öhman, M.-B. (2021). Morfars farmors syster Brita Stina Larsdotter Rim: Återtagande av lulesamisk och skogssamisk historia och identitet i ett bosättarkolonialt Sverige. *Tidsskrift for Kjønnsforskning*, 45(4), pp. 197–214. https://doi.org/10.18261/issn.1891-1781-2021-04-04

(The) black (phd) student. poem.

A black Ugandan PhD candidate is defending her thesis in Copenhagen.

During the defense her committee member says, what is it like in Tanzania?

A black postdoc enters the admin office on her first day of work to collect her key card.

Instead, she receives a trash can.

After having presented her work to her department for the first time, a colleague follows a black PhD student into her office and says “once my friend experienced racism while doing volunteer work in Nepal. She's white.”

A black master’s student from Zimbabwe is sitting in a room of 300 peers.

A slide is being shown of the statistics of tuberculosis

Zimbabwe is, according to this map, a hotspot.

The white student next to the black Student raises their hand, stands up and asks whether one can get TB from sitting close to someone from those countries?

…

A Somali Danish student is at a party with her classmates and the “very white guy” opposite from her interrupts the music by shouting “what is it like to be a n-word?”

…

What can we *do*? As feminists, *how* can we make it better?

…

Racism is a distraction, Toni Morrison said

…

A black researcher is reminded by other black feminists to take care of herself and rest

…

A Black Phd student goes to the doctor, concerned about her mental health. The doctor suggests she goes for a swim.

…

A black PhD student organizes a workshop on positionality
A conference on decoloniality
An event on knowledge creation outside the academy

Is asked,
What can we *do*?

…

A Black phd student becomes what Francesca Sobande calls the Accidental activist

A Black professor is either the exception or the representative of the race, as Shirley Anne Tate phrases it

Patricia Hill Collins calls it *The outsider within*

The pedagogue, the wiper of white tears

…

A black researcher's contract is not prolonged.
…

A black PhD student goes on sick leave.

…

A black PhD student

has a meeting with the HR department

because her sick leave is about to end.

The HR representative says, you know I had to make sure before you logged in that you could even speak Norwegian
Oh you do?
Oh and how about my *norlandsdialekt*?

You can understand that as well?

Ko experience tan my father usually says when I call to complain about racism
But this time he just listens and says, *mbe anda hay bat*. (they don't know a thing)

…

A black PhD student is cornered by a white Professor Emerita. The professor has discovered something about herself that she would like to share

I would very much like to have coffee with you as I've begun to grapple with my own *coloniality*.
You see, I've found out that I speak Norwegian to anyone who *looks* Norwegian. By that, I mean anyone who looks white. And I speak English to everyone else.

This is not news to the black PhD student. Because she remembers how years ago in her first meeting with this professor, she was asked, in English

What is it like to be a migrant?

…

A black bachelor student says to a group of black people her age

you know it's tiring to have to be that teacher all the time. *Jeg ha'kke tatt utdanning til det her.*

…

Racism is a distraction, Toni Morrison said

…

A video of a black man being brutally murdered by a white police officer in the US goes viral. Suddenly white researchers in the Nordics care about anti blackness

Which demonstration should we go to?

Can you organize this panel?

Can you teach about this?

Can you tell us *what to do*?!

…

The researchers talk about watering plants

and whether they should consider reading that book you know the one about white fragility

they read about whiteness but never speak of it

…

Who can speak? Grada Kilomba asks

…

A black student drops out

A black scholar leaves academia, refuses to be affiliated

A black phd student steals from the university

A black PhD student finds community

…

These scenes come from black cis and nonbinary women and femmes who work and study in Scandinavian universities. I have been collecting them since 2016. And what strikes me is that what began as a research inquiry has simultaneously become the reality of my own work life.

I've come into this talk, wondering, whether it is possible to work as a black person in academia, doing black feminist work, and whether it is possible to do this work and maintain good health?
Is burnout inevitable?

.

(poem-lecture, delivered at NORA conference in Oslo, June 2022. Thank you to Ro Averin, Jan Mendes and Nafeesa Nichols of Black Feminist Fridays for holding space for my emotio-knowledge and for sharing your own).

Article 1: "What I miss is being taught a kind of language"

Double consciousness and language development among black youth in Oslo[27]

> "How serious or, how pedagogical am I supposed to be today?"

Meron, a black woman in her 20s, asks herself this question daily when faced with anti-black racism. She sits around a table with a group of African Norwegians and discusses what it means to be both Norwegian and *black*[28]. She wonders if she has to assume a special educational responsibility.

> «(...) It's exhausting, it's tiring. To always be that teacher. So, I'm not educated as a teacher, you know what I mean, but I have to do it all the time anyway. (...) But what I also miss is *being taught a type of language* to deal with these things. To sort of learn a language about it. Because there's a language that exists."

This language that Meron is talking about is one that several young black people are in the process of learning, or that they are developing themselves. In this text, I show how blackness is ascribed, negotiated, and used as a political and social frame of reference for African Norwegian youth. I understand blackness as a historical, political construct that has some commonalities globally and some different meanings in local contexts (Hall, 1994, Wright, 2004). Meron speaks specifically about a language that can be used to understand, explain, and contradict anti-black racism, what I refer to as *language as theory* (hooks, 1991). There is also another side of this language, which is about creating meaning and belonging, what I'll call *language as poetry* (Lorde, 1984/2007). My question is about how desire of young black Norwegians to *learn a language* can be analyzed through the concept of double consciousness. Double consciousness (DuBois, 1903/2012), is an analytical tool that can help us understand the ability to see oneself

[27] This chapter was originally written in Norwegian and published in the anthology *Rasisme: Fenomenet, forskningen, erfaringene*, edited by C. A. Døving (2022), pp. 363-377. I want to thank Tore Mekbib Mollan-Holter of the @svarthistorie Instagram for reading and providing constructive feedback.

[28] I alternate between the concepts African Norwegian and *black* throughout the text to reflect the creative and flexible ways such labels are being used by black Norwegian youth.

and one's position from the outside, which I examine as something special for those of us who are both Norwegian and black/African. I use the term to examine the features of anti-blackness and being seen as a stranger in one's own country (El-Tayeb, 2011; DuBois,1903/2012; Gilroy, 1992). Double consciousness was originally put forward in 1903 by the African-American sociologist W.E.B. DuBois, and has since been used extensively in Critical Race Theory. DuBois said the black American was born with a (metaphorical) *veil*, which separated them from the rest of society. This meant that black Americans had no real self-awareness, but instead a specific 'double consciousness', which was the ability to see themselves through the gaze of the outside world[29]. Double consciousness will be central to the exploration of language development that takes place in the encounter between Norwegian *and* black belonging. I regard racism and anti-blackness as fundamental structures in our society[30], which, among other things, deprives African Norwegian youth of the opportunity to belong where they 'hear home'[31]. There is something specific about the position of black/African in Norway (and the Nordic countries in general) that includes a hyper visibility at the same time as a hyper invisibility, where one becomes an 'impossible presence' in the nation and will always be asked 'where one is *really* from' (Diallo, 2019; Habel, 2011; McEachrane, 2014; McIntosh, 2015; Sawyer, 2008). The language that is the main focus of this text and that black youth are creating legitimizes their reality and allows them to belong in spite of racism as a basic condition in their lives in Norway. During the analysis, I will move between the two kinds of language (language as *theory* and language as *poetry*), much like the young people themselves. To understand how this process takes place, I anchor the analysis in the black feminist tradition.

[29] Original citation: «It is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder." (DuBois, 1903/2012, p. 9)

[30] Other words for this may be 'race thinking' (Gullestad, 2006) or 'racialized grammar' (Bonilla-Silva, 2012). I understand racism as organizing structure along with patriarchy, cis- and heteronormativity, functional normativity, capitalism, etc. See possibly hooks 'white-supremacist, capitalist patriarchy' (hooks, 1989/2015, p. 51)

[31] To hear home is a direct translation of the Norwegian expression for belonging "å høre hjemme", which I think is suitable to use here as another reference to language and its connection to home. This note has been added for the English translation.

Black feminist analysis

Black feminists have long been concerned with language and 'speaking' as a structural problem. Black feminists have 'spoken out' (Optiz et al, 1986/1992), 'talked back' (hooks, 1989/2015) and shown 'who can speak' (Kilomba, 2010). I would like to invite you as a reader into a black feminist analysis and way of writing research, where you will gain insight into conversations and reflections between me and the project participants as the basis for the analysis. Through excerpts from conversations, I want to show how they theorize through creating language. Especially the way they alternate between Norwegian and English in the attempt to find words and concepts to describe their reality is interesting. The development of language as an analytical and theoretical framework has been written about by several black feminists, including bell hooks who write that she "came to theory, desperate", that she wanted to "understand, to grasp what was happening around and inside [her]" (hooks, 1991, p.1). hooks wanted to grasp at the pain she was carrying and saw theory as an opportunity to find healing. As an extension of hooks' longing for theory, I also see a longing for language among African Norwegian youth. Through the project participants' stories, I want to show the process that black youth go through to put their experiences into words in a Norwegian 'color blind' context [32]. I have become close with many of those who have participated in the study, and together we have come up with the key questions and analyses on which the study is based. Such relationships are typical of black feminist epistemology, in which lived experience and theorizing collectively are central (Collins, 2000).

Language as theory: double consciousness as strategy

Being racialized as black in Norway is connected to our colonial history where the union of Denmark-Norway of the past built capital on the slave trade with African peoples and colonization of areas in Africa and the Caribbean. At the same time, most of those who are racialized as black in Norway are people who have come as asylum seekers and migrants in recent times (since the 90s) and especially their children, the second generation. The position of immigrant and non-Western (often Muslim) affects how anti-blackness looks in the Nordic

[32] Color blindness is a type of ideology that prevailed in European discourse in the aftermath of World War II to avoid putting 'racial' differences into words, even if they exist structurally, economically and politically. Bonilla-Silva explains color blindness as 'racism without racists' (Bonilla-Silva, 2006).

context (Hunter, 2021). Meron explains why she needs language in the face of anti-blackness. "Because what happens when you're sort of confronted by racists, or, call them what you will. You tend to be caught off guard in that situation, or you get a little too quick and, maybe you misunderstand." I notice Meron's description of the doubts that can arise in such situations, and the way she carefully considers her own reactions. This doubt, which is perhaps more than doubt and closer to an ability to analyze the situation from the outside (a white Norwegian perspective), I propose as an expression of double consciousness. I recognize the tendency among most of the black youth I've encountered. Meron experiences discussing with herself and analyzing a situation where she is exposed to racism from both the outside (the white majority's gaze) and from her own perspective, at the same time. The black feminist abolition theorist, Ruth Wilson Gilmore, recently stated that double consciousness was a gift, a greater perspective on the outside world, and why and how systems and structures that oppress people work (Gilroy & Gilmore, 2020, para. 12). It is not certain that those who experience such awareness see it as a gift, but that it might be interesting to explore this both-and-position as something generative. An example of how double consciousness is expressed is well described by Meron when she reflects on language and mentions whiteness as a category when analyzing her own observations from conversations with white Norwegians. "I'm very new to that word, the term, just like that, *whiteness* itself," she ponders, specifying what she's talking about:

> "it's that [whiteness] *is* something, that you can turn the arrow a little bit and say *whiteness* as a term that actually contains everything that I'm really talking about. That is in many ways a struggle to take back power, a struggle to sort of put into words what it really is, we're talking about."

'Turning the arrow' is the central thing here. Meron's uneasiness regarding 'turning the arrow' by naming whiteness as a structure or phenomenon may be an expression of Nordic exceptionalism (Habel, 2011). The concept of Nordic exceptionalism explains how the Nordic countries' "persistent unwillingness to acknowledge and take responsibility for the heritage of colonialism" (Habel 2011, p. 100) has consequences for how 'race' and racism are (not) addressed in popular discourse. To investigate how and why black youth long for a language, we must relate to the 'language' that is widely available in Norway. We rarely talk about 'race' and especially not

whiteness. Instead, as in many other European countries, we tend to highlight cultural and religious differences as a kind of code language for 'race' (Essed, 1991; Gullestad, 2006). Such a taboo makes it more difficult to talk about racism and the definition of 'racism' stagnates at a colourblind level, where, for example, 'immigrants' are divided into 'Western' and 'non-Western' backgrounds as an indicator of rights and the possibility of belonging (Hunter, 2021). The anthropologist Gullestad wrote about how Norwegianness is equated with whiteness and how the Norwegian national narrative of not having participated in colonization (but as a former colony) and being a humanitarian pioneer has contributed to making racism a taboo and a phenomenon that most of all belongs outside Norwegian borders and Norwegian history (Gullestad 2006, 217-18, Kennedy-Macfoy 2014, p. 40; Gilroy, 2014:xi). This kind of (national) narrative is what the Dutch anthropologist Wekker calls 'white innocence' (2016), which influences not only the white majority population, but also minorities' relationship to whiteness and their ability to articulate racism and anti-blackness (Wekker, 2016, p. 39; Diallo, 2019). Meron continues to reflect on how this 'whiteness taboo' affects her inner dialogue:

> "Yes, it's crazy, because I'm kind of twofold in my head. One [side] is such a manipulated version, which I haven't yet been able to filter with the so-called wokeness. It's a constant power struggle in your head. 'No, no, you can't say that, there's Sarah next door, and then there's Stine and then there's Hans and Peder.' It's not actually *whiteness* somehow (...) But it is as simple that to turn the picture around and say 'Pakistanis', 'Indians', 'Eritreans', 'Ethiopians', 'Afghans' or just 'foreigners' or... in these days; *immigrants*."

Meron finds herself 'twofold in the head', where she has yet to infiltrate one part with *wokeness*, or a vigilance about anti-blackness. She finds that she can see the situation from a white majority perspective and at the same time from her own perspective, and that these two sides are fighting each other. She explains how she cannot talk about whiteness because it deprives people of individuality, while at the same time it is 'so easy' to talk about whole groups of 'immigrants'. One could say that double consciousness is a specific form of racial awareness, or awareness of racism as a system, in which one simultaneously carries the burden of seeing oneself as black through the white gaze. This filter that divides Meron's head in two is perhaps not unlike the veil that DuBois described. Meron explains why it's so easy to turn your gaze to yourself:

> "(...) Every day you open your phone you get *fed* a little bit more and you get smaller, you don't take it in anymore, that's the way it is, that's the new fact. And if you are told one thing enough times, you almost believe it (...) Not only have they managed to convince themselves, but they have also managed to convince the so-called *victims* in their eyes."

Meron is influenced by what she reads in the media. The 'they' she is talking about can be understood as the white majority society. She finds that as a black minority, she becomes convinced of her victimhood as a fact. She gives an example:

> "When you have a little brother who comes home and says, 'so yeah, I was stopped by the police three times today, but you know I'm black' wauw. So, it's all good, you see, it's sort of like that, *the new expected normality, is this*[33]."

According to Meron, the fact that Meron's brother expects racial profiling from the police because he is black is an expression of his acceptance of this as a new normality. Both Meron's experience of being twofold in her head and her description of her brother's expectations of the police can be expressions of double consciousness as a strategy. Wekker refers to DuBois when she writes that black youth in Europe develop double consciousness to survive (Wekker, 2009; Wekker, 2016, p. 38). In Wekker's analysis, this also implies that black people in Europe also adopt dominant cultural, political, and linguistic frameworks from the United States to organize themselves (Wekker, 2009, pp. 281-82). Such awareness thus balances somewhere between the experience of being an immigrant and black in Norway and at the same time being a black person in the 'West', which relates to a common transatlantic economic history. The Swedish anthropologist Sawyer (2008) examines how Afro-Swedes engender 'race' as a way of creating an African diasporic community in Sweden. According to Sawyer, there is a kind of negotiation and movement going on between understanding oneself as African and understanding oneself as black, not unlike how it takes place in Norway. She writes that in connection with what she, inspired by Stuart Hall, formulates as "calls to belonging", is coded with various cultural

[33] "The new expected normality, is this" was said in English while the rest of the sentence was in Norwegian.

references that are either based on a notion of the continent of Africa, or a broader non-geographically determined affiliation in a 'black' diaspora, which is often strongly influenced by US American black culture and theory. (Sawyer, 2008: p. 89).

This duplicity between the African and the black is also expressed as an alternation between being attributed and attributing oneself as black. The young queer activist, Kai, also tries to navigate between different categories and words that can anchor blackness. When I asked them to tell me what blackness means to them, they laughed a little before answering that blackness and 'race' are difficult to deal with because on the one hand it is 'socially constructed'[34] and on the other hand is such that "when people are *seen* as black in society, then they experience specific things, (...) you sort of have a shared culture in some ways, just because of a lot of things you experience (and have) in common, there's sort of a lot that intersects."
Kai points out two key points here; On the one hand, black is something one is 'seen' as in society (racialization), and on the other hand it implies a 'shared culture' that is rooted in shared experience. It is precisely this duplicity of blackness itself that makes it difficult to define. Kai further explains how one is read differently as black based on skin tone or cultural/ethnic origin. "And then there are people like us then, who have a white parent, where people say, oh but you're sort of *half black*, or you're not *quite*." Kai shows here how blackness as a category is difficult to deal with. "Often, when people see me, they don't quite manage to place me, (...) because they don't quite see that I have a white parent, which means that I am most often treated as someone, someone..." They hesitate and I ask, "*fully black*?". "Yes, whatever that means," they confirm. Kai, who grew up with their West African father, without their white Norwegian mother, believes that they "may relate more strongly to the black side." According to Kai, the attribution as black takes place not only from the outside as racialization, or what they call 'socially constructed', but that it is also about experience and what access one has to one's own blackness/Africanness in a positive way. When whiteness and thus Norwegianness are out of reach, blackness as a frame of reference can offer a sense of belonging.

[34] Kai talks about socially constructed categories. This could be, for example, gender, which according to queer researchers such as Judith Butler (1990) is not related to biology. Instead, gender is performative. "Race" and "ethnicity" are also socially constructed categories, which have real consequences in people's lives (Alcoff, 2011).

"I feel like black identity, it's not just about the socially constructed part, it's not just about skin color or the shape of your nose and lips, or the type of hairstyle you have, it's not just about your language or what media it's you're watching or listening to, but it's sort of a mix of all those things."

Here, double consciousness is clear. Kai is both aware of how they are read by others and why. One tendency that is clearly emerging among people with African diaspora backgrounds in both Norway and the rest of Europe is the cultural and linguistic influence of U.S.-American black culture. We thus return to Wikker's understanding of double consciousness as a strategy for survival, organization, and community.

Language as belonging: between theory and poetry

African American popular culture and critical race theory dominate Western representation of blackness, which is why, as Wekker (2009), El-Tayeb (2011) and Gilroy (1992) suggest, there is reason to examine the importance of this culture for black peoples in Europe. The inspiration also comes out in the form of language use. More specifically, this group tends to combine an appropriated type of AAVE with Norwegian. The language mix is a gateway to understanding how African Norwegian youth use a global frame of reference to create something internally common and to resist marginalization. In a conversation with Khadija, a black lesbian woman, I ask how she understands the importance of language mixing and appropriated black US-American popular culture: "One *blends*, sort of the blacks here and blacks in other countries, quite a bit of language. (...) I *know* we have a lot of the same references, I can sit and have exactly the same conversation with black South Africans as I can with my friends here, who are black." As Khadija sees it, of which she is not alone, there is talk of a global black frame of reference, and this is often based in the United States. Khadija, who grew up in western Norway, attributes quite a lot of importance to black popular culture from the United States to her youth and the possibility of understanding her own position. Having access to hip-hop and black representation on TV was a way of seeing herself reflected as a young black queer woman in Norway. "*We* (blacks) have gotten hung up on African-American culture for a very specific reason, and it has to do with blackness," she concludes, explaining that they "had a need to watch those shows (...), to watch female black lead actors or TV shows like *Moeisha*, where you see a

young black woman being portrayed." Representation and reflection in popular culture is not just about visibility and role models, but about finding sources for legitimizing one's own reality. Stuart Hall explains how representation in black popular culture is central to the creation of cultural identity, which involves an active positioning in relation to what we call *history* (Hall, 1994, p. 25). Khadija believes that this representation did not exist in other forms, "it was only in the United States, as a young black woman, that one could see it," she reflects. Khadija's analysis of the importance of U.S. black culture is about the possibility of *existing* as a black person, a black woman in Norway[35]. At the same time, it was an important class perspective. Khadija grew up with her mother and siblings in public housing, which wasn't always easy when most of her classmates were white and middle-class. Black popular culture became a strategy for taking ownership in a marginalized position:

> "When I was young, a lot of people didn't know I lived in public housing, it wasn't something I shared, it wasn't cool that we had a very low income, and my mom lived on NAV[36] and all those things. When you got to a certain age, maybe in your teens, because of popular culture, I think it was more okay to talk about those things. Because that one saw others responding who talked about being from the 'ghetto', there were so many references (...) It was just as if there was some respect in having managed to have lived through it. And I think that was solely through those images, that I felt I could talk about it openly. That the rest of us, we immigrants, (...) not just blacks, that we could talk about our experiences without it having to constantly be negatively charged. (...) So it was kind of an honor that you carried, because we haven't had it so easy, we haven't had everything served on a silver platter."

As Khadija says, it was *solely* through popular culture that she got to talk openly about her situation. The fact that she could suddenly use her experience as something positive meant that it was no longer associated only with shame and that being both black and from the "ghetto" was a position she could take ownership of. Classmates who had "had everything served on a silver platter" could not bear this authenticity like Khadija and the other minority youth. "So I would

[35] McIntosh (2015) analyzes black Norwegians as an 'impossible presence' in the nation
[36] State administered financial aid

say that the U.S. perspective and the black experience there has been incredibly important to me and my upbringing, in my family," she notes. " But maybe it's not the same for all (blacks)," she continues, precisely explaining this translation problem, because most black/African minorities in Norway have arrived as asylum seekers, refugees or through family reunification, and that the majority have automatically ended up in a "low-income situation", as she put it. Khadija is reflective of what plays into how one is positioned as a black minority in Norway. This kind of double and perhaps triple consciousness, when one includes the migration perspective, I interpret as coupled with the specific experience of navigating and negotiating blackness, both as a burden and as a way of belonging.

Language as poetry: one does not become as alone

Audre Lorde wrote that for (black) women, poetry is not a luxury, but a tool for survival. Poetry, for Lorde, is the way we "name the nameless, so that it can be thought." (Lorde, 2007/1884, p.37). Hope, a Norwegian-East African woman in her twenties, was also searching for language. I met her at the African Student Association's afro hair event. Hope said that it is not a conversation she was used to having with other African Norwegians. "I feel like there's something you're talking about so much more *out there.* So, I kind of feel like we're kind of lagging behind in Norway."

"We kind of don't know what it means to be African Norwegian," she says. Hope sees that this lack of knowledge is also reflected in our use of knowledge (and language) from abroad, which is not so simple “because the story is so different. In other words, the story you carry in England, about being *African or black* is quite different from what you might be carrying here in Norway." She shows how this space arises: "It's sort of a new terminology that's starting to come now — it's common for my little brother of fifteen years to say that, to identify with it, because he's probably experiencing it from pop culture, among other things. But I'm not used to saying I'm black." Hope points out the importance of historical context, and that generation can also influence how one understands oneself as African Norwegian. "It's easier sometimes to explain, to show parts of their identity, or to gain some kind of understanding, of someone who has experienced something similar," she says. Hope needs to think in community with other African Norwegians to make sense of herself. "You don't feel quite as alone," she says, and continues, "you get the opportunity to suddenly talk about something or hear about something that you

haven't been able to put into words before." She uses the term 'microaggression'[37] as an example: "when I first heard about it, I was like, okay, this here is, this is a language that I have to learn, and *this is a language* I want my brother to know (...) Because, I've experienced it, and I've never been able to identify it." Like Meron, Hope refers to the fact that there is *a whole language to learn,* and she explains what she means by that:

> "I never knew what racism was until someone taught me, that this is the definition of racism, and it was like 'oh, I've experienced that' these and these times in my life, where I may not have felt so good, but I may not have been able to fully explain what that experience did to me, or what happened."

Through Hope's experiences, we see language acting both as theory and poetry. Hope explains the way Meron did that she has previously dismissed experiences with racism, because she didn't understand it in a larger context. She distinguishes between defining racism and how racism affects a person. "As soon as you *can label something*, it's so *much easier to*[38] put it in place when it happens, so that's why I think it's a language you have to learn." Hope sees this language as a tool to legitimize experiences and to understand herself in a larger community while using the knowledge to educate her little brother.

The language of change: new knowledge from art and activism

Research on blackness and people of African descent in Norway is still quite limited. At the same time, African Norwegian artists and activists have produced knowledge for decades about their reality through alternative narratives about black people's place in Norwegian history. For example, the dance company Tabanka Dance Ensemble, which together with their groundbreaking art form also published the magazine “Hårsår”. Authors such as Sumaya Jirde Ali (2018a, 2018b) and Camara Joof (2018) address sexism and anti-blackness in the face of

[37] Microaggressions are a type of discriminatory and exclusionary behavior and statements that may seem harmless in isolation, but that accumulate over time and can have a great negative impact on the person who experiences it. Examples from this study include commenting on or physically touching the body and hair, complimenting or questioning the Norwegian language skills of people born and raised in Norway, or asking where someone is really from.

[38] The cursive part of the quote was said in English, while the rest was said in Norwegian.

anti-Islam politics and heteronormativity. The musicians Hkeem and Musti challenge Norwegian boundaries of belonging through an anti-racist class critique from Oslo's east side[39]. These poetic contributions all relate to blackness as a racialized category and as a cultural and political frame of reference and are accessible to generations of African Norwegians[40]. This knowledge develops in small communities and in social movements as we saw the wave of demonstrations and grassroots-organized public education in the summer of 2020 after a white police officer killed African American George Floyd with the whole world as a witness[41]. The killings of African Americans at the hands of white police officers were not merely an entrance to show solidarity. Young African Norwegians took the opportunity to remind us of black people who have lost their lives here at home due to structural violence, either at the hands of police, as in the murder of Eugene Obiora or neo-Nazis such as the murder of Benjamin Hermansen. The point here is that Norwegian youth who are racialized as black are in conversation and continuous language exchange with a global African diaspora, especially via the internet and popular culture, and they use these diasporic resources to resist marginalization, denial of history and knowledge scarcity in relation to racism and its intersections[42].

Closing: Learning a language for oneself and others

Through this text, we have gained insight into the way black youth in Norway try to learn a language. The stories of Meron, Kai, Khadijah and Hope show how they long for a language that can explain what it means to be seen as black in a white majority society like Norway while carrying a story of their own. How blackness and black identity are understood and developed socially and politically here in the Nordic countries is slightly different from what it looks like in, for example, the United States, where much (published, academic) Critical Race Theory and

[39] The east side of Oslo is generally known for working class, immigrant neighborhoods such as Tøyen, Grønland and Grorud valley

[40] Among others, Asta Busingye Lydersen's book "Afropolitt" (2017), Yacoub Cisse's book "Africans in Norway through 400 years" (2014), Relevant organizations and initiatives: OMOD, Tabanka Dance Ensemble, Nordic Black Theatre, CAK, AYIN, Melahuset, Svarthistorie, ASA, ARISE, Black History Month, Manifold, Norwegian-Eritrean Youth Network, Salam, Skeiv Verden, YLTV, Somali Student Association, Afriyea Collective and others.

[41] The demonstration in front of parliament on 5 June was organised by the African Student Association and ARISE. The sound equipment was borrowed from Nordic Black Theater, and the organizing was supported by many black activists of the older generation.

[42] Intersectionality is a black feminist analysis of how oppressive systems overlap and affect each other. Introduced by law professor Kimberle Crenshaw (1989), to explain how black poor women in the United States are not protected by the legal system.

black feminist theory comes from. Both I as a researcher and the youth themselves are trying to navigate a landscape where racialization is taboo and we often need to make use of theories/languages from the United States and elsewhere, which may not always fit our reality so well. In this way, the concept of double consciousness can shed light on the ability to view and analyze one's position from a structural perspective. Through a study of how African Norwegian youth understand and negotiate blackness, we gain insight into the way racism as a colonial thought system behaves in a Norwegian context. The lived experience and knowledge of the so-called 'second generation' enables an exploration of how racism prevents people from belonging where they "hear home". The creative use of language shows how black youth use double consciousness as a strategy and create a sense of belonging across geographies and beyond the borders of the white (Norwegian) nation-state (El-Tayeb, 2011). As a black feminist researcher, I am interested in how research can contribute to understanding and developing tools for organizing and belonging for African Norwegians. A black feminist analysis can be employed to reverse dominant perspectives and 'expose' the oppressive structures that organize our society. In this way, we can access parts of (contemporary) history that may have been silenced, made invisible and forgotten, both politically, culturally, and educationally.

References

Alcoff, L. M. (2006). *Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self.* Oxford University Press. doi:10.1093/0195137345.001.0001

Ali, S. (2018a). *Ikkje ver redd sånne som meg.* Samlaget.

Ali, S. (2018b). *Melanin hvitere enn blekemiddel*. Aschehoug.

Bonilla-Silva, E. (2006). *Racism Without Racists.* (2nd ed.) Rowman & Littlefield Publishers

Bonilla-Silva, E. (2012). The invisible weight of whiteness: the racial grammar of everyday life in contemporary America. *Ethnic and Racial Studies 35*(2), 173-194. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2011.613997

Butler, J. (1990). *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity.* Routledge.

Cisse, Y. 2011. *Afrikanere i Norge gjennom 400 år.* (2nd ed.) Manti Press.

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum Vol 1989* (1), 139-167. DOI: http://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8

Collins, P.H. (2000). *Black Feminist Thought* (2nd ed.) . Routledge

Diallo, O-K. M. (2019). At the Margins of Whiteness: Black Women in Danish Academia. I A. Emejulu & F. Sobande (Eds.) *To Exist is to Resist: Black Feminism In Europe* (pp. 219-228). Pluto Press.

DuBois, W.E.B. (with Keenan, R. & Gilkes, C. T.). (2012). *The Souls of Black Folk* (1995 edition). Signet Classics. (Original source published 1903).

El-Tayeb, F. (2011). *European Others. Queering Ethnicity in Postnational Europe.* University of Minnesota Press.

Essed, P. (1991). *Understanding Everyday Racism: An interdisciplinary theory* (2nd ed.). Saw. http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781483345239

Gilroy, P. (1992). *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack.* Routledge.

Gilroy, P. (2014). Foreword. In McEachrane, M. (ed.) *Afro Nordic Landscapes.* Routledge.

Gilroy, P. Gilmore, R.W. (2020). Transcript: In conversation with Ruth Wilson Gilmore. https://www.ucl.ac.uk/racism-racialisation/transcript-conversation-ruth-wilson-gilmore

Gullestad, M. (2006). *Plausible Prejudice.* Universitetsforlaget.

Habel, Y. (2011). Challenging Swedish exceptionalism? Teaching while Black. In K. Freeman & E. Johnson (Eds.), *Education in the Black diaspora: Perspectives, challenges, prospects* (pp. 99–122). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203152973

Hall, S. (1994). Cultural Identity and Diaspora. In P. Williams & L. Cgrisman (Eds.) Colonial *discourse and Post-Colonial Theory. A Reader* (pp. 222-237). Harvester Wheatsheaf.

hooks, b. (1991) Theory as a Liberatory Practice. *Yale Journal of Law and Feminism 4*(1), 1-12.

hooks, b. (1987/2015). *Talking Back. Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black.* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Hunter, E. L. (2021). Diasporiske perspektiver på racialiseringens kolonialitet i Danmark. *Periscope 25*:88-111.

Joof, C. L. (2018). *Eg Snakkar om det Heile Tida.* Samlaget.

Kennedy-Macfoy, M. (2014). Queendom: On Being Black, Feminist Norwegian Women. In M. McEachrane (ed.) *Afro Nordic Landscapes* (pp. 39-56). Routledge.

Kilomba, G. (2010). *Plantation Memories* (2nd ed.) UNRAST.

Lorde, A. (2007/1984). *Sister Outsider*. Crossing Press.

Lydersen, A. B. (2017). *Afropolitt.* Aschehoug.

McEachrane, M. (Ed.) (2014). AfroNordic Landscapes. Routledge.

McIntosh, L. (2015) Impossible presence: race, nation and the cultural politics of 'being Norwegian'. *Ethnic and Racial Studies 38*(2), 309-325, doi:10.1080/01419870.2013.868017

Optiz, M., Oguntoye, K. & Shultz, D. (1986/1992). *Showing our Colors: Afro-German Women Speak Out.* University of Massachusetts Press

Sawyer, L. (2008). engendering 'race' in calls for diasporic community in Sweden. *Feminist Review* 90(2008), 87-105

Wekker, G. (2009). Another Dream of a Common Language. In D. C. Hine, T.D. Keaton & S. Small (eds.), *Black Europe and the African Diaspora* (pp. 277-289). University of Illinois Press.

Wekker, G. (2016). *White Innocence: Paradoxes of Colonialism and Race.* Duke University Press. https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822374565

Wright, M. M. (2004). *Becoming Black*. Creating Identity in the African Diaspora. Duke University pressure.

Article 2: Theorising from our lives: A Black Nordic Feminist Approach[43]

Oda-Kange Midtvåge Diallo and Rahwa Tilahun Yohaness

This article is awaiting publication and is not included in NTNU Open

[43] This article has been accepted for publication as part of an edited volume (Keskinen, Seikkula & Atabong, Eds., forthcoming). It is written in UK English because of style requirements. Black is spelled with capital B for the same reason. In the thesis black is spelled with small case b, and the language is US English.

[44] Misogynoir is a term coined by queer Black feminist scholar Moya Bailey in 2018 (Bailey 2018) and captures the particular anti-Black misogyny that Black women and femmes face.

Article 3: Writing Letters as Counter Archiving: An Afro-Nordic Feminist Care Practice[57]

Kollektiv Omsorg: Oda-Kange Midtvåge Diallo, Jasmine Kelekay, Maimuna Abdullahi and Lena Sawyer

This essay is a letter writing between four feminists of the African diaspora living and working in the Nordics. We wrote to each other with the aim of thinking collectively about counter archiving, as we felt this was a practice that linked our individual approaches to Black feminist study. We wrote our letters during the fall of 2021, just as covid restrictions were temporarily lifted in Norway, Finland, and Sweden. This was a historical moment of grief, death, racial violence and an overall individual and planetary vulnerability. We discovered through our writing how we had all been longing for contact with other Black[58] feminists working in and from Nordic universities, involved in community activism, and whose work we appreciate as with purpose.

We write as subjects partially haunted by a dominant archive of the Nordics that renders us as impossible presences (McIntosh 2015). We write against, and back to, an archive, both cultural (Wekker 2016) and physical (as libraries and national archives), which erases Black presence in these specific nations by way of collectively forgetting our colonial history and treating Black Nordic citizens as "always just arrived" (El-Tayeb 2008: 653). It is an archive invested in reproducing an idea of white innocence[59] and Nordic exceptionalism[60].

[57] This article was recently published in Meridians journal as part of the special issue "BIPOC Europe".

[58] In this text you will see Black/black spelled both with capital and lower-case bs in the letters themselves, corresponding to each author's preference. The question of capitalization has for a long time been the subject of debate among scholars and activists across the African diaspora. Our choice to not homogenize the spelling in our letters, is a reflection of our diverse realities and relationships to Afro-diasporic movements, the languages we speak, and local politics of labels.

[59] This term is developed in the Dutch context but we also find relevant for the Nordics. It references formulations of national identity as tolerant and as "innocent" in relation to the ignored legacy of colonialism. This includes, according to Wekker, the normalization of whiteness and the denial of racism (Wekker 2016).

[60] Nordic exceptionalism is a term referring to the ways that the Nordic countries understand themselves as separate from the colonialism of continental European countries and thus also the racial meanings inaugurated with this enterprise (Habel 2012).

We write ourselves into a longer tradition and practice of Black feminist letter writing as a counter archiving found in and outside of academia. For example, the "love letters" by/for/to Black feminists," both in academia and in everyday contexts. Like this we read the work of Black feminist historians Saidya Hartman (2018) and Tina Campt (2017) as beautiful examples of archiving as care and whose work is a kind of "love letter" to us.

We have been inspired by Haritaworn, Moussa and Ware's QTBIPOC grounded methodology of counter archiving which exposes the logics and structures that produce invisibility and homogeneity and refuses a "...curatorial approach that collects QTBIPOC objects and subjects for an ever more colorful archive whose foundations remain firmly white" (Haritaworn et al 2018:5-6). These words resonate because we too feel that we have been erased from our contexts and as contributors to history in the places we call home. These approaches are helpful in our work to make connections between the structures and institutions which have shaped Black diasporic living and organizing in the Nordics. Our counter archiving aspiration has meant grappling with questions of "*what* is deemed worthy of archiving, and *who* is worthy of remembrance" (Haritaworn et al 2018:6). We see this as a flexible method of experimentation, as a way to listen for silences and to imagine beyond what has been archived (Olufemi 2021: 18–19).

Our methodology followed a somewhat circular and yet also linear process of dialogue: During the summer of 2021 we agreed on letter writing as a form that was pleasurable and possible. An initial letter was sent suggesting questions about how we understand our work in relation to counter archiving. What emerged was more personal and emotional than we had anticipated. We also had regular video calls, a kind of parallel conversation about the letters and their content. During these meetings, we mostly found ourselves telling each other more about our lives and current dilemmas and struggles, as well as more about our families and experiences living in and between different contexts; a way to contextualize why and how we work as we do with counter archiving. We have not limited ourselves in terms of style and chronology, but instead we have made a mosaic of our letters, that reflects the ways we relate to each other's stories and our separate, yet parallel histories.

As multilinguals, we wrote to each other in English, a language we have learned to speak at different points in our lives. In some ways we can think of this fact of translation, not only in

the literal sense, but also a translation of experiences, thoughts, emotions, and theoretical concepts - to and from our own Nordic contexts, Europe, Africa and across the Atlantic. As children of Black and African people in the Nordics, translation is an everyday exercise, and sometimes fraught with erasure. Engaging with translation in the way we have, together and with each other, has been profound and affirming. As Black, Afro-diasporic people in the Nordics, our experiences are not the same, but still we feel there is something shared between us: perhaps a longing and an ability to relate to each other across our differences. We share not only the pain of being racialized and deemed outsiders, but also a dedication to create practices for transformation, community, and change.

Our aim with this dialogue piece is manifold: We want to meditate on some of the specificities of living and negotiating a Black feminist life in the Nordics. We also want to inscribe the Nordics into the Black European archive. Finally, we want to suggest through an example of a letter writing dialogue alternative forms for theorizing and creating knowledge and suggest that these can also entail pleasure, collectivity, and care. The letters themselves theorize counter archiving in a variety of ways and which we will in the conclusion argue are significant practices for the creation of alternative archives. We have organized our dialogue into themes which are presented in an order that aims to first give a contextualization of ourselves and entries into the conversation and then moves on to a more specific discussion of the work we do.

Positionalities and contexts: An entry into a conversation

August 24th, 2021. Gothenburg, Sweden

Hello Maimuna, Jasmine and Oda-Kange. I wanted to pick up some of the ideas from the last time we met online. I remember how we talked about how we hoped that through a collective writing practice we could learn from each other and communicate with a larger audience the intricacies of oppression from which we negotiate and aspire. But also, through a dialogue form suggest alternative forms for thinking, theorizing, understanding. Can dialogue and collective writing be a practice of social care?

I enter our conversations as an African American and Swedish woman in her 50s, working in the university as a tenured teacher and researcher, with few other Black colleagues, nor institutional acknowledgement for the perspectives I work with. Born and educated in the US, I moved to Sweden more permanently twenty years ago, but have traveled to Sweden with

my parents, and later after they divorced, my mother during my childhood and later alone for doctoral research. My dissertation was grounded in interviews with Afro-Swedes and addressed questions of identity, racism, and belonging. Questions which were also of course very much about understanding my own belonging. I re-learned the Swedish language as an adult, attending immigrant language courses in Sweden in the 1990s, as at about age ten I tried (and was successful) at forgetting Swedish.

When I write this now, I think of affect and feeling, and how we carry with us as feminists of African ancestry specific knowledge of Nordic logics of oppression as well as strategies of survival. I remember our first discussion started with an acknowledgement of where we were in terms of our relationship to writing and how this led us to talk about the summer of 2020, police violence and media images of Black death in the U.S. and the BLM protests and refusals we had participated in both online as well as in our cities, within the frame of the covid pandemic. I remember one of the first things we had was a "check in" with each other, and I remember Oda-Kange when you said the year had been hard, I was suddenly taken over by affect and a feeling of affirmation. I offer now as a way for us to start our dialogue, the following questions: How do we understand what we do as a counter archiving practice? Why do we archive and to what end? And how do Nordic specificities engage, shape, and/or speak to or against our archiving practices? In solidarity, Lena

September 2nd, 2021. Tråante/Trondheim, Norway

Dear Lena, Jasmine, and Maimuna. Thank you for your reflections, Lena, and for helping me feel a bit more centered on this rainy day in Tråante. An hour ago, I had a surprise "random check" by the authorities at my house, who wanted to control whether I was staying indoors during my travel quarantine. As a Norwegian, Fulani and Danish black person, whose claim to belonging is intra-Nordic, my life is about crossing borders physically and metaphorically. My father crossed the borders of the Sahara in the 70s and came to Norway in the 80s. This is when he met my mother, who together with me crossed the borders to Denmark in the early 90s, which is where I grew up. Even though I am privileged with dual citizenship between Norway and Denmark, I feel great anxiety every time I cross the borders. During this pandemic, racialized control and surveillance has increased in Norway and both the media and politicians have been blaming immigrants and poor people for the spread of the virus. All the while public

conversations about “racism” have become popular domain after the whole world witnessed the police murder of George Floyd last year. Suddenly the Norwegian media floodgates opened to personal testimonies from people of color, and every day new stories emerged about “what it is like” to experience racism. The media discourse, however, never really got away from the need to prove the existence of racism in Norway, and the platform that was given to reiterate personal trauma was equally shared with think pieces from white politicians who argued that there was no such thing as racism in Norway, and that the young people who were protesting in the streets around the country were acting irresponsibly. Even though this year, 2021, is the 10-year anniversary for the white supremacist terrorist attack in Oslo and on Utøya, the public debate manages to silence and erase histories of racist ideologies that have shaped Norwegian society and especially the lives of black, brown, and Muslim Norwegians, not to mention the Roma, and the indigenous Sami and Kven populations.

The past year has been tough on many levels, but it has also brought with it an eruption of black youth resistance and it has made visible an emergent black Norwegian community that exists both online and offline. It is then with great pleasure that I become part of this collective with the three of you, as I think we need each other in a time where we are simultaneously isolated and presented with the possibility of engaging in community online. Perhaps, we can use this space we are creating as a way of witnessing each other’s lives?
With care, Oda-Kange

September 25th, 2021. Helsinki, Finland

Dear Lena, Maimuna, and Oda-Kange. I write to you from a rainy and gray east Helsinki suburb, only a few kilometers from where I grew up. For the past two and a half years, I have been splitting my time between Stockholm and Helsinki, before which I had been living in the U.S. for nearly a decade. The view from the window where I am sitting is of an otherwise boring construction site across the street, but every once in a while, my eyes land on the large sign advertising the future apartment complex. It reads *tervetuloa kotiin* - welcome home. That sign has haunted me, forcing me to reflect on what it means - and feels like - for me to be back here. Is this home? Is somewhere else home? Is home a place, a feeling, or something else entirely?

I have thought a lot about these questions in relation to what Lena so beautifully referred to as "the intricacies of oppression from which we negotiate and aspire." Although I was born

and raised in Finland, Finnishness always felt distant and even unfamiliar to me. As an Ethiopian and Finland-Swedish Black woman, I navigate Finnish society as a double minority, speaking Finnish only as my fourth language (after Swedish, Amharic, and English). I grew up in the different working class and "immigrant-dense" suburbs of east Helsinki in a time when the racist backlash from the early 90s refugee arrivals, of which my father was a part, was palpable. As the years went on, the sharply violent racism seemed to morph into a duller yet ever-present and in other ways violent specter that I today understand as structural racism.

While I have reflected a lot on how the intricacies of oppression in the Nordic context led me to decide that I had to leave, I am still trying to figure out why I returned. In reading your stories of movement across borders and boundaries, I realize that any kind of movement - whether leaving or returning - always entails an element of negotiation around our structural positions, as well as aspirations for what could be.

The Black Lives Matter protests that erupted during the summer of 2020 brought all of these tensions to the forefront, illuminating the pervasiveness of racism in Nordic logics of exceptionalism, on the one hand, but also the liberatory potential embodied and mobilized by our Black/African diasporic communities. Navigating these times - politically, intellectually, emotionally - has been difficult and exhausting. Entering this collective space has felt like entering a safe harbor in a raging storm. I enter this dialogue a little battle-worn, but with a lot of love, care, and gratitude. Jasmine

October 4th, 2021. Gothenburg, Sweden

Dear Lena, Jasmine and Oda-Kange. Since our very first meeting online, I have felt very excited about exploring whether dialogue and collective writing can be a practice of social care. Your reflections fill me with excitement - so much so that I have struggled to know where to begin. To be continued, Maimuna

Multigenerational legacies: silences, gifts, stories

October 10th, 2021. Gothenburg, Sweden

Dear Jasmine, Lena and Oda-Kange. When I look back on my upbringing, I see traces of counter archiving. More specifically I think of the efforts by my migrant parents, and in particular my mother, to document experiences of exile. At first it was in the form of both letters and several cassette tapes that were sent between my mother, her siblings and my grandfather in Somalia.

About 3-4 times a year, my mother recorded and sent several cassette tapes to her family. I remember clearly the care that surrounded both the moments when the recording took place, and when we would all gather to listen to the cassette tapes we had received from relatives. The bands had several hours of stories, songs and poetry. They addressed memories of growing up, the new everyday life in Mogadishu and Uppsala/Gothenburg, and the future prospects for them to reunite. Was this their way of maintaining a form of social care at a distance? Perhaps a way to make sure to immortalize memories, in the case they may never reunite. Or could it have been another way of documenting other stories about a war-torn Somalia and the new reality of exile in Sweden? I have not referred to this experience and documentation as counter archiving before. However, it has inspired my willingness to document my own experiences of racism in Sweden. With care, Maimuna

October 20th, 2021. Stockholm, Sweden

Dear Lena, Maimuna, and Oda-Kange. Maimuna, the beautiful story of your mother's tapes has made me think about familial practices of archiving – of storytelling, of carefully put together photo albums, and of hoarding boxes filled with seemingly random documents or small but meaningful trinkets loaded with memories – but also the many absences and silences that sometimes are even more pre-occupying.

I am reminded of the archival practices of my maternal grandmother, Iris. Born to a poor single mother in the countryside, only a few years after Finnish independence, she never had the chance to access education, but was a masterful archivist. She loved telling stories, whether over a cup of coffee in her kitchen, through her handwritten letters, or the countless photo albums she meticulously curated, with dates and anecdotes contextualizing each image, along with carefully selected rubrics and ornate decorations cut out from newspapers. I have realized that her photo albums were not just a way of storytelling, but a way of archiving. They were a gift through which I got to see the world through her eyes. What was perhaps most special was the way in which the photo albums helped her remember the smallest details from decades before, often prompting spontaneous storytelling that could go on for hours. As she got older, I became filled with a sense of urgency to record almost every conversation we had, hoping to capture as many of her stories while she was still here. Since her passing, I have barely been able to listen to the recordings. I still don't know what to make of them, except that I know her albums, her letters,

and her stories were a way for her to create a counter archive of a life that some deemed to be insignificant and a perspective that many might have deemed to be unimportant.

I have also wondered a lot about the many absences and silences in my childhood, particularly in my relationship to my father and, by extension, my Ethiopian family history. I remember asking many questions that my father wouldn't want to answer - about his past, how he came to Finland, our family, or the origins of the scars on his body. As a child, I couldn't understand that there were stories he did not want to share, that there were things he did not want to explain, experiences he did not want to recount. I couldn't understand why nobody would tell me about my father's mother, my grandmother, who had died long before I was born. Why would nobody even utter her name? Because we had no photographs of her, I would spend hours daydreaming about what she looked like, and what she might have been like. Did she wear traditional garb like my auntie? How did she wear her hair? I wondered what she smelled like, and what her specialty dish might have been. I think I felt such profound loss over never having met this ancestor of mine, not only because she had passed, but because there were so many silences surrounding her.

I didn't understand that these absences and silences were perhaps part of being in the Diaspora, of the refugee experience, and of the multigenerational legacies of trauma. We finally traveled to Ethiopia for the first time when I was fourteen years old, and I remember being so excited that my cousins gossiped. I didn't care whether the tales they spun were true or not, I just wanted to hear all the family stories they had to share. They made me feel as if I was part of something bigger. I would write them down as soon as possible, as if they would disappear if I did not capture them instantly.

In retrospect, I realize that my inability to fully access my Ethiopian family history is probably part of why I was so close to my grandmother Iris. For all the silences and absences that surrounded my paternal grandmother, whose name I now know was Tewabech, I turned to Iris with a hunger to learn everything about her. In different but related ways, my relationship to the archive was framed by both women. I still don't know much more about Tewabech, but I often say her name to myself, to honor her and feel closer to her.

I think trying so desperately to fill the absences and silences of my family awakened a curiosity in me for trying to understand the relationship between myself and the world around me. I also

think my searching to fill these gaps in my own history was about building up my sense of self, about establishing a counter-narrative to all the anti-Black narratives I encountered growing up that taught me that I was less-than. In that respect, it also deserves to be said that for all the silences I lament, my father also gave me the gift of his presence, his language and culture - something many of my peers did not have. Although he may not have been able to give me as complete a personal portrait as I wanted, he also imbued me with a pride in our rich culture and history of anti-colonial resistance, and through that a collective identity. This, too, has inspired my passion for the counter archive. With care, Jasmine

Nov 2nd, 2021. Tråante, Sapmie

Dear Maimuna, Lena and Jasmine. Your reflections on storytelling and family archives reminded me of a feeling I've had since childhood. I wanted to know as much as possible about my parents, their childhoods, and who and where they came from. Growing up as a child of a Norwegian mother and a Fulani father (who does not come from any nation), at an international college in Denmark, speaking four languages, meant that I was always translating, telling and listening to stories across difference. My mother missed Norway and made sure that we traveled there often. My father was also longing, not necessarily for a place, but for community. As a family, we were always missing someone or something that was elsewhere. This is the way I relate to the three of you, as though we share something intimate, yet unnamable, a feeling, a search for home, language, and story. Both of my parents only told their story in fragments, but somehow it was easier for me to piece together my mother's story than my father's. I still feel as though I don't know exactly how he got here. I know how he didn't properly start school until he was 15, how he tried to leave Mauritania at 19, had his papers stolen, how he traveled through the Sahara in the back of a truck, only to get stuck in Libya on the way to Iraq, and later Qatar. I remember his story about coming to Scandinavia in 1985, staying on the sofas of Gambian comrades. Noticing the way young West-African men appropriated US and Caribbean blackness, he reflected on being an African, much like the way I now try to understand what it means to be black. In an anthology, my father shared his observations:

> "In 1985 I spent about two months in the Rinkeby neighborhood of Stockholm with some African comrades. They were mostly young men, each with a Swedish or Finnish girlfriend or wife. Many of them spoke only Swedish and English with

> American/Jamaican accent and yelling hey man to another. I thought that in a matter of few years, those guys would be lost and become neither European nor African. I was so surprised when I returned for a visit ten years later in 1995. From far away, I could smell African food, incense and see Africans strolling around in comfortable colorful African outfits like in an African village. The Scandinavian women were replaced by African women, and Swedish and English languages with African languages. The Swedish culture and society was suddenly getting richer" (Diallo 2004: 15).

I did not know that my father had written this until I, years later, decided to study how black women navigate racist and sexist structures in academia (Diallo 2019). By some detour, I inherited my father's questions, which meant that when I finally began asking them out loud, we opened the doors to a new conversation and a new way of relating to each other. My father did not share his analyses of navigating the Nordics as a black African, until I began asking him about it from the perspective of my own resistance. Before this opening, I had been stumbling to speak without having the words, and to listen for what was not being said, but felt instead. This makes me think about how we need someone to tell our stories to. Someone who will listen. So, thank you, all of you, for listening to me. Oda-Kange

November 7, 2021. Gothenburg, Sweden

Dear Maimuna, Jasmine, Oda-Kange. My entry into Sweden was also through stories. And trying to figure out the truth in relation to stories. I see now it was also about navigating racism within my own family: that intimate, ugly, and painful racism that is imbued with care and love. On the one hand, my white Swedish family's stories of my Black American father's many visits to their small Swedish West Coast rural town in the mid-1960s and 70s and their contrast to my father's stories of his visits there. But also, a kind of silence I experienced in relation to discussing race at all with my Swedish family. My *Morfar,* my maternal grandfather's, words to me as a teenager visiting one summer that "there is no racism in Sweden" stood in stark contrast to my (now divorced and no longer visiting Sweden) father's stories of selective introduction to family members, and general feeling of not being welcome as a Black man in this white village. And then, more recently, when my father was dying and I sat beside his bed at hospice in Philadelphia, he brought up Sweden, and in his typical sarcastic style wondered how his life would have been had he moved there, maybe it would have been better? "Universal health care,

less likelihood of being shot", and according to him, "white women who loved Black men". Here he reminded of the specificities and differences of racial and national sexual economies in Sweden and the US and his imagined negotiation of them.

Much of my own research and counter archiving, I think, has been trying to figure out, understand and document the materiality of racism, and how it is also entwined with understandings of gender, sexuality, desire, family, love, strategies of resistance. So when I have interviewed elder Swedes of African ancestry, of my father's generation who did move to Sweden, I sometimes also envisioned and heard fragments of my father's story, or at least a version of what might have been, had he moved to Sweden in the 1970s. I hear him in their stories of what people hoped for, tried to, or thought they left behind when they moved to Sweden, and what they found, and how they coped with the specificities of racism here. These have been questions I have been interested in contributing to memorializing; we were here, we are here, and will be here in the future. With care, Lena

Counter Archiving (as) mobilization, transformation, refusal

November 15, 2021. Tråante, Sapmie

Dear Jasmine, Lena and Maimuna. In the last three years, during which I have been studying blackness and community among African-Norwegian youth, I have seen how political and historical consciousness and language develops and spills over from one arena to the next. What happens among black artists influences activism. What is discussed and shared on social media influences different forms of community care. And vice versa. These streams of shared knowledge and experience is a counter archival practice. When George Floyd was murdered by police in the US, young black people in Norway made sure to remember and speak out loud the name Eugene Ejike Obiora, a black man who was strangled and killed by Trondheim police at a local social security office in 2006 (see image of poster in Trondheim city center remembering Obiora). They spoke the name Sophia Baidoo, a black woman who was choked and called racist slurs by the same police officer, shortly before he killed Obiora. Baidoo survived the attack, and the police officer kept his

position only to climb to a higher rank. These cases and others like them, not to forget how young black men and boys are being stopped and harassed by police every day, are not mainstream news or history. These realities are only being spread to the public by young black people, black feminists, and activists. I think about this effort to remember as a practice of counter archiving. I think about how young people of African descent in Norway are creating their own archives, online and between each other, by telling and retelling stories that have been forgotten or erased, denied or silenced. Stories that help them understand their realities in Norway and the genealogies of blackness that they are also a product of. I also see connections between the Nordic countries. Maybe you recognize some of these tendencies of Afro-Nordic counter archiving online in Sweden? For example, the Swedish Instagram account *svarthistoria* (Black History) inspired the creation of a Norwegian sister account last year by the same name *svarthistorie*. Just like my own analytical process, the everyday theorizations and pedagogical tools that young black Norwegians develop online and in community with each other are a bit torn between frameworks from the US and homegrown theories. How do we understand the silencing of our past as a result of a global anti-blackness and specific Norwegian policies of anti-immigration, and a white national self-image? What does it mean being both black and Norwegian? What does it mean being both immigrant (or child of immigrants) and black? How is it all linked? I will continue meditating on the question of care after this, and I look forward to seeing whether some of my reflections have sparked something in you. In solidarity, Oda-Kange

November 20th, 2021. Helsinki, Finland

Dear Oda-Kange, Lena, and Maimuna. Throughout my work, I have been drawn to examining the myriad ways in which Black/African diasporic people resist the conditions of their oppression. From this vantage point, I studied how African diasporic hip hop can be seen as creating alternative archives of experience in the face of erasure, constituting a means of talking back (hooks: 1985) to racialized logics of Nordic exceptionalism (Kelekay 2019). When George Floyd was murdered and the world erupted into protests, I was in the middle of my fieldwork with Afro-Swedish activists, fittingly researching Black/Afro-Swedish communities' experiences of policing and modes of resistance. I joined with other Afro-Swedish activists to organize a variety of protests and actions, filling a complex role as organizer, researcher, and "expert" on the topic. Since I happened to be visiting family in Finland at the time of Floyd's death, I also

got involved with organizing local protests in Helsinki. As in Norway, the protests across Sweden and Finland gathered more people than ever before, but also sparked fierce media debates over the local relevance of the BLM movement, the validity of local protests, and about local histories of racism and colonialism.

Activists affirmed that the protests were not only demonstrations of solidarity with the U.S., but about turning the spotlight onto local dimensions of racialized state violence. In Finland, activists highlighted the 2016 police killing of Samuel Dolphyne, who like George Floyd had been heard uttering "I can't breathe" as his very last words. In Sweden, activists, researchers and public profiles took to the media to respond to the discursive dismissal of the protests, insisting that racial profiling and police brutality are everyday phenomena for Black Swedes. Testimonials of experiences of police violence soon flooded both social media and mass media outlets. Activists organized campaigns to raise awareness about local cases and to support those affected. These mobilizations can be seen as collective efforts to create a counter archive. They also embodied and engendered social care by creating spaces in which to process both collective grief and grievances.

These mobilizations also occurred within a broader context of Afro-Swedish community organizing. Black/Afro-Swedish organizations and collectives have long engaged in a kind of counter archiving effort through the commemoration of the 9th of October - the day in 1847 on which the last people enslaved under Swedish rule were freed from bondage on the Swedish island colony of St. Barthélemy. Over the past three years, I have studied (and helped organize) some of these mobilizations, which have spanned different tactics, emphases, and modalities, including campaigns for official recognition, memorial conferences, freedom parades, historical city walks, public education, and the showcasing Afro-Swedish culture and arts. Although these efforts have been ongoing in different parts of the country, they have with the help of social media (and dare I say the pandemic-forced digitization of public events) become more coordinated and complimentary, taking the form of an unofficial but nationwide *Afrosvensk Historievecka* (Afro-Swedish History Week). Social media has also facilitated new kinds of counter archival efforts, such as the Instagram account *Svart Historia* (Black History), which has made Black diasporic history more accessible to a Swedish audience, or the organization *Black Archives Sweden*, which has as its mission to keep a contemporary archive of Afro-Swedish experiences.

In the same way that the mobilizations under the banner of the Black Lives Matter movement (broadly speaking) have engaged in the production of a counter archive of contemporary racialized state violence, the efforts to uncover and confront Sweden's history of colonialism and slavery are countering the archival erasure of Sweden's legacies of racial violence. Importantly, these efforts signify a collective refusal of the invisibilization of the African diasporic presence in Sweden, and an insistence on the mattering of Black lives. Although the state of the world frequently has me visiting the brink of hopelessness, the mobilizations that I have had the privilege of following serve as a reminder of the potential of our collective efforts. In solidarity, Jasmine

November 27th, 2021. Gothenburg, Sweden

Dear Oda-Kange, Jasmine, Lena. Before I applied to the PhD-program, the idea of creating spaces to make visible, as Lena put it, "the intricacies of oppression," was alive and close for several years. My political consciousness was shaped by living in a post-eleventh-September world. When the War on Terror was declared, I was 14 years old, and the rest of my youth and transition to adulthood was shaped by the new-normal where I navigated what is happening at the intersection of gender, race and religion. My experience of Sweden is similar to the one you describe Oda-Kange: the public debate manages to silence and erase histories of racist ideologies that have shaped Swedish society, and especially the lives of racial and religious minorities.

In an attempt to challenge the silencing and erasure of the existence of racism and its effects, I engaged as an activist in order to help create spaces for conversations where we created common knowledge of our living conditions, and a way to document the experiences and effects of racism. Of course, it was an attempt to challenge the idea of the color-blind Sweden. What I did not understand when I began my journey as an activist, was that ten years later, I would be at the center of a public trial. Where my analyses of racism in Sweden in a post-eleven-September world would form the basis for being singled out as an extremist.
This is where I am now – not quite on the other side – but asking myself: how do I archive this experience? With care and in solidarity, Maimuna

November 30th, 2021. Gothenburg, Sweden

I think of your letter, Maimuna, about how to archive the public trial you have been part of and wondering how you will or can archive this experience. I do know already, from being

part of some of the mobilizations around the trial, that your community is with you as this archive takes form. There is a large paper and social media trail of visual images, letter writing, newspaper articles, blogs and Instagram pages which have been created and maintained by a community who is with you and has raised funds to cover the trial costs. But there is also an emotional trace now in us; of witnessing your bravery and sacrifice to make a collective statement of *No Pasaran!* (They shall not pass!) in the face of Swedish racism, islamophobia and its legalities. And the papering of the walls outside of the Court of Appeals[61] where the trial was held, and which lies on the same colonial historical site of the

French Plot,[62] with the poem ZONG![63] is a refusal as it cast colonial light onto Swedish institutions of law and gave yet another layer to the archiving of the trial.

I also think of the travel of concepts we use to understand and to name the intricacies of oppression and strategies of survival here. One of the challenges for us in the Nordics is to also participate in European and more international conversations and mobilizations from the specificities of life here. The dominance for example of the Middle Passage in relation to migration is often used to frame our understandings, a kind of comparison of struggles with the histories in other contexts. For example, I have heard our situation described as "pre-Windrush, pre-civil rights"[64] and this can be useful in one sense, but it also potentially misses the specificities of the deep institutionalization of color blindness and exceptionality here in the Nordics, our complex and colonial relations with each other, and how in spite Nordic social movements, refusals and mobilizations are happening.

As you all have earlier here brought up: how do we make sense of our predicament with a terminology that is grounded here and not elsewhere, where the specificities of African migration to the Nordics are at the center rather than the Middle Passage and in some cases, return to Empire? Having now lived the first twenty-five years of my life in the US and the last twenty-

---

[61] For images of the installation, see: https://www.gibca.se/en/gibca/gibca2021/artists/m-nourbese-philip/

[62] For some background on the French Plot, see for example: https://www.gibca.se/en/gibca/gibca2021/framework/franska-tomten/

[63] NourbeSe, *Zong!: As Told to the Author by Setaey Adamu Boateng*. This poem is created through the words used in a 1781 century legal insurance report. It brings forward the memory of the 150 enslaved Africans who were thrown overboard on the Dutch ship's way from West Africa to Jamaica.

[64] Very generally: Windrush refers to the generation of Commonwealth citizens who migrated from the Caribbean to Britain to fill post WWII labor shortages between 1948-1971 and their contributions there. Very generally: Civil-rights refers to Black American's social movement to gain equal legal rights during the 1950s-1960s.

five here in Sweden for example, with many transatlantic dialogues occurring in both and across these spaces, I see my own understanding as an ongoing translation. And I also see this in how we have here these past months thought together through our letter writing. With care, Lena

Imagining Otherwise: letter writing as a practice of care

December 1st, 2021. Tråante, Sapmie

Dear Maimuna, Lena and Jasmine. Thank you for your thoughtful and generous letters. During a time where writing as practice feels exhausting and, sometimes, as if it is only for the continuance of the academic industrial machine, receiving and responding to your letters is healing. Being here, in Norway, means that I do not know the full extent of the court proceedings that you have been part of, Maimuna, but I can understand from the way you both write that it is a labor of love and sacrifice for the right and the freedom to speak without nationalist-white-cis-heterosexist-anti Muslim prosecution and control. I want to thank you for daring to step in front of such a movement, and I accept your invitation to reflect on how we can archive the lifework we do, for our survival, like you said Lena, and for the survival and life of those who come after us. This year's theme for Black History Month in Norway was family. Young and old African Norwegians were encouraged to think about and share their thoughts on family, both blood and chosen in the context of being African diaspora here. I think about a counter archiving practice, then, as a way of digging up treasures from the past, as well as leaving gifts for the following generations. What do we want them to know about our time, what would we like them to learn from? These big struggles we are carrying, we have inherited from our ancestors, and even though these struggles shift and transform, they will outlive us.

Recently, I was in conversation with the black feminist writer and activist from London, Lola Olufemi (2021), who is experimenting with the practice of imagining otherwise. She does this in community, through organizing and writing. This practice of imagining otherwise is simultaneously rooted in archival work, in destruction of oppressive systems, and in building a better future for us all. Olufemi asks us to think about what the archive tells us. For example, if we let black feminist activists speak from the images we have of them in archive, what do they say? I was thinking about how our communal archival practice of sharing our emotions and knowledge, might be an example of imagining otherwise? Maybe, through documenting and

archiving our lives, we begin to build something new? I think you are right, Lena, when you suggest that there is an archival practice happening inward, silently, through our emotions, and I find it very comforting to know that some of our emotions are shared. I remember a passage from the black, biracial, bisexual writer Camara Joof's book of prose: "*Eg snakkar om det heile tida*" (I talk about it all the time), in which she writes: "*MANI. Eg er besett av detaljer. Eg må hugse alt. Eg har med meg ei notatbok overalt. Skriv ting ned*." (Mania. I am obsessed with details. I must remember everything. I bring a notebook with me everywhere. Write things down) (Joof 2018: 74). Joof's words resonate with me because I too have been writing things down to make sure I would remember what happens. The emotional state Joof associates with this practice seems to be desperation, mania. The notes app in my phone is filled with little observations, thoughts, descriptions of situations and feelings. My own little archive. But this practice of archiving has gone from documenting everyday encounters with racism and anti-blackness, mostly, to a more pleasurable, explorative practice in which I archive so much more. Ideas. Poetry. Theory. Life. I wonder if this is a particularly "black in the Nordics" kind of thing? Or is it a researcher thing? Or perhaps, is it so that we have become researchers/archivists because we are (have the experience of being) black in the Nordics? Thank you for the care you have shown me. I care deeply about you too! Oda-Kange

December 8th, 2021. Helsinki, Finland

Dear Oda-Kange, Lena, and Maimuna. Thank you for inviting me to join this conversation. I did not realize, until I was reading and responding to your letters, how desperately I have been missing this kind of a practice. As we often discuss, being Black in the Nordics often means battling against willful ignorance, strategic erasure, and a concoction of colorblind racism and racial gaslighting. I think many of us pursue a kind of counter archiving, whether through academic research, activism, or art, in part in response to these conditions. Nordic exceptionalism not only serves to render racist structures invisible, but also tries to render Black experience illegible, and Black community impossible. And yet, of course, we exist, we resist, and we create. It is this that I strive to capture, to understand, and to advance through research and writing in conversation with the communities alongside whom I work.

Although I had already been navigating the socially constructed boundaries between activist, researcher, and individual, the summer of 2020 brought all these tensions to the

forefront. In an attempt to approach ethnographic research as a practice of social care (Nash 2018), I have strived to engage with community activism as a methodology. It has meant entwining my research with the needs of the communities with whom I have worked, but it has also allowed me to center agency, resistance, and community care in the face of racialized state-sanctioned violence. Although it has been messy and confusing at times, I hope that by approaching my research through a practice of care, I can both contribute to the production of a counter archive and document the ways in which African diasporic communities in Sweden are themselves countering the hegemonic archive.

Ultimately, I believe it is through these kinds of practices of social care that the "we" is forged. Our experiences across the Nordic context may share similarities and our histories may be intertwined, but our solidarities are not a given. Even within our national contexts, our communities are immensely diverse, embodying a variety of experiences, histories, and structural positions. So even community is not guaranteed. Our Afro-Nordic communities have not been organic but have actively been created out of a desire for community. And this is what I see us to be doing here, right now, writing to one another in the spirit of social care. We are writing the collective into existence. And our community has not been organic either - we are spread across national borders, academic disciplines, native languages, and while we share some aspects of identity, experience, and social location, we diverge in others. But, with care, we have crafted a community. And for that, I am grateful. Once more, with care and love, Jasmine

December 9th, 2021. Gothenburg, Sweden

Dear Jasmine, Oda-Kange, Maimuna. Yes "imagining otherwise," thank you Oda-Kange for introducing me to the powerful work of Lola Olufemi (2021). It has become a bit clearer for me where and what I want to focus my energy on, a kind of trying to do something different, imagine otherwise, with a more clearly directed purpose informed by purposeful practice of care. A clearer turning point in this direction was my Grandmother Lillie's passing in 2006. I re-read all the letters she had handwritten to me during my time away at college, telling me of her life and work as a domestic worker in rich white homes in Princeton, NJ. And like you, Jasmine, I have barely been able to listen to the tape recordings of interviews. Sometimes becoming unanchored can lead to a new practice of anchoring. I began to write, more aware of purpose and privilege. I wrote as a way to write my Grandmother into an archive which had deemed her only

interesting in relation to the well-known scientist she had worked for and to challenge the racism of archival practices in general (Sawyer 2008).

And maybe this is what we have also been doing with our own letter writing and dialogue? Creating a form for care within the Academic Industrial Complex (AIC), as you named it Oda-Kange? Where our acts such as checking in, listening, and trying to create space and community, sitting with each other through our own daily struggles navigating these institutions, and when necessary, carrying each other if needed, all add to the creation of a counter archive of Black presence in the Nordics? With love, Lena

Signing off: … with care

We entered our conversation with specific understandings of counter archiving. Oda-Kange was telling her mother about our letter writing as an exploration and as a practice of counter archiving, and her mother reminded her of the way artists Jeannette Ehlers and LaVaughn Belle describe the meaning behind their monumental sculpture "I am Queen Mary" (Ehlers and Belle 2018). Belle and Ehlers have morphed their two bodies, with inspiration from different African diasporic resistance movements, into one. This "hybrid of bodies, nations and narratives," as they write on their website, resembles our dialogue method. Through our practice we have similarly forged a collective. Reading each other's letters led us to uncover parts of our own stories that might not have been uttered before. What emerged in our five-month writing was that our understandings of counter archiving often were grounded in our families and their negotiations of life in diaspora. Our sharing, listening, and witnessing of each other's stories became just as integral to our thinking with each other. This is an approach that in Black feminist thought has been theorized in relation to social care. Jennifer Nash's words inspired us to understand our own dialogue when she writes: "Care is a practice for tending to what has already been lost and what might be lost, a political tool for the maintenance of self and collective… a strategy of examining Black life and the structures that seek to constrain that life" (Nash 2018: 79).

We write from a Nordic space where we are very few who share this specific positionality as African diasporic feminists in academia engaging in questions of racism, belonging, anti-Blackness. Counter archiving as a practice means witnessing both historical and contemporary modes of anti-Blackness, but also community, life and joy when there is so much

investment in rendering it invisible and impossible. We do not have a natural collective, instead it means actively fashioning and building one through care, we do not have a shared history, but we make histories by connecting our archives. We choose to be related. We claim space.

Our letter writing is an intentional practice and methodology of social care; for ourselves, each other, and our ancestors. A methodology that makes space for silences, for what is left unsaid, and is sometimes too painful to speak. Our letters are practices of witnessing, leaving, and returning, an opportunity to utter the names of so many who have been marginalized and forgotten, a way to grasp for the smell of loved ones never met, and as survival. These are potent practices we believe occur not only in our letters but are shared and can be found in everyday non-spectacular forms of Black living. Further, this is a practice that does not begin or end with us. We share our own intimate memories here and publish them; offering this fragment of a moment in our lives in hopes that you, the person reading this now, will be compelled to write your own stories. The African diaspora is more nuanced than what we read or oftentimes even know. Due to forceful erasure this history is not written down, archived, or even remembered. Through letter writing we become each other's living archive.

Acknowledgements: Thank you to the three anonymous reviewers for their supportive and care(ful) reading and comments.

We would like to be cited as: Kollektiv Omsorg, Diallo et al. 2022

References

Campt, Tina. 2017. Listening to Images. Durham: Duke University Press.

Diallo, Garba. 2004. “On being an African”. African Renaissance 1(2), 14-17.

Diallo, Oda-Kange Midtvåge. 2019. “At the Margins of Institutional Whiteness: Black Women in Danish Academia”. In To Exist is to Resist: Black Feminism in Europe, edited by A. Emejulu & F. Sobande, 219-228. London: Pluto Press.

Ehlers, Jeannette and LaVaugh Belle. 2018. “Background” (Accessed December 15, 2021). https://www.iamqueenmary.com/history

El-Tayeb, Fatima. 2008. “‘The Birth of a European Public’: Migration, Postnationality, and Race in the Uniting of Europe.” *American Quarterly* 60(3): 649–70.

Enszer, Julie R. and Audre Lorde, eds. 2018. *Sister Love: The Letters of Audre Lorde and Pat Parker 1974-1989*. Dover: A Midsummer Night's Press.

Habel, Ylva. 2012. “Challenging Swedish exceptionalism? Teaching while Black”. In *Education in the Black diaspora: Perspectives, challenges, prospects*, edited by K. Freeman & E. Johnson, 99–122. New York: Routledge.

Haritaworn, Jin, Ghaida Moussa and Syrus Marcus Ware, eds. 2018. “Introduction.” In *Marvellous Grounds: Queer of Colour Histories of Toronto*, 1–22. Toronto: Between the Lines.

Hartman, Saidiya. 2019. *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments. Intimate Histories of Social Upheaval*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Henery, Celeste. 2017. “And so I Write You: Practices in Black Women’s Diaspora”. *Meridians* 15 (2): 435–463.

hooks, bell. [1985] 2014. *Talking Back, Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black*. New York: Routledge.

Joof, Camara L. 2018. *Eg Snakkar Om Det Heile Tida.* Oslo: Samlaget.

Kelekay, Jasmine. 2019. ““Too Dark to Support the Lions, But Light Enough for the Frontlines”: Negotiating Race, Place, and Nation in Afro-Finnish Hip Hop”. *Open Cultural Studies* 3(1):386-401.

McIntosh, Laurie. 2015. “Impossible presence: Race, nation and the cultural politics of “being Norwegian””. Ethnic and Racial Studies 38(2), 309–25.

Nash, Jennifer C. 2018. *Black Feminism Reimagined: After Intersectionality*. Durham: Duke University Press.

NourbeSe, Philip M. 2008. *Zong!: As Told to the Author by Setaey Adamu Boateng*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press.

Olufemi, Lola. 2020. *Feminism Interrupted*. London: Pluto Press

Olufemi, Lola. 2021. *Experiments in Imagining Otherwise*. London: Hajar Press

Sawyer, Lena. 2008. "Grama, Einstein and me". *SLUT* 2(1): 14-25.

Wekker, Gloria. 2016. *White Innocence*: *Paradoxes of Colonialism and Race.* Durham: Duke University Press.

Article 4: Joining in black study

A black/queer[65] ethnography alongside African Norwegian youth

Oda-Kange Midtvåge Diallo, Norwegian University of Science and Technology

This article is awaiting publication and is not included in NTNU Open

Appendix 1: Group discussion guide (translated from Norwegian)

Introductory round – who are we and why are we here. What do we hope to get out of this conversation?

IDENTITY AND BLACKNESS IN NORWAY

1. What words do you use about your identity?
2. What does it mean to be black? Who is African? Who can be Norwegian? Who is an African Norwegian/Afro-Norwegian?
3. What stereotypes/characteristics do you encounter about people of African descent? Where do these come from and what do you think of them?

AFRICAN BLACK COMMUNITY? NORWEGIAN BLACKNESS?

1. Do you participate in African events in Oslo? Why, how often? Why not?
2. How do you experience these events?
3. What do you think about black American culture? What role does it play here in Norway?
4. What does culture mean to you? If there is an African Norwegian culture, what does it look like?
5. Knowledge and inspiration: how did you learn about identity, blackness, etc?
6. What brings people together? What divides people?
7. How do you see yourself in relation to the 'black community'?

ACTIVISM AND RESISTANCE

1. What issues get a lot of attention?
2. Do you participate in activism? How? Why/why not?
3. How are you met if you engage?
4.

Norwegian media coverage of people of African descent

1. How do you perceive media coverage of people of African descent?
2. Are you affected by this, how?
3. Do you participate in media debates and on the internet? Why, why not?

GENDER, SEXUALITY AND AFRICAN HERITAGE?

1. What does gender mean to you?
2. What expectations and prejudices do you encounter in relation to your gender? Is that something you're thinking about?
3. What role does gender play in African communities in Oslo?
4. What about love and relationships?

Appendix 2: Consent form (translated from Norwegian)

Participation in research project on African-Norwegian identity in Oslo

Background and purpose
The project is about Norwegian-African identity and joint chapter building in Oslo and the purpose is to investigate what it means to be Norwegian-African today. Participants must have an African or African diasporic background (Caribbean, North and South America) and be born or raised in Norway. The project will deal with themes around identity, roots, activism, (pop) culture and racism.

What does it mean for you to participate?
Participation in the project means that you meet with me for 2-3 informal conversations and that you possibly participate in a focus group discussion. If it's okay with you, I'd also like to join you for some activities and events in your free time. Since I use social media to create contacts and to see what is happening in the communities in Oslo, I may ask you if I can use some of what you share on social media. We will agree on this in due course.

What happens to the information about you?
All personal data will be stored on a secured server and anonymized, so that no participants will be recognizable in publications from the project. The material from the study will be used for in articles and oral dissemination at conferences. The project is expected to end in July 2023. The material is stored for any further research until June 2028 on a secured server, which only I have access to. Participation in the project is voluntary, and you can withdraw your consent at any time without any explanation. All information about you will then be deleted. NSD – Norwegian Centre for Research Data has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project complies with the privacy regulations.

What gives me the right to process personal data about you?
I only process information about you based on your consent.

Your rights
If you can be identified in the data material, you have the right to:

- access to what personal data is registered about you,
- to have personal data about you rectified,
- have personal data about you deleted,
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability); and
- to lodge a complaint with the Data Protection Officer or the Norwegian Data Protection Authority about the processing of your personal data.

Where can you learn more about your rights?
The project is my independent PhD project and therefore only I have access to the information about you. If you have any questions, contact me by e-mail: oda-kange.m.diallo@ntnu.no or by phone: 41269989. If you have complaints in relation to the processing of your information, you can contact Data Protection Officer Thomas Helgesen at NTNU here: thomas.helgesen@ntnu.no. If you have further questions about your rights in relation to personal data about you, you can contact NSD – Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS, by email personverntjenester@nsd.no or phone: 55 58 21 17.

Best regards,

Oda-Kange Midtvåge Diallo, Project Manager, PhD candidate at the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies of Culture, NTNU

Consent form

I have received and understood information about the project 'African Norwegian identity and everyday racism' and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I agree to:

- ☐ Participating in informal conversations
- ☐ Participating in focus group discussion
- ☐ that the Project Owner can participate with me in events
- ☐ that the Project Owner can use post I share on social media according to concrete agreement.
- ☐ that my personal data is stored after the end of the project, for further research.

I agree to the above

Signature, date

Appendix 3: Call for participants (translated from Norwegian)

Do you want to join a project on Afro-Norwegian identity in Oslo?

My name is Oda-Kange Diallo and I am a Norwegian-Fulani PhD student. My project is about African Norwegian identity and community in Oslo, and I am now looking for people who will participate in group discussions and informal conversations during the spring 2019.
Participants must have one or more parents with a black African or African diasporic background (e.g. Caribbean, North and South America), be born or raised in Norway and want to talk about topics around identity, roots, activism, pop culture and racism. You don't have to be active in any organization or group, but you may occasionally attend events that address these topics.
Everyone is welcome, regardless of gender, but you must be between 18-35 years old. All participants will be anonymized.
Send me an email oda-kange.m.diallo@ntnu.no if you're interested in hearing more about it, and I'll invite you for a cup of coffee or tea!

ISBN 978-82-326-7338-4 (printed ver.)
ISBN 978-82-326-7337-7 (electronic ver.)
ISSN 1503-8181 (printed ver.)
ISSN 2703-8084 (online ver.)

NTNU

Norwegian University of
Science and Technology