Queer(ing) Migrations to Iceland:

Homo(trans)nationalism, migrant hierarchy, and the politics/sense of (un)belonging

Linda Sólveigar- og Guðmundsdóttir

Thesis for the degree of PhD
in Anthropology

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Abstract

This doctoral research examines three distinct but interconnected groups of queer migrations to Iceland, that is, individuals coming from the Global South, from Central and Eastern Europe and from the Global North. The general aim of the project is to queer migration studies within the Icelandic context, by discussing queer people and by decentring dominant political projects. This research further applies the theory of homonationalism to frame the overall study, as well as theories of nesting orientalism and the global hierarchy of value to analyse the hierarchical ordering of migrants. Moreover, it implements the analytical lens of belonging to examine how political projects of exclusion dictate interlocutors' sense of belonging, to their ethnic community, the queer community, and the Icelandic mainstream society. The research project applies feminist, queer and transnational methodology, and qualitative methods are implemented.

The research is rooted in four peer reviewed articles. Article one discusses how migrants from the Global South often develop a bifocal worldview; how their degree of "outness" is determined by identity management strategies; and how their experience of racialisation and othering often leads to a sense of unbelonging. Migration could, nonetheless, materialise new paths and practices regarding issues of gender and sexuality. Article two discusses migrants from Central and Eastern Europe, the overarching theme was "exclusionary moments" while sub-themes relate to social class and disidentification; shame and emotion l work; and participants' sense of unbelonging. Article three discusses the group from the Global North, where a privileged subjectivity is highlighted, relating to the themes of queer imaginations of belonging; a privileged sense of belonging; and the politics of belonging. The fourth and last article discusses the exclusionary moments of queer migrant women from all over the globe, relating to the political projects of the national identity and the Catholic Church in Iceland.

The findings display the intersectional process of queer migrants' experiences, the multiple effects of racism, sexism and migratism in the queer community and sexism, heterosexism and cisgenderism within the ethnic and religious communities. The relational process of racialisation and being labelled as the immigrant other within the Icelandic mainstream society seems nonetheless, in some cases, impossible to overcome. This othering of immigrants is embedded in racial, cultural, and class hierarchies, as white migrants from the Global North experience inclusion and belonging unlike that of non-white migrants from the Global South. Interlocutors from Central and Eastern Europe are, in many cases, automatically attributed a subordinated subject position compared to that of other white immigrants. This ever shifting but underlying hierarchical ordering of immigrants highlights how cultural similarities, racialisation processes and socioeconomic status determines immigrants sense of acceptance and belonging in Icelandic society.

Ágrip

Þessi doktorsrannsókn skoðar hinsegin fólksflutninga til Íslands, og reynslu hinsegin innflytjenda af því að búa á Íslandi. Megin markmið rannsóknarinnar er að hinseginvæða fólksflutningafræði í íslensku samhengi, með því að fjalla um hinsegin reynslu og að skjöna samfélagsleg norm. Femínískri, hinsegin og þverþjóðlegri aðferðafræði er beitt ásamt eigindlegum aðferðum. Viðmælendum er skipt í þrjá hópa, það er, einstaklingar sem koma frá hinu hnattræna suðri, frá Mið- og Austur-Evrópu og frá hinu hnattræna norðri. Kenningar um hinsegin þverþjóðlega þjóðernishyggju eru notaðar til að ramma inn rannsóknina ásamt kenningum um stigskipta Austurlandahyggju og hnattrænt gildisstigveldi til að greina myndun innflytjendastigveldis. Kenningar um pólitíska fullgildingu og tilfinningalega fullgildingu eru notaðar til að greina á hvaða forsendum útilokun á sér stað og hvernig hún stjórnar tilfinningu viðmælenda varðandi það að tilheyra, í viðkomandi innflytjenda samfélagi, í hinsegin samfélaginu og í íslensku meginstraums samfélagi.

   Rannsóknin byggist á fjórum ritrýndum greinum. Sú fyrsta fjallar um innflytjendur frá hinu hnattræna suðri, hvernig þau mynda oft tvíhliða sýn á veruleikann, og stjórna markvisst upplýsingum um kynhneigð og kyngervi sitt. En reynsla af kynþáttun leiddi oft til tilfinningarinnar að tilheyra ekki. Fólksflutningar gátu þó opnað nýjar leiðir í tengslum við kynhneigð og kyngervi viðkomandi. Grein tvö fjallar um hópinn frá Mið- og Austur-Evrópu, þar er yfirstefið „útilokunarstundir" á meðan undirþemu tengdust samfélagsstöðu og afsamsömun, skömm og tilfinningalegri vinnu ásamt tilfinningunni að tilheyra ekki. Þriðja greinin fjallar um hópinn frá hinu hnattræna norðri og endurspeglaði vissa forréttindastöðu. Þemun þar fjalla um hinsegin hugmyndir varðandi fullgildingu, forgjöf varðandi tilfinningalega fullgildingu, og útilokun í tengslum við pólitíska fullgildingu. Fjórða greinin fjallar um útilokunarstundir hinsegin kvenna frá öllum heimshornum, varðandi pólitíska fullgildingu og það að passa ekki inn í ráðandi hugmyndir um sjálfsmynd þjóðarinnar og fá ekki aðgang að velþóknun innan kaþólsku kirkjunnar á Íslandi.

   Niðurstöðurnar sýna fram á ferli skörunar varðandi reynslu hinsegin innflytjenda af kynþáttahyggju, menningarhyggju og kynjahyggju, í hinsegin samfélaginu og gagnkynhneigðarhyggju, kynjahyggju og síshyggju í innflytjenda- og trúarsamfélögum. Í meginstraums samfélaginu er að finna samskiptalegt ferli kynþáttunar sem felst í því að vera endurtekið stimplaður sem innflytjandi, sem í sumum tilfellum virðist ómögulegt að yfirstíga. Öðrun innflytjenda er, engu að síður, innbyggð í stigveldi hugkvía eins og kynja, kynþátta, menninga og stétta, þar sem hvítir innflytjendur frá hinu hnattræna norðri upplifa þátttöku og það að tilheyra ólíkt því sem innflytjendur með annað litarhaft og frá hinu hnattræna suðri upplifa. Á sama tíma upplifa viðmælendur frá Mið- og Austur-Evrópu í mörgum tilfellum að þeim sé sjálfkrafa eignuð víkjandi samfélagsstaða, samanborið við aðra hvíta innflytjendur. Þetta síbreytilega en undirliggjandi innflytjendastigveldi sýnir hvernig menningarleg einkenni, kynþáttafordómar og félagshagfræðileg staða innflytjenda ákvarðar tilfinningu þeirra fyrir fullgildingu og því að tilheyra í íslensku samhengi.

Acknowledgements

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Home was a place of order. A place where the order of things come together - the living and dead - the spirits of the ancestors and the present inhabitants, and the gathering up and stilling of the to-and-fro.

Leaving home can only happen because there is a home to leave. And the leaving is never just a geographical or spatial separation; it is an emotional separation - wanted or unwanted. Steady or ambivalent.

For the refugee, for the homeless, the lack of this crucial coordinate in the placing of the self has severe consequences. At best it must be managed, made up for in some way. At worst, a displaced person, literally, does not know which way is up, because there is no true north. No compass point. Home is much more than shelter; home is our centre of gravity.

A nomadic people learn to take their homes with them - and the familiar objects are spread out or re-erected from place to place. When we move house, we take with us the invisible concept of home - but it is a very powerful concept. Mental health and emotional continuity do not require us to stay in the same house or the same place, but they do require a sturdy structure on the inside - and that structure is built in part by what has happened on the outside. The inside and the outside of our lives are each the shell where we learn to live.

Jeanette Winterson - *Why Be Happy When You Can Be Normal?*

1 Introduction

In retrospect, my interest in the research topic has its roots in an introductory module in sociology, in upper secondary school, where queer issues in other cultural contexts were discussed in one of the textbooks. I had not come to terms with my own sexual orientation at the time and was majoring in economics. After graduation, I eventually moved over to the sociology program at the University of Iceland as a mature student and had by then also come out as queer. I did further sign up for various courses in the gender studies program, where the only module on gay, lesbian and queer studies was taught at that time. In my BA thesis I discussed general attitudes towards lesbians and gay people (samkynhneigðra) in society, based on a small online survey. Where less acceptance correlated with increased social status of gays and lesbians. My MA thesis was based on a qualitative study regarding lesbian mothers' degree of outness in various social locations in London, UK. The main findings there were connected to issues of race/ethnicity and socioeconomic class, and how they were defining factors when it came to interlocutors' capacity to be open about their sexual orientation. I was thus interested in examining whether the findings from my MA thesis were in some way transferable to the Icelandic context and formed a research proposal where queer studies and migration studies could analyse this jointly. Migration studies were mainly located within the anthropology program at the University of Iceland at that time, and I was instructed to apply there, but was obligated to take several courses as an entry requirement. This has, since then, become a trend throughout my PhD studies, where I have attended several short courses, summer schools, and workshops abroad, eighteen to be exact, as well as presenting the project at seminars and conferences. The first course I attended was called Transnational Feminisms held at Umeå University, and where Catrin Lundström, Diana Mulinari and Nira Yuval-Davis were the course facilitators. I was familiar with Yuval-Davis's work at that time, but her writings have since then become somewhat instrumental in this process, as well as Sara Ahmed's scholarship.

This project is queer on many levels, including ways in which queerness challenges neoliberalism, neurotypical dominance and notions of failure. By adopting Halberstam's (2011) theorisation of the queer art of failure, which will be discussed further in the theoretical and methodological chapters, a space is opened up for those who e.g., do not finish a PhD project within a specific timeframe and those who are neuroqueer (Walker, 2021). I did attend an interesting course facilitated by Halberstam at Lund University called Queer Studies at the End of the World in 2018. This perceived failure to reproduce the

predominant norm can, nonetheless, also be viewed as a liberation from cultural traditions and straight time, and as such should not be underestimated, as it can manifest itself as a potency for socio-spatial transformations.

Several laws regarding LGBTQI+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex, the plus indicates other identity markers under the queer umbrella) people have been enacted since the beginning of this project, and various societal changes have taken place, such as an increased diversification of the labour market and the queer community, accompanied with increased visibility of trans and intersex people. Academically the field of queer migrations within the Nordic region has become tangible, although still small in scope and mostly focused on queer people seeking international protection. My initial interest in identity management has taken a back seat, and the focus has moved towards queering the migration and diasporic process and experiences of exclusion and belonging. This became especially salient in the second and article of this thesis called "Exclusionary moments: Queer desires and migrants' sense of (un)belonging," as well as in the fourth article, called: "National Imaginary and the Catholic Church: Queer Migrants Women's Experiences of Exclusionary Moments." "Exclusionary moments" occurs when exclusion transpires in specific circumstances and when "new realities" are formed, in accordance with Crenshaw's (1989) conceptions of intersectionality. In the case of enduring bodymind differences, similar realities have however occurred routinely throughout one's history of experiences, and thus these new events only reinforce old feelings of unbelonging. This study thus examines how the relationality of affective (un)belonging (Ahmed, 2004a) within the Icelandic context, is firmly grounded in the political projects of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2011a). Political projects such as sexism, heterosexism, cisgenderism, homonormalisation, racism, migratism (Tudor, 2017), nationalism, religism, classism and ableism as well as border regimes and restrictive laws regarding access to residence and work permits, as well as citizenship rights. These exclusionary processes relate to the theory of homonationalism (Puar, 2007) which again link up with theories of the migrant hierarchy (Bakić-Hayden, 1995; Herzfeld, 2004). Moreover, this research project discusses how sexual exceptionalism functions by glossing over the upkeep of boundary policing of acceptable race, class, gender, and ability formations. As it promises gays and lesbians inclusion in the state, when in fact, this assumed exceptionalism only strengthens existing hierarchies within the Icelandic mainstream society, the queer community, and the immigrant community. Gays and lesbians are now to a lesser extent seen as the others within society, but this marginalised subjectivity has now been allocated to immigrants, especially those that hail from Central and Eastern Europe (Ellenberger, 2017) and the Global South (Gunnarsson, 2021). The theory of homonationalism thus frames the study, through the processes of predominantly discussing the experiences of those disenfranchised though bodymind differences to various degrees.

1.1   Aims and research questions.

The knowledge gap regarding queer people's voluntary migration to and within the Nordic area, and particularly to Iceland, is the primary research problem this study addresses. Moreover, the aim is to queer migration studies in the Icelandic context, which has until now only discussed heterosexual and cisgender migrations. The main research question is: What are queer migrants' experiences, from the Global South, Central and Eastern Europe, and the Global North, of residing in Iceland? The five sub-questions are: 1) What are queer migrants' gendered experiences of residing in Iceland? 2) What are queer migrants' experiences regarding identity construction, identity management, degrees of "outness" and/or disidentification, identity subversion, concerning their sexual orientation and gender identity? 3) What are queer migrants' experiences of the political projects of belonging and their sense of belonging to their ethnic community, the queer community, and the Icelandic mainstream society? 4) How do transnational practices and adaptation/resocialisation to the host society play out in queer migrants lives? 5) How do queer migrants utilise their agency and show resistance and subversion within those processes?

1.2   Enquiry into three groups

Migration research in the Nordic region has discussed internal migration of gay men (Wimark, 2015a) or gays and lesbians (Wimark, 2015b). But research on this topic frequently focuses on queer people seeking international protection, where the Global North is the space of arrival (Andreassen, 2020; Akin, 2017; Liinason, 2020, 2022; Lunau, 2019, 2024; Lunau & Andreassen, 2023; Mühleisen, et al. 2012; Shield, 2019; Schröder, 2023a, 2023b; Wimark, 2019, 2020, 2021). One study discusses North to North queer migration and belonging regarding a privileged subjectivity and partner migration to Sweden (Ahlstedt, 2016) and other discusses queer Romanian diaspora also in Sweden, with regards to notions of (un)belonging (Dima & Dumitriu, 2023). This study is, nonetheless, is the first comprehensive research in the Nordic region that discusses the voluntary mobility of LGBTQ+ individuals (I do not include I for intersex when referring to interlocutors as no intersex persons participated in this study) of all genders from different parts of the world and organises the population thematically into three groups, that is, people coming from the Global North, Central and Eastern Europe and the Global South. Dedicating one article to each group and the fourth one to women's experiences specifically. Moreover, this is the first study that applies both dimensions of belonging, that is, looks at how political projects of belonging dictate interlocutors' sense of belonging to their ethnic community, the queer community, and the Icelandic mainstream society, and thus discussing all three levels of social analyses.

It is complex to discuss "difference" at a global scale, and most terms are economically and politically based, often rooted in imperialist and colonialist histories, such as, the developed and the developing world (UNDP, n.d.), the First World, Second World and Third World, (Sauvy, 1952), Core and the Periphery (Perlof, 1957) and the West and the Rest (Ferguson, 2012). These terms have been criticised for being incorrect concerning economic difference, and that the terms have a negative meaning for the poorer countries. Punch (2000) has thus argued for an alternative language, where the ´Minority World´ would refer to the ´First World´ and ´Majority World´ would refer to the ´Third World´ because the Majority World has the greatest population and the largest land mass compared to the Minority World.

The terms the Global North and the Global South have in a way displaced previous descriptions of the global order and are an attempt to correct the usage of previous terms (Del Casino, 2009). To draw the divide between the Global North and the Global South a broad trend line is roughly drawn horizontally around the globe (not in line with the equator though). The former colonised, low-income, and often politically or culturally marginalised south is in the Southern Hemisphere, mostly in South and Central America, Africa, Asia, and Oceania. And the wealthier north with its global capitalist system and economic, political, and cultural hegemony is in the Northern Hemisphere, for example in Europe, North America, Canada, Russia, and Israel. There are immediate exceptions to this line regarding Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and Hong Kong and sometimes also Singapore and South Africa, which are considered part of the Global North despite their geographical location, as their human development index is high (Damerow, 2010). Where this line should be drawn and how exactly countries should be divided in this way is, of course, still problematic. While the Global North is generally powerful and affluent, it is not uniform. Because of internal stratification and diversity among its societies, a large portion of people in the Global North are, in fact, impoverished and powerless, and wealth and power certainly exist within the Global South. Consequently, it is important to remember that any definition of the global world will generalise and homogenise the dissimilarities and complexities found within the Global South and the Global North, for example, regarding the politics of difference and inequality (Del Casino, 2009). Countries in the Global South started to see common interests in the early 1960s, at time period during which the Global North were consolidating their economic and political power, and the global South began to push for international cooperation (Connell, 2007).

After taking this into consideration, the thesis makes use of the terms "the Global South" and "the Global North", but further complicates this division regarding Central and Eastern Europe and Russia, which are discussed

separately. Thus, the division that is used in this thesis, is in praxis, more in line the division of the first world, the second world and the third world, concerning geography and history, while nonetheless applying the terms of the Global North and Global South. One of the contributions of this thesis to the field of queer migration studies is the independent analysis of mobility from Central and Eastern Europe. There are discernible patterns within the region that render this differentiation relevant, particularly in relation to the post-Soviet mindset and modes of existence in the global context. The inclusion of Russia in this group seemed to be a sensible approach e.g., due to the presence of just one interlocutor from Russia. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that a significant proportion, more than half, of the immigrant community in Iceland originates from Central and Eastern Europe. Thus, from the viewpoint of the immigrants' country of origin, this division has considerable significance. The first article discusses queer migrations from the Global South, the second article examines queer migrations from Central and Eastern Europe, and the third article considers queer migrations from the Global North. The fourth article discusses the specificities of women's experiences, from all these regions.

1.3   Micro, Meso, and Macro level

This study investigates three levels of social analyses within the social sciences, usually referred to as micro, meso, and macro. Some analyses operate from a binary perspective, looking at either micro or macro levels (Barnes, 2001; Berk, 2006; Ryan, 2005) but including the meso level disturbs the analytical binarism and thus more accurately captures the cluttered realities of daily existence. The micro level of analysis addresses, for example, individual identity, agents, motives, cognition, and interactive processes, it is the study of how people behave in real-world situations including direct interaction, experiences and emotions. The meso level of analysis is seen as an intermediate unit of analysis, and relates, for example, to the construction of groups, communities, movements, social institutions, and formal organisations such as workplaces and churches. The macro level of analysis refers to, for example, processes of geopolitics at the national and global level, processes of stratification and differentiation, cross national cooperation, and national imaginaries of societies (see Fine, 2012; Pyyhtinen, 2017; Serpa & Ferreira, 2019; Wiley, 1988). In the context of this thesis, the micro level of analysis would be, for instance, interlocutors' experiences of residing in Iceland, relational processes of resocialisation and locating a sense of belonging, as well as the relational experiences of racialisation and othering. The meso level would be analysing how various communities relate to interlocutors, such as, is there racism and xenophobia in the queer community and is there homonegativity and cisnormativity in the immigrant community; or does the Catholic Church in

Iceland accept queer individuals into their social space. And finally, the macro level of analysis, where I look at transnational and global processes as well as the political projects that are at work in the Icelandic mainstream society, their construction, and inner workings. This thesis makes an additional contribution by examining the three levels of social inquiry, and thus provides a more comprehensive understanding of how individual's sense of belonging is influenced by international processes, power dynamics, and political endeavours at both local and global levels.

1.4 Organisation of thesis

The organisation of the thesis is divided into six main chapters, which are, this introduction, the theoretical framework, the Icelandic context, the methodology applied, a collection of papers, and the conclusion. In the next chapter I briefly discuss the theoretical framework. Firstly, by examining the relevance of queer theory to the project, specifically in connection to queering migration studies within the Icelandic context. Further exploring theories relating to queer globalisations which serve as foundational knowledge for the study and queer migration studies where the research has its roots. Secondly, there is a discussion of the theory of homonationalism and its role in shaping the overall theoretical approach. Furthermore, exploring theories relating to the migrant hierarchy, and how it connects to issues of privilege, racialisation and cultural othering. The third and final section of the theoretical framework examines theories relating to belonging, which are the cornerstone of the analyses and consequently are applied in all the articles and throughout the theses, in one way or another. Moreover, I discuss how political projects of belonging dictate interlocutors sense of belonging, within the Icelandic context, as well as examining the potentiality of unbelonging and belonging-in-difference. In chapter three the Icelandic context is considered, as it relates to the development of the national imaginary as well as looking at predominant othering processes of migration and diaspora for immigrants in Iceland. Then moving on to a discussion of the history of migration and the history of legal framework for migrants, as well as a short deliberation of the history of LGBTQI+ sociality and legal rights in Iceland. The methodological discussion is in chapter four and there I focus on the three approaches to methodology that were applied, how feminist methodology laid the groundwork for queer methodology which came forth more recently, as well as discussing the importance of transnational methodology within the field of migration studies. I examine a qualitative research design, which was essential as queer migrants are, in many ways, a hidden and hard to reach group in Iceland, and as I wanted to locate in-dept knowledge of experiences. I further discuss the methods that were used, as well as how I located the interlocutors and their background information. I examine

the data analysis process, as well as reflecting of my own positionality, and highlight ethical considerations.

In chapter five, I discuss the four articles that have been produced from the study: "LGBQ migrations: Racialisation and (un)belonging in Iceland," which I wrote in collaboration with my supervisor Unnur Dís Skaptadóttir and published in 2017 in the journal lambda nordica, "Exclusionary moments: Queer desires and migrants' sense of (un)belonging" published in 2018 in the journal Emotion, Space and Society, "North-to-North Queer Migrations: Privileged Subjectivities and Belonging in Iceland" published in 2023 the journal Gender Place and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography and "National Imaginary and the Catholic Church: Queer Migrant Women's Experiences of Exclusionary Moments" published in 2023 in the journal Social and Health Sciences. The first three articles thus jointly illustrate the migrant hierarchy in the Icelandic mainstream society as well as in the immigrant community and the queer community. These articles demonstrate that the most othered migrants are from the Global South, often in connection to racism and racialisation as well as not fitting in with dominant notions of the national imaginary, and that individuals from Central and Eastern Europe are slightly less othered but are nonetheless strongly connected to a lower social class. Individuals from the Global North, however, are substantially less othered in Icelandic society and are often seen as skilled migrants who receive preferential treatment. This hierarchical ordering is nonetheless intersectional and connects to one's social locations, in accordance with issues of racism, migratism (Tudor, 2017), sexism, classism, heterosexism, cisgenderism, border regimes and restrictive laws regarding residence- and work permits as well as access to citizenship rights. Queer migration processes often focus on gay men, and thus I wanted to highlight the experiences of queer women and nonbinary individuals regarding issues of migration and diaspora. The fourth article discusses migrant women specifically, and their experience of residing in Iceland in connection to who is included in the national imaginary and who is accepted within the Catholic Church in Iceland. What binds all the four articles together is the theoretical framework and the analytical approach. In chapter six, I discuss the research questions in relation to the findings, or a short summary of the analyses for the four articles that make up the core of the theses. Lastly, I conclude with some deliberations and final remarks.

2 Theoretical framework

In this chapter, I discuss the theoretical framework for the study in three main sections. In the first section, I discuss issues of queer theory, queer globalisations, and queer migration studies. In relation to queering migration studies in Iceland and grounding the study within the field of queer migration studies. The second section is called homo(trans)nationalism and the migrant hierarchy, where I discuss how homonationalism frames the theoretical approach and how the migrant hierarchy operates intersectionally depending on one's social locations, such as, gender, ability, ethnic origin and social class. The third and final section is called the politics and sense of (un)belonging, and there I discuss the politics of belonging, a sense of belonging, affect and emotions, and the politics of unbelonging and belonging-in-difference. Or how the political projects of belonging dictate interlocutors sense of belonging. The theoretical framework thus binds together the four articles that make up the core of this thesis.

2.1 Queer(ing) migrations

In this first section of the theoretical framework, I will discuss the issue of queering migration scholarship within the Icelandic context. This is the first application of queer theory to the study of migratory movements and diaspora within the Icelandic context. In my opinion, it is important to apply a queer theoretical perspective when studying queer migration processes to decentre dominant political projects, such as, hetereosexism, cisgenderism, homonormalisation and homonationalism. This section starts by discussing queer theory and criticism thereof, before moving on to an examination of queer globalisations and concluding with a deliberation on queer migration scholarship and citizenship studies.

2.1.1 Queer theory

As Martin Manalansan (2006) has stated, he uses the word queer as a theoretical and political perspective in his research with gay migrant men from the Philippines. He applies the perspective in cases where sexuality is restrained by practices and social institutions that naturalise and normalise heterosexuality and heterosexual practices, such as family, marriage, and biological reproduction, and in the process marginalise people and institutions that deviate from these norms. In a similar vein, I use queer theory both as a theoretical and political lens. In this thesis I am queering the area of migration studies by combining experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals with the migration,

resettlement, and diasporic processes, or joining queer studies and migration studies within the Icelandic context. I further use queer theory to decenter sexism, heterosexism, homonormalisation and cisgenderism, by focusing on how the interlocutors perceive these political projects in the Icelandic setting, in their home countries, and transnationally. My goal, coming at this from a political viewpoint, is to shed light on the underlying hierarchies within queer migrant community and analyse the experiences of those on the fringes of that group as well as those who are closer to the centre.

The late 1970s saw the beginning of organised research of gays and lesbians. However, gay men, lesbians, and allies started studying themselves and how they were portrayed in history and culture with the rise of the gay liberation movement in the late 1960s. This led them to wonder how gender and sexual orientations were constructed and conceptualised. Gay and lesbian studies examine the experiences of lesbians and gay people in their daily lives, including their identities, social visibility, experiences of oppression, and struggles for acceptance and inclusion, as well as the way that heterosexuality and its binary opposite, homosexuality, have traditionally been defined. Gay and lesbian studies also look at how different societies and eras have imposed beliefs about what types of sexualities are considered to be "normal" and "abnormal," as well as which behaviours are seen as "moral" and "immoral" (Halperin, 1990; Newton, 1979; Weeks, 2000; Weston, 1993). Lesbian feminism arose in the late 1960s in North America and Western Europe as a response to sexism within the gay movement and homophobia within the women's movement. It criticised heterosexuality as an institution and noted that its roots lie within patriarchy, capitalism and colonialism (Daly, 1968; Frye, 1983; Lorde, 1984; Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1983; Rich, 1980). Lesbian feminist theory has helped feminists better understand the nature of gender and power, as well as shed light on the social and cultural roots of sexuality and gender roles (Hesford, 2013; Hogan, 2016). Lesbian and gay studies and lesbian feminism did not become an academic field in Iceland at that time, it was not until the turn of the 20th century that LGBTQ studies began to surface as a field of study (Ellenberger, 2016; Hafsteinsdóttir, 2017a). Queer studies as a distinct but interdisciplinary academic discipline has only emerged in the Icelandic context in the last five to ten years.

Queer theory has emerged as a means through which to unpack the assumed connections between sexuality and gender and bring them into the open. The heterosexual/homosexual dichotomy, as well as the privileging of heterosexuality as "natural" and homosexuality as its abnormal and repulsive "other" are challenged by queer theory. Since difference is constantly "otherised" or a marker of something inferior and less than, queer theory tries to examine and demolish concepts of natural difference and difference itself. By

exposing social norms as social fictions—arbitrary notions that, as norms, become regulatory devices—queer theory seeks to undermine dichotomous thinking (Hammers, 2016). Queer theory thus inclines a radical destabilising of identity politics and is thus similar to the emphasis postcolonial theory has offered to Westerners. "The clash between the periphery and centre within these movements is a key source of postmodern thinking and politics" (Seidman, 1997, p. 113). Together with feminist, gay, and lesbian researchers, many queer theorists believe that hegemonic understandings of sexuality (and gender) are the organising principles of society, social interactions, and social institutions (Sedgwick, 1990, Sullivan, 2005, see Browne & Nash, 2010b).

The gender dichotomy of "male" and "female" is notably challenged by Judith Butler (1990) in their book *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. Butler argues that many 1960s feminists unintentionally reaffirmed heterosexuality as "natural" by seeing gender as a basic dichotomy. Butler criticises what is seen as "natural" by questioning both the signified (gendered bodies) and the signifier (gender language). They define gender as a "stylised repetition of acts" (191), and drag as a deconstruction strategy, as it "implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself—as well as its contingency" (187). Butler's approach has been labelled postmodern feminism, poststructuralism, and/or queer theory due to its emphasis on politics, language, and sexuality. It is also vital to place their work within a history of lesbian feminism. In *Gender Trouble*, Butler challenges lesbian feminist groups for retaining strict definitions of identity and criticises the heterosexism of feminist theory.

As Hall (2003) has noted, "there is no 'queer theory' in the singular, only many different voices and sometimes overlapping, sometimes divergent perspectives that could be loosely called 'queer theories'" (5) (see McCann & Monaghan, 2020). Scholars such as Rubin (1984), Sedgwick (1985, 1990), Bersani (1987), Butler (1990, 1993), Fuss (1991), de Lauretis (1991) and Warner (1993) have all published critical works which are frequently cited in discussions of queer theory. But what is usually missing from this genealogy of queer theory are the works of people of colour. Hames-García (2011) has put forth an integrationist genealogy of queer theory where he includes works by pivotal scholars, such as, Baldwin (1962), Smith (1977), Lorde (1978), Moraga & Hollibaugh (1981), Beam (1986) and Anzaldúa (1987) which predate the more canonical writings and have thus been erased from this body of work. People of colour's writings are sometimes included for strategic reasons, where theorists of colour are seen as new and marginal, but in general, white theorists give insights into sexuality, while theorists of colour and working-class queers demonstrate how sexuality varies in different contexts (Hames-García, 2011). The terminology "queer research" is used to describe a wide variety of studies

situated within theoretical frameworks that draw attention to the precariousness of commonly held assumptions and the power dynamics they generate. "To be" will no longer do, since the English language's significational structures may contribute to the difficulty in accurately portraying identities as forms of "becoming," as always in process and always relational. Instead of giving up on identities, we should better understand the mediations and intersubjective circumstances that led to their creation and focus on providing a thorough analysis that emphasises the verb of positions (Browne & Nash, 2010b).

Queer theory has been criticised extensively, for example, for excluding issues of race and class in its critique. Spivak (1988) argued that the realisation that gays and lesbians may not have much in common with one another may shatter concepts of political unity. Spivak notes that although there may be many similarities between the movements, the "queering" of gay and lesbian studies is both a demand that the liberal (white, yuppified, Western) gay and lesbian elite see the "subalterns" in their midst and a protest against foreclosure of prospective inclusion (see also Almaguer, 1991; Appiah & Gates, 1995; Brandt, 1999; Foster, 1991; Hawley, 2001; Lim; 2013; Morgensen, 2011; Punt, 2008). By decentring whiteness and offering a clear analytical perspective, queer of colour critique seeks to rectify queer theory's omission of race and class issues. It highlights the importance of power dynamics by revealing how our perceptions of normativity and non-normativity, as well as our vulnerability to different types of violence and exclusion, are shaped by once social locations such as race, class and gender identity and processes of capitalism and imperialism. To fully appreciate queer of colour criticism, one must grasp the idea that issues of race, class, gender and sexuality are inextricably intertwined (see e.g. Carlos, 2011; Cohen, 1997; Cruz, 2016; El-Tayeb, 2011; Eng & Puar, 2020; Ferguson, 2004, 2015, 2019; Gill-Peterson, 2018; Gopinath, 1997, 2005, 2018; Johnson, 2010; Kim, 2021; Luciano & Chen, 2015; Muñoz, 1999, 2009, 2020; Nguyen, 2014; Piepzna-Samarasinha, 2018; Reddy, 1997, 2011; Rodríguez, 2014; Snorton, 2017; Snorton & Haritaworn, 2013; Wekker, 2016). Queer of colour critique ought to be viewed as the culmination of three decades of academic and activist labour, which began with criticism of second wave feminism, particularly from lesbians, women of colour, and lesbians of colour (Vidal-Ortiz, 2003). Ferguson's (2004) addition to the queer of colour criticism focuses on bringing a political and economic lens to the study of sexuality, rather than a multicultural approach to queer theory. Fergusson has further noted that as queer of colour critique is deeply rooted in the USAmerican racialised system and formation logics it is thus not necessarily applicable or intelligible elsewhere (Vidal-Ortiz, 2003). As such, I do not employ queer of colour critique as a form of theory in this thesis. However, I do use several

writings from this body of work and thus connect in different ways to crucial parts of the critique.

The liberating possibilities generally associated with queer fluidity and transgressive behaviours are further firmly tied up with material possibilities, and thus it is imperative to link them up with social, economic, and historical contexts. This potentially undercuts the ground of a viable political subject (see Armato, 2012; Brim; 2018, 2020; Browne & Nash, 2010b; Champagne, 2010/1993; Hartsock, 1990; Lee, 2017; Richardson, 2006). A great deal of queer theorising originated in the Global North, and thus it has its historical and social context there. Consequently, it is not necessarily helpful or even appropriate to use its uncritical relations with sexual or gendered lives in other locations (see Browne & Nash, 2010b; Gorman-Murray et al. 2008; Johnston & Longhurst, 2008; Liinason & Kulpa, 2008; Waitt & Markwell, 2006). Trans scholars have pointed out that Butler's theory has, in fact, answered Raymond's (1979) assumption that all gendered behaviour is inherently replicative of sexist norms, by rejecting the view that biological male/female sex is independent of culture and by providing a theoretical basis for the subversive potential of some queer gender performance. Nonetheless, trans scholars have raised concerns regarding Butler's effort to provide a unified account of gender as imitation and note that trans oppression is unique from heterosexism in its mode of injustice. Further, using trans people to account for the fluidity and transgressive practises of sex/gender is highly questionable, as it does not generally engage with the lived experience of trans people themselves (Namaste, 2000; Prosser, 1998; Stryker, 2004; 2006).

The term queer has sometimes been divided into three aspects to comprehend the vast usage of it, that is, the theoretical, the political and the cultural. Poststructuralist scholarship on sexuality and gender that has been branded queer theory refers to the theoretical aspect of queer. The in-your-face and other forms of queer activism is seen as the political aspect. And the association of queer with gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgenders (as well as i.e., pansexual, and intersex people), without necessarily considering the political or the theoretical aspect, is the cultural part. This differentiation can be useful but often the usage of the word is a combination of different categories (Wickman, 2010). It is important to distinguish between the various usages of the term queer, especially between queer theory as an academic field and queer as a community (the cultural aspect) and as an identity marker (Raymond, 2003). The Icelandic translation of the term queer (hinsegin) has become well rooted in in the language and culture, mainly as an identity marker, and is used in the pride celebrations each year which are called Queer days (Hinsegin dagar) or Reykjavík Pride (previously Gay Pride). I personally like the term "hinsegin" as an identity marker because of its inclusionary potentials and

radical history, but that perhaps has to do with my own experience of enforced identity labels. However, I am also conscious of dominant criticisms concerning applying it as such, and how that usage potentially merges narratives and experiences of men, women, and genderqueers when they are, in fact, quite distinct, and in the process tends to flatten out marginal perspectives and groups under the umbrella term of queer (Benediktsdóttir, 2014, Ellenberger, 2017). Scholars have further noted that "queer" should not be used as a collective identity marker for LGBTQI+ individuals and in activism (Davis, 2005; Giffney, 2004; Halberstam, 2005) as it then loses its political edge. The critical edge of queer theory is found in its presentation of "queer" as a location of "becoming" (Edelman, 1995) and of persistent norm-checking. The term "queer" opposes homogenising tendencies and resists normativity, whether that normativity originates from dominant heterosexual discourses or from the majority of the lesbian and gay political spectrum (Seidman, 1997). Therefore, using a "queer" approach to research is a different methodological approach with the goal of "queering," or de-naturalising, conventional categories of analysis beyond sexuality and gender (Fotopoulou, 2012). Nonetheless, it is important to note that LGBTQI+ individuals tend to queer "normative" ways of being, simply by their presence, their connections with others, or by some visible markers of nonnormativity. Thus, there is no clear-cut line between who is a transgressive LGBTQI+ individual and those who are not, and a more relevant approach might be to investigate who has the socio-economic means to go against the norm and disrupt the status quo (Beasley, 2005).

2.1.2   Queer globalisations

Globalisation is the term used to describe the transnational interconnectedness of different countries and regions, which includes significant aspects related to the economy, politics, culture, and environment. It generates novel prospects and limitations, potentialities and vulnerabilities. The conflict between globalising and localising impulses is a prevalent phenomenon worldwide, and it forms the core dialectic of globalisation (Eriksen, 2014). Societies and cultures have always been hybrids, although the process of hybridisation is taking place faster now than ever before. Culture has become somewhat of a totemic or political capital, both for migrant groups and local populations, which incline towards more knowledge of other ways of living and of other people. Although culture is now constructed in a more reflexive way, its rhetoric is still closely linked to material resources and notions of power (Urry, 2000). A discussion of queer globalisation and queer migration research is crucial for situating the thesis within its appropriate academic context, since it is within these fields that its historical and theoretical underpinnings lie. Queer

globalisation studies relate more to the foundational knowledge that is the basis for this thesis, and queer migration studies is where the thesis has its roots.

Modern societies are characterised by time-space compression and disembedding inner workings, where "reflexivity" or self-monitoring is a basis of modernity (Giddens, 1990). Giddens noted that in a globalised world the self becomes something to be reflected upon, altered, and even moulded; individuals become responsible for and are in control of the creation and maintenance of the self and this responsibility is continuous. The self is then produced in the development of intimate social relations as well as in self-exploration (Ritzer & Goodman, 2003). This account has been criticised by Anthias (1999) who points out that this depiction of late modernity and globalisation and its bases are the experiences of an identifiable privileged minority. This is a minority that is able partake in a wide range of lifestyle choices, new technologies, and travel. She maintains that it is important to take full account of issues of power and subordination within modernity and globalisation, and that the self is not necessarily unitary within these processes. Globalisation nonetheless often divides us as much as it unites. One thus needs, to some extent, to become what one is, as one is no longer born into one's identities. This has in some cases provided more opportunities for queer people, and a more liberal social climate (Bauman, 2002). Consequently, it is assumed that it has never been "easier" to be a queer person than today, but as discrimination persists on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity, "coming out" can still be risky and difficult in various locations around the world as well as in the more globalised societies (Valentine, 1993). Moreover, through globalisation we are all on the move, in one way or another, even if we stay still (Bauman, 1998).

The concept of "sexile" has been used to describe the subject who is outside the demands, identifications, and duties of nationalism, as thus exiled from the national space, but is liberated into transnational mobility. Consequently, it might be assumed that as gender normativity is disrupted by queerness, so is national sovereignty disrupted by globalisation (Guzman, 1997). Altman (1996) coined the term "global queering" to refer to how queer identities and culture had become global, but later maintained that the globalisation of capitalism, which is in many ways driven by American economic power, may have limited cultural influence. Moreover, many cultural attitudes have not become internationalised in spite of considerable efforts, for example, issues of sex, religion and culture are often ignored by the rest of the world, although they may have a defining importance within the United States. Cultural Americanisation has thus not always followed the American economic dominance, consequently, it is important to highlight the extent of local autonomy within transnational capitalism, and within theories of global

queering and cultural globalisation. Cruz-Malavé and Manalansan (2002) maintain that "queer is now global", as queerness has now reached recognition in the transnational framework. They ground their claim in two intersecting arguments. First, they point to the increased visibility of queer sexualities, through global circulation of commodities and images for queers. And secondly, they maintain that queer politics and coalition-building has become transnational through queer visibility in the marketplace and the commodification of lesbian and gay identities. Moreover, this has enabled mobilisation around, and international recognition for, the queer struggle for social justice. In this transnational framework, the diasporic queer subject is centrally located, and imagined as both ideologically and geographically unlocatable. The queer diasporic subject mediates between its political mobilisation and the commodity-based queer identity and serves as meditating figure between the local and the global; home and the state; and the diaspora and nation. In this sense, the diasporic queer becomes a doubly mobile or transgressive subject, as someone who both challenges local categories of desire, as well as the stability on national identity (Wesling, 2008).

Feminists have criticised globalisation theories, as the static role of the local is generally made feminine, and the global is made masculine (Freeman, 2001), as well as questioning the commonly understood transgressive mode and rootless existence of migrants in the diaspora and insisting on the importance of roundedness (Ahmed et al., 2003). The mobility of queerness as transgressive is not necessarily how queer desires are constituted in relation to such categories, and their disruption is not in any way assured (Fortier, 2003b). The visibility strategies implemented by gay and lesbian liberation organisations in North America can have counter-effects in other parts of the world, as they may close off some possibilities for non-normative sexualities and desires in other countries and encourage new policies of surveillance with regards to homoerotic encounters in other cultures (Altman, 1997). The advantages of class, gender, and race further tend to preserve queer people' rights as consumers rather than as citizens, and they often reproduce the paradigm that describes mobility as white privilege (Alexander, 2005). Emerging transnational similarities are indeed evident amongst queer cultures, but new and diverse queer identities have developed in the Global South that are not particularly converging towards Westerns forms. Although some countries have drawn upon English gender and sexuality identity markers, such as, "gay" and "lesbian", research has shown a proliferating diversity between various parts of the world (Jackson, 2009). In Indonesia, these identity markers have often been used to refer to new forms of local same-sex identities, but do not borrow from Western cultural patterns as such (Boellstorff, 2005).

An assimilationist project was termed by Massad (2007) as the "Gay International". The Gay International's missionary work produced two types of literature on the Muslim world. On the one hand, academic literature primarily written by white male gay scholars from Europe or the United States "describing" and "explaining" what they refer to as "homosexuality" in Arab and Muslim history up until the present, with the aim to explaining Islam to a Western audience. On the other, journalistic accounts of the lives of so-called "gays" and (much less so) "lesbians" in the contemporary Arab and Muslim worlds. Which had the unenviable task of educating white male gay sex tourists about the region and working to "liberate" Arab and Muslim "gays and lesbians" from the oppression they allegedly live in, by transforming them from same-sex contact participants into subjects who identify as "homosexual" and "gay". It is challenging to see how identity concepts like gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender can avoid being characterised as Western rather than "universal" given that Muslim organisations' frequently oppose sexual minority rights at the UN based on a discourse of disputing Western cultural imperialism and in order to preserve cultural/religious integrity (Sweibel, 2009).

Grewal and Kaplan (2001) assert that in "in modernity, identities inevitably become global" (663), but that does not begin to "get at the complex terrain of sexual politics that is at once national, regional, local, even 'cross-cultural' and hybrid" (663). Globalisation is thus not only a process of making everything the same or a kind of neocolonialism. Grewal and Kaplan (2010) prefer the term "transnational" rather than the term globalisation and they describe five features that characterise the discourse of the transnational within the US academy: (1) A discussion about migration that lacks an examination of labour; (2) A discourse about the insignificance of the nation state, which overlooks an analysis of political economy and new forms of governance; (3) A discussion about diaspora that romanticises and obscures displacement as a subcultural phenomenon that is always resistant to the nation-state; (4) A discourse of neocolonialism that obscures forms of exploitation that existed prior to globalised capitalism; and (5) The transformation of social movements into NGOs, a "transnationalism from below" (666), which relies on a universal subject and is connected to colonial processes and imperialism.

As Tellis & Bala (2015) have noted, these five coordinates discussed by Grewal and Kaplan do effectively outline the primary elements of the field in the Global South, including not only academic institutions but also other areas. However, they are adjusted to accommodate the varying scales and spaces. Within these contexts, the realm of same-sex politics may be characterised by various forms of migration, both internal and international, however without an examination of labour dynamics. There is a discourse on rights that goes beyond the nation-state and involves the country using instruments from outside its

borders, while claiming that the nation-state is unimportant, while in reality it is more important than ever. The globalisation phenomenon has given rise to subcultures in urban areas, which are shaped by narratives of identity from diasporic communities. In certain regions of the Global South, the rhetoric of neocolonialism, particularly from the Left, still relies on disregarding same-sex politics and offering an inadequate critique of capitalism in Third World countries. The process of transforming women's movements and same sex "movements" into non-governmental organisations has further occurred without much critical examination of the consequences.

Mobility, transmigration, and transnationalism have increasingly emerged as key themes in the study of immigration, challenging older approaches that prioritised integration and assimilation into host communities (Skaptadóttir, 2004b). The concept of transnationalism generally refers to practices, connections, and exchanges across borders, which transcend national space as a reference point for identities and activities. Transnationalism has been described as:

> the processes by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement. Immigrants who build such social fields are designated "transmigrants." Transmigrants develop and maintain multiple relations-familial, economic, social, organizational, religious, and political - that span borders. Transmigrants take actions, make decisions, and feel concerns, and develop identities within social networks that connect them to two or more societies simultaneously (Glick Schiller, et al. 1992 p.1-2).

Transnational practices and modes of transformation, both draw from and contribute to the wider process of globalisation. These practices are involved in deep-seated structural transformations and patterns of change, such as "bifocality" or a bifocal view, which underpins how migrants' lives are lived with a dual orientation, simultaneously here-and-there. Such a view may influence, for example, identities and family life for post-migration generations, in relation to heightened challenges around questions of nationality and dual citizenship. It can also have potentially profound economic impacts through money transfers and sending remittances and with regards to development in the country-of-origin (Vertovec, 2004, p. 970). Leading transnational, multi-sited lives means that exchanges and interactions across borders are a regular and sustained part of migrants' realities and activities. These exchanges may take the form of ideas, values, and practices, as well as political mobilisation and economic contributions. Transnationalism creates a greater degree of connection between individuals, communities, and societies across borders,

bringing about changes in the social, cultural, economic, and political landscapes of the societies of origin and destination (IOM, 2010). Transnationalism can also be viewed as a system that creates honeycombs, as well as preserving and shaping the identities of nation-states, international and local institutions, and specific social and geographic areas, rather than simply nurturing limited networks. A honeycomb ties, but it also has hollowed-out gaps where organisations, people, and ideas may wither out and be replaced by new groups, people, and inventions. A transnational community's boundaries must remain permeable, porous, revisable, and participatory in order to persist. If they are not, a honeycomb of national, regional, and international ties will eventually be replaced by another (Calvin, 2005). Most interlocutors in this study engage in transnational practices in their daily life, through communication technologies, online media, and in some cases travel, and have developed a bifocal world view. Transnational mobility is in itself a privileged subjectivity, but interlocutors especially from the Global North saw themselves more as a globalised subject that interlocutors from the Global South or Central and Eastern Europe.

2.1.3   Queer migration studies

The field known as queer migration studies and/or sexual migration studies has its origins in the North American context and investigates the connections between sexuality and migration. The interplay of sexuality and immigration, or what Lionel Cantú (2009) refers to in his book *The sexuality of migration: border crossings and Mexican immigrant men* as a "queer political economy of migration", is a body of scholarship that shows the effectiveness of queerness as an analytical framework, in illuminating the nuanced interactions among sexuality, gender, race, politics, economy, and culture that shape desire and the movement of many bodies across a wide range of borders (Cantú, 2009; Epps et al., 2005; Luibhéid, 2008; Luibhéid and Cantú, 2005). Queer migration studies use insights from studies on both queer/sexuality studies and migration studies as well as examining feminism, racism, ethnicity, colonialism, and globalisation. For instance, queer/sexual migration studies have benefited immensely from an understanding of sexuality as produced within overlapping multiple relations of power, such as ethnicity, class, race, gender, geography, and citizenship (Luibhéid, 2008; Crenshaw, 1989) in order to conduct an intersectional analysis of interlocking systems of power. Queer migration is further not always a journey from repression to liberation, nor is it usually driven exclusively by rational individuals making cost-benefit judgments; rather, it is connected to factors like political influence, histories of imperialism, invasion, investment, and commerce, which serve as bridges across nations (Cantú, 2009; Gopinath, 2005; Luibhéid, 2002/2008; Manalansan, 2003).

Migrants' loyalty to the states and the power structures that have previously shaped their lives further persists when arriving in the host country. Migration thus reshapes inequalities but does not erase them, as discrimination towards immigrants and persistent racialisation processes are frequent in the host countries (Cantú, 2009; Luibhéid, 2008; Luibhéid and Cantú, 2005; Manalansan, 2006).

Andrew Gorman-Murray (2009) expands the definition of queer migration beyond the movement of persons who identify, in some sense, as having non-normative gender identities and sexual orientations, and migrate for reasons such better access to jobs or higher education. He proposes that wants, needs, or gender and sexuality play a role in the uprooting, whether as a driving force behind a move or regarding the decision of where to settle. Thus, he focuses on the embodied, intimate, and emotional aspects of queer migration. Gorman-Murray (2009) has further identified three primary queer migratory patterns. The first one relates to "coming-out migration," in which LGBTQ+ individuals relocate in order to "self-reinvent as non-heterosexual and to explore bodily sexual desires in the process" (446). Gravitational group migration, or "moving to be near a neighbourhood with a gay and lesbian presence" (446) is the second trend. In the third type, called "relationship migration," is where people relocate "with a partner to consolidate a same-sex relationship - or conversely, mov[e] away after a relationship breakdown" (446). The fourth motive for queer migration has been added by Mole (2021) and relates migrating to another nation to benefit from a broader array of sexual citizenship rights, such marriage or anti-discrimination laws.

Although there have been some attempts to queer migration instead of mainly discussing queer subjects, the majority of the work in the field of queer migration studies focuses on queer subjects, practices and identities as they relate to migration. Moreover, queer migration scholarship frequently examines topics similar to mainstream migration scholarship, such as diaspora, refugees and asylum seekers, belonging and a sense of home, ethnic communities, transnational practices, nationalism and citizenship, but from the perspective of queer subjects (Ahlsted, 2016). Nonetheless it is important to note that by simply discussing LGBTQI+ subjectivities, identities or practices, a queering of mainstream migration trajectories takes place, in most if not all contexts, so in my opinion there is no clear-cut division between what research does or does not queer traditional migration processes. Eithne Luibhéid (2004) notes that the connections between heteronormativity, sexuality and migration are typically ignored by mainstream migration research. The state and powerful social organisations interfere with and organise sexuality in normative ways and that this is connected to other forms of social regulations relating to gender, class, and race, where sexuality is seen as something "natural" and "private" (see also

Cantú, 2009). A significant portion of the literature that focuses on queer subjectivities, practices and identities, discuss queer people living in ethnic minority communities or being a queer immigrant in a specific nation, primarily the US (e.g., Brown, 2020; Cantú, 2001, 2009; Carrillo & Fontdevila, 2014; Decena, 2011; del Aguila, 2012; Eng & Horn, 1998; Gonzalez-Lopez, 2005; Gupta, 2006; La Fountain-Stokes, 2005, 2009; Lewis & Naples, 2014; Luibhéid, 2020; Manalansan, 2003, 2006; Peña, 2005; Rodriguez, 2003; Roque-Ramirez, 2005; Solórazano, 2020), but also, for example, in Sweden (Ahlstedt, 2016; Dima & Dumitriu, 2023; Liinason, 2020, 2022; Wimark, 2015a, 2015b, 2019, 2020, 2021), Norway (Akin, 2017; Mühleisen, et al. 2012), Denmark (Andreassen, 2020; Lunau, 2019, 2024; Lunau & Andreassen, 2023; Petersen, 2016; Shield, 2019; Schröder, 2023a, 2023b), Israel (Kuntsman, 2003, 2007, 2009a, 2009b), Ireland (Luibhéid, 1999,), Germany (Mole, 2018, 2021; Petzen, 2004; Tudor, 2017, 2018; Yörükoğlu, 2014, 2020), Belgium (Dhoest, 2019; Peumans, 2012, 2014a, 2014b, 2015), France (Amari, 2012, 2013; Brett, 2019; Cesaro, 2020; Chossière, 2021, 2022), Spain (Coll-Planas, et al. 2021; Perego, 2021) the Netherlands (Hertoghs & Schinkel, 2018; Juros, 2022; McNeal & Brennan, 2021; Patterson & Leurs, 2018), Italy (Carnassale, 2021; Castro & Carnassale, 2019; Masullo, 2016), Greece (Carastathis, 2018; Tsilimpoundi & Carastathis, 2020; Carastathis & Tsilimpoundi, 2020; Zisako, 2021) Britain (Cowen et al., 2011; Danisi, et al. 2021; DasGupta & Dasgupta, 2018; Giametta, 2014, 2015; Khan, 2013; Mole et al. 2017; Mole et al. 2014; Ryan-Flood, 2015; Simmons, 2004, 2008; Stella, 2015, Stella et al. 2018; Stella & Gawlewicz, 2021; Valenzuela, 2021), Canada (Murray, 2013, 2014ab, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018; Shahidian, 1999; Shakhsari, 2013; White, 2013a, 2013b, 2014), Australia (Gorman-Murray, 2009, 2007, 2014; Lewis & Peñaloza, 2020; Ruez, 2016; Smith, 2012a; Yue, 2008), and Turkey (Bayramoğlu & Lünenborg, 2018; Koçak, 2020; Saleh, 2020; Sari, 2020; Shakhsari, 2014).

Queer migration scholarship has in the past tended to glance over non-normative gender identities and transgender individuals, but there are some studies that have focused solely on transgender migration, such as Vogel's (2009) study of transgender women in Venezuela, Cotten´s (2012) edited volume on transgender migrations and Camminga's (2018) study of transgender refugees in South Africa, as well as Aizura's (2018) analyses of transgender narratives, from 1952 to the present, regarding transnational health and tourism industries. Most recently Camminga and Marnell (2022) edited a volume discussing both queer & trans African mobilities. Furthermore, articles discussing the mental health outcomes for transgender forced migrants (Hermaszewska, et al. 2022) and transgender individuals at risk of increased minority stress due to experiences of trauma (Rosati, et al. 2021). Transgender

refugees that are politically irrelevant to the Dutch asylum system (van der Pijl. et al. 2018). The experiences and framing of transgender immigrants in detention centres in the US (Kurdyla, 2022; Vogler & Rosales, 2023) and remittances and transnational activism amongst transgender refugees in the UK, US and Europe (Soloaga, 2021).

Queer diaspora is part of the field of queer migration studies, in that it partly moves away from the queer subject and towards the queering of diaspora with regards to theory (e.g., Alexander, 2005; Charczun, 2019; Eng, 2003; Fortier, 2002; Gopinath, 2005, 2015, 2018; Jorquera, et al. 2022; Mohabir, 2021; Patton & Sánchez-Eppler, 2000; Ponce, 2011; Rouhani, 2015; Smith, 2021; Yockey, 2020; Wesling, 2008). An intra-national movement of queer migrants from "backwards" rural areas towards possibilities and "outness" in metropolitan areas is also well documented, where a cosmopolitan queer identity is presumed to be obtainable along with a global culture (e.g., Higgs, 1999; Hubbard, 2012), and where the choice to "stay put" seems somewhat out of place within queer studies (Fortier, 2002) as Halberstam (2000) suggests, the rural is the closet of the urban. These notions have generated biased narratives of queer migrations, and as Gorman-Murray (2007, 2009) has noted, this trend is not in line with the experiences and concrete practices of queer subjects who live in larger cities, as they may become anonymous but never emancipated (see Di Feliciantonio and Gadelha, 2015). Queer culture(s) have now become more accessible with the emergence of "queer sites of connection" which manifests itself, for example, thorough the Internet, films, and magazines, and which have created somewhat of a queer diasporic consciousness. But it is important to note that these sites of connection are not conflict-free or homogeneous zones, nonetheless, queer spaces, whether physical or virtual, can be a space of refuge both from other LGBTQI+ worlds and the straight world(s) (Wakerford, 1997, see Fortier, 2002).

Additionally, there are studies placing emphasis on the nation and queer citizenship (Banerjie, 2019; Cruz-Malavé & Manalansan 2002; Luibhéid & Cantú, 2005; Ponzio, 2022; Somerville, 2005) as well as sexual citizenship (Aggleton, et al. 2019; Aizura, 2006; Bell, 1995; Bell & Binnie, 2000; Binnie, 1995; Bhanji, 2012; Chávez, 2010, 2015; Giddens, 1992; Evans, 1993; Haritaworn, 2012; Herman, 1994; Josephson, 2017; Plummer, 1995; Phelan, 1994, 1995; Richardson, 1998, 2000, 2017; Robson, 1992; Ryan-Flood, 2009; 2011; Volpp, 2017; Weeks, 1998; Wilson, 1995) and intimate citizenship (Bonjour & de Hart, 2017; Chauvin, et al. 2019; Moreira, 2020; Nordmarken, et al. 2016; Oleksy, 2009; Plummer, 2001a; Roseneil, et al. 2013b). The comparison between citizenship and performance is based on the idea of cultural citizenship which has its roots in the field of anthropology. According to Rofel (1999), the process of citizen formation is one "in which culture

becomes a relevant category of affinity" (Rofel 1999, p. 457) rather than only a political one. These scripts of belonging can be interpreted to encompass the "right to be different and to belong in a participatory democratic sense" (Rosaldo, 1994, p. 402). Therefore, unofficial or common scripts that support apparently opposing ideas of participation within a political and cultural entity or group make up cultural citizenship. More than just accepting rights and obligations, citizenship also necessitates modelling and contesting the appropriate civic ideas and behaviours (Cruz-Malavé & Manalansan, 2002; Ong, et al. 1996; Beaman, 2016).

In relation to queer globalisations and queer migration scholarship, the innovation of this research project lies in the fact that it does not discuss a specific group of queer migrations to Iceland but analyses experiences from all over the world, and then divides the narratives into the three previously mentioned groups: the Global South, Central and Eastern Europe and the Global North. It further analyses the three analytical layers of micro, meso and macro, as well as focusing on how exclusionary political projects affect the relationality of belonging.

2.2   Homo(trans)nationalism and the migrant hierarchy

This is the first research project to apply the theory of homonationalism to the study of queer migrations to Iceland. Ellenberger (2017) had previously applied the theory to analyse documents regarding the subject of "pink tourism" and as it relates to the Icelandic national imaginary. This study is further the first one, as far as I am aware, to examine a migrant hierarchy within the field of queer migration studies, and the first one that divides the interlocutors into three groups, hailing from the Global South, Central and Eastern Europe, and from the Global North. It is imperative to highlight how this hierarchy functions within queer migrations as in other forms of migrations, and how the hierarchy is connected to whiteness, socioeconomics, cisgenderness and geopolitics.

The theory of homonationalism (Puar, 2007), in a sense, frames the overall study, as has been previously mentioned. Homonationalism takes place in a setting where a relatively small group of privileged gays and lesbians, who fit the predominant norm regarding social locations such as race, class, gender, ethnicity, ability, and age, have become part of the national imaginary. In the Icelandic context, this takes place through histories of Nordic exceptionalism regarding the welfare state, gender equality, sexual rights, and low crime rates. Moreover, this exceptionalism is contrasted against the immigrant other, who are in Iceland predominantly migrants from Central and Eastern Europe and to some extent from Muslim majority countries, but more generally from the Global South. These migrants are often seen as more "backwards" than other

migrants, and thus do not fit the predominant norm to various degrees and do not possess a privileged subjectivity. To highlight the processes of homonationalism and the migrant hierarchy, this study thus discusses the experiences of those queer migrants who are not included in the national imaginary, those who do not fit within the predominant norm, and those who have encountered microaggressions, exclusionary moments, and structural violence within the queer community, their ethnic community and in the Icelandic mainstream society. Some queer migrants in this study, however, especially those from the Global North, are more privileged regarding various social locations, such as, race, class, gender, ethnicity, and ability. All these experiences are nonetheless intersectional, as migrants can be privileged in some situations subjugated in others and occupy a place of in-betweenness in yet others. This study thus calls attention to the migrant hierarchy and the fact that some queer migrants are more accepted and can more easily find a sense of belonging in Iceland, while others are more stigmatised, racialised and othered, within that same society, and are structurally positioned to not belong.

2.2.1 Homonationalism

Despite having its origins in transgender activism (Stryker, 2008), the concept of homonormativity was coined by Duggan (2002) to describe politics that uphold and sustain dominant heteronormative institutions and assumptions within LGBTQI+ communities, instead of contesting and resisting this normalisation, "while promising the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency and a privatised, depoliticised gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption" (p. 50). Jasbir K. Puar (2007) extends Duggan's formulation in her book *Terrorist assemblages*, to show how homonormativity aligns with hegemonic forms of nationalism and coined the term homonationalism. Puar proposes that U.S. sexual exceptionalism (in relation to sexual liberation, tolerance, and gay friendliness) works by glossing over the maintenance of boundary policing of acceptable racial, class, gender, and ability formations, and indeed, only reinforces them. Moreover, she shows that some queers support this discourse of nationalism, as it seems to promise them inclusion in the state, when in fact it both reinforces and reflects cultural, racial, and other hierarchies within the queer communities. This occurs in a setting where heterosexuality is the norm but homotolerance has increasingly become included in the imaginative geographies of nation. Furthermore, it fosters nationalist homosexual positionalities, which are indebted to liberalism through kinship and consumption, while policing non-normative and non-nationalist sexualities though panopticon. Puar's theory is grounded in the attacks on the twin towers in 2001, as well as U.S. nationalism and patriotism, where the Orientalist terrorist other and the racialisation of the other is used to think

through the idealisation of a multicultural heteronormative society in an age of counterterrorism. Deployment of homonationalism and sexual exceptionalism are contrasted against "racialised bodies of pathologised sexualities" (Puar, 2007, 51), when Muslims became the other within society after the 9/11 attacks, and then replacing the subject position of lesbians and gays, who side with the state that had previously oppressed them. This process eliminates the idea that there could exist a non-heterosexual Muslim individual (El-Tayeb, 2012). US sexual exceptionalism is nonetheless transnational as several nation states construct their national imaginaries through ideas of gender equality and superior human rights discourse, such as the Nordic countries and Iceland. Puar herself also discusses Britain and the Netherlands as examples of sexual exceptionalism, where Muslim populations are presumably posing a particular danger to LGBTQI+ individuals, groups, and communities. However it is important to note, that in the last few years, we have learned that homotolerance is extremely fragile, especially in the US, where many states are now pushing back against rights for gays and lesbians, such as banning gay marriage, implementing "don't say gay" laws for schools and limiting trans rights.

In her article *Rethinking homonationalism,* Puar (2013a) discusses the usage of the theory, while also referring to a transnational framing. Puar notes that the right to and capacity for national sovereignty are measured through the barometer of "acceptance" and "tolerance" for gay and lesbian subjects, as well as a universal commitment to a sexual identity that prioritises identity politics, "coming out", public visibility, and legislative measures (Puar, 2013b). Furthermore, she notes that homonationalism is an analytical category "deployed to understand and historicise how and why a nation's status as 'gay-friendly' has become desirable in the first place" (Puar, 2013a, p. 336). Puar also emphasises the framing of homonationalism:

> homonationalism is fundamentally a deep critique of lesbian and gay liberal rights discourses and how those rights discourses produce narratives of progress and modernity that continue to accord some populations access to citizenship – cultural and legal – at the expense of the delimitation and expulsion of other populations. [...] I have thus theorised homonationalism as an assemblage of de- and reterritorializing forces, affects, energies, and movements. While the project arose within the post 9/11 political era of the United States, homonationalism is also an ongoing process, one that in some sense progresses from the civil rights era and does not cohere only through 9/11 as a solitary temporal moment (Puar, 2013a, p. 337).

By using Deleuzian assemblage, also known as "agencement" in French, which loosely translates to "patterning of arrangements," homonationalism is re-articulated as a field of power as opposed to an activity or a quality of any one

nation-state, organisation, or person. Furthermore, homonationalism is a process rather than an occurrence or a characteristic (Puar, 2013b).

Puar further links homonationalism with pinkwashing, as one practice and manifestation made possible through homonationalism. But the concepts are nonetheless separate, as pinkwashing is predominantly produced by state practises, which homonationalism is not per se. Pinkwashing, refers to the tactic of using LGBT rights protections as a means to showcase liberalism and democracy, sometimes as a diversion or justification for aggression against other nations or groups. A prime example of pinkwashing is the Israeli state, which through promoting LGBTQI+ bodies as representative of Israeli democracy, and positioning itself as progressive, civilised, and modernised, supports their settler colonialism in the Palestinian state, by utilising Euro-American notions of the Muslim other as "backwards", "pathological" and "uncivilised" when it comes to issues of gender and sexuality (Puar, 2013a). This also plays into the ongoing U.S. discourse of "war on terror", the class of cultures, and cultural differences, which jointly whitewashes, or in fact pinkwashes, the Israeli state of any wrongdoings regarding the occupation of land and ethnic cleansing of Palestinians, or "the constraining and suffocating spatial and economic effects of apartheid" (Puar, 2013a p. 34) which has now turned into an ongoing genocide. Pinkwashing builds on the foundational ideas of homonationalism, but is, in some sense, the next step regarding the misuse of LGBTQI+ rights and protections and does thus not relate to this research or the Icelandic context as it is described here.

A transnational framework for theorising homonationalism has been developed by Bacchetta and Haritaworn (2011) in their conversationally formatted chapter "There are Many Transatlantics", which is not centred on the United States but can be applied in other cultural contexts. They follow the transnational relationships and processes that support the development of "Western culture" and foster queer inclusiveness. Moreover, "[D]isparate histories of colonialism, slavery, genocide and migration are collapsed into a single globalised trope of civilisation and modernity, enabling the cohering of nations, Europe and a West, who all share the same enemy" (Bacchetta and Haritaworn 2011, p. 131). This enables the alignment of homonormativity with the West through queer deployments of civilisational discourse and produces queer collusions with national and transnational regimes of securitisation, imprisonment, and war. These processes further create the conditions and possibility of homonormative inclusion within specific Western nation-states (Bacchetta and Haritaworn 2011; see Verhaeghe, 2022). Bacchetta outlines the conditions for homonationalism in three dimensions:

> One, which I'll call homonationalism one, and is perpetuated by states. A second, homonationalism two, is maintained by subjects within a nation, including feminists and lgbtq subjects. A third, which we could call

homotransnationalism, is based on homonationalism one and two, but is differentiated by its transnational scale of circulation. The three are deeply inter-related. They manifest themselves variably in diverse sites (Bacchetta and Haritaworn 2011, p. 132).

Bacchetta mentions novels and films that have been available in Iceland as an example of cultural products which produce and sustain homotransnationalism, by creating images of persecuted Islamic women and homosexuals. Among those works is the book *Reading Lolita in Tehran* by Azar Nafisi and the film *Not without my daughter* which builds on a book with the same name by Mahmoody & Hoffer. This book was translated into Icelandic (Aldrei, aldrei án dóttur minnar, 1991) and along with the film was especially marketable in Iceland. This popularity can, nonetheless, also be traced to a parallel custody battle of an Icelandic mother against a Turkish ex-husband, which in some sense reflected the storyline of the book and consequent film (Ellenberger, 2017). Ellenberger (2017) has thus argued that these examples indicate that Iceland is in the range of distribution of homotransnationalist notions. In this thesis, the theory of homotransnationalim is applied, as it best describes these processes beyond the U.S. context. But in the articles, the term homonationalism is sometimes also applied, as that term also has this transnational potentiality, and as people are generally more familiar with that framing of the theory.

The modernisation theory itself is entirely founded on the Western experience, and consequently, we need to consider if the assumptions of exporting or disseminating that model can genuinely give effective sexual freedom within Muslim and other minority groups or majority cultures. The modernisation thesis would indicate that it is illogical to try to force queer rights on nations that have not yet "modernised" enough based on economic development, secularisation, and democratic government, which are seen as the predecessors to sexual diversity. The local repercussions of this type of aid conditionality may be an increase in the stigmatisation and state harassment of queers. In fact, repressive state actors frequently gain legitimacy by urging their citizens to oppose the enactment of LGBT rights in the form of neocolonial resistance (Rahman, 2014).

This push for modernisation can however also be seen in Central and Eastern Europe, where the pressure comes from the European Union. The Roman Catholic Church has always played a vital role in the life of Polish people, as it, for example, supported the Solidarity union which was the main political opposition force during the communist times. Moreover, the Roman Catholic Church has been inextricably linked to Polish national identity and as a result, it's extremely conservative views on sexuality have been accepted without

question (Szulc, 2011). Sexual minority movements started to organise themselves in the beginning of the 1990s in Poland, but their voices were extremely weak in the beginning and still are to some extent, compared to the strongly supported institution of the Polish Catholic Church. LGBTQI+ movements in Poland strive towards assimilation to the dominant cultural group while the Catholics and the conservatives maintain that homosexuality is caused by childhood problems and can thus be changed (Mucha, 1997). Ideas of a socially constructed queer identity are thus generally absent from the LGBTQI+ movements, but queer theory and ideas are somewhat more present in Polish academia. Gender studies and queer theory emerged in Polish academia at the same time and have thus created considerable misconceptions, for example, these fields have been linked to paedophilia even by academics (Szulc, 2011). Butterfield (2013) has examined sexual rights in Croatia and notes that it is important to advocate for sexual human rights without preserving a homogenising and Eurocentric discourses, which externally and internally reproduce the European other and hierarchical European identities. It is not enough to simply focus on strategies that implement anti-discrimination laws, as has been the case within the European Union, because they tend to have homogenising tendencies towards nations, societies, and cultures and as they reconstruct borders between the more primitive or backwards "non-European" cultures and the so-called more developed and modern "European" cultures. Furthermore, these legal strategies do not address the important issue of social and economic inequalities that exist, both within and between various LGBTQI+ communities in central and eastern Europe, which play a vital and formative role within the overall context of social change.

Opposition to queer and women's rights, as well as to the concept of social constructionism, must be understood in its historical context. The first protests against the notion that gender and sexuality are socially constructed phenomena's that are not biologically defined took place in 1995 at the United Nations world conference in Beijing. An objection was made by the Vatican, as they wanted to define gender through biological and sexual aspects of men's and women's identities and argued that biological sex was not transformable. The Vatican got its wish, and the notion of socially constructed gender and sexual rights were taken out of a document dealing with women's self-empowerment. Later, the Vatican coined the term "gender ideology" in order to downplay feminist and queer ideas about socially constructed sexuality (Corredor, 2022). There is an established relationship between right-wing populism and the term "gender ideology". Populism often has a conservative leaning and is therefore associated with right-wing politics (also left-wing in Latin America). Populist movements have grown considerably in Europe and elsewhere. Since "gender ideology" is vague and ill-defined, it is possible to get

many different movements to unite in opposition to it. Populism has thus drawn attention to the movement and made it popular (Paternotte & Kuhar, 2018). The Catholic church and right-wing politics can thus be seen as the root cause of the backlash against LGBTQI+ rights that has taken place in various parts of the world.

2.2.2   The migrant hierarchy

Inclusion and exclusion are frequently linked to social identities as they have significant structuring impacts on why, how, and where, certain borders are constructed (Anthias, 2001). Identities are nonetheless neither logically nor metaphysically prior to difference, as all identities are effects of difference. The concept of difference is thus a real system of divergent relations that creates actual sensations, times, and spaces (Deleuze, 1994). The focus of exclusion in the European context has been on a lack of social integration, social cohesiveness, or just another term for poverty and its consequences (van Berkel, 1997). Social exclusion is a multidimensional phenomenon and can be grouped it into four categories: Exclusion from social arenas; participation in civil society; labour market participation; and formal citizen rights (Aasland & Flotten, 2001). Homonormative and middle-class performances of identity and politics are further often favored within contemporary frameworks of inclusion and belonging (Richardson, 2000; Bell & Binnie, 2000). But as citizenship is confined to some and not others, it is important to refute the very move of inclusion, into political subjectivity, citizenship, and rights, through sexuality (Haritaworn, et al., 2013). Inclusion can further also mean exclusion, as when formerly excluded groups are successfully included, they themselves might exclude more disenfranchised and vulnerable groups. In this politics of dualism, questions need to be asked as to who is excluded, from what, and who constructs the representation of social inclusion and exclusion (Jackson, 1999). Inclusion into a patriarchal, neoliberal, and politically short-sighted systems that do not address systemic exploitation and violence towards minorities is thus not desirable (Nair, 2010a/2010b). It is thus important to shift the focus away from inclusion's seductive promises and toward the devastating implications of some forms of inclusion, while centring attention on those lives and deaths that fall outside of inclusive citizenship, into erasure, violence, and abandonment (Haritaworn, et al., 2013). In fact, when we talk about inclusion and exclusion, there is always a hierarchy of inbetweeness that is often not discussed, or to put it another way, different degrees of inclusion and exclusion if one wants to keep within the terms of duality.

Cultural relativism was first proposed by the anthropologist Franz Boas and claims that the customs and practices of cultures should be examined on their own terms, and not in relation to the scale of development, the moral judgment

of the researcher or the dominant discourses in other societies. Unlike such ideas, there is a cultural hierarchy operational in Iceland, as is the case in most other countries. Exclusionary processes regarding immigrants in Iceland are thus deeply embedded in racial, cultural, and class hierarchies, which needs further discussion within queer migration studies. Processes of cultural othering relate to Said's (1979) theory of Orientalism, which describes how the West often depicts and portrays the East, i.e., the Orient, with disdain. Inhabitants of Asia, North Africa, and the Middle East are considered to be societies and peoples of the Orient. Said contends that Orientalism, as understood by Western academia regarding the Eastern World, is intrinsically linked to the imperialist countries that generated it, making much of the work inherently political and subservient to power. Exclusionary processes regarding immigrants in Iceland and the degrees of otherness and acceptance in the mainstream Icelandic culture has thus created a migrant hierarchy, which is reflected in how value is connected to migrants' culture, termed "global hierarchy of value" by Herzfeld (2004) which is then othered in accordance with the gradient of the Orient, termed as "nesting Orientalism" by Bakić-Hayden (1995). Nesting orientalism depicts a pattern in which, the "West" (Western/Northern/Southern Europe, the U.S., Canada, and Australia) is determined as the centre, and where Asia is categorised as the most "Eastern" or the most "other", followed by the Balkans, and then Eastern Europe, in a hierarchical structural formation towards the "West" as the centre (Bakić-Hayden, 1995). This hierarchical ordering is nonetheless not fixed but shifting and intersectional and closely connected to migrants' socioeconomic status. The majority of quantitative research on attitudes towards immigrants have used aggregate measures that do not account for distinct migrant groups. However, Ford (2011) looked at disaggregated opinions regarding immigration to Britain from seven distinct locations and discovered extensive evidence supporting a consistent hierarchy of preferences between immigrant groups, where white and culturally similar immigrant groups are generally less opposed than non-white and more culturally diverse immigrants. This hierarchical ordering of migrants has thus been established in other cultural contexts. Moreover, it is essential to make note of how this arrangement of different immigrant groups relates to queer migrations in Iceland as elsewhere. There is further a hierarchical structure that occurs both between nations in the CEE region and inside each ethnic community.

The terms used in migration studies reflect the overall framing of the migration process, where a distinct hierarchical ordering is reflected in the language itself. The word immigrant has been used to refer to foreign-born individuals who intend to stay for more than one year, or long-term residents, but has in many countries become loaded with negative significations (Newton, 2008; Leinonen, 2012; Guðjónsdóttir, 2018). The word migrant has thus in

many cases taken over as the dominant synonymous, or umbrella term, for everyone who migrates from one location to another, "irrespective of the causes, voluntary or involuntary, and the means, regular or irregular" (IOM, 2022, p. 1). However, not noting the nuances of migration, such as in relation to distance and time can be misleading.

Several subcategories have been listed by IOM (2022) regarding the term international migrant. An irregular migrant is a person who, owing to unauthorised entry, breach of a condition of entry, or the expiry of their visa, lacks legal status in a transit or host country. The term "irregular" is preferable to "illegal" because the latter carries a criminal connotation and is seen as denying migrants' humanity. A documented migrant is a migrant who enters a country lawfully and remains in the country in accordance with their admission criteria. A temporary migrant worker is a skilled, semi-skilled or untrained worker, who remains in the destination country for definite periods as determined in a work contract. An economic migrant is a person leaving his or her habitual place of residence to settle outside his or her country of origin to improve his or her quality of life. This term is often loosely used to distinguish from refugees fleeing persecution and is also similarly used to refer to persons attempting to enter a country without legal permission and/or by using asylum procedures without bona fide cause (McNulty, 2015). A skilled migrant is a migrant worker who, because of their skills or acquired professional experience, is usually granted preferential treatment regarding admission to a host country (and is therefore subject to fewer restrictions regarding length of stay, change of employment and family reunification). The term expatriate is within the field of human resource management used to refer to an intra-company transfers (McNulty, 2015). Nonetheless, in public and academic debate, affluent "white" mobile professionals moving within the West, are often allocated the term "expats" rather than "immigrants" or "migrants", without being an intra-company transfer, or are simply referred to as Europeans, Americans, or Canadians (Croucher, 2012; Loftsdóttir, 2016; Guðjónsdóttir, 2018). At the heart of the general usage of the term "expat", thus lie complex configurations of nationality, class, gender, and racialisation, while also involving a problematic reproduction of the colonial past (Kunz, 2016). A distinct hierarchical ordering of migrants is evident in these definitions, which are deeply embedded in geopolitics, socioeconomic class, racialisation, and whiteness (Leonard, 2010; Lundström, 2014). This framing of migration processes requires critical attention and illustrates how social hierarchies are constructed.

In this thesis I focus on voluntary migrations which are taken out of personal convenience, which can be temporary migrant workers, economic migrants, skilled migrants, "expats" or a combination of various classifications. People

seeking international protection fall under the umbrella term of migrants, for example in the UN definition of migrants, but as their migration process is usually substantially different from that of voluntary migrants, and as at the time, refugees granted asylum in Iceland were extremely few in numbers only one refugee was interviewed. In the Icelandic language the world immigrant (innflytjandi) is generally used as an umbrella term for all migrants who have taken up residence in Iceland, but there is no well-grounded translation for the word migrant. I thus use the term migrant and immigrant somewhat interchangeably in this thesis. As previously stated, the theory of homonationalism frames the overall study, and is thus a central pillar in the theoretical foundations of the thesis. As Bacchetta and Haritaworn (2011) extended this formulation to incorporate the transnational potential of the theory, and I do apply the term homotransnationalism to some extent. But in actuality I do use the terms somewhat interchangeably, but a preferred writing of the term might be homo(trans)nationalism as is applied in the name of the thesis.

2.3   The politics and sense of (un)belonging

This research is rooted in theories of belonging, which function on the macro, meso, and micro levels. The study aims, among other things, to determine which political projects of belonging are active in interlocutors' daily lives and how these projects govern the relationality of affective belonging in their ethnic community, the queer community, the Icelandic mainstream society, as well as transnationally. This research is the first one to divide belonging into the politics of belonging and a sense of belonging in relation to queer migrations in Northern Europe. Further discussing the politics and potentiality of unbelonging and belonging-in-difference. Ahlstedt (2016) discussed queer partner migration to Sweden in relation to affective belonging, and Dima & Dumitriu (2023) discusses queer Romanian diaspora in Sweden with regards to (un)belonging. When discussing belonging, I think it is vital to apply both (or even all) aspects of the term at the same time, in order to comprehend how social structures and exclusionary processes affect people's views on what is considered to be "normal" regarding ones social locations, as well as ones identifications and attachments to various groups and collectives. Moreover, to grasp how unbelonging can motivate social transformations. To understand how a sense of belonging operates, it is important to start with a discussion of intersectionality, which is also a key concept in my conceptualisation of "exclusionary moments", or how exclusion occurs as a result of subordination of one's subject position. Subsequently, there is an examination of affect and emotions as they relate to "home" and "race", and finally a deliberation of the politics of unbelonging and belonging-in-difference.

2.3.1 Intersectionality

Intersectionality is the systematic examination of the interrelations of differences, relating to racial, gender, sexual, class, and ethnic identities as well as other sociopolitical and cultural identities, and is central to the way subordination is lived and experienced (Fotopoulou, 2012). Women from various marginal groups began challenging the idea of "women" as a homogenous formation with a common experience in the early 1980s, which may be seen as the genesis of the concept of intersectionality (Abu-Lughod, 2006; McCall, 2005; Mohanty, 1991). Women who do not fit within the categories of "white," "middle class," or "heterosexual" targeted their criticism towards Western feminists who did not consider the numerous dissimilar experiences of being a woman (Abu-Lughod, 2006; Mohanty, 1991). The term developed parallel to feminist standpoint theory, which clams that it is crucial to account for social positioning of the social agent, and challenge "the good trick of seeing everything from nowhere" (Haraway, 1988, p. 581) as a cover for and legitimisation of the hegemonic masculinist positivistic positioning. Situated imagination, situated knowledge, and a situated gaze constructs the way we perceive the world in dissimilar ways. However, intersectional theory is focused more on how the distinct positions of various social actors are affected by the social, economic, and political projects they experience (Yuval-Davis, 2011a). Intersectionality further has its origins in early writings of women of colour, including Pauli Murray in the 60s and 70s and Black feminism in the 1970s (McCann & Monaghan, 2020). The term was nonetheless coined by the legal scholar and critical race theorist Kimberly Crenshaw (1989; 1991) while accounting for the multifaceted discrimination that African American women faced, in the text, *All the women are white, all the blacks are men, but some of us are brave* (Hull et al., 1982). Crenshaw elaborated on how such unidimensional conceptualisations obscure the specificity of the social position of Black women (Fotopoulou, 2012). There are further several different formulations of intersectionality, such as, that of configurations (Bhavnani, 2006) an axis of difference (Yuval-Davis, 2006a), social dynamics (Cooper, 2004) a dynamic process (Staunæs, 2003) and crossroads (Crenshaw, 1989). Some scholars have focused on particular positions, such as women of colour (Essed, 1991; Crenshaw, 1989; Harding, 1991); other formulations have been developed in broader terms that apply to any group of individuals, privileged or underprivileged (see Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1992; Brah, 1996; Maynard, 1994). This elevates intersectionality to the status of a key analytical instrument, challenging dominant approaches to stratification research as well as reified forms of identity politics (Yuval-Davis, 2006a). Intersectionality has become a travelling theory and is used in many parts of the world, both in academia and activism, thus it is important to note that it is grounded in the concept of race

(Lewis, 2013). The relative importance of different categories in determining people's social standing varies in relation to context. However, some categories seem to affect the lives of most individuals, regardless of place, such as, class, ethnicity, gender, and age (Yuval-Davis, 2006a). There have also been substantial theoretical advancements of intersectionality (Collins, 2012; Frankenberg, 1993; Levine-Rasky, 2011; McCall, 2005). Intersectionality is a practical answer that sheds light on the societal and material effects of gender/race/class power structures, but it does so by using methods compatible with the poststructuralist project of deconstructing categories, revealing universalism, and investigating the dynamic and paradoxical nature of power (Brah & Phoenix, 2004; see Fotopoulou, 2012). The fluidity of queer theory makes intersections of identity categories complex, but the fact remains that within particular spaces spatial orderings make a particular group and individuals feel moments of exclusion, making the concept continuously current (Valentine, 2007). Moreover, the importance of intersectionality lies in determining which difference matters, but all categorical thinking must be done selectively, strategically, and critically (Fotopoulou, 2012) as is the case in this thesis.

2.3.2 The politics of belonging

Belonging is never a reified fixity but a dynamic process, and a naturalised construction of a particular hegemonic form of power relations. Spatiality is crucial to conceptualising "belonging" as a process and consequence of affective connections. Much of today's scholarship on migration, transnationalism, and globalisation views "the migrant" as a prototype of "borderless belonging"; that is, someone whose sense of identity is in constant flux, never fully established, and unable to be pinned down. In sharp contrast to these ideas is the craving for and the practises of making a "home" in a new location despite experiences of displacement. Migrants' place-making activities, as well as their stories and visions of "home," reveal a fundamentally relational understanding of location within the framework of "belonging" (Ingold, 2000; Malpas, 1999; Massey, 2005). Belonging, can be as much a matter of who you know as it is of how far you can go in the future. Regarding queer people, for whom belonging is more than a simple desire to be or feel connected, this is especially pertinent topic. Freeman (2007) labels "queer belonging" as the desire "to be long", which she defines as "to endure over time, beyond procreation" or "to be bigger not just spatially, but also temporally" (p. 299, see Mattes, et al., 2019).

According to Nira Yuval-Davis (2005; 2006a&b; 2010; 2011a&b) a distinction must be made between a sense of belonging and the politics of belonging. This separation illustrates how exclusionary political projects of

belonging dictate individuals' sense of belonging to a community or society, and within cultural scenarios where these power structures are operational. These political projects are socially constructed by those who have the power to do so, and through sources such as dominant discourses, predominant norms, respectability politics and social and legal citizenship. For a person living in Iceland, or in any society for that matter, there are distinct political projects and power structures operating. Living within these communities and societies one must deal with the affects and long-term effects of those political projects though relational processes with other people, groups and clollectives, as well as institutions and organisations. Each society has its own predominant political projects, but similar nations often have similar political projects ongoing, such as sexism, racism, classism, migratism (Tudor, 2017), nationalism, heterosexism, cisgenderism, homonormalisation, ableism, ageism, and political projects relating to citizenship and border regimes. The politics of belonging includes distinct political projects with a focus on creating a sense of belonging to certain collectivity/ies, which are then creating their own borders and definitions inside these projects in very specific ways. However, as Antonsich (2010) notes, these borders are often spatial and connect to a particular locality/territoriality rather than solely being built around social collectivities, where space is simply an embodiment of social networks (Massey, 2005).

The creation of boundaries as well as the inclusion or exclusion of certain individuals, categories, and groups, inside these limits are set by those who possess the power to do so and are all part of the politics of belonging. Politics is the use of power, and various hegemonic political projects stand for various symbolic power structures. Theoretical contributions from Bourdieu (e.g., 1984, 1990) and Foucault (e.g., 1979, 1991) have enriched understandings of power. In Foucault's concept of a "disciplinary society", power is increasingly exercised via impersonal physical discipline mechanisms and a governmentality that works outside of the awareness and will of both individuals and groups of social actors. Under these circumstances, power doesn't begin to function until resistance arises. The concept of governmentality refers to the political power of the nation state and describes a phenomenon whereby laws or formal rules do not enforce disciplinary control over subjects' behaviour but subjects themselves willingly change their behaviour to adhere to predominant norms. While sharing some of Foucault's views, such as the significance of bodily practises in mediating relations of dominance, Bourdieu's theory of symbolic power may be more relevant in this context. According to Bourdieu, the subject is socially and physically constructed. Bourdieu's theory of practise provides a more sensitive analytical framework for analysing empirical data to interpret impersonal power relations. The idea of symbolic power explains the covert, almost unconscious forms of social and cultural dominance that are maintained

over aware subjects in everyday social interactions though unquestioned "shared beliefs" also called *doxa*. Symbolic power is mediated by various forms of accumulated capital (economic, social and cultural) which is carried in the body and fits between the habitus and the field. Symbolic power refers to the use of discipline to establish and reinforce an individual's subject position within a social hierarchy. This may occur in personal relationships, but is mostly carried out via institutional systems, such as the educational system (Deer, 2008). According to Bourdieu, the "social field," which is shaped by symbolically mediated relations of dominance, and the "habitus", which he refers to as the socially ingrained inclinations of individual agents, interact constantly. Central to Bourdieu's concept of habitus is his analysis of social identity, in attempting to theorize how the social is incorporated into the self, and how the self is constitutive in social relations. He stated that, for example, only the cultural and symbolic artifacts of the middle class is generally known as legitimate, and thus the difference which the working-class people display is made into inequality (Lawler, 2005). The habitus and the theory of governmentality, previously mentioned, are thus interconnected. When it comes to political projects of belonging, symbolic powers are vital, even if they often serve as the focal point for conflicts and resistance. The boundaries that divide the world's population into "us" and "them"—sometimes literally, but always symbolically—are the boundaries that the political community of belonging is concerned with. All political projects of belonging hinge on the issue of the boundaries of belonging, or the boundaries of Anderson's (1991) "imagined communities". The politics of belonging encompass additional political actors contesting, challenging, and resisting the borders of the community of belonging in addition to the hegemonic political powers, inside and outside the community, maintaining and reproducing them (Yuval-Davis, 2011a). As the politics of belonging is also dialogical it includes disagreements about the participatory nature of citizenship as well as the status and privileges that come with it. Citizenship is often seen as the ultimate political project, where a formal inclusion in the nation state is the end goal (Yuval-Davis & Werbner, 1999).

2.3.3 A sense of belonging

A sense of belonging can be experienced in various ways which can differ in abstract or a concrete ways, from a particular person to the whole of humanity. A sense of belonging is defined by the manner in which people come together in emotionally connected and relational ways. It is only through the merging of feelings that a sense of belonging may be created (Wright, 2015). A sense of belonging also involves an emotional and perhaps ontological connection and a sense of feeling at "home", where home is an ongoing effort entailing a feeling of optimism for the future (Hage, 1997; Taylor, 2009). The notion of a "safe

space" also plays a role in this sense of optimism (Ignatieff, 2001). At the same time, it is crucial to note that feeling "at home" does not always result in pleasant and cosy emotions. It also permits the safety and emotional involvement of feeling furious, resentful, embarrassed, and outraged (Hessel, 2010). A feeling of belonging is also connected to the positions and the amount of power one holds within a particular group.

The first analytical layer of a sense of belonging relates to social locations. When persons are referred to as belonging to a certain sex, ethnicity, class, or country, or are members of a certain age group, family group, or a certain occupation, we are in fact discussing their social and economic locations. Such social locations would typically be associated with each historical period, and the specific values in the grids of power relations functioning in their culture. Being working-class or middle class, man or woman, a person of colour or white, a citizen of a country in Europe or Africa, individuals are not just several categories of social location, with various contextual meanings, but they also often have particular positionalities along power axes that are superior to or inferior to other similar categories. However, such positionalities often differ in various historical settings, and are often contentious as well as debated (Yuval-Davis, 2011a). On occasion differences are only identifiers for different locations rather than actual differential power positionings (Harding, 1991; Fraser & Honneth, 1998). Even in their most stable form, social locations are seldom built along a single power vector of difference, despite the fact that identity politics and official statistics often tend suggest this. This demonstrates how very significant the intersectional approach to social locations is (Yuval-Davis, 2011a).

The second analytical layer of a sense of belonging relates to individuals' emotional attachments and identifications with diverse collectivities and groupings. Once we define identity in a manner that is precise enough, we may utilise it to our advantage. According to Martin (1995), identity is a particular kind of story in which individuals tell themselves and others about who they are, who they are not, and who or how they would want to or should be (see Kaptani & Yuval-Davis, 2008; Yuval-Davis, 2010). Individual or collective identity narratives are both possible, with the latter often serving as a resource for the former. They may be passed down from one generation to the next, but only selectively; they can change and shift, be disputed, and have numerous manifestations. The most beneficial use of such an understanding of identity, however, is that it can be understood to include both performative and dialogical methods. Performative methods may tell us a lot about the practice of identity narratives in oppositional and preconceived discourses, while dialogical methods can inform us about the social and relational construction of identity narratives. Identity narratives' sociality is created either inside pre-existing

socially normative discourses or via dialogically merging both individual and group resources (Yuval-Davis, 2010). Depending on the power positions and normative ideals of the social actors as well as in connection to their cognitive and emotional identifications, inclusion or exclusion is often not reciprocal. People may be forced to construct their sense of self and identity in certain historical settings. In such circumstances, people's identities and sense of belonging take on significant dimensions in terms of their social positions and locations (Yuval-Davis, 2010). Fanon (1952) noted that resistance politics must target oppressed people's internalisations of coerced self- and identity-constructions as well as their social and economic circumstances. Muñoz (1999) contends that complete assimilation is only feasible at considerable personal sacrifice because those who are erased and severely oppressed by what they are expected to be, by prevailing ideologies, are unable to assimilate. Although counteridentification is a possibility, it is not always crucial to survival because it still entails adhering to the rules of conduct of dominant ideologies. Muñoz contends that for queers of colour, disidentification is a means of coping with a social context that erases and despises them. This has its foundations in daily resistance and opens up certain specific opportunities for more overt political activity and cultural production.

The third analytical layer relating to a sense of belonging is ethical and political values. Belonging encompasses more than simply social locations and the creation of individual and group identities and connections; it also has to do with how these issues are evaluated and appreciated by oneself and others. As was mentioned above, one's social locations as well as one's attachments and identifications relate to predominant political projects of belonging which are operational within each culture, and become concrete through everyday interactions with other people, groups and collectives. The internalisation of predominant norms, discourses, ethics and values produces a hierarchy where those who fit within these power structures are more accepted and included, and those that do not fit are excluded to various degrees. People with similar social locations can do this in several different ways, including those who self-identify as belonging to the same group or community. These might differ not only in terms of how significant these social locations and communities appear to be in one's life and in the life of others, but also whether this is seen as a good or a bad thing (Yuval-Davis, 2011a). Those fitting the prevailing norm in terms of social locations such as gender, sexuality, nationality, race, class, and ability, and those who identify with such groups and collectives, are thus valued more highly within society than those who do not.

2.3.4 Affect & emotions regarding "home" & "race"

Affect and emotions have a significant role in social structures and social settings characterised by inequities and power relations based on factors such as race, class, and gender. Relational patterns of differentiation and value go hand in hand with emotional processes of othering that are unique to social locations (Slaby & Scheve, 2019). Emotions are "the expression of affect in gesture and language, its conventional or coded expression" (Massumi, 2003, p. 232), in contrast to affect, which does not have any permanent structure, is incoherent and nonlinguistic in nature. An emotion is a person's articulation of how they are now feeling, which is guided by cultural norms and social conventions. Affect occurs below the threshold of awareness, as sensory intensity, and it may arouse a nebulous sensation that we are experiencing something, a murky stirring that, if strong enough, might inspire attempts (more or less conscious) to figure out what we are feeling and how to express it. This distinction between affect and emotions is not temporal, where affect comes first and then an emotion takes its place as the dominant state of mind. Even if it isn't always fully realised, affects are constantly there. Affect is what causes a feeling to be experienced (Shouse, 2005), as the lack of emotional intensity renders the experience meaningless (Gould, 2009), affect and emotions are thus fundamental when discussing peoples experiences. Although I do adhere to Ahmed's theorisations of the relationality of affect, in several ways, I also acknowledge the distinction between affect and emotions made by Massumi and others and do thus not use the terms interchangeably.

As has been noted by Probyn (2004), Bourdieu's analysis of embodiment as "practical sense", has mapped "emotions" onto experiences, which are then performed by enculturated social actors. Emotional capital is also understood as "emotional resources", and it is exchanged, accumulated, and circulated for other forms of capital, as well as regulated through emotion practices which are based on emotional norms. Emotions have an embodied aspect which is affect, affect is experienced in the body but then named and re-experienced through culture and social relations (Zembylas, 2007). Ahmed (2010) discusses the stickiness of affect in her book *The promise of happiness*. An object's stickiness is determined by the types and amounts of interaction that have previously left impressions on it, "affect is what sticks, or what sustains or preserves the connection between ideas, values, and objects" (29). Stickiness is "as an effect of the histories of contact between bodies, objects, and signs" (Ahmed, 2004a, p. 90). Ahmed's (2004a) further puts forth the notion of "affective economies" in her book *The cultural politics of emotions*, which proposes that emotions circulate rather than reside in a subject, in connection to what is different. Hate does not reside within an individual but circulates and sticks together other bodies, and forms a group united by their hatred, and in the process

differentiates these bodies from others. The focal point of affective economies is how some people and emotional behaviours gain more "affective value" or "emotional capital" than others. Affect is important to the functioning of power, and power gives rise to affects. For those who perform them, affective practises and affective subject positions give out "distinction". Affect powers and is entwined with societal value systems, enabling the labelling of certain people as repulsive and others as paragons of contemporary morality (Ahmed, 2004a; Skeggs, 2010; Skeggs & Wood, 2009). In contemporary research on social class, some authors have claimed that affect and the psychological are critical tools for establishing social status and gaining access to privileged social networks (e.g., Charlesworth, 2000; Lawler, 2005; Sayer, 2005). For instance, Beverley Skeggs (2004, 2010) argues that for white working-class women who are carefully negotiating the terrain of "respectability" the reflexive practise of affect has been vital for preserving social status. The issue of conformity is therefore dominant in the study of affect, power, and value (Wetherell, 2012). This reflexive practise of affect regarding white working-class women thus also relates to Bourdieu theorisation of symbolic power.

Ahmed (2000) notes in her book *Strange encounters: Embodied others in post-coloniality,* that addressing notions of being-at-home, can only be done through affect and questions of "how one feels or how one might fail to feel" (89). Home can also be theorised as "the lived experiences of locality, its sounds and smells" (Brah, 1996, p. 192) with regards to how locality is not simply something outside the subjects, but can intrude the senses through remembers, feels, touches, hears and smells. The issue of whether one is at home or away is therefore always a matter of memory, of the break between the past and the present: "For an exile, habits of life, expression or activity in the new environment inevitably occurs against the memory of things in the other environment" (Said, 1990, p. 366; see Ahmed, 2000, p. 91). Moreover, migration and the experience of leaving home are about the "failure of memory to fully make sense of the place one comes to inhabit" (91). These failures of memory are also connected to the process of returning home, as the familiar is not inhabited the same. Ahmed (2000) notes:

> Home is implicitly constructed as a purified space of belonging in which the subject is too comfortable to question the limits or borders of her or his experience, indeed, where the subject is so at ease that she or he does not think. [...] Such a narrative of home assumes the possibility of a space which is pure, which is uncontaminated by movement, desire or difference, in order to call for a politics in which movement is always and already a movement away from home [...] it is the very opposition between "home" and "away" that we must call more radically into question [...] Rather, "homes" always involve encounters between those who stay, those who arrive and those who leave (87-88).

Queer conditions, so to speak, foster forms of belonging and enable the emergence of communities, and thus can be found in the experience of sensing and making sense of one's place in both spatial and temporal terms, including feelings of alienation, discomfort, an inability to extend or return, and discontinuities of the past and the present (Mattes, et al., 2019).

The concept of "homing desires" has been discussed by Brah (1996) where in the context of migration, some ontological security is provided through the (re)constituting of spaces, symbolically or physically, in an attempt to feel at home. Cappello (1996) notes that "homes" are not seamless sites of belonging, but rather locations, criss-crossed by variety of forces that have to be negotiated again and again. Even when we are in it, home is already fantasised. There is a narrative of queer migration as "homecoming", where "home" is not the place of origin but the destination, as the vast majority of queer people are brought up in heterosexual families, they often have to move out of the childhood home, in order to come out as a non-heterosexual and fulfil their "true" homosexual self (see Fortier, 2000). Further discussed by Kuntsman (2003) who analysed the double homecoming of Jewish Russians who had migrated to Israel and escaped othering processes by coming out as lesbians, in a nation-sate where sexual citizenship is systematically misused to indicate modernisation and westernisation. But not all queer people leave home to come out, nor do all queer people have the desire to move. The intersections of sexuality, ethnicity and migration can be complicated, and in some cases, it is possible to "queer" the "home" of origin, to some extent, but in other cases it is an impossible task (Fortier, 2001). It would be useful to have a more effective theorisation of "home", such as of a space that is not necessarily determining or foundational, nor a function of heterosexuality, one that thinks of the familial home as more open to "queer belongings" (Fortier, 2003a). The idealised image of "coming out as coming home" (Fortier, 2001), a key tenet of white queer politics in the 1990s, is contested by queer migrants and queers of colour. For them, neither the "country of destination" nor the (white) queer community there offer a promise of a place to call home (Petzen, 2004, see Kuntsman, 2009a).

As Frantz Fanon (1952/2008) pointed out in the context of race, such historically rooted markers of human difference are produced and preserved primarily via antagonistic emotional interactions or affects of racialisation. Such category-marking processes are intrinsically affective, in the sense that they entail potentialities for action, which may show as (subtle or not-so-subtle) affective dispositions or overt feelings like resentment, humiliation, fear, and pride. Fanon's searing analysis of the emotive and bodily workings of racialisation is undoubtedly ready for an assertive rebirth in light of widespread xenophobia and the persistent presence of structural discrimination and institutional racism (Slaby & Scheve, 2019). As Ahmed (2004b) has discussed, it is important to study whiteness as a form of anti-racism, and that whiteness

studies begin with a critique of white racial privilege, and its effect on bodies that are recognised as Black. Lorde (1984) notes that by assigning race to others, whiteness is produced as a mythical norm. Whiteness studies make whiteness visible for the people who inhabit it, and for non-whites, they make whites visible in a different way (Ahmed, 2004b). Usually, whiteness is seen as the non-colour, the unseen or the unmarked, while all other colours are measured as a form of deviance (Dyer, 1997). Seeing whiteness as a non-white person is about living its effects. These effects give way to white bodies that move through spaces, which are already made in their shape. But these shapes make Black bodies stand apart, unless they can pass as white, then these spaces also fit their shape (Ahmed, 2004b). To make whiteness visible is thus an attempt to contest white privilege, but not to make it a fixed category of homogeneous experiences; as essential something (Dyer, 1997) as the centre of intellectual inquiry; or to sustain narcissism (Ahmed, 2004b). Although the notion that the human race may be divided into various subgroups has been debunked, racism continuous to be a daily experience for people of colour (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Ahmed notes:

> But for me we cannot do away with race unless racism is "done away". Racism works to produce race as if it was property of bodies (biological essentialism) or cultures (cultural essentialism). Race exists as an effect of histories of racism as histories of the present. Categories such as black, white, Asian, mixed-race, and so on have lives, but they do not have lives "on their own", as it were. They become fetish objects (black is, white is) only by being cut off from histories of labor, as well as histories of circulation and exchange. Such categories are effects and they have affects: if we are seen to inhabit this or that category, it shapes what we can do, even if it does not fully determine our course of action. Thinking beyond race in a world that is deeply racist is at best a form of utopianism, at worse a form of neo-liberalism: it imagines we could get beyond race, supporting the illusion that social hierarchies are undone once we have "seen through them" (Ahmed, 2004b, p. 48).

The historical context and concealed material of emotions, as well as the repetition of words with similar traces, allow, for example, derogatory words like "Paki" to accumulate value and cultural meaning. The effect of their repetition is to generate emotional value and bodily affects, that emerges from the specific context they are in (Ahmed, 2004b).

2.3.5 The politics of unbelonging & belonging-in-difference

A distinction is often made between unbelonging and nonbelonging. Spivak and Butler (2011) draw a clear contrast between "bare life" (not belonging) and "being contained and dispossessed" by the state at the same time (unbelonging). Garvey (2011) argues for the application of the analytical idea of (un)belonging

while evaluating figures from the queer diaspora in Dionne Brand's work; how places, times, and people "undo belonging, while not leading to the destructive erasure of not belonging" (758). Regarding the difficulties of moving, and the nuanced relationship between home and identity, and the "racialised laws" (769). Realising that the familiar routes we have taken up to this point are not the only ones accessible to us may be liberating for those who feel they do not belong and can inspire one to take political action. Specific identities may be developed outside of dominant belongings or in the periphery (Probyn, 1996; Stychin, 1997). Non-heterosexuals, for example, might help foster the growth of "deep diversity", an ethos in which identities are not fixed or totalising but rather fluid and open to multiple belongings (Stychin, 1997). New narratives of identity, such as lesbian identity narrative, have emerged as a result of such resistance to belonging, and have helped individuals achieve "new material possibilities and social positions" (Duggan, 1993, p. 811). Thus, the effects of feeling like you don't belong are not always terrible, and belonging isn't always the best possible situation either (May, 2011). The politics of unbelonging is thus, in my opinion, this creative force that materialises when exclusion occurs, and new realities transpire. Although it often is accompanied by humiliation and intense discomfort relating to disconnection, this productive energy of feeling out of place can potentially be harnessed to create a future more in line with one's sense of becoming. Or as Halberstam (2011) noted "Under certain circumstances failing, losing, forgetting, unmaking, undoing, unbecoming, not knowing may in fact offer more creative, more cooperative, more surprising ways of being in the world" (2).

The concept of belonging-in-difference refers to the spectrum which lies in-between a sense of belonging and unbelonging. Belonging-in-difference is a mode of being and becoming as has been explained by Muñoz in his books *Cruising utopia: The then and there of queer futurity* (2009) and *The sense of brown* (2020) which was published after his passing. Muñoz observes that the experience of "feeling like a problem" entails a sense of being disconnected and distinct from others. However, he strongly asserts that this sense of isolation is, paradoxically, the foundation upon which different ways of being, becoming and belonging-in-difference come together to form a collective relationship: "feeling like a problem is also a form of belonging, a belonging achieved through recognition." (Muñoz, 2020, p. 36). Therefore, seeing oneself as a problem is a way of acknowledging one's status as a minority. Muñoz prompts the reader to contemplate the issue of seeing oneself as a problem, not only as a deadlock situation, but rather as an opportunity for progress. W.E.B. Du Bois, approaches the communality of racial identification and belonging-in-difference with dexterity and grace. For Du Bois, the perception of a problem is a means of belonging, and for Muñoz, it creates a place for a different kind of relationship

inside the alternative space of minoritarian becoming, complete with an ingrained utopianism that is quasi-militant and exists outside of the realms of the known (Saldaña, 2021). Muñoz sees queerness as that which is "not quite here," "the thing that is not-yet-imagined" (2009, p. 21). "The field of utopian possibility is one in which multiple forms of belonging in difference adhere to a belonging in collectivity" (2009, p. 20). In article three of this thesis the concept of belonging-in-difference comes into the limelight, but in conjunction with theorisations of queer temporality. Queer temporality is a project that seeks to intervene and reconsider the presumed inherent nature of straight temporality, its controlling principles, and its limitations. Derived from the research conducted by queer theorists like Lee Edelman, Jack Halberstam, Jose Esteban Muñoz, and Elizabeth Freeman, queer temporality challenges the conventional notions of maturity, responsibility, happiness, and future by questioning the ways in which marriage, children, generativity, and inheritance shape and restrict cultural expectations. Moreover, queer temporality aims to interrogate the manner in which time is conceptualised and enacted, criticising the political aspects inherent in these interpretations. Queer temporality challenges the way heteronormativity controls and regulates time and space, offering alternative perspectives on history, speed, relationships, ideas of achievements, and the linear division of past, present, and future (Goltz, 2022). Queer temporalities thus open an analytical space for the imagination of queer communities and resistance.

In this chapter I have discussed several theories relating to the three pillars that the theoretical framework for the thesis rests upon. I began by discussing queer theory as it relates to the queering of migration studies that takes place by joining queer studies and migration studies, as well as processes of decentering exclusionary processes, such as, sexism, heterosexism, cisgenderism, homonormalisation, the national imaginary and access to citizenship rights. Followed by a discussion of queer globalisations which is foundational knowledge for the study and queer migration studies where the research project has its roots. Then moving on to theories of homonationalism as well as theories relating to the migrant hierarchy. The theory of homonationalism frames the study, as has been previously pointed out, and illustrates how a small portion of privileged gays and lesbians have gained access to citizenship rights, while othering is firmly attached to marginalised groups, such as migrants from Central and Eastern Europe and the Global South. The last section in this chapter is, in a sense, the central element of the theoretical framework, and discusses intersectionality, the politics/sense of belonging as well as emotions and affect as they relate to the concepts of "home" and "race". A deliberation of unbelonging and its transformational protential is also salient along with a brief discussion of belonging-in-difference and queer temporalities. What I

wanted to emphasise through these theoretical directions, was to look at different levels of analyses. At the macro level of theorisation, as is done with theories of homonationalism and the migrant hierarchy as well as regarding political projects of belonging. At the meso level, by discussing belonging to particular communities, and social institutions such as the Catholic Church. As importantly, to give attention to the micro level of feelings and emotions, when it comes to interlocutor's sense of belonging, unbelonging and belonging-in-difference. I think this holistic view of the subject matter is the main strength of this thesis and demonstrates a comprehensive view of the subject matter.

3   The Icelandic context

This chapter provides an overview of the Icelandic context, including a brief discussion of the formation of the national imaginary and research concerning othering processes within migration and the diaspora. Subsequently, examining the migration history and the progression of the legal framework for migrants. In the last section, I will discuss the history of LGBTQI+ sociality and legal rights pertaining to queer people in Iceland.

3.1   The Icelandic national imaginary

Until the 20th century Iceland was mainly described by foreigners who moulded its outward image, sometimes even without visiting the country themselves (Ísleifsson, 2020; Ísleifsson, 2002). Discourses of purity and originality were also indicators of the exceptionalism of the society. The national imaginary is quite paradoxical, as Icelanders are often seen as the protectors of the original Germanic culture which makes their identity eternally linked to the past, while also being connected to progressive ideology and technology which are indicators of modernisation. In the 1940s, Icelanders began to re-create their own national identity to recover from the Great Depression. They believed that a powerful promotion of the country would increase the country's exports, and in return, boost the economy. This promotion emphasised the purity of Icelandic products, such as seafood, and the untouched natural beauty of Iceland for potential travellers (Ellenberger, 2007). A national identity construction around equality and human rights can be traced back to the 1970s and is part of a broader Nordic development interconnected with the establishment of the welfare state model after the Second World War. The Nordic welfare state has been described as woman-friendly, where women are seen as individuals and not dependent on their husbands (Þorvaldsdóttir, 2011). Support for women and children is emphasised so women can take part in the labour market and the public sphere (Jónsson, 2004). This connects to the myth of the strong Icelandic woman, as part of the country's struggle for independence and women's rights (Arnórsdóttir, 2000). The concept of the "gender equality paradise" in the North has become part of the Nordic identity as well as an unofficial competition between the Nordic countries. Governments encourage this idea of the Nordic countries being the forerunners in issues of gender equality, also termed as state feminism (Hernes, 1987), and even export such "expert knowledge" to other parts of the world though developmental aid. In Iceland this takes place, for example, through the GEST program, but this occurs without having a discussion around whether these methods are transferable to other cultural

contexts, or the situation of gender equality in Iceland itself (Þorvaldsdóttir, 2011; see Ellenberger, 2017). After the 2008 financial crisis, Iceland started the process of rebuilding its reputation. A powerful discourse formed, calling for women to begin restoring the nation and blaming the problem on the male "business Vikings" because women had been excluded from the events that led to the collapse. Additionally, Iceland rose to the top of the Global Gender Gap Report (Einarsdóttir, 2020). Using Iceland as a case study when critically analysing gender indices Einarsdóttir (2020) pays particular attention to the Global Gender Gap index. She points out, for instance, that this index does not quantify anything related to gender-based violence and notes how the Global Gender Gap assessment demonstrates a limited notion of gender equality, showcasing the "shrinking" and "bending" of the idea. Additionally, the index serves as an example of how gender equality rankings are used in reputational politics to create nation branding.

After the economic collapse in 2008 Iceland started to depend on the tourism sector to turn the economy around, and during that time, notions of a "gay paradise" started to develop and become a part of the national imaginary. In 2011 an LGBTQI+ travel agency was established, which led to the country being portrayed as a rather commercialised "pink destination" for tourists and citizens alike. One of its owners stated that as we in Iceland have come this far, it is our duty to take the next step and export human rights. In 2012 the city of Reykjavík further made an offer to GLISA to host the World Outgames, where Iceland as a gay paradise was the main selling point (Ellenberger, 2017). Demands have, for example, been put on the minister of foreign affairs, to discuss human rights with government officials and representatives of countries that promote homophobia or a general disregard for human rights (Skarphéðinsson, 2012). It is important to note that in 2010 the "One Marriage Law" was passed, and to some, that was the endpoint of gays' and lesbians' struggle for equal rights in Iceland. This ignored the fact that other marginalised groups under the umbrella had not gained vital rights, for example, regarding intersex bodily integrity and access to trans-related health care. Strategies in the struggle for gaining equal citizen rights in Iceland are similar to those elsewhere: essentially an assimilation into heteronormativity and its institutions, instead of subverting expectations, values, and goals of the cisheteropatriarchal, middle-class, majority. It would have been possible, for example, instead of fighting for equal rights to marriage and the blessing of the church, to struggle for the right not to get married, but still gain the rights that go with being legally married. This process of supporting conservative and violent institutions only benefits the privileged minority within the queer community and masks the exclusion of the most marginal within that community, even to the extent of

supporting violence and murder of queer people during wartime (Conrad, 2014; see Ellenberger, 2017; Vilhjálmsson, 2022).

A substantial portion of the population gathers each year for Reykjavík Pride, one of Iceland's biggest national family-friendly events, to celebrate sexual and gender diversity. However, opposing this seemingly gay-friendly social context are queer No-Borders activists and scholars, exposing another reality, by criticising Iceland's deportation regime. The contentious Dublin Regulation has generated several controversies involving the deportation of SOGIE (sexual orientation, gender identity and expression) refugees to other European nations, some of which are even known for their homophobic and transphobic hate crimes. To be included in the state and the yearly pride celebrations, the activists view commercial "pink tourism" as an issue, making whiteness, socioeconomic status, and Euro-American citizenship an essential criterion. Additionally, they critique how a significant portion of the LGBTQI+ community ignores the deportations of numerous SOGIE refugees, because it might guarantee their inclusion in the national imaginary. At the same time, a predetermined number of quota SOGIE refugees are invited to settle in Iceland and are formally welcomed by the prime minister. This plays into the notion of Iceland's "sexual exceptionalism" and the notion of a the "gay paradise" and can be interpreted as an example of government officials' strategic homonationalism.

3.2 Othering in the context of migration & diaspora

Iceland has always been part of global migration processes and transnational connections despite its remote location, however, mobility to and from Iceland has frequently been glossed over (Skaptadóttir, 2011). Hans Jonathan, the Caribbean slave who escaped from Denmark in the early eighteenth century and took up residence in the East of Iceland, where he started a new life, is a well-documented example of that (Pálsson, 2014). International migration processes nonetheless had a belated onset in Iceland, but in the last few decades immigration has risen sharply. Iceland has thus moved from being mainly an emigration country to an immigration country, in the last two decades, with one of the highest immigration rates in Europe (Skaptadóttir & Garðarsdóttir, 2020). Iceland has, nonetheless, a miniature population of 387,758 inhabitants in January 2023. The immigrant population has increased from 2% in 1996 to 18.4 % in January 2023 (Statistics Iceland, 2023a), where Poles make up or 32.3% of the immigrant population, followed by individuals from Lithuania standing at 5.5%, Romania at 4.5%, Ukraine at 3.7%, Latvia at 3.5%, the Philippines at 3.3%, Germany at 2.7%, United States of America at 1.9%, Britain at 1.9%,

Spain at 1.9%, Thailand at 1.7%, Portugal at 1.8%, Venezuela at 1.7% and Vietnam at 1.6% (Statistics Iceland, 2023b).

Loftsdóttir (2014; 2012a) has highlighted the presence of whiteness within Icelandic discussions on national identity and belonging, and its purpose of positioning Icelanders as "white" and thus "Western". Racialization in the Icelandic context, as an affective process, was not as concerned with creating the image of the African or colonized "other", as it was with certain perspectives on nation-states and a feeling of belonging to civilized nations in northern Europe. A research conducted by Loftsdóttir (2015) further notes that certain kinds of racist discourses are considered acceptable within the Icelandic context, especially calling people derogatory names, as a joke or in everyday conversation, such as "negro" or "nigger". Otherwise, people of African descent did not experience racial prejudice in Iceland, but many had previously lived in the Euro-American context and discussed experiencing hatred there. The population of Iceland is, however, also intrigued by the exotic other. People of African origin talked about how many Icelanders had naïve attitudes about black people, which revealed ignorance of the issue at hand. Racism is often described as specific acts or ideas of individuals which are in turn considered abnormal, when racism is, in fact, social and culturally supported. Individualizing racism does not affect the idea that Iceland is often seen as separated from the horrors of the past but supports the notion that racism is a foreign import that needs to be resisted. The first Thai immigrants to Iceland arrived in 1978 and were almost all married to an Icelandic men. Thai migrants along with Philippines and Vietnamese migrants were the first visible minority in Iceland (Bissat, 2013). Stereotypes about Asian women are especially prominent in the Icelandic context; Thai and Filipino women are frequently lumped together and identified as "Asian women" or just Thais, with the overreaching impression that they are the victims of their Icelandic husbands, in one way or another. In contrast, Filipino males are often overlooked in discussions on immigrants in Iceland. They are not subject to the same stereotypes and are not portrayed as victims, unlike the women (Skaptadóttir, 2015). According to Júlíusdóttir et al. (2013), a significant number of migrant workers in Iceland, particularly Filipinos, are employed in low-wage positions within a labour market that is divided based on gender and, to a growing extent, ethnicity. A significant number of individuals see their move as a decline in their social status, as their educational credentials are often not valid and because of restrictions regarding upwards mobility. The conversation on equality and equal pay in Iceland mostly centres upon the gender wage gap, while largely neglecting the broader issue of low-paid occupations and the specific challenges faced by immigrant workers. A study with gay Asian men reviled, that all the interlocutors had experiences of microaggression; either

homophobic comments towards their sexuality or racist attitudes towards them their ethnic origin, and in some cases both. Many interlocutors had experience of, or knew about, incidences of prejudice and racism within the gay community and discussed its lack of diversity. Moreover, that the small group of gay men that are visible within that community were very homogeneous (Gunnarsson, 2021).

A solid half of the immigrant population are from Central and Eastern Europe, of from Poland, Lithuania, Romania, Ukraine, Latvia, as well as 1.3% from Croatia, 1.3% from Czechia, 1% from Hungary, 0.8% from Bulgaria, 0.8% from Moldova, 0.74% from Slovakia, 0.6% from Serbia, 0.6% from Bosnia and Herzegovina and 0.35% from Estonia. Russians are 0.77% (Statistics Iceland, 2023b) of the immigrant population and are often also included in this group, as is the case in this study as one interlocutor was from Russia.

The "immigrant other" within Icelandic society relates to the largest immigrant group, who are Polish immigrants. This marginalisation is rooted in their standing among Icelandic immigrants, which have become associated with social class during times of economic prosperity (Guðjónsdóttir & Loftsdóttir, 2017; Loftsdóttir, 2015) and subsequently to racial capitalism (Ferguson, 2004). It is crucial to keep in mind the diversity of CEE nations and the fact that Poles are not always representative of these nations. However, in Icelandic public discourse, discussions concerning Poles or Lithuanians are frequently essentialized and presented as a representative of all migrants from CEE. Which relates to how frequently Eastern European countries are viewed as Europe's "internal others" (Kalnačs, 2016). Prejudice against Polish and Lithuanian individuals in Iceland are linked to negative stereotypes that emphasise criminal behaviour and disintegration. Due to historical circumstances and the perception of the "Eastern" Europeans as a "cheap" labour force, the image of the Central and Eastern European has become an important part of Icelandic racism (Loftsdóttir, 2017). According to a media analysis of criminal activities of Lithuanians, the immigrant other has developed into a threatening and "unnatural" stereotype in the mainstream Icelandic discourse, which is then used to construct the "natural" self-image of the native Icelander (Ólafsson, 2008). People from Central and Eastern Europe and, to some extent Muslims, are thus a threat to the safety and freedom that women and LGBTQI people enjoy in Iceland, through the assumption that these groups enjoy total equality in Iceland. While depicting Iceland as liberal and progressive and thus an example to other countries, homonegativity is seen as something that is located in the immigrant other and in other cultural contexts, such as in Russia and Central and Eastern Europe (Ellenberger, 2017). Hidden everyday prejudice and discrimination are pervasive in Iceland, as is noted by 93% of the participants of foreign origin who took part in a study and reported experiencing prejudicial

behaviour toward them at least once or more over a fifteen-day period (Pétursdóttir, 2013). Various studies have shown that racialization processes and stereotypes change over time, as different minority groups encounter racialization in response to labour market demands. In the 1990s, a bridge between Poland and Iceland was created as there weren't enough workers for Iceland's fish industry and because Poles are typically thought of as having a good work ethic and being cooperative at work (Wojtyńska, 2011). Human resource managers are aware of potential discrimination against women from Central and Eastern Europe and try to avoid it. The biggest barriers to recruiting people of foreign descent are related to the Muslim religion, while notions of gender equality were applied to prevent such prejudice. Work experience in the Icelandic labour market is however the most crucial consideration for recruiting individuals of foreign descent (Loftsdóttir, et al., 2016). Following the 2008 financial crisis, there was a considerable decline in media coverage of immigrants (Wojtyńska, et al. 2011), and prejudice towards immigrants did take substantial changes (Wojtyńska, & Zielińska, 2010). More recently though, organized crime groups operating in Iceland and originating in Central and Eastern Europe have, to some extent, become a threat to the nation (envisioned as a peaceful and with low crime rates), which recreates pre-existing stereotypes of the immigrant other (Ólafs & Zielińska, 2010; Loftsdóttir, 2017; Hafstað, 2021; Fontaine, 2022). Nonetheless, Icelandic public generally holds positive attitudes toward immigrants (Loftsdóttir, Harðardóttir & Skaptadóttir, 2007), which have become more positive over time, especially by those with a university education, while those who are older or identify with the right-wing politics are less supportive (Ólafsdóttir, 2020).

Muslims make up a small minority in Iceland, and they typically blend in well with the local culture. Few women wear the hijab, and the burka is not commonly seen in public places. The most numerous group from majority Muslim countries is from Syria, standing at 0.93% of the immigrant population, followed by people coming from Iraq at 0.63%, from Albania at 0.47%, from Afghanistan at 0.44%, from Iran at 0.43%, from Morocco and Palestine both standing at 0.42%, from Somalia at 0.22%, and from Pakistan and Turkey both standing at 0.20% (Statistics Iceland, 2023b).

A recent study revealed that about 44% of the Icelandic population believe that accepting more migrants from Muslim majority countries will increase the risk of terrorism (Valdimarsdóttir & Jónsdóttir, 2020). But an ethnographic study has shown that the Muslim community in Iceland is small and aims for a peaceful cohabitation with the host society while rejecting puritanical and fundamentalist interpretations of Islam and has thus existed without major problems (Sigurðsson, 2020, 2023). The terrorist other is thus an imported anxiety mainly based on foreign media and populist rhetoric (Loftsdóttir, 2021).

Orientalist discourses on Islam and the European debates on multiculturalism have prominently feature sexuality as a symbolic token. Gay emancipation along with women's rights is thus often presented as the framing of "modernity", which shapes narratives of non-modern subjects such as Muslims. These processes thus directly relate to the rise of Islamophobia in Europe and the "culturalization of the citizenship" (Mepschen, Duyvendak & Tonkens, 2010).

Migration research in Iceland has shown in various ways how people's situations change, and identities are formed regarding race, class, gender, and national background, but this thesis is the first one to discuss queer/sexual migration processes and experiences. In 2019 an MA thesis in international relations was written on the status of queer refugees in Iceland, from the perspective of professional in the system (Steinþórsdóttir, 2019). In 2021, racialisation processes were discussed for the first time in connection to gay Asian men in Iceland, in an MA thesis in educational sciences (Gunnarsson, 2021). This thesis is thus the first holistic research project joining queer studies and migration studies within the Icelandic context and discussing the experiences of people of all genders and hailing from all over the globe.

The history of immigration to Iceland and the gradual development of the legal system, from the first immigration legislation to the present-day legal framework, will be addressed in this next section, as well as a brief discussion of immigration policies and an immigration implementation plan.

3.3   History of migration and legal framework

This section will provide a concise overview of the history of immigration to Iceland as well as the history of the legal framework for migrants. For instance, I will discuss the events of 1940, when the British army occupied the country and the resulting moral panic. Furthermore, how Iceland's participation in the European Economic Area (EEA), the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), and the Schengen agreement changed access to the country for anyone travelling from outside those borders. Furthermore, I will consider the 2007 Government policy on immigrants and the 2023 revision to the 2016 Act of Foreigners. Additionally, I will be looking at how government officials' actions (or lack thereof) reveal the government's underlying perspective on immigration issues.

3.3.1   Migration history

As a Norwegian dependency, Iceland came under Danish rule in 1380 and was a Danish dependency from 1660 until 1944 when it gained independence. Iceland has thus had a close political, cultural, and economic relationship with Denmark. Norwegians were more numerous than Danes in Iceland in the early

1900s and frequently worked as manual laborers or in the fisheries. Danes made up more than half of the immigrant population in the years from the 1930s until 1960. Danes habitually saw themselves as representatives of the majoritarian Danish society located in one of its territories. In the early 1900s, there was a small but influential elite group of Danes in Iceland, who were crown officials, merchants, or specialists, and thus had unrestricted and unconditional access to societal participation. Later that century, and with increased immigration from Denmark, there developed, in some sense, a mutual adaptation between Icelandic and Danish culture, which could be termed multiculturalism today. The proportion of inhabitants in Iceland that were born in Denmark was nonetheless small, only 0.3% in 1901 and 1.1% in 1960 when it was at its highest point, and when the total population in Iceland was 173,855 individuals (Ellenberger, 2013; Skaptadóttir, 2004a).

The British forces occupied Iceland in 1940 which caused turmoil and moral panic in Icelandic society, as native women who took up a relationship with the soldiers were accused of betraying the nation and shaming their nationality. Most of the women turned out to be adolescents from the ages of 14 to 17 years old in precarious social situations regarding socioeconomic class and family support. There were at least three documented cases of homosexual men taking part in the "circumstances" regarding the British soldiers, but that was never discussed publicly. Consequently, this resulted in the implementation of organised acts of aggression towards those women as well as extensive personal surveillance, and the enactment of a youth surveillance act, the establishment of a juvenile court and the first state-run homes for juvenile delinquents. However, the occupation created jobs and changed the country's economy, which, in turn, emerged out of a deep depression (Baldursdóttir, 2002; 2023; Hafsteinsdóttir, 2017b; Jónasdóttir, 2018; Whitehead, 1999; 2013). Iceland had a military presence from the U.S. during World War II, the U.S. army thus replaced the British in 1941. Around 60,000 U.S. soldiers, were stationed in Iceland during the wartimes, most of them Americans. U.S. soldiers were not allowed to leave the military base and no Black soldiers were permitted in Iceland at that time. Icelandic nationalism has thus been linked to being a non-armed microstate, with socialist influences and a strategic location. The U.S. military naval air base was operational in Iceland from 1951 until 2006, and in the mid-1960s the ban on stationing Black shoulders in Iceland was lifted (Ingimundarson, 2004).

In 1949, 300 Germans were employed through the Agricultural Association of Iceland to work on farms, and this was the first group of foreign labourers that came to Iceland. Around 70% of the group were women who often married Icelandic men and established families. There was a lack of women in the countryside at that time, both as labourers and for marriage, as with changing laws, native women had moved to the villages to become independent and work

in the fishing sector, which paid better than the jobs in the countryside (Ísberg, 2010). The process of selecting people to migrate to Iceland from Germany had several restrictions, such as having Germanic origins (Thorsteinsson, 2001). This was after the war and unemployment was high in Germany, but these restrictions did not stay in place, as it was difficult to hire people to migrate. German women were assimilated into society and were made Icelandic though domestication and seen as mothers of Icelandic children. In the Icelandic nationalist discourse, the purity of the blood and the Icelandic race are essential, but as the authentic Icelander was a man with masculine characteristics this arrangement as accepted (Ísberg, 2010; Matthíasdóttir, 2004).

In the post-war period many Western European and Nordic countries sought workers from abroad for their growing economies, for example, Sweden in the 1950s and Denmark and Norway in the late 1960s (Brochmann & Hagelund, 2011), but this was to a lesser extent the case in Iceland. The collapse of the herring industry in the late 1960s resulted in high unemployment and a deep recession, with increased emigration. In the early 1970s Icelanders commonly migrated to other Nordic countries, but also to places such as Australia. Icelanders have since then been mobile, more than residents in the other Nordic countries, but the return migration rate is also high, as more than 70% move back to Iceland at some point. Icelanders tend to migrate in times of recession, and in 2008 another wave of emigration took place, after the economic collapse (Harðarson, 2010; Garðarsdóttir, 2012). It was only in the late 1980 that immigration to Iceland started to increase, and by mid 1990s there was a notable increase in immigration rates. At that time, several socio-economic transformations were taking place which led to an economic boom, such as the privatisation of the fishing quota and the deregulation of the financial sector. In 1994, the EEA was further established with Iceland as its member (Skaptadóttir & Loftsdóttir, 2016; see Skaptadóttir & Garðarsdóttir, 2020).

Before the 1990s seasonal labourers in fish processing plants were mainly from Iceland, but also from countries such as Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa (Júlíusdóttir, Skaptadóttir & Karlsdóttir, 2013). After the 1990s other groups started to arrive, such as migrants from Poland, but also from the Philippines and Thailand. They were mostly women, as work in the fish factories were traditionally a women's occupation in a gendered labour market (Skaptadóttir & Wojtyńska, 2008). The first women who migrated from Poland, the Philippines and Thailand came to be with their Icelandic spouses, and then a migration chain emerged, which formed a bridge between the countries. Generally, migrants are recruited to work in low-income jobs, such as in the service industry, food production or construction, similar to the post WWII migration to Europe and the Nordic countries, and these workers were seen as a temporary workforce, who would return to their country of origin (Skaptadóttir,

2011). After the enlargement of the European Union (EU) in 2004, and the two-year delay secured by Iceland, people from Poland and Lithuania no longer needed to acquire work permits before coming to the country as Iceland was part of the EU market. But for people coming from beyond those borders, such as those coming from the Philippines and Thailand, getting a work permit became more complicated (Bissat, 2013; Sigurðsson & Arnarson, 2011). The primary way for people coming from outside the EEA area or the EFTA countries, to gain access to residence and work permits, was through family reunification or as specialists. Women from the Philippines, for example, have immigrated as specialists in the field of nursing, as well as au pairs and as university students (see Skaptadóttir & Garðarsdóttir, 2020).

In 2022, it became possible to register as non-binary or other at the national registry, 20 individuals with an immigrant background are currently registered as such and 160 individuals in total (Statistics Iceland, 2023c). Four individuals are from the Unites States of America, two from France, Poland, Russia, Ukraine, and a foreign county not specificized, and one individual from Belgium, Germany, Britain, Grece, Lithuania, and Countries in former Yugoslavia unspecified (Statistics Iceland, 2023b). The more traditional ratio of men versus women has varied but female immigrants tend to stay more permanently in Iceland than men. Polish migrants often stay more temporarily (Skaptadóttir & Wojtyńska, 2008; Wojtyńska, 2012) and seek employment in different countries. Filipinos do not have as many options and have less flexibility until they have gained Icelandic citizenship; they also more frequently than Poles have an Icelandic spouse. In 2019 86.5% of immigrants from the Philippines had Icelandic citizenship, while 29.9% of Polish immigrants had Icelandic citizenship, despite the fact that both countries allow dual citizenship (Skaptadóttir & Garðarsdóttir, 2020). In 2007 at the height of the economic boom, 36% of all foreign workers were men working in the construction industry (Sigurðsson & Arnarson, 2011), and they became unemployed after the collapse. In 2010 16.8% of those registered as unemployed were foreign citizens, and primary from Poland (Skaptadóttir, 2015). The growth of tourism played a pivotal role in the economic recovery in Iceland after the economic collapse, creating jobs but also increasing immigration as many of those working in the tourist services sector are immigrants (see Skaptadóttir & Garðarsdóttir, 2020).

3.3.2 History of the legal framework

An Icelandic citizenship was not established until 1919. Icelandic women who married Danish men automatically took up Danish citizenship until 1952 (Ellenberger, 2017). The citizenship law from 1952 until 1995 stated that a condition for receiving Icelandic citizenship was to change one's name in

accordance with Icelandic customs and give up one's previous name. In 1991 this was changed so that those applying for citizenship had to add one Icelandic name to their registered name, so their children could make it their patronym (Ísberg, 2010). In 1996, this was changed again, now applicants do not need to change their name, and people who had previously changed their names could take up their former names again (Alþingi, 1996c).

The first immigration laws were called *Laws on the Control of Foreigners* and are from 1920, but before that time only selected provisions discussed foreigners in Icelandic laws. These laws declared that only those with valid documents could enter the country, that foreign citizens needed to be able to support themselves for the next two years, that they did not have infectious diseases, that they declared their intent to migrate, and that they were not migrating for illegal, indecent, or dangerous purposes. Anyone hosting foreigners also had to keep a guest book. The next laws concerning the control of foreigners were approved in 1936; they were based on the previous laws but had an added clause concerning the control of foreigners (Káradóttir, 2009). In these laws the definition of a foreigner was a person for whom it was not obligatory to grant the right to reside in Iceland according to local and international laws. There is an added clause in these laws about sailors, and another about how foreign citizens needed to inform the chief of police of their intention to stay in the country, and a clause on obligatory travel documents for tourists (Kristjánsdóttir, 2010).

In 1954, the Nordic countries made an agreement regarding residence and work permits, as this was now a joint labour market. In 1965, a thorough revision of the 1920 immigration laws took place. Although the focus is still on border control and deportation, there is also, with later amendments, a clause on people seeking international protection, the Schengen cooperation, the EEA, as well as free movement of people, and complaints procedures (Kristjánsdóttir, 2010). There is further a discussion on the division of power between the Minister of Justice and the Chief of Police regarding a rejection of residence permit and deportation (Ellenberger, 2003). The law also discusses the Foreigner Monitoring Agency (útlendingaeftirlit), which later became Directorate of Immigration (útlendingastofnun) and its role, as well as discussing foreigners who need temporary financial assistance (Kristjánsdóttir, 2010). Iceland became a member of the United Nations Refugee Convention in 1951 and thus there is a clause in the laws regarding the legal status of refugees (Káradóttir, 2009). In 2001, amendments were made to this clause, regarding the Dublin agreement from 1990. The aim of the Dublin cooperation was to avoid transferring applicants between states without reviewing their case, and thus was intended to improve the process for applicants. But in practice the

regulation has mainly been used to decrease the number of refugees in Europe (Stefánsdóttir, 2008).

Several amendments have been made to the 1965 laws. In 1993, amendments were made in connection to Iceland's participation in the EEA, and consequently in the EU. In 1999, the Foreigner Monitoring Agency was separated from activities of the police (Káradóttir, 2009), and in 2000 and 2001, there were amendments to the law regarding the Schengen agreement. The main changes were, the ceasing of surveillance of people travelling within the area, along with an exemption of residence permits and visas. At the same time surveillance of people moving from beyond those borders was increased, which has become a key issue regarding access to the Schengen countries for people coming from outside of Europe. A human rights chapter was created in the constitutional law in 1995, mentioning the rights of migrants to move to the country, and the grounds upon which they can be deported. A clause was also added to the constitution, which mentions that everyone should be equal before the law and enjoy human rights, regardless of sex, religion, opinions, national origin, race, colour, socioeconomic status, ancestry, or one's subjectivity otherwise defined. Women and men should be equal in every respect (Kristjánsdóttir, 2010).

In 2002, a new law on foreigners called the *Act on Foreigners* (Lög um útlendinga) was enacted, and this is considered the first comprehensive law on foreigners in Iceland. Despite these laws being more extensive than the previous ones, they did not include a clause on integration as was the case in the other Nordic countries. A definition of the term "foreigner" was added in 2008, applying to everyone who did not have Icelandic citizenship (Kristjánsdóttir, 2010). The Act on Foreigners is divided into nine chapters and 59 articles (Alþingi, 2002). There is no mention of issues of gender or sexuality in these laws, but presumably SOGIE people seeking international protection fall under the clause discussing a particular social group. Building on the 2002 laws, a new Foreign National Act was implemented in 2016 and is currently in use. Among the new alterations of the bill, is a greater coordination between the Act on Foreigners and the Act on Employment of Foreigners, residence permit categories have been changed, conditions for residence permits have been simplified and sections on international protection have been revised and updated in accordance with international, European, and Nordic developments (Stjórnarráð Íslands, 2016). In these laws, there is one mention of the issue of sexuality, with regards to when people are seeking international protection, as part of a specific social group. In 2013 Statistics Iceland defined an immigrant as a person who was born abroad, has parents who were born abroad, as well as both grandparents.

The process of gaining citizenship rights in Iceland can be a strenuous undertaking and may take several years, usually no less than seven years. There are a number of requirements such as passing a language test; testimonials from two Icelandic citizens of good standing; evidence that the applicant can support himself in Iceland and has not received a support grant from a local authority for the past three years; and a clean criminal record. An exemption for the seven-year rule are foreign nationals that are children of an Icelandic citizen; a foreign nationals who is married for three years or more to an Icelandic citizen, or in a registered cohabitational union with an Icelandic citizen. Other exceptions include a foreign national who acquired Icelandic citizenship by birth but has lost it; or a young person over the age of 18 who has resided in Iceland though family reunification for four years or more and has worked or studies there (Alþingi, 2016; Alþingi, 1952). Nordic nationals must have a legal domicile in Iceland for four years to be able to apply for a citizenship. The Minister of Justice may, upon receiving the opinion of the police and the Directorate of Immigration, further can grant an Icelandic citizenship though legislation, if the applicant meets certain conditions (Alþingi, 1952). Regarding gaining residency and work permits, the applicants' country of origin plays a decisive role in the process. People migrating from beyond the EEA/EFTA borders face different circumstances, as they need to apply for a residency and work permit before entering the country, and their temporary work permit is dependent on the employer and the employment contract. There are three exceptions to this general rule, that is, if the spouse of the applicant has a permanent residency in Iceland; the applicant is the child of an Icelandic or Nordic national; or if the applicant falls under the definition of having expert knowledge or special skills or specialist qualifications, that cannot be found domestically, within the EEA, the EFTA states or in the Faroe Islands. Temporary work permits can also be issued due to shortage of employees for a specific job, which cannot be found on the domestic labour market or within the EEA, the EFTA states, or the Faroe Islands. Temporary work permits can further be issued to athletes, to reunite families, in connection to studies, and due to special circumstances, such as having a residency permit on humanitarian grounds or special relations to Iceland (Alþingi, 2002).

The Ministry of Social Affairs published the first and only government policy on the integration of immigrants in 2007. It has nonetheless been criticised for recreating old ideologies under new formulations. Einarsdóttir and Gústafsdóttir (2008) have discussed that this ideology can be divided into two streams, one being nationalistic cultural policy, which includes teaching Icelandic and the protection of Icelandic culture and language, and the other being utilitarianism. The utilitarianism theme appears throughout the document where labour market participation is emphasised. Increased immigration is

explained though the premise of increased demand for workers and because of economic prosperity in industry and construction, highlighting the usefulness of immigration for Icelandic society, and the way that economic underpinnings and the demand of the labour market construct the frame of access to the country. The policy document seems to be gender neutral, but its premise rests upon a male individual, who is the breadwinner of a family. Iceland does not have a history of colonisation, but as one of the richest countries in the world, and with increased ethnic diversity because of increased demand for foreign workers, often coming from poorer countries, there is a distinct power imbalance that needs to be addressed in everyday social relations as well as in policy-making documents (Einarsdóttir & Gústafsdóttir, 2008).

In 2009, the Icelandic association of local authorities approved a policy formulation on immigrant issues. The focus of this policy was not on employment or what immigrants could contribute to the community, but rather on how municipalities and the government could improve their services to better suit new inhabitants. The city of Reykjavík made a policy formulation in 2009, where a future image of Reykjavík as a multicultural city is put forth (Kristjánsdóttir, 2010). Several other municipalities have also put forth a policy regarding immigrant issues since then. The government of Iceland has had an implementation plan for immigrant issues for the years of 2016-2019 and 2022-2025. In 2022, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour published a report called "Status and development in immigrant issues". This report mentions sexual orientation and gender identity concerning equality in the labour market, and regarding people seeking international protection (Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, 2022). The implementation plan is a step in the right direction. Nonetheless, a comprehensive official government policy regarding migrants, or immigrants and people seeking international protection is needed.

A regulatory change was made in 2020 to make it easier for specialists from outside the EEA/EFTA area to work remotely in Iceland for 90 to 180 days. However, there were restrictions such as, one must be working for a foreign employer or independently and have a monthly salary of one million ISK or more (Directorate of Immigration, n.d.). Extensive amendments were further made to the 2016 *Act on foreigners* in 2023 (Alþingi, 2023a), which have been proposed to the parliament five times, but had never gained a majority vote before now. The law has been criticised for opening up the possibility for human rights violations, by proposing formalisation of medical examinations and health examinations on people seeking international protection. In the law, the ability of the Icelandic state to fulfil its obligation not to send individuals back to dangerous situations is restricted, in spite of the fact that it has been repeatedly pointed out that this needs to be examined on a case-by-case basis. Furthermore, there is a clause in the law making it legal to deprive people of

housing and support after a rejection of their application for international protection, which has led to a multifaceted and complex social and economic problem for stateless persons and people unable to return to their home countries. Fourteen NGOs officially opposed these revisions, but their concerns were disregarded. The underlying government policy, regarding issues of migration from outside the EEA/EFTA region, can thus be read as a policy that makes it easier for wealthy upper middle-class people to reside in the country and tends to deport and reject access to those who need support and are in the most vulnerable position.

3.4 History of LGBTQI+ sociality and legal rights

I will now present a brief history of LGBTQI+ sociality and legal rights in Iceland. It is important to note that for Iceland, formal sources for this history are few and far between. Abroad, the writing of queer history generally began in the 1970s, when queer scholars began to pay attention to this side of the past. But in Iceland, on the other hand, historians have done very little research on the history of sexuality, let alone the sub-discipline that revolves around queer history, and thus it has not been discussed in Icelandic history. The history of queer people in Iceland has primarily been preserved by people at the grassroots level, often by the forerunners of the struggle for equal rights, and the historiography has therefore mostly taken place outside the framework of academia (Ellenberger, Benediktsdóttir & Hafsteinsdóttir, 2017).

3.4.1 History of LGBTQI+ sociality

Individual diaries and letters occasionally discuss issues of sexuality, as their authors believed these documents were private and that their sentiments would never be made public. These sources occasionally include accounts of the queer lives and inner lives of women. However, the nature and scope of queerness among women in the 19th century will always be obscured. Hellesund (2008) has demonstrated how Norwegian middle-class spinsters undermined socially accepted gender norms with their independence, and in the process, threatened the traditional understanding of masculinity and femininity, which prompted a strong response from society. Moreover, whether they had romantic connections with other women or not, she views them as having been "queer". There are a lot more male-authored records preserved than female-authored ones, but it is only in the 19th century that we get a significant understanding of how women, or more specifically middle-class women in Iceland, experienced and defined their own gender identity (Benediktsdóttir, Hafsteinsdóttir & Ellenberger, n.d.).

Between 1920 and 1960, both in Iceland and abroad, there was a significant growth in knowledge and awareness of homosexuality and other types of queerness, which had a variety of effects. In Icelandic literature and

publications, people could find more knowledge about sexuality, and those who were attracted to the same sex might identify as homosexual or bisexual. Condemnation and marginalisation of queer people and queer sexuality, however, increased in prominence and influence in this same period. For instance, public discussion of homosexuality among Icelandic males grew significantly after the 1950s while also becoming considerably crueller and more unforgiving (Benediktsdóttir, 2017). This was truer for men than for women since men were the main focus of discussions and understanding of queer sexuality at that time. Next to nothing was spoken in public about queer women, which likely provided some protection for lesbians compared to gay males. However, it is evident that in such a setting, many activities that were previously thought to be somewhat normal started to raise suspicion. For instance, there are limited records of female life companions and romantic partnerships beyond the 1920s. This can be seen in the obituaries of the women in question and the gaps in the records, which show that personal materials have been erased. Thus, it seems that there were fewer options at this time to live an openly queer existence. Ideas from the women's movement concerning women's independence and their participation in public life were thus in for a serious setback (Matthíasdóttir, 2004). This increased conservatism in equality issues also contributed to the lower visibility of women in queer relationships. The arts, however, continued to be a place for queer love and queer sexuality, as they had in the past. The queerness of women had however close linkages to other countries, which provided opportunities that were less common in Iceland. This may further be traced to how global the art world was at the time (see Benediktsdóttir, Hafsteinsdóttir & Ellenberger, n.d.).

In the nineteen eighties homosexuals frequently emigrated from Iceland to cities such as Copenhagen, Amsterdam, and San Francisco, to live out their authentic selves and to avoid being stigmatised, harassed, and excluded. Iceland was at that time lacking in liberal ideology compared to the other Nordic countries, due to systematic restraints from the crises and war times as well as extreme inflation. The first homophile association in Iceland was formed in 1976 and consisted of about 30 gay men. It was in operation for two years and was called Iceland Hospitality. Its aim was community building and combatting prejudice and the lack of knowledge about the issue of homosexuality (Guðnason, 2008). Hörður Torfason, an artist and activist was the first person to come out publicly as homosexual, in a magazine article in 1975, and due to threats of violence and persecution had to leave Iceland and take up residence in Denmark. Hörður also initiated the formation of a new human rights organisation for gays and lesbians, after he returned from Denmark (Jósepsson, 2008). Organisation '78: Association of Gays and Lesbians in Iceland, which was later was changed to Association of Lesbians and Gays in Iceland and has

now been changed to the National Queer Association of Iceland (Samtökin '78: Félag hinsegin fólks á Íslandi). Organisation '78 was, to a large extent, male dominated during its onset, especially with respect to occupying space, board members, and the content of the library. As a result, the radical lesbians Margrét Pála Ólafsdóttir, Guðný Stella Hauksdóttir, Elísabet Þorgeirsdóttir and Þóra Kristín Ásgeirsdóttir founded The Icelandic lesbian association (íslensk-lesbíska) in 1985, which formed a bridge between the women's movement and the lesbian and gay movement and created a safe space where gender and sexual orientation could be integrated. The association lasted for two years and called attention to such issues as the double oppression of lesbian women though leaflets, they produced and distributed. The Icelandic lesbian association is further the only organisation that applied an intersectional approach to its policies and practice, as neither the National Queer Organisation in Iceland nor the Icelandic Women's Rights Organisation have formally taken up an intersectional approach (Sigurjónsdóttir & Ólafsdóttir, 2008; Ellenberger, 2016). In 1986 the global pandemic of HIV/AIDS took hold of the gay community in Iceland, which forced the authorities to recognise that homosexuals existed in Icelandic society, in order to deliver vital information to individuals who were, until then, never addressed overtly. AIDS caused unimaginable tragedy, despair, and grief, and brought down many who were active in the gay community. The disease and the wave of hate that accompanied it cast a dark shadow over the entire gay community and deterred many from coming out. Due to the fight against AIDS, public authorities started to treat homosexuals more humanely and comparable developments took place in the neighbouring countries. First the health care system formed a relationship with gays and the gay movement, then the social system took over and finally the education system was implicated. The general debate thus became more intelligent, and more people began to support the cause of gays and lesbians (Björnsson, 2019; Gunnarsdóttir, 2020). The mechanic Anna Kristjánsdóttir was the first person to come out publicly as transgender in 1994, in a magazine article, but was forced to move to Sweden to live authentically and go through the transition process (Haraldsdóttir, 2017). Anna was for many years thereafter the only outspoken transgender individual in a county where cisgenderism was and still is the predominant norm and gender outlaws were systematically stigmatised, harassed and bullied. Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir was the first female Prime Minister of Iceland 2009-2013 but had been an MP since 1978, further becoming the world's first lesbian head of government, at a time when the recovery from the economic collapse of 2008 was in its infancy. She had been married to a man but divorced in 1987 and in 2002 entered a civil union with Jónína Leósdóttir who wrote a book published in 2013 reviewing, among other things, their relationship. Jóhanna never discussed her private life publicly until

she retired from politics, so the only evidence for members of the queer community that they were in a relationship was the registration of their partnership. Jóhanna initiated the law on marriage equality, and when it came into effect in 2010, she and Jónína changed their partnership from a civil union to a marriage (Leósdóttir, 2013).

People like that ("Svona fólk"), a critically acclaimed Icelandic documentary film series from 2019, has come to represent the country's fight for gay and lesbian rights as a form of canon. When the registered partnership was finally achieved in 1996, it became a turning point in the series' narrative of the upward march of normalising development and change from below (Vilhjálmsson, 2022). According to Vilhjálmsson (2022), the series is an effort to create a shared memory consistent with Iceland's new self-image as a queer utopia. In his article he emphasises new accounts and experiences from the documentary series' own archive, as well as from sources the series had not previously investigated, such queer diaries and official reports. These accounts give rise to various narratives, in which homonormativity is imposed by the Icelandic state and National Church in the 1990s and conceded by Iceland's National Queer Organisation. Through the stories that were not included in the documentary, it becomes clear that that some gay and lesbian Icelanders saw the registered partnership laws not as a victory but as a loss of power, in the process, bringing to light the politics of remembering and forgetting as well as the little-discussed issue of Icelandic gays' integration into society in the 1990s. From 1990 to 2010, the neoliberal discourses in Iceland portrayed gay men as good and respectable citizens. Ellenberger and Vilhjálmsson (2023) draw on interviews with gay men in Icelandic periodicals and have discussed three discursive forms of responsibilisation that demonstrate the technologies of agency at work in transforming gay men into good, responsible citizens capable of self-management. This construction centres on the good gay citizen who (a) adopts a positive outlook, (b) reforms himself, and (c) replaces responsibility for personal injuries. The authors demonstrate how discursive practises connected to responsibility, happiness, and societal advancement construct gay men as neoliberal subjects. These practises allow for normalisation processes, free from conflict, resentment, or blame, in which gay men are held accountable for both their personal lives and the historical marginalisation they endured.

3.4.2 History of legal rights

Significant legal changes have occurred in Iceland over the past two decades regarding LGBTQI+ people, parallel to a shift in general attitudes towards queer people (Traustadóttir & Kristinsson, 2003). This has, in part, been because of long-standing activism within queer communities but is further in

line with similar legal and social transformations in the Nordic countries. However, it is important to be mindful of the effect of listing one's country's progression of legal rights, as those same rights are often used as a trope of being or becoming a developed, civilised, progressive, Europeanised nation state. Moreover, discussions of legal rights are often used to highlight how "backwards" some countries are, as well as individuals, such as migrants, who need to "catch up" in the homonormalisation process (Roseneil, et al. 2013a), to become included in the western modernisation of sexual exceptionalism, sometimes also termed as "gay imperialism" (Haritaworn et al. 2008; Nichols, 2012; Rahman, 2014, Rao, 2020; see Klapeer, 2018). I have no such intentions here, but instead want to take note of the rights that have been accorded and the time of implementation, as they were brought about through voluntary activism, to a large extent, by the generation that came before me. Such as long-term chair of The National Queer Organisation (Samtökin '78), Þorvaldur Kristinsson, who I first noticed on a televised programme, probably some thirty years ago, calmly and collectedly debating issues of homosexuality with the most homonegative pastor in the country at the time. There has also been substantial activism ongoing in recent years by marginalised groups within the queer community, such as Trans Iceland and its long-term chair Ugla Stefanía Kristjönudóttir Jónsdóttir as well as Intersex Iceland and its long-term chair Kitty Anderson. I would like to acknowledge that many of these rights have sentimental and pragmatic value to individuals in the queer community.

The law on homosexual acts, or *Coitus Against Nature* (samræði gegn náttúrulegu eðli) came into effect in Icelandic law in 1869, through article 178, which was a translation of the Danish Penal Code from 1866 and was in force for seventy years (Forordning ang. Criminalvæsenet paa Island, 1838). This section only referred to sex between men and did thus not apply to women, as they were not suspected of engaging in sexual relations with other women (Þorvaldsdóttir, 2007). Article 178 states: "coitus against nature requires a stay at a correctional facility" (samræði gegn náttúrulegu eðli varðar betrunarhúsavinnu). Several judgments were passed based on the article, but only one for homosexual intercourse between adult men, the case of a famous wrestler, Guðmundur Sigurjónsson, in 1924, who was sentenced to prison for having sex other men (Kristinsson, 2017). Þovaldur Kristinsson (2017) has noted that from available sources, it can be concluded that although the homosexual reality was shrouded in silence in public discourse in Iceland at the time, the public's awareness of the subject matter was evidently much more widespread than official sources indicate. In the documents of the case, it is possible to see signs of the tensions that took place in Europe at the time, regarding whether homosexual behaviour should be considered a crime as it had been in previous centuries, or as an appendage of the medical sciences in the

spirit of newer times. Finally, Guðmundar's story testifies to the ways in which accusations of homosexuality in the West at the turn of the 19th century had the main purpose of debilitating individuals socially and politically.

The absolute ban on homosexual acts was lifted in 1940, when consensual sex between two consenting adults over the age of 21 and of the same sex was no longer considered to be a criminal offence (Alþingistíðindi, 1939). In 1992 The Parliament passed bills through which homosexuals and heterosexuals gained equality before the criminal law (Alþingi, 1992) (see Þorvaldsdóttir, 2007). The penal code of 1940 was amended in 1996, making it illegal to discriminate in business and service operations based on sexual orientation (Alþingi, 1996a) with later amendments regarding gender identity (Alþingi, 2014), as well as making it a criminal offence to publicly mock, slander, insult, or threaten a person or group of persons on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity (Alþingi, 2014). Sexual orientation is nonetheless not listed in the constitution of 1995 but falls under the category of "subjectivity otherwise defined" (Alþingi, 1995). In 1996, registered partnership between same sex individuals became recognised by a civil registrar (Alþingi, 1996b). In 2006, couples in registered partnerships could apply for adoption and gained access to assisted reproductive technology as well as equal rights to marriage (Alþingi, 2006). In 2010 the *One Marriage Law* (Ein hjúskaparlög) was enacted, where marriage equality rights in the state-supported Lutheran church became one and the same regardless of sex/gender or sexual orientation (Alþingi, 2010). In 2012, the first transgender rights law was passed (Alþingi, 2012). In 2018 a law was enacted on equal treatment in the labour market, concerning issues of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender characteristics or gender expression (Alþingi, 2018). The gender identity and sexual characteristics bill was adopted in 2019, allowing anyone to legally register their gender as they define it and access trans-related health care without a medical diagnosis of gender dysphoria. In 2020, an amendment was enacted to that same law that further prohibits medical operations on intersex children (Alþingi, 2019). In 2023 an amendment was made to criminal law, where conversion therapy regarding sexual orientation and gender identity or expression was made illegal (Alþingi, 2023b).

Despite the progression of legal rights for LGBTQI+ people, and the fact that LGBTQI+ people have now started to gain access to citizenship rights in Iceland, there is still room for improvement on several levels. For example, there is no mention of LGBTQI+ people or gender nonconforming individuals in the constitution (Alþingi, 1995). The constitution was adapted from the Danish constitution in 1944, with the establishment of the republic, and was amended in 1984, 1991, 1995 and 1999, but is now outdated in several ways (IHRC, 2019). A new constitution was written in 2011 by the publicly elected

Constitutional Council and approved in a national referendum in 2012 (The Constitutional Council, 2011). Nonetheless the Icelandic parliament has not yet been successful in adopting the new constitution as conservative powers are predominant there within. Legislation dealing with hate speech and violence against LGBTQI+ people is further restricted in scope, as a conservative MP made the requirements for making such cases extremely narrow (IHRC, 2019; Eyþórsdóttir & Loftsdóttir, 2019). Legislation regarding LGBTQI+ people seeking international protection also need a thorough revision, as the process itself is discriminatory in practice, as SOGIE asylum seekers must continuously "prove" the authenticity of their sexual orientation and gender identity, and as the Dublin II regulation is applied extensively when in fact there are no requirements to do so (ILGA-Europe Annual Review, 2022; Steinþórsdóttir, 2019). It is nonetheless important to note that antidiscrimination laws and hate crime laws do not tackle the systemic structural racism, sexism, classism, ableism, heterosexism, migratism, cisgenderism, and ageism that are predominant within society and its institutions, but individualises the problem, which invites caution when estimating the effectiveness of such measures. Moreover, demonstrating intent becomes crucial, making it nearly impossible to win such cases (Spade, 2015; Davis, et al. 2022).

I have now introduced the study, including the research questions, scales of analysis, as well as the theoretical framework and the Icelandic context. I have discussed how a queer theoretical perspective is applied in the thesis, as well as examining literature regarding queer globalisation and closing with a brief overview of the field of queer or sexual migration studies. I have discussed the theory of homo(trans)nationalism, and how it frames the overall study, as well as pointing out who has become the other within Icelandic society. I have discussed theories relating to the migrant hierarchy, and how it connects to the three groups of queer migrations discussed in this thesis. In the section on the politics and sense of (un)belonging I have discussed how political projects of belonging dictate interlocutors' sense of belonging, as well as examining affect and emotions as they relate to the concepts of "home" and "race", and shortly introducing the potentiality of unbelonging and belonging-in-difference. In chapter four I discussed the Icelandic context, as it relates to the national imaginary and the othering processes within the context of migration and diaspora, as well as discussing migration history and the history of the legal framework for migrants. The chapter ended with a discussion of the history of LGBTQI+ sociality and legal rights. In the next chapter I will describe the methodology of the study before moving on to the four articles of the study, which are the main body of the thesis, and ending with a concluding discussion.

4   Methodology

In this chapter I will discuss the three approaches to methodology that were applied in this study, which are feminist methodology, queer methodology, and transnational methodology. Then I will move on to examining the research design of the study, which was a qualitative research design, with the sub-sections of data collection and description of the research interlocutors. In the third section I will look at the methods that were applied in the study, which were participant observation, interviews, and a focus group. The remaining three sections of the chapter discuss data analyses, positionality, and ethical considerations.

4.1.1   Feminist methodology

A feminist methodology was implemented in this research project, reflexivity was applied throughout the process, as well as getting feedback, and constructive criticism from fellow PhD students and academics from various disciplines and from different parts of the world. The overall aim of the research is furthermore to strive for social transformations. Ramazanoglu & Holland (2008) point out that the purpose of feminist social research is to give insight into a gendered social existence, but not to contribute to political correctness or methodological purity. Additionally, they maintain that although power can be conceived both negatively and positively, feminist researchers should in their research process be reflexive about the exercise of power, as well as in terms of ethics and moral accountability.

Feminist methodology draws substantially from Marxist methodology and is a way of doing research that emerged from feminist researchers' frustrations with the inability of mainstream methods to adequately represent the lived realities of women and other historically underrepresented groups. Academics who identify as feminist have long argued that positivist scientific approaches that reduce people's lives to a set of isolated variables fail to do justice to the intricacies of social life. Furthermore, feminists were among the first academics to call attention to the underrepresentation of women of colour in research and to propose methods for redressing this imbalance (Collins, 1990; Zinn, 1979). The intersection of race, class, gender, and sexuality is emphasised in feminism's critical literature as a crucial lens through which to study women's experiences (Crenshaw, 1993). Feminist methodology has evolved into a highly inclusive vision of research practices that can be used to investigate a vast array of subjects, examine the experiences of both men and women, and delve into phenomena on a local, national, and international scale (Naples, 2017).

Feminist scholars have written on the limitations of positivism and advocate for a method of knowledge creation that considers feminist and postcolonial theoretical and political concerns. The social environment and viewpoints of people who originate the questions, perform the research, and interpret the findings impact what qualifies as knowledge and how information is perceived: this is not considered by conventional approaches to science. Feminist methodology proposes an integrative strategy that gives more weight to the researcher's role and the process by which new knowledge is created (see Naples, 2003). Fonow and Cook (2005) have noted the continuity and changes in the issues that dominate debates about feminist methodology at the turn of the century. They discovered that modern feminist methodology still prioritizes issues like researcher reflexivity, process transparency, and women's empowerment.

A review of feminist approaches in social science research was conducted by Reinharz (1992), where she outlines some elements that arise in feminist researchers' attempts to differentiate their research methods from conventional methods. These include the following: "(1) feminism is a point a view, not a particular method; (2) feminist methodology consists of multiple methods; (3) feminist researchers offer a self-reflective understanding of their role in the research; and (4) a central goal of feminist research is to contribute to social changes that would improve women's lives" (see Naples, 2017, p. 2). Feminist methodology may thus be distinguished from some other research methods by its emphasis on reflexivity and search for social transformations.

4.1.2 Queer methodology

Queer methodology is a relatively recent phenomenon within academic circles (Brim & Ghaziani, 2016; Browne & Nash, 2010a; Compton, Meadow & Schilt, 2018; Ghaziani & Brim, 2019a; Lewin & Leap, 1996; Liinason & Kulpa, 2008; Kulpa & Liinason, 2009; Plummer, 2005) but is a logical extension of queer theory. Although defining what queer research might include is opposite to the very notion of queer theory, often described as being perpetually becoming, unstable and fluid (Browne & Nash, 2010b). Queer approaches can thus contest conventional disciplinary methods and norms in the social sciences, such as supposed veracity, generalisability, reliability, and coherence central to statistics and power relations when it comes to qualitative data collection (Browne & Nash, 2010b; Halberstam, 1998; Plummer, 2005). Therefore, there might be an obvious contradiction when the words "queer" and "method" are used together. The latter term is often "characterised by ordered, disciplinary-specific, and readily repeatable processes," whereas the former celebrates a "failure to conform to stable classificatory systems or be restricted by disciplinary bounds" (Ward, 2018, 71). The hypothetical-deductive view of research is thus incorrect

because it overlooks the messy, chaotic nature of scientific inquiry, which is exactly where queerness flourishes (Ghaziani & Brim, 2019b). "Making space for what is" is what queer methods offer (Love, et al. 2012, p. 144). Thus, it is important to fight the urge to "fix objects in place" but rather "ask what we think we know and how we think we know it" (Morgensen, 2015, p. 311). Ghaziani & Brim (2019b) envision a dual instruction for queer methods, taken from an interview between Sara Ahmed and Judith Butler, "to outline the conditions of queer worldmaking and to clarify, but not overdetermine, the conditions that 'make life liveable' " (p. 7, see also Ahmed, 2016, p. 490). The link between data and theory is nonetheless a methodological dilemma, and therefore theory, data, and method cannot be comprehended independently (Boellstorff, 2010).

My approach to this research project is interdisciplinary and inherently queer. Having a background in sociology but being positioned in anthropology is one aspect of it, another is my reading habits and adherence to theories, concepts, and approaches which I find interesting, relevant, and useful, irrespective of their disciplinary origin. Within the undergraduate sociology program at the University of Iceland there is, or at least was at that time, a strong emphasis on quantitative methods, so it was only in my master's program in the UK that I got acquainted with qualitative methods, which I personally find much more intriguing and relevant for such a hard-to-reach population and project examining LGBTQI+ experiences. Within anthropology there is a strong emphasis on conducting studies in other cultural contexts and through ethnographic methods, which is not the case in this study. The context is Iceland, where I grew up, and can thus be described as at-home research (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997; O'Reilly, 2005), and as it turned out, conducting participant observation was not possible to any extent, as the queer community in Iceland is scattered and the interlocutors in this study did not meet formally. Some small coffee meetups and gatherings took place but were usually attended by a mix of people, and often interlocutors did not know each other.

Schilt, Meadow & Compton (2018) have highlighted their ambition "to find ways to gather empirical data about the experiences of people who are politically and socially marginalized without reproducing such marginalization through practices of research and theorizing that conflate objectification with 'good science'" (p. 5). They have further defined a set of principles that bind the many epistemological and methodological commitments, fields of study, sociocultural contexts and social locations of researchers and the research we describe as "queer research" within sociology. Firstly, such works place a strong emphasis on using empirical evidence to support explanations of gender and sexual formations that are distinct from the normative centre. Secondly, in order to shed light on the covert processes of power and normativity

surrounding racialized, gendered, and sexual categories, such works adopt a perspective from the margins. They also offer critical analyses of the ways in which investments in hetero-, homo-, and cisnormativities are firmly ingrained in much theory and practice in the social sciences. Third, queer research within sociology takes into consideration how these governing, socially constructed identities originate and change throughout historical, political, and national contexts while being attentive to the ways in which individuals use identification categories to make sense of their lives and wants. Fourth, although hybridities, intersectionalities, reflexivities, erotics and intimacies may seem to undermine a technique from a positivist perspective, we contend that these are essential for comprehending social and sexual existence. Finally, building on significant contributions from queer, feminist, and critical race theory, queer research investigates how institutions, communities, and social networks, as well as social locations like race, class, and nationality, shape people's lived experiences with sexuality and gender in ways that simultaneously enable and limit people's ability to lead liveable lives and create queer worldmaking practices. My research adheres to all those five points, by using empirical evidence; adopting a perspective from the margins; examining and explaining identity categories while also noting their instability and social construction; using qualitative methods which give room to intersectionalities, hybridities, reflexivities, erotics and intimacies, and finally, the study builds on elements of queer, feminist, critical race and queer of colour critique, and highlights how political projects of belonging shape the relationality of belonging in Iceland.

4.1.3 Transnational methodology

Faist (2012) and Amelina & Faist (2012) have put forth a methodological framework to arrive at systematic and substantive findings in transnational studies. They note that this methodology includes a wide range of research methods that relate to present epistemological insights on how mobility, the social and space are interconnected (Hannerz, 1996; Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004; Urry, 2007). Amelina & Faist (2012) point out three methodological issues in modern migration studies and transnational research. Firstly, empirical studies of international migration are often conducted with the assumption that the nation-state is the primary relevant setting. Secondly, some experts on migration use ethnicity as the primary category to classify their findings. Thirdly, notions that naturalize ethnic belonging define numerous empirical investigations. A fourth issue relates to the positionality of the researcher, relating to funds and social scientific concepts, as funds are usually located in the immigration states, which puts researchers from the emigrating states in the global south at a disadvantage (Faist, 2012). The transnational methodological

approach thus disapproves of using individual countries as the basis for research (Basch, Glick Schiller & Szanton Blanc, 1994; Faist, 2000; Portes, 2000; Pries, 2008; Vertovec, 2007). The transnational approach avoids a methodology focused on nation states by advocating for the de-naturalization of terms like "country" and "space" (Beck & Grande, 2010; Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2003).

In this study I do critically examine nationalism, homonationalism and homotransnationalism and its effect on nation building processes. Consequently, although this research only takes place in one country, I do not discuss it as territorial "container", or a quasi-natural entity. My focus is further on the macro, meso and micro level, or on global processes of migration, the communities that interlocutors have connections to, such as the queer community and their immigrant communities, as well as how political projects of exclusion manifest in the relationality of affective belonging in interlocutors everyday lives. My main focus is on queering migrations and discussing the experiences of LGBTQ+ migrants, so the first criteria for selecting interlocutors was always that they were under the queer umbrella and is thus transnational. Moreover, the issue of using an ethnic lens, or naturalising ethnic belonging and applying it as a starting point for a research project to examine group integration is not something that this project does. Secondly, I interviewed people from all over the world, but to make sense of such a diverse dataset I divided the interviews into three groups, that is people coming from the Global South, the Global North and Central and Eastern Europe, as there were clear trends within each group. I furthermore emphasise the hierarchical ordering of immigrants, in relation to ethnicity and national origin, as well as discussing issues of gender, class, and religion, and how these different social locations intersect and create exclusionary moments, which is one of the key concepts in this study. I further emphasise how these categories are socially constructed, as well as discussing how dominant stereotypes of specific ethnicities affect interlocutors experience of belonging. Lastly, I am the only researcher in this project, and I am self-funded through a project grant with the Icelandic Research Fund, consequently there were not issues relating to power relations between researchers located in different parts of the world.

4.1.4 Insights across three methodologies

Queer methodology in many ways builds on the groundwork that feminist methodology had laid out, with the emphasis on social transformations, reflexivity, ethics, moral accountability, positionality of the researcher, and empowerment of marginal groups within society. Queer methodology is more recent and thus takes steps towards decentring methods and norms in the social sciences, such as supposed reliability, generalisability, veracity, coherence

central to statistics and power relations regarding qualitative data collection, although this has been done to some extent within feminist scholarship as well. Queer methodology emphasises using queer theory to decentre heterosexism, cisgenderism, homonormalistaion, and homonationalism and that is the main distinction between the two approaches in my opinion. Furthermore, it incorporates postcolonialism, critical race theory and queer of colour critique as well as a perspective from the margins in its intersectional approach to research. A transnational methodology builds to some extent on feminist methodology, for example regarding the researcher's positionality. But its main emphasis is on issues relating to ethnic essentialism, methodological nationalism, ethnocentrism, and geopolitics. Applying these three perspectives jointly within this research project is thus very fruitful, and in my opinion important for the progression of the study.

4.2   Qualitative research design

Now that I have discussed the methodology applied in the study as a feminist, queer and a transnational approach, I will next describe the research design. A qualitative research design is often described as, firstly, the aims and research questions of the study (described here in section one the introduction), the perspective of the researcher (systematic, processional, holistic, empathetic, non-judgemental) and the perspective of the interlocutors, the methods used to select interlocutors, the methods used to collect data, and finally the analysing process and writing up of findings. Qualitative research nonetheless relies less on a pre-defined structured design as quantitative research usually does, rather it rests on an interactive and open work plan (Corbetta, 2003).

Some key characteristics of qualitative research include: "the overall research perspective and the importance of the participants' frames of reference; the flexible nature of research design; the volume and richness of qualitative data; the distinctive approaches to analysis and interpretation; and the kind of outputs that derive from qualitative research" (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003, p. 3. See also, e.g., Bryman, 1988; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Holloway & Wheeler, 1996; Mason, 2002; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002). Denzin & Lincoln (2000) offer a working definition to capture the essence of qualitative research:

> Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that makes the world visible. These practices ... turn the world into a series of representations including fieldnotes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (3).

Social constructionism, also referred to as interpretivism, is an approach by which people try to comprehend their surroundings and create their own unique meanings that fit their experiences. These meanings are not inscribed or innate in each individual. Instead, meanings develop via social interaction (Creswell, 2007). This research relies on the premises of social constructionism and symbolic interactionism.

4.2.1 Data collection

Locating research interlocutors started in mid-2013 and lasted till the end of 2015, and then again in 2020, as by then I had noticed that more trans women had become visible in the queer community and in the general society and I wanted to interview more neuroqueer individuals. In 2013-2015 only one transgender woman participated, and as it turned out two neuroqueer individuals, but in 2020 I had located four more trans individuals and one more neuroqueer individual, which seemed more appropriate numbers. No trans men were located, unfortunately. I made efforts to find and get in contact with intersex individuals but was not successful in that quest. The process of locating interlocutors started with me contacting a friend, who was a queer migrant himself, and asking if he could put me in contact with some queer migrants, and then the ball started rolling. I used a snowball sampling technique along with a purposeful sampling technique. A snowball sampling technique is a method used to search into participants' social networks to access specific populations and is often used when the population is "hidden" in some ways, due to the sensitivity of the topic or a low number of potential participants. This method both includes and excludes individuals, as those who are not in a particular social network are possibly in some way different from those within the network (Browne, 2005). I also asked other people I knew to put me in contact with queer migrants, which generated some more interviews. I further placed ads on "walls" of various Facebook groups, as well as asking people within queer oriented Facebook groups to participate via messenger, which assisted me in getting into contact with a more diverse group of people. Almost everyone in Iceland has or uses Facebook regularly, or 91% of the population (MMR, 2018), so locating participants via Facebook turned out to be very helpful. A large number of the people that contacted me through Facebook ads were people from the Global North, but I had to make a conscious effort to get in contact with people from Central and Eastern Europe in particular. This was a result of the challenges associated with publicly acknowledging and embracing a non-heterosexual identity within this specific geographical area, particularly in the Polish context, and as a consequence of the influence exerted by the Catholic church. Furthermore, these complexities persist in the diaspora populations residing in host nations and thus operate transnationally. Purposeful sampling of

interlocutor has been described by following guidelines. Researchers should interview people who meet the criteria: 1) are knowledgeable about the cultural field, situation, or experience under study; 2) are open to discussion; and 3) can articulate a variety of perspectives (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 66). Purposive sampling is emphasized by Glaser and Strauss (1967) who note that it is useful to stress the variety of similarities and differences across informants.

4.2.2   Research interlocutors

As the Icelandic population is 396,960 in September 2023 (Statistics Iceland, 2023c), and recent surveys in the US estimate that people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender are 7.1% of the inhabitants (Mones, 2022), the LGBT population might thus be around 26.700 individuals in Iceland. Nonetheless, the queer community in Iceland is small and information about one's gender identity and sexual orientation are still, to some extent, considered sensitive information. Consequently, I do not want to put interlocutors' background information in a linear table to protect their anonymity but will simply describe them in plain text. I further want to make clear that although I am in some sense counting and categorizing interlocutors in this section, I want to emphasize that all the categories discussed are social constructions, and thus dependent on how interlocutors interpreted their meaning. Moreover, to be able to discuss social hierarchies, as is one of the aims of this study, it is imperative to make distinctions between different social locations. As previously stated, I did have one main interview period around 2013 and 2015, and then added another five interviews in 2020. I thus took 49 interviews with 54 individuals: 23 with cis-men, 20 cis-women, as well as with 5 trans women, two people who defined as gender benders, and four who defined their gender as androgenous, gender queer, bi gender, and nonbinary. Interlocutors defined their sexual orientation as follows: 20 as gay men, 18 as lesbians, 7 as bisexual, 5 as queer, 2 as trans and heterosexual, and then one as pansexual and one as a woman who likes women. Regarding the age of the interlocutors, 17 were in their twenties, 28 in their thirties, six were in their forties, two in their fifties and one in their sixties. Three of the individuals who saw themselves as nonbinary in some sense, also identified as autistic. Two individuals had a physical disability. It is complicated to discuss people's race and class, especially as this was not something I directly asked about in the interviews, but something I have estimated from available information, for example, concerning social status of parents in the country of origin (but in retrospect I probably should have discussed issues of race and class more directly, and with regards to definitions). But my best estimate concerning interlocutors' social class is that 22 came from a middle-class background, 20

from a working-class background, and 12 had an unclear background concerning social class. Regarding race, the same situation was prominent, as I did not ask directly how interlocutors defined their "race" (but as Ahmed (2004b) has noted, race matters as long as people are still discriminated against on account of their race). I am thus estimating from the racialisation incidences they discuss in the interviews, how their race is perceived in daily social interactions in Iceland. My rough estimate thus is that 38 individuals were racialised as white and 16 were racialised as Black or brown. The vast majority of the interlocutors were from the Global North, or 27 individuals, 13 were from Central and Eastern Europe, and 14 from the Global South. Their time of residence in Iceland ranged from nine months to over thirty years, two had migrated as children and two as teenagers, but the vast majority of the interlocutors had lived in Iceland for several years. All the interlocutors were first generation migrants, but two individuals had one parent that was Icelandic, they nonetheless were born and grew up abroad and then moved as adults. 12 interlocutors had an Icelandic citizenship at the time of the interviews and 39 did not, while for two individuals this was unclear, and one had a refugee status in Iceland. Interlocutors educational level varied, in two cases the educational level was unclear, three individuals had finished compulsory school / high school / gymnasium, two had a vocational training, twelve had a matriculation examination, twenty-three had a bachelor's degree, and ten had a master's degree at the time of the interviews. Interlocutors work situation varied as well, as two were unemployed and one was on disability pension, one worked in media, on worked as a translator and a writer, two in social services, two worked in IT, two worked in health care services, two worked in preschools, three were teachers in elementary schools, three worked in music and arts, three worked in restaurants, five worked in retail and sales, six worked in fish factories, nine worked in the travel industry and ten were studying at university at the time of the interviews.

4.3   Methods

In this study four qualitative methods were used, that is, participant observations of smaller events, interviews with 54 individuals, one focus group, and discourse analysis of newspaper articles and an article listed on the website of the Catholic Church. The central emphasis was nonetheless on the interviews, as participant observation was not applicable due to the lack of formal community of queer immigrants.

4.3.1 Participant observation

Ethnographic methods are applied to understand people's way of life, from their own point of view and in the context of their everyday experience, and to gain a deep understanding of people's reality (Spradley, 1979). Critical ethnography is used to detect social inequalities and strives towards social change (Berg, 2009). Participant observation, which is central to the classic definition of ethnography, may nonetheless be less useful in modern urban or translocal fieldwork. Research into transnational processes, as explained by Eriksen (2003), calls for a slightly different conceptual apparatus and methodological toolbox than that which was characteristic of the field half a century ago. Contemporary urban or multilocal fieldwork frequently makes more use of formal interviews and written materials than traditional ethnography. There is also a trend toward a less diversified engagement with informants (Eriksen, 2003; see also Gmelch & Gmelch, 2009). One might say that this study is ethnographically informed, as I did interview several interlocutors at their homes or at other locations that were meaningful to them, consequently I did in some sense enter their private spheres. This study further falls under the definition of an "anthropology at home" as the Icelandic queer community and the mainstream society is the location where I grew up, so the study's cultural context is relatively well established in that sense.

The goal of participant observation is to gain insight into people's lives through partaking in their activities and learning from their practices. It is important to take field notes in that process and gather any additional relevant data such as interviews or observational data (O'Reilly, 2005). Semi-structured interviews and participant observation are seen as complementary strategies because individuals often say one thing but do another (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). There was not really an opportunity for me to actively use this method, but I did take part in small coffee meetups, where only a few people attended, and I did attend smaller events which were more mixed with both queer migrants and queer ethnic Icelanders. This is, in part, due to the fact that there is no organisation for queer migrants in Iceland and consequently no formal gatherings as such. More or less everyone I interviewed was further busy with work and other commitments, so I found it inappropriate to ask if I could have more of their time, or "follow them around" sometimes also termed as shadowing (Quinlan, 2008). I further had no previous experience with applying ethnographic methods so that might a have played a part in this decision, along with the fact that being autistic limits my tolerance for uncomfortable social interactions such as small talk and further increases relational misunderstandings. If I were interviewed in connection to a research, which has happened, I would be blatantly honest about myself, what I do and how I think, but I also realise that this is presumably not the norm for everyone. I would

further be apprehensive about someone following me around unless it was just in workplace situations. Moreover, from my perspective, this method thus seems rather illogical in many ways, as it is firmly grounded in an allistic (people who are not autistic) ways of conceptualising research. Consequently, mainly focusing on interview data and smaller events was, in fact, the best method for me and the progression of the project. Granted it is different to be present in the moment when things occur compared to when someone tells you about their experiences, but then again, a lot can be discussed in an interview that would never come up in behaviour observations and casual social interactions. Becoming an insider within a particular social group rather than being a researcher from the outside, could be beneficial regarding gathering deep insights, but then again, being autistic, I am never really an insider in any social groups in my experience, so again, this seems somewhat of a problematic way of thinking and doing things. It is often noted that in participant observations one can use all of one's senses to generate data, such as sight, taste, smell, touch, and hearing (Esterberg, 2002), but as my senses work slightly differently than allistic senses, this might generate findings in line with such diversity and differential ways of interpreting sensory data. And lastly, because of the immense unpredictability of ethnographic work, I find the process itself slightly intimidating, and it would require tremendous energy to navigate if applied it as the main method of gathering research data. This failure to carry out a proper ethnographic research may be similar to previous professional and personal setbacks that altered the course of this work. However, a presumed failure in one area may lead to a flourishing in another; in this instance, I found that conducting in-depth interviews was the most fruitful approach within the context of this study.

4.3.2 Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used in this research as they are flexible while still maintaining some form of structure (Esterberg, 2002), and as it is possible to probe beyond the answers, which often gives the most informative responses (Berg, 2009; Legard, et al. 2003). I began the interviewing process in late 2012, by conducting four preliminary informal interviews which I did not record, but which gave me an idea as to how to construct the theme list for the subsequent interviews. Those four individuals were thus interviewed twice in the context of this study, and two of these same individuals further attended the focus group session. I started the interviewing process by sending interlocutors a letter of introduction, where the research was introduced in a short text. In the interview itself, I began each session by getting a signature on the informed consent form (with the exception of those who participated though Skype or Zoom), where it is for example noted that interlocutors can withdraw their participation at any

time, and then I proceeded to go through the interview guide that I had put together. When I initially interviewed a trans interlocutor in 2015, I was apprehensive about my overall lack of knowledge of trans issues. But by 2020, however, I had read up on trans issues and controversies, and felt more confident in my approach. Since receiving my autism diagnosis in 2014, my interest and knowledge of the condition has grown substantially.

As previously mentioned, I recorded 49 interviews with 54 individuals: 16 were in Icelandic and in 36 in English. Nonetheless, about twenty more of those interviews could have been conducted in Icelandic, as interlocutors were able to speak it, but for different reasons it was decided to stick to English, one being that my thesis and articles would all be written in English so it would be easier to use that language from the beginning. There were nonetheless three interviews where an interpreter would have been beneficial, but as I had not requested additional funding for such an endeavour, and as I was slightly worried that an interpreter would make the flow of the interview setting uncomfortable, I did not have an interpreter present in any of the interviews. The first case was with a Polish lesbian couple who lived in a small fishing village, with whom I had come in contact through a third party, a person that my supervisor knew. One of them spoke some English but the other one did not, so the person who could speak English translated everything for her partner. This made the interview setting slightly uncomfortable, as they tended to discuss a lot of things and then only translate part of it for the interview, so in retrospect an LGBTQ+ friendly interpreter would have been helpful in that situation. The second case was an interview in the northwest of Iceland, where I was attending a conference and got in contact with a lesbian couple from the Global South there through the local Multicultural Information Centre. As I had only minimum contact with them before the interview, I did not realize that they did not speak English and spoke very limited Icelandic. I did manage to have some basic conversations but the depth of the interview as completely lacking because of language issues. The third case was with a transgender woman from the Global South, whom I had located through a Facebook group. She did not speak Icelandic and spoke very limited English, so again there the depth of the interview as lacking, which is unfortunate.

Five of the interviews were with lesbian couples, while all the others were individual interviews. I did interview one gay couple, but separately, as they were living in separate countries at the time. A couple interview is in some sense more productive, as then the interlocutors are also talking to a person they know well, but then again, they may hold something back that would make the partner uncomfortable. The interviews took place in various locations; as I do not have an office at the university there was not a set place where the interviews could be held, so I often asked the interlocutors where they would

want the interview to take place, or I suggested a place. As it turned out, one interview was through email, where I just sent the person the theme list, as this was his request. Three interviews were conducted at interlocutor's place of work, seven in rooms at the university library or in rooms at the university, eight at cafes in the city centre, eight through Skype or Zoom, twelve at the Reykjavík city library, and thirteen at interlocutors' homes. The interviews lasted from thirty minutes to three hours, but most of them were around one or one and a half hours in length. Themes that were asked about in the interview were: the migration process itself and the first year of residence in Iceland; work, studies and financial issues; interlocutors' connection to various communities, such as the queer community, their ethnic community and the Icelandic mainstream society, do they find a sense of belonging there; issues of structural inclusion and exclusion regarding residency, work permits, and citizenship, as well as issues of racism, classism, heterosexism, cisgenderism, ableism, ageism; issues regarding language and cultural differences, learning Icelandic and adjusting to a different culture; transnational practices and having connections in more than one country; issues relating to religious institutions and having a religious upbringing and how interlocutors' gender identity and sexual orientation fit within that framework; issues relating to interlocutors' connection to their families, the place they grew up, and how their family have reacted to interlocutors' gender identity and sexual orientation; how interlocutors define their gender identity and sexual orientation, when and how they came out, issues relating to identity management and staying safe; issues relating to dating and relationships; gender role expectations and interlocutors' opinion on the gender binary; and always closing with asking if there is something that they want to say to each community, that is, the queer community, their ethnic community and the Icelandic mainstream society.

4.3.3 Focus group

Focus groups have been known to be helpful in reducing power imbalances between interlocutors and researchers (Montell, 1999), by enabling participants to speak to others with similar experiences, and can thus be empowering (Madriz, 1998, 2000). One focus group interview was conducted in collaboration with the Multicultural Centre in Ísafjörður, but the interview was housed at the Icelandic Human Rights Centre in Reykjavík. The interview was held on a weekday evening, and beforehand we had arranged to have light refreshments during the event. Four interlocutors that I had previously interviewed in an individual interview attended the event, so when I transcribed the interview recognizing who was speaking was not an issue. Two cis men, one cis woman and one gender-bending man attended. Their ages ranged from twenty-four to thirty-three at the time of the interview and they all lived in

Reykjavík. I did send out an invitation to several other individuals that I had previously interviewed but only these four had the time, interest, and opportunity to attend. They all were familiar with each other beforehand, to some extent, and two of them were friends and had the same country of origin. They were all from the Global North and had resided in Iceland for between one year and fifteen years. The main discussion topic was multiple discrimination. Several issues were raised but the homogenization of the group might have been somewhat of a hindrance in that regard. After the interview we all decided to move over to a bar nearby and continue the conversation, where we were joined by other people.

4.4   Analysis of data

Data analysis has, in a sense, taken place throughout the process, as Kvale (1996) has noted, in qualitative research, data collection and analysis are not separate processes but occur in tandem (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). The process might have started when I conducted the preliminary interviews in order to construct the theme list, followed by writing down field notes directly after each interview, and then transcribing the interviews verbatim and making further notes during and after the transcribing process. A lot of impressions are made through these initial stages of data collection and analysis, which sometimes are reflected in the field notes and memos, and sometimes are more of an affect which one cannot properly put into words. The process of listening to myself in the interviews while transcribing them became an obstacle that I did not really anticipate, as I found the process tremendously difficult and draining, and something that I could only get through by taking frequent breaks and intermissions. This has, for sure, to do with me being autistic and having a history of complex social relations and rejections, mostly with allistic people but also with other autistics. In that sense, this process forced me to examine in detail how I conduct myself in conversations and consequently deal with presumed failures of my communication style. The recorded and transcribed interviews and focus group, as well as the field notes, generated some 1066 pages of text, or 612,279 words, so the months that went into just transcribing and coding the interviews were extensive. It was only in the five interviews that I took in the year of 2020 that I could use the relatively new technology of online converter from audio to text, to some extent. To govern all of this text and information I used the online program of Dedoose, where I could conduct the coding process, and where I could have some sort of an overview of the media, codes, excerpts and descriptors, and make the data more manageable, as well as assist in some preliminary analyses. I further could divide the data set into different subsets, where I could examine interviews, for example, from a

specific part of the world or relating to interlocutor's other background data, such as gender, which was the case in the last article.

Elements of grounded theory are applied in this research. I am aware of how this study does not adhere to one approach to qualitative research, but that might be one way of queering qualitative inquiry. Although the aim of this research is not to generate theory or an abstract analytical schema of process, interaction, or action (Creswell, 2007; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), per se, it is grounded in empirical data, regarding the actions, interactions, and social processes of interlocutors, that has been systematically collected and analysed. I applied some components of grounded theory, such as, focusing on interlocutor's experience of a process and identifying steps in the process, and reaching a saturation by adding interviews until new information becomes scarce. I did an analysis of the interviews and focus group data through line-by-line coding, first with an open coding and then focused coding, but I did not use axal coding (Charmaz, 2006). Braun & Clarke (2013) have put forth the notion of grounded theory light, as in practice, many researchers only complete the earlier stages of grounded theory of initial coding and concept development, which is thus more in line with the process applied in this study. This light version of grounded theory is rooted in four steps: 1) transcription 2) initial open coding which is semi complete and writing memos 3) intermediate or focused coding, which incorporates writing memos, refining the coding system, linking codes to other codes, identifying categories, defining categories 4) production of diagrammatic representation of the analysis, showing categories and the relationship between them (p. 202). The final stage of analysis is the "writing up process". Writing is noted to be an inherently dynamic and complex way to learn about the world (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). As the data analysis and the writing-up are inextricably related processes (Creswell, 2007), I completed the analysis phase by writing up, along with several reviews and rewritings of the four articles that make up the main body of the thesis.

Discourse analysis of online secondary sources also informed the study. Discourse analysis examines communication via speech and writing as social behaviours and the means by which such practices are enabled. Analysis of the performances, language choices, and rhetorical strategies used in specific stories reveals how knowledge is constructed within various discourses (Ritchie & Lewis 2003). The focus of the discourse analysis was on cases where power differences came into question, concerning marginalised groups and people in positions of power. A historic discourse analysis (Foucault, 1972; Jóhannesson, 2006) has the potential to identify the interplay of contradicting ideas and direct discursive themes and regimes of truth. I used historic discourse analysis to examine four cases, where the analysis generated 93 pages of text, including some images. Firstly, I analysed an article entitled "What homosexuality is not"

(van den Aardweg, 2013), which was on the website of the Catholic Church in Iceland in 2014 and is thus indicative of their stance on the issue at the time, it is discussed in more detail in my fourth article. The Catholic Church in Iceland typically refrains from expressing its stance on matters pertaining to sexual orientation, gender identity and expression. Consequently, I resorted to conducting an online research in order to find any correspondence that aligned with the accounts I heard in interviews regarding prevalent homophobia and transphobia within the institution. This article was the only document I found at the time, and that is the reason for the analyses of this specific text. Secondly, I looked at a study of newspaper articles in 2016 concerning a homophobic Orthodox television preacher from the US who was invited to give a keynote lecture at a Christian festival called Celebration of hope (Hátíð vonar) in Reykjavik in 2013. Thirdly, I examined a case where a teacher at an Icelandic state funded high school, who previously had been the chairman of a Christian denomination group, was suspended for posting homophobic and transphobic notions on his personal online blog in 2012. This case went to trial, and he was acquitted, and was consequently reinstated to his previous position. In 2018 he further received compensation from the Municipality of Akureyri. The fourth examination was an investigation into newspaper articles about a substitute candidate on the Human Rights Committee for the City of Reykjavík, who was appointed in 2015 by the Progressive party (Framsókn og flugvallavinir) which was a right-wing populist party. He later briefly became a candidate for a then, newly formed, nationalist party called The Icelandic National Front (íslenska þjóðfylkingin) which was, for example, against any kind of multiculturalism and wanted out of the Schengen agreement but did not get enough support to come into political power. Ironically, this same person has since then moved to Spain where he now lives as a retirement migrant.

4.5 Positionality

When doing research, feminist and other critical academics have stressed the need of considering the researcher's own position in terms of social categories such as, race, class, and gender and emphasised how research practices are imbedded in power relations (England, 1994; Frankenberg, 1993; Loftsdóttir, 2012b; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). Researchers should be self-aware and reflexive not just about their own background but also about their field and broader sociocultural contexts (Davies, 2008). In the late 1960s, anthropology started critically examining its own history, realising that it was a product of and benefited from colonial expansion. Over the last several decades, anthropologists have been more concerned with how to think about, conduct, and write about ethnographic research as they have continued on their reflexive path and been inspired by feminist, postmodern, and postcolonial ideas

(Clifford, 1986; Plummer, 2001b; Rose, 1997). Feminist ethnographers in particular (Abu-Lughod, 2006; DeWalt & DeWalt, 1998; Sylvain, 2005) have been preoccupied with the researcher's identification and how one's social and historical position always impacts the study (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). When claims of rigour are made in qualitative research by privileging a particular aspect of the researcher's subjectivity as an insider, a "credibility fallacy" is committed because it fails to account for the way in which subjectivities and space are relationally co-constituted. Moreover, maintaining a research context that allows for different possibilities in an interview setting rather than focusing on pre-established frameworks is essential to a queer research positionality, as is stressing the ongoing exchanges of the interview that actively define the meanings of narratives (Gorman-Murray, et al. 2010).

The concept of gays and lesbians doing research in queer settings has been discussed by Lewin & Leap (1996), who have pointed out that as sexuality is a social construct, the question of whether being a non-heterosexual spans cultural boundaries requires a different answer for each situation. Consequently, I assumed that although it might be beneficial in some interviews that I identify as queer person or even a lesbian, it might not be so in others. As such, I decided that I would not specifically state my or sexual orientation or gender identity in the interviews, but if I was asked, which as it turned out never occurred, I would be open about my current identifications. There were also several incidents where this information might have been divulged, through my interest and familiarity with the topic and experiences discussed, sometimes termed as a shared understanding between the interlocutors and the researcher (Merriam et al., 2001). Nonetheless, this shared understanding might result in me not posing specific questions and the interlocutors not stating certain information (DeLyser, 2001; Kanuha, 2000). Therefore, I am an insider to some extent, but since my autistic identity is grounded in the experience of being an outsider in social groups, I strongly related to interlocutors' feelings of being on the periphery of both Icelandic society and the queer community. I further have a specific relationship to gender, and in fact define myself as autigender. Moreover, I often find it easier to converse with gay men rather than women, as they tend to be more direct and concrete in their communication styles, which adds another layer to the queering of power relations in an interview setting.

In *Decolonizing Methodologies* Smith (2012b) argues that a willingness to embrace humility through humour, self-reflection, and experience, is crucial to locating spaces where racialised and non-racialised scholars may interact with mutual respect. This was indeed the approach that I applied in the interviews, I attempted to make the setting comfortable and safe, and tried to be humble and use humour where appropriate. I did review the theme list several times, as I found the flow of the interview sometimes lacking and made every effort to

make this more of a conversation rather than an interview. I am nonetheless aware of my position as a researcher and the one guiding the interview, and the presumed cultural capital that comes with such a role. I however have a relatively good self-understanding, I am familiar with most of my limitations and strengths, thus my hope was that this would assist in making the interview setting more relaxed, despite me generally not discussing these issues explicitly. Whiteness is however the unmarked normative subjectivity in Iceland and a reflection on issues relating to one's race is not the norm (Loftsdóttir, 2012b). Nonetheless, having been in an interracial relationship and seeing the everyday racialization my ex-partner encounters has caused me to reflect on my own white privilege for the last fifteen years or so. This experience of self-reflection regarding white privilege thus potentially decentred some power relations in the interview settings.

I further grew up in a working-class or lower middle-class subjectivity, depending on class definitions, and still see myself as working-class while simultaneously being highly educated. In fact, I often experienced my working-class subjectivity intensely in interviews with interlocutors that had an upper middle-class background. I draw my class consciousness from my own experiences and having British friends who discuss class belonging in concrete ways, while Icelanders are reluctant to define themselves within the social category of class, and consequently the topic of social class rarely if ever comes up in conversation (Oddsson, 2010). Most of the interlocutors were somewhat younger than me or similarly aged, while only few were older. My impression is that age was not a substantial obstacle in the interview settings, as I tend dress and act younger than I actually am.

4.6 Ethical considerations

Research that studies people and their relationships to the world and to each other must be sensitive about issues of ethical behaviour, as it often collides with the rights and sensibilities of others. Basic moral principles serve as the foundation of research ethics. The idea of respecting human autonomy is a crucial one to keep in mind while doing any kind of study, but it takes on special significance when it comes to individuals being studied in social research (Shamoo & Resnik, 2009; Resnik, 1998). This implies that no one should be subjected to a research study unless they voluntarily agree to do so after being properly informed about the nature of the study and its potential risks (Kristinsson, 2013). The concepts of non-maleficence and beneficence are two more cornerstones of ethics. The principle of beneficence states that we must work to help others by advancing their interests (Shamoo & Resnik, 2009), whereas the concept of non-maleficence states that we must avoid doing

harm to others in carrying out research or publishing the project's findings (Lee, 1993; Kristinsson, 2013). Many people think that the primary ethical responsibility of a researcher is to make sure that no one is harmed in the course of the research (DeWalt & DeWalt, 1998; O'Reilly, 2005). As such, this idea is informed by the concept of non-maleficence. Social responsibility is a fundamental tenet of scientific ethics, and it is connected to the general concepts of beneficence and non-maleficence. Scientists should thus do their best to prevent damage to society and enhance social gain (Resnik, 1998, see Guðjónsdóttir, 2018). Interlocutors were usually interested in topics related to gender identity and sexual orientation because their identity constructions and experiences included such issues. This study's overarching goal is to promote meaningful social transformations; specifically, I seek to raise acceptance of migrants in Iceland, bring attention to hierarchies within society, and broaden acceptance of LGBTQ+ persons who do not conform to mainstream homonormalisation.

Socially sensitive research has been described as research where there are potential consequences, either for the individual or the class or group of individuals which the research represents. Sometimes topics might seem sensitive when in fact they are not, and vice versa. To develop a comprehensive understanding of sensitive issues in research, it is important not only to focus on the consequences, but also on methodological and technical issues and to examine them from both the participants' and the researcher's perspective (Sieber & Stanley, 1988). Lee (1993) has noted that in the past sensitive topics have been linked with issues that are generally considered to be taboo. Sensitive research can be seen as threatening in three main ways. Firstly, in relation to research topics that could be seen as intrusive, which touch on sectors that might be considered stressful, private, or sacred for the interlocutor. Secondly, through a threat of sanction, when research focuses on areas which are considered to pertain to deviance and private or sensitive information, which when revealed could lead to social stigma. And thirdly, research which might pose some sort of a political threat, where the interests of the powerful within society are under investigation in some way. Based on this understanding, studies of sexual orientation and gender identity may be classified as sensitive since they infringe on the private sphere and within specific contexts are associated with potentially harmful societal and legal repercussions. However, this is contingent on the interlocutors' histories, background, and experiences regarding issues of gender and sexuality. Some of the interlocutors in this research were, for example, not open about their sexual orientation with their families. Because of this, and as the queer community in Iceland is exceptionally small, I took great care to conceal the identities of the interlocutors in the texts and sometimes switched around their biographical

details to better protect their anonymity and the confidentiality of the information they provided for this research. After inquiring with the data protection authorities, I was informed that a formal application was not required for this particular research at that time.

5   Collection of papers

In this chapter the four articles that make up the core component of this thesis are presented; they can be read separately but together illustrate the process of queer(ing) migration scholarship in Iceland, which has until now only discussed the experiences of heterosexuals and cisgender individuals. The first three articles give an overview of the migrant hierarchy, as they discuss the three groups previously mentioned, or people coming from the Global South, Central and Eastern Europe and the Global North. As most queer migration scholarship discusses the experiences of gay men, I wanted to highlight the experiences of women and non-binary individuals by dedicating a separate article to the issue. The last article thus discusses the experiences of queer women, hailing from all over the world, and in relation to the political projects of national imaginary and the Catholic church. What binds all of the four articles together is, firstly, the queering of migration scholarship within the Icelandic context. The theory of homonationalism which frames the overall study and illustrates how the immigrant other has replaced privileged queer people as the other within society, as well as theories of the migrant hierarchy. Lastly, all the articles focus on how specific political projects dictate interlocutors' sense of belonging, to their ethnic community, the queer community, and the Icelandic mainstream society.

My supervisor professor Unnur Dís Skaptadóttir is the co-author of the first article. I worked independently on the first draft of the article, and then she added sections relating to her research with people from the Philippines and regarding racialisation processes, as well as making comments and suggestions regarding other parts of the text. I am the sole author of the subsequent three articles, but my supervisor and the doctoral committee read over all the articles and made valuable remarks and recommendations to the text. The first article, "LGBQ migrations: Racialization and (un)belonging in Iceland" (Sólveigar- og Guðmundsdóttir & Skaptadóttir, 2017), was published in the journal *lambda nordica*. Drawing on Mai and King's (2009) call for an "emotional" and "sexual" turn in migration studies, the article explores the experiences of LGBQ (interlocutors identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and queer) migrants from the Global South, building on theories of postcolonial critique regarding racialisation and othering, and discusses theories of belonging through an intersectional lens. Three main themes were carved out of the analysis. The first theme involves a bifocal world view, where interlocutors compared the "here" and "there" to make sense of a different cultural context. The second theme was degrees of outness, concerning interlocutors' sexual orientation, and how the

normative values of family members and religious institutions controlled the degree of outness in particular settings. Lastly, there is the theme of feelings of (un)belonging, where the political projects that dictate interlocutors' sense of belonging are examined in connection to racialisation, xenophobia, and language. I further suggest that migrating may provide space for new ways of being and becoming in relation to gender and sexuality. Additionally, I demonstrate how racialization and geopolitics regarding migrants coming from outside the EEA/EFTA area are in sharp contrasts with Iceland's tolerant stance on LGBTQ+ issues.

The second article, "Exclusionary moments: Queer desires and migrants' sense of (un)belonging" (Sólveigar- og Guðmundsdóttir, 2018), was published in the journal *Emotions, Space and Society*. This article focuses on the experiences of LGPQ (interlocutors identify as lesbian, gay, pansexual and queer) people who have relocated in Iceland from Central and Eastern Europe, and their experiences of "exclusionary moments" and a sense of belonging within that context. This article applies the theoretical perspectives of nesting orientalism and the global hierarchy of value, habitus, and social class, affect and emotions, as well as the politics and sense of belonging. My analysis sheds light on three themes. The first theme relates to social class and (dis)identification, or how Poles inhabit the immigrant "other" within Icelandic society, and the ways that this otherness becomes connected with social class and dominant stereotypes through periods of economic prosperity. The second theme relates to shame and emotional work, where shame is viewed as a group-based emotion relating to histories of imperialism and colonialism. Emotional work relates to the way interlocutors would make extensive efforts to stay in contact with, for example, family members in their country of origin. The third theme relates to interlocutors' sense of (un)belonging, regarding making connections in the queer community, their ethnic community, or the Icelandic mainstream society, where they faced figurative walls. This demonstrates how interlocutors destabilize categorizations by shifting between national, class, and sexual identities depending on the context, and how they deliberately attempt to avoid stigma through disidentifying from the identities of migrants from Central and Eastern Europe and LGPQ individuals, in different situations.

The third article, "North-to-North queer migrations: Privileged subjectivities and belonging in Iceland" (Sólveigar- og Guðmundsdóttir, 2023) has been published in the journal *Gender, Place and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*. This article focuses on queer migrations from the Global North and proposes a reconsideration of the ambivalences of a privileged queer subjectivity. It illustrates how a sense of belonging is determined by sociocultural and socioeconomic factors, as well as one's social locations, such as race, ethnicity, gender, language, and nationality. The article further applies

theories of critical whiteness, hegemonic masculinity, social space, as well as the politics and sense of belonging. The first of the three themes carved out of the analysis relates to imaginations of queer belonging, or how through migration, interlocutors hope for a future that is differently constructed than the one that was possible in their previous location, and search for belongingness. The second theme relates to interlocutors' privileged sense of belonging within the Icelandic context, as having a middle-class background, being in many cases "white", relatively young, and non-disabled males from the Global North made migration for these interlocutors seem effortless. The third theme relates to the politics of belonging, or how being racialised as Black or brown, or seen as transgender, or having migrated from beyond the EEA/EU area activated political projects of exclusion which were strenuous to cope with. Interlocutors may thus have enjoyed privileges in certain cultural scenarios, subordination in others, and a sphere of inbetweeness in yet others. Privilege in some arias nonetheless assisted them in coping with discrimination in others.

The fourth article, "National imaginary and the Catholic church: Queer migrant women's experiences of exclusionary moments" (Sólveigar- og Guðmundsdóttir, 2023) was published in the journal *Social and Health Sciences.* In this article the relational affects of the political projects of national identity and religious institutions are discussed. Theories relating to postcolonialism, critical race theory, queer of colour critique, and racialisation are applied, along with theories of social space, queer theology, and the politics and sense of belonging. The first theme that was carved out of the analysis relates to the political project of national identity in Iceland, and that interlocutors do not have access to the national imaginary, and are thus perceived as perpetual foreigners, a process sometimes also termed as migratism (Tudor, 2017). The second theme relates to the Catholic Church in Iceland, and the way in which priests and nuns within that institution strategically surveil and discipline women's sexuality and gender expression, and thus exclude those who do not align with the dominant norm. This approach had significant influence on the women's sense of belonging within that social space. Being accepted within such a power structure can seem like the ultimate social acceptance, and being rejected there as the ultimate rejection, which means that the power held by representatives of the church is significant.

5.1 Article one.

LINDA SÓLVEIGAR GUÐMUNDSDÓTTIR &
UNNUR DÍS SKAPTADÓTTIR

LGBQ Migrations:

Racialization and (Un)belonging in Iceland

SAMMANFATTNING

Artikeln studerar LHBQ-migranters erfarenheter av att leva på Island, med tonvikten lagd på LHBQ-migranter från den globala södern. LHBQ-migranter kan tillhöra många olika gemenskaper, som till exempel deras etniska grupp, den queera gruppen och det större, omgivande isländska samhället och samtliga påverkar deras upplevelser. På Island har det skett en rad olika samhälleliga förändringar rörande LHBQ-gruppen under de senaste decennierna, samtidigt som antalet internationella migranter som bosatt sig på Island ökat kraftigt. Artikeln använder teorier om tillhörighet på LHBQ-migranters subjektsposition i samhället och använder rasifieringsteorier för att studera hur migranter upplever exkludering och xenofobi. Den använder en intersektionell ansats för att analysera hur frågor kring människors genus, sexualitet, ras, etnicitet, nationalitet och klass överlappar varandra och formar deras erfarenheter under hela migrationsprocessen och i deras dagliga liv. Resultaten visar att LHBQ-migranter har en bifokal världsåskådning och belyser hur de upplever rasifiering och en känsla av (icke-)tillhörighet i den isländska kontexten. Dessutom visar denna undersökning att migration kan skapa möjligheter till nya livsvägar och praktiker i fråga om deltagarnas sexuella läggning och identitetskonstruktion.

Keywords: LGBQ migrations, racialization, outness, belonging, Iceland

UNTIL THE TURN of the century, migration to Iceland was primarily from other Nordic countries, but has since then become nationally, ethnically, and religiously diverse (Júlíusdóttir et al. 2013). In the last twenty years, the number of international migrants in Iceland has

increased extensively challenging images of Iceland as a homogenous society.[1] At the same time, various societal and legal changes have taken place regarding LGBQ people.[2] Nicola Mai and Russel King (2009) have called for an "emotional" and "sexual" turn in migration studies, and suggest that love and sexuality are important elements to consider within the migration process. The transformations in terms of LGBQ people's rights, along with increased immigration to Iceland in recent decades, provide an interesting context for examining Mai and King's notion.[3] This paper examines the experiences of LGBQ migrants from the Global South, applying theories of belonging to examine queer migrants' subject position (Spivak 1998), and theories of racialization to explore the ways in which queer migrants experience exclusion and xenophobia. The paper poses the question: What kind of challenges do LGBQ migrants from the Global South face, and how do they find a sense of belonging, within their ethnic communities, the queer community and within wider Icelandic society? Drawing on ten semi-structured interviews, we address these issues, and demonstrate the ways in which participants express their sexual identities and practices within the context of cross-border migration.

As this study focuses on LGBQ migrants, it engages with the act of queering the paradigm of migration studies. Adi Kuntsman (2003) noted that queer theory's perspective on gender and sexuality is a useful tool for destabilizing heterosexuality as something natural and taken for granted. Similarly, the stability of borders, belonging, and ethnicity are undermined by transnational perspectives on location and migration. The destabilizing effects of queer theory and transnationalism can be applied to make room for those who do not fit neatly within the ideology of heterosexual national belonging. Postcolonial critiques of tradition and modernity decenter queer Western-centrism by rethinking and challenging the relationship between the West and "the rest," framing queer life, non-heterosexuals, and non-procreative sexual practices in national or local ways. A postcolonial approach further aims to identify the multiplicity of non-heterosexual politics, love, and sex, while considering Western powers and United States' global dominance when

it comes to sexual discourse, as well as political and economic power (Wilson 2006). This approach emphasizes the ways in which sexuality relates differently to communities, rights or possibilities and holds different meanings in the non-Western context, for example with regards to coming out and liberties for queer migrants, thus recasting identities as syncretic, diasporic, and hybrid (Strongman 2002).

Edward Said's (2003) analysis of orientalism shows that those who are defined as the racialized Other in society are portrayed as contradictory to "the norm" and are further systematically used to create identity for those who constitute the predominant norm. Both LGBQ people and migrants have, at some point, been labeled as the Other, although lesbians and gays have increasingly become integrated (some might say assimilated) into the national imaginaries of Western countries in recent years (Puar 2007). Concerning sexual orientation, heterosexuality is the predominant norm, which produces a culture of compulsory heterosexuality (Rich 1980) and heteronormativity (Warner 1991), sometimes also referred to as heterosexism, along with homophobia (Corrin 1999). As Suzanne Pharr (1997) explains:

> [H]eterosexism creates the climate for homophobia with its assumption that the world is and must be heterosexual and its display of power and privilege as the norm. Heterosexism is the systematic display of homophobia in the institutions of society. (Pharr 1997, 16–7)

Concerning migrants, former ideas held by policy makers and also in the social sciences, centered on assimilation into host societies where migrants were expected to leave behind their original culture (Brown and Bean 2006). In the 1980s, assimilationist approaches were increasingly replaced with ideas of multiculturalism, integration, and acceptance of ethnic diversity (Grillo 2007). However, multiculturalism is commonly used to emphasize the cultures of the Other, or of non-Western migrants, and thus the process of othering continues (Baumann 1999; Grosfoguel et al. 2015). Explaining discrimination toward migrants by referring to people's culture and using racist discourse thus

reinforces old colonial and racial hierarchies (Grosfoguel et al. 2015). LGBQ migrants from the Global South thus potentially face various simultaneous forms of discrimination within Icelandic society. This relates to Kimberle Crenshaw's (1991) notion of intersectionality, or the ways in which constructions such as class, race, sexuality, and ethnicity function as mutually constructing systems of power.

For the purposes of this study, these important theoretical and contextual perspectives on migration, colonialism, and sexuality must be linked to theories of belonging and racialization in order to show the framework within which LGBQ migrants to Iceland operate. bell hooks (2009, 1) has noted that sense of belonging is "the making of lives that we feel are worth living," while Nira Yuval-Davis (2011, 10) makes a distinction between belonging and the politics of belonging, noting that "[b]elonging is about emotional attachment, about feeling 'at home' […]. The politics of belonging comprise specific political projects aimed at constructing belonging to particular collectivity/-ies." We need, she claims, "to look at what is required from a specific person in order for her/him to be entitled to belong, to be considered as belonging, to the collectivity" (Yuval-Davis 2011, 20). Floya Anthias (2013, 6), on the other hand, claims that this differentiation is not necessary "because the arenas of the social and political infiltrate all social life, including our feelings, values, and orientations." Sara Ahmed (2004) has also argued that emotions or feelings are shaped by social structures and, as such, there is no clear-cut distinction between the politics of belonging and belonging. Elspeth Probyn (1996) further notes that the term belonging captures the desire for some sort of attachment to people, places or modes of being better than the term identity.

Despite the lack of scientific basis for the concept of race and scholars' view of race as a cultural category, it continues to be an important part of everyday life in Europe today (Silverstein 2005). Indeed, race continues to be constructed as a natural and essential part of individuals' lives. According to Paul Silverstein (2005) racialization,

refers to the process through which any diacritic of social personhood – including class, ethnicity, generation, kinship/affinity, and positions within fields of power – comes to be essentialized, naturalized and/or biologized [...] and indexes the historical transformations of fluid categories of difference into fixed species of otherness. (Silverstein 2005, 364)

Increasingly, the study of racialization has included the critical analysis of whiteness as a relational construct and a category of racial privilege (Ahmed 2004; Loftsdóttir and Hipfl 2012). Richard Dyer (1997) has noted that making whiteness visible dislocates the us/them binary from its position of power. Fatima El-Tayeb (2008) has pointed out that in theory, "belonging to" Europe is a question of one's passport, but in practice, this is further built on notions of non-belonging, such as racial and religious profiling, through which "visible minorities" are determined by fraudulent biological or latently racialized concepts of national or European identity, and invariably positioned as the Other.

The Icelandic Context

The expansion of societal and legal rights for LGBQ people, especially gays and lesbians, in Iceland has been relatively swift in the last two decades, although these changes have been less extensive for queer[4] people more generally (Þorvaldsdóttir 2007; Ellenberger 2017). Gays and lesbians have struggled for, and gained, various citizenship rights, for example, adoption rights and the right to access artificial insemination in 2006, and marriage equality in the state-sponsored Lutheran church in 2010. Nonetheless, Iceland is increasingly lagging behind other European nations in many ways. This is evident in ILGA's "Rainbow Map" (2017b), which measures the status of human rights and equality for lesbian/gay/bisexual/trans/intersex people, where Iceland stands at 47% while other Nordic nations range between 60% and 78%. According to the ILGA-Europe's *Annual Review* (2017a) the main reason for this rating is Iceland's general lack of policies and laws concerning,

protections for LGBTI people in anti-discrimination legislation, gaps in hate crime legislation and no legislation or positive measures in the area of asylum. Current legislation still imposes a series of deterring conditions on trans people to access legal gender recognition, and there is no legislation to protect the bodily integrity of intersex people. (ILGA-Europe 2017a, 118)

Regarding migrants from the Global South, the process of gaining work and residence permits, as well as citizenship rights in Iceland can be a strenuous undertaking and takes several years because of exclusionary processes. Iceland is not a member state of the EU but is part of the Schengen Area and the European Economic Area (EEA) agreement, which implies free movement of persons, services, goods, and capital within the EEA member countries. Moreover, in 2006, the Icelandic labor market was opened to workers from new EU member states, and since that time it has become almost impossible for people from other parts of the world to acquire work permits in Iceland, except as specialists or for family reunification, because people from EEA countries are given priority (Bissat 2013; Skaptadóttir 2015).

Íris Ellenberger (2017) has argued that in recent years the image of Iceland has become associated with a "gay utopia," or a "safe space" for gays and lesbians, and refers to it as a recreation of older images of "Icelandic exceptionalism." This discourse also relates to the representation of Nordic countries as a "gender equality paradise" (Þorvaldsdóttir 2011). The fact that a minority group such as gays and lesbians is now included in constructions of Icelandic identity indicates that this privileged group of white, Christian, cisgender, gender conforming, able-bodied, monogamous, middle-class gays and lesbians, is to a lesser extent being branded as the Other in society, while othering is still firmly associated with certain groups of migrants (Ellenberger 2017). These processes have also been described through Lisa Duggan's (2002) concept of homonormativity as a politics, which sustains dominant heteronormative institutions and assumptions within the LGBTQ communities instead of resisting this normalization. Jasbir Puar (2007) has extended

Duggan's formulation and put forth the concept of homonationalism to describe how homonormativity aligns with hegemonic forms of nationalism, as it seems to promise inclusion in the state, when it in fact reinforces and reflects cultural, racial and other hierarchies within the queer communities.

As Kristín Loftsdóttir (2011; 2014) has argued, Iceland's relationship to racism has in many ways been marked by attempts to demonstrate its innocence, since the country did not participate directly in the colonial project and has in the past been under Norwegian and later Danish rule. She has further pointed out that Icelandic national identity was, nonetheless, constructed in close dialogue with both colonialism and racism, embedded in masculine characteristics, and based on whiteness as a normative and distinctive category. This proposed innocence from racism can also be seen in other Nordic countries and is commonly referred to as "Nordic exceptionalism" (Browning 2007). Studies in Iceland have shown that migrants do experience racism and prejudice in their daily lives there. For example, many Filipinos have encountered incidences of overt racism in public spaces and at work, as well as prevailing stereotypes of Asian women as docile and submissive (Pétursdóttir 2013; Skaptadóttir 2015). Furthermore, Asian women of different nationalities are often categorized together as Thais, which is in many ways a representative example of racialization and Othering in present day settings (Skaptadóttir 2015).

The struggle for women's and gay and lesbian rights, and the emerging social changes that followed, have not strategically been used to exclude Muslim migrants, as has been the case in the Netherlands, Britain, and Germany (Mepschen et al. 2010; Haritaworn and Petzen 2011). However, the perceived threat of "Middle Eastern terrorists" has recently become established in Icelandic discourse and islamophobic sentiments have been voiced, for example, during the Reykjavík municipal elections in 2014 (Jóhönnudóttir 2015). Thus, it is only recently that Muslims have become part of the image of the foreign Other in Iceland, as the vast majority of migrants are Eastern-Europeans, mostly Poles, arriving mainly for work purposes. The largest groups from the

Global South hail from the Philippines and Thailand, and again, have largely migrated for work or family reunification (Skaptadóttir 2015). Out of a total population of about 338,000 persons, almost 10% are immigrants (Statistics Iceland 2017b). Only a minority of them has arrived as refugees. Since 1956, 645 individuals have been resettled as quota refugees (Velferðarráðuneytið nd), and from the year 1997 to 2016 about 350 individuals were given refugee status or permission to stay in Iceland based on humanitarian grounds; most of them in the last few years (Statistics Iceland nd). As previously noted, Icelanders have a rather naïve approach to race and racism, for instance, with regards to terms that are seen elsewhere in Europe as highly racist (Loftsdóttir 2014). The term *nýbúar* [new residents] has become loaded with negative connotations, as it is usually coded in terms of cultural difference and mostly used to refer to non-white individuals (Skaptadóttir 2015). The Icelandic language plays a central role in defining Icelandicness, and in migrants' inclusion within the national context (Skaptadóttir and Innes 2017).

The Study and Methods

The findings presented here are based on the analyses of interviews with ten individuals from the Global South. The participants came from the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Latin America, and Africa. The interviews took place in Reykjavík during 2013 and 2015 and were conducted in English or Icelandic. Participants' class status varies, as they came from both working-class and middle-class families. Most of the participants had attended university, had a university degree, or were working toward getting one, either in Icelandic for foreigners at the University of Iceland or in other areas. All the participants were engaged in full-time employment or study, or a combination of the two. They worked in the tourist industry, the health care and educational systems, social services, and in catering. Most of the participants in this study had a relative already living in the country, a close friend, or a partner, and this was the main reason they gave for migrating. While many wanted to experience life in other countries or moved for work or study, one person came seeking asylum. Many of the participants already had Icelandic citizen-

ship when the interviews took place, and others were in the process of acquiring citizenship. Participants' ages ranged from twenty-six to forty years old. Three are ciswomen, while seven are cismen, and, as previously mentioned, all of them are, more or less, gender conforming in their everyday life. The gender ratio in this sample seems to be representative of LGBQ migrants from the Global South, as more men are out with their sexual orientation, while women seem under more pressure to conceal it. Whether participants could presumably "pass" as white or not, during the interviews they often mentioned that people could see that they were not ethnic Icelanders.

LGBQ migrants in Iceland do not form a specific community or a subculture as such; in fact, participants in this study talked about the lack of such a community. This is a diverse group of people, with different ethnic and national backgrounds and different experiences of being LGBQ. Linda Sólveigar Guðmundsdóttir located participants for the study and conducted the interviews; she used personal friendships and social media groups for the initial interviews and then a snowball sampling technique along with convenience sampling. Interviews were analyzed with open and then focused coding to identify relevant themes (Esterberg 2002). Heather McCosker et al. (2001) have argued that the study of groups in which there is fear of stigmatization may be considered sensitive research. This may be applicable to the current study, especially for participants who are not out to co-workers, friends, or family members. Recognizable details of the participants are therefore withheld when possible and all names are pseudonyms.

The Findings and Analysis

The aim of this study accords with the aims discussed by Eithne Luibhéid (2008), namely that queer migration scholarship attempts to validate subjects and histories that have largely been rendered unspeakable and invisible. In our analysis of the interviews three main themes were developed. Firstly, the participants experienced a bifocal world view, in which they compared their current social situation to that in their country of origin, mainly with regards to sexual norms and ways of being

non-heterosexual. Secondly, there was the issue of identity construction in connection to the migration process and one's degrees of outness. Finally, there was a discussion of participants' sense of belonging regarding various social and cultural exclusionary practices.

Bifocal World Views

As Martin Manalansan (2006) has noted, queer migrants experience a transformed and continued commitment to the power structures that have modulated their lives. The critique of methodological nationalism (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2003) and the recognition of transnational perspectives have challenged the unidirectional assumptions of integration theories. A transnational perspective sheds light on the ways in which transnational activities such as interacting through modern communication technology, sending remittances, and traveling back and forth affect the cultural, social, and cognitive orientation of migrants (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004). All the participants in this study used various communication technologies to maintain their connections with people in their country of origin. All but two had travelled back "home" for visits, one because of a refugee status in Iceland and the other for affective or emotional reasons. Two participants sent remittances to support elderly parents. All participants expressed what Steven Vertovec (2004) calls a bifocal view, in which they compare or reflect on life "here" and "there." Basim discussed the extent to which normative social structures in his country of origin had molded his ideas of gender and sexuality, and the way in which residing in another country or culture assists him in deconstructing these same ideas:

> I grew up in a very conservative society and dealing with homosexuality, it took a while for me. I was always under the impression that a woman equals inferior, and I keep pushing this idea away, trying to educate myself better. [...] There is one thing that I kind of gained from moving to Iceland, concerning different gender roles or types, and meeting people who come out to me as transgender. Because in [country of origin] they would have been hidden deep, deep in the closet somewhere.

It is important to bear in mind that because of the small population, it is relatively easy to meet people from all walks of life in the same location, which can further potentially open for connection between different individuals. Faizah, who had lived in Iceland for about two years, noted that her experience of racism in Iceland is not a problem for her compared to the discrimination toward her sexual orientation in her country of origin. Although not experiencing these two forms of discrimination in the same way, they materialized similarly as biases toward her personhood. Her gender, ethnicity, and sexuality clearly intersected differently within different power structures. Faizah described her bifocal view on same-sex sexualities in this way:

> I had a girlfriend for the longest time, but I was scared to hold her hand and be affectionate with her in public, and it took a while for me adjust from that, because I had that fear in [country of origin]. Being here where the family and such are so accepting, it's not even an issue, nobody really discusses sexuality. You know, it's like saying I had a cup of coffee.

This quote reflects Faizah's complex migrant subject position in many ways, and illustrates how "being yourself" is a privilege, obtainable to some and to a lesser extent to others. Many societies have experienced a significant shift as gays and lesbians have, at least to some extent, been integrated into political and social life as "normal citizens." Nonetheless it is important to realize that they have been constituted in accordance with heterosexual norms (Richardson 2004). Most participants thought it was affirmative to be able to get married in Iceland, and perhaps more importantly that gay and lesbians had, to an extent, gained the same legal rights as heterosexuals. Thomas, who had gotten married in a civil ceremony, described his view on marriage:

> People know that I have gotten married here and my parents' question was, why is it okay to be married in another country, but why not in [country of origin]? Yeah, they were really surprised and a lot of my friends were really surprised.

Thomas' life "here" seems in some ways at odds with what the norm is over "there," and thus this quotation is a valid example of a bifocal view. Participants mentioned that there are similar norms, values, and prejudices within the queer community as in wider Icelandic society, for example, regarding issues such as getting married and having children. According to Gloria Wekker (quoted in Mepschen et al. 2010) it is necessary to take seriously the complexity, diversity, and questions of power within LGBTQ cultures, and consider the possibility that queer migrants might choose forms of sexual freedom that deviate from normative representations. Faizah mentioned that in her experience, the queer community in Iceland was non-existent, as it was mainly visible within the club scene and once a year at Reykjavík Pride (formerly Gay Pride). In her country of origin, she used to associate daily with people from the community and find support there but she lacks this connection in Iceland. She said:

> I think it's important for the queer community to come together and not just once in a while but whenever it can, basically. Especially immigrants, as that's a group of people that may have had a very troubled experience in regard to their gay life. If you know somebody that is like that, it can be very helpful just be able to talk to someone and feel comfortable.

The participants' comparison of experiences "here" and "there," we argue, are indicative of a necessary strategy to make sense of cultural differences and to help them to adjust to their present cultural context. Nevertheless, being yourself and finding a sense of belonging in a society where queer people do not form a stable support network, can be a challenge for LGBQ migrants.

Degrees of Outness

In queer migration scholarship, sexuality is understood as a construction that takes place within intersecting and multiple relations of power, concerning issues of citizenship status, geopolitical locations, class, race, ethnicity and gender (Luibhéid 2008). Some participants viewed their

sexual orientation as innate and an unchangeable part of their identity, while others did not. The construction of individuals' identity presumably has its foundations in early life, but it is also in a sense transfigured though the migration process and the continuous process of coming out with one's sexual orientation. Participants' degrees of outness, for example to their family and ethnic community varied, but was further connected to their sense of belonging within those collectives. Carlos, who had lived in Iceland for five years, described the way in which his sexual identity and degrees of outness had been molded in his country of origin:

> There is a Catholic background in [country of origin] which makes it okay [to be gay], but not okay, because it's not okay for a Catholics, but not many people in [capital city] are ultra-right Catholics [...] I started exploring it [his sexuality] a little bit more when I came here, because in [country of origin], I kind of had to be careful about that. It's like a "don't ask, don't tell" thing. I would never say I'm straight, but I just wouldn't talk about my personal life.

Carlos' experiences reflected in this quote support Roberto Strongman's (2002) point that the most predominant disparity between Latin American homosexual categories and those of the United States lies in the issue of secrecy and disclosure. The image of "the closet" has been highlighted in the North American gay discourse, especially through Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's (1990) description of the closet as "a structured silence." This structure of silence is broken by coming out, and is further a key factor in producing the gay subject, as every instance of coming out is a reproduction of that closet. Many Latin Americans, on the other hand, "do not rely on the same notion of disclosure to exist; the performance of desire is a much more defining moment than the declaration" (Strongman 2002, 181). The ignorance of the closet can bring many Latin American homosexuals freedom, as it is difficult for society to condemn something that is not part of popular discourse.

As Gill Valentine (1992) asserts, gays and lesbians may attempt to

pass as heterosexuals by concealing their sexual orientation at various times and places, to avoid stigma. Some participants were not "out" to their parents and had no plans of discussing their orientation with them. Others had informed their parents after they had moved from their country of origin, while yet others were out with everyone, including their families. Nilakshi, who migrated to Iceland some twelve years ago, stated that she had not realized she was attracted to women until she met her current partner. She was in many ways still in the closet and did not particularly relate to the labels of LGBQ, but noted that she was most likely a lesbian. Nilakshi described her realization in this way:

> When I met her, I realized that I had never experienced this strong emotion, which comes with being in love with someone. But it took me more than a year to get my head around the idea that I was attracted to a woman. Because in my mind it was somehow clear, as I am a woman, I had to marry a man if I wanted to get married. [...] I just became physically ill when I thought about these things. So eventually I just told myself, okay, just do what makes you content and if that is being with her, then so be it.

Nilakshi's quote emphasizes her struggle with predominant notions of heteronormativity, it further demonstrates how accepting the subject position of being at odds with the norm can be a strenuous process. Luibhéid (2008) has pointed out the importance of using the analytical lens of heteronormativity when analyzing those who may identify as LGBTQ (without assuming these categories to be transhistorical or essential in any way) to create a space for those whose gender and sexual practices do not align with their identities. Participants' experiences of coming out to one's family differed a great deal. One person recounted that he had more than once been severely beaten by a family member when he was a child and a teenager for being gay or too feminine, even before he realized that he was attracted to men. Another participant, Duyi, who had moved to Iceland some fifteen years ago as a teenager, explained how he had successfully queered his family home at an early age:

> I came out when I was born, in [country of origin], there was no way of hiding it.
>
> /Interviewer: Was it because you were feminine? /
>
> Yes, I was very feminine in school and at home. I remember one time when I was around six years old there was this Latin American soap opera on TV and there was this very handsome guy in it, I said out loud to everyone in the room, I want to marry a man like that. Everyone just said okay, no problem.

Coming out with one's same-sex attractions as a child or as an adult does not have the same weight or impact, consequently, Duyi's story does not fall under the definition of a coming out-narrative. Nonetheless, his self-expression demonstrates the variety of experiences when it comes to sexual orientation and gender identity. In the lives of many LGBQ people, movement is connected to actualizing one's sexual identity, desires, and relationships (Knopp 2004). However, uncertainty of belonging can arise from stigmatization and as a result, people's social connections can become sensitive information (Walton and Cohen 2007). Salah, who was not out to his family in his country of origin, described his father's views on belonging and sexuality in this way:

> My father always says that my place is in [country of origin]. He is a very religious person, and I think it would kind of break his heart [if he told him he is gay]. That his eldest son will have a horrible death and will burn in hell for ever and ever.

This quote reveals a strong argument for staying partly in the closet, namely Salah's understanding of his father's religiously based fears. Moya Lloyd (2005) has noted that a hidden feature of conceptions of non-Western ethnicity is presumed heterosexuality, and that normative heterosexuality is a central component of nationalist and ethnic ideologies, while the cornerstone of ethnic communities is traditional family life. Participants' participation in their immigrant or religious communities varied, two of them were quite active in their immigrant com-

munities and felt accepted there, even though they lived openly with a same-sex partner and their communities were shaped by Catholic values. Unlike these men, Sebastian mentioned that he did not find a sense of belonging in his immigrant community. He said:

> I don't feel comfortable with them, I have actually never been much of a nationalist and I'm also an atheist. I feel I have to be very careful about my queerness around them, cause I'm not sure how they will take that [...], of course there are nice people from [country of origin] that I talk to regularly, but I feel I don't really fit in there for many reasons.

Living in another country or culture seemed to unlock other ways of being and becoming for the participants in this study. Although coming out and being out has been a political strategy aimed at gaining acceptance within society, it is imperative to grasp that it is based on Western ideologies and is a somewhat privileged subject position. However, various degrees of identity management can be more applicable regarding LGBQ migrants.

Feelings of (Un)belonging

The politics of belonging in Iceland has become more complex for individuals from the Global South in recent years, due to racialization, but also because of difficulties in gaining residential status and work permits, as described above (Bissat 2013; Skaptadóttir 2015). However, other factors also affect people's sense of belonging and connectedness to a place and its local population. Salah who arrived three years ago, described his sense of (un)belonging and "foreignism" as follows:

> I have come to the realization that I feel I don't really belong in [country of origin], for different reasons, and sometimes I still feel like a bit of an outsider in Iceland. Maybe in ten years, I will truly integrate and when I talk to someone they won't notice my "foreignism" [...] I think for a foreigner to live here and not feel like an outsider is a more of a society change.

The term foreignism is used in linguistics to indicate a word or an expression that has been borrowed from another language, but has not yet been integrated into the recipient language and is perceived in terms of non-belonging (Fischer 2008). The Icelandic language has numerous foreignisms, some from Danish, but most of the current ones are from the English language. The linguistic usage of this term coincides, in many ways, with how participants experienced their belonging to Icelandic society. The extent to which participants felt they belonged differed, some talked about obstacles connected to breaking into close-knit social groups, as ethnic Icelanders often maintain childhood friendships instead of seeking out "new" friends (although this also depended upon whether they themselves had lived in other locations). Nilakshi described her experience in this way:

> It's very different making friends here as people are very cautious, you talk to a lot of people but they sort of keep you at a distance [...]. I could make friends there [in London] and it happened really like instantly, but here it's a really long process and it gets lonely and boring sometimes.

Other participants described how they already felt a sense of belonging to the Icelandic contextually; although adjusting to a new society was sometimes demanding, one just had to try to learn the language and have a positive outlook on things. Studies have shown that the Icelandic language plays a central role in the construction of Icelandic national identity and in determining who can claim to belong (Hálfdánarson 2003; Þórarinsdóttir 2010; Skaptadóttir and Innes 2017), and passing an Icelandic test is a compulsory element in gaining Icelandic citizenship (Innes 2015; Innes and Skaptadóttir 2017). Accordingly, most participants discussed the fact that language was in many ways a key to Icelandic society, but that at the same time, Icelanders commonly spoke English with foreigners. Bayani, who migrated to Iceland some twenty years ago as a teenager, described his experience with language:

> The first few years here were very difficult, and it was primarily the

language that caused these difficulties. If I would have come to grips with the language sooner I would have been able to do something more [...] today I have studied Icelandic at a university level, and finished other studies, but as of yet I haven't found work connected to my studies.

As previous studies in Iceland have also shown, Bayani's experience reflected in this quote suggests that proficiency in Icelandic is not enough to be accepted as equal within the labor market and wider society (Kristjánsdóttir and Christiansen 2015). Other factors play a part in this process as well, such as racialization and xenophobia. Indeed, as Ahmed (2004) has noted, a different approach would thus be useful to study whiteness critically and particularly white racial privilege and fantasies of anti-racism. Usually whiteness is seen as the non-color, the unseen or the unmarked, while all other colors are measured as a form of deviance (Dyer 1997). Bayani discussed his experience relating to what he characterized as substantial societal changes in Iceland in recent decades:

It's okay now, but about fifteen or seventeen years ago, Icelandic people simply hated foreigners and especially people from Asia. It was very difficult to live here back then, but today it's much more tolerable, the change is so substantial that it's a bit like moving from black to white.

Bayani's observations reflect how Icelandic society in the last twenty years, through increased immigration, has moved toward more multicultural formations, which again, is closely linked to the expansion of the labor market. Participants mentioned that in work situations, attitudes toward migrants varied greatly between workplaces, as different employers and co-workers' class belonging and educational levels played a significant role. The components of participants' "foreignism" were not consistently overt, nor were the causes of peoples' negative reactions toward participants, but language fluency and a "Nordic" appearance (or Eurocentric features), seemed to be defining factors. Robyn Wiegman (1999) has noted that white racial supremacy and apartheid structures have universalized whiteness through its power of invisibility,

as well as mobilized white particularity, for example, through spaces "for whites only." Mariana was born in the Global South, but had parents from Southern Europe and had lived in Iceland for seven years. When asked, she described her experience of workplace exclusion:

> The language is the main reason but also because of my look, some people look at me and notice I'm not local. I have had some situations at work where people say to me, I don't want any foreigner touching the patient, or my family member. It's not just an isolated case, but most people are polite and nice.

Mariana's quote indicates an experience of distinct racialization. Guðrún Pétursdóttir (2013) has shown that many immigrants or people of foreign origin living in Iceland have encountered the kind of attitude Philomena Essed (1991) called everyday racism, and how it manifests itself in day-to-day situations. This kind of racialization is latent and repeatedly performed as casual incidents or occurrences, but when accumulated can lead to physical and mental illnesses. Many of the participants talked about how some ethnic Icelanders did not realize how challenging gaining access to various communities and the general society was. Duyi described his experience of exclusion from the queer community as follows:

> The first few years after I moved here, my greatest disappointment was with the queer community. Guys didn't want to date me because they thought they would have to pay me money, which I would send to home to my relatives. To be honest, I have never participated in Gay Pride, as I somehow feel that it's a celebration of hypocrisy. Still today, I don't really have gay friends.

This quote suggests that in Duyi's experience, the queer Icelandic community reflects predominant norms of racialization present within wider society. It also shows how racist words, comments and attitudes can resonate and affect one's emotions and behavior over time (Hübinette

2012). As discussed above, the politics of belonging along with the concept of "foreignism," which incorporate both language fluency and physical characteristics, relates to LGBQ migrants experiences of (un)belonging.

Conclusion

This article has aimed to shed light on some of the obstacles that LGBQ migrants from the Global South face in Iceland, as well as their sense of (un)belonging to the queer community, their immigrant communities, and wider Icelandic society. It further illustrates how migration can, in some sense, pave the way for other ways of being and becoming. Moreover, it shows how Iceland's rather liberal approach to LGBTQ issues is counteracted by racialization, as well as increasing restrictions on the politics of belonging for migrants coming from outside the EEA. Participants who migrated more than fifteen years ago had somewhat different stories to tell than those who arrived later, as society has moved toward a more multicultural framing along with increased immigration. This article thus in many ways, shares findings with other studies undertaken in Iceland among migrants from the Global South (Skaptadóttir 2015; Loftsdóttir 2016), in that it illuminates how language and appearance play a part in participants' sense of belonging and exclusion. As Raewyn Connell (2007) has noted, addressing topics of race, gender, and sexuality are central to social relations of empire and hierarchies of populations. Further, while a privileged group of gays and lesbians has now, to some extent, shifted away from being identified as the Other in society, specific migrant groups are still othered. LGBQ migrants in Iceland belong to various minority groups, and thus potentially face multiple discrimination, for example, regarding the politics of belonging – being non-white or a "foreigner," in connection to language fluency, and relating to the performance of the "correct queerness," in connection to ones to degrees of outness and identity management. These various factors need to be further addressed and discussed, in public policies and academic settings, as they are crucial to improving the acceptance and inclusion of migrants within Icelandic society. The aim

of this article then, has not so much been to "give voice" to LGBQ migrants hailing from the Global South, but rather to show how processes of othering and racial exclusion challenge fantasies of Icelandic culture as innocent and devoid of racism. It shows the lived experience of LGBQ migrants residing in the Nordic region, and thus aims to expand and diversify the international body of research on the social and cultural contexts of sexuality.

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NOTES

1. In 2017, the proportion of foreign nationals was 8.9% of the total population, compared to 1.9% in 1996 (Statistics Iceland 2017a).
2. This is how the interviewees for this study defined their sexual orientation, i.e., gay, lesbian, bisexual, or queer, and consequently that is how they are identified in this paper. All the participants who agreed to take part in this study were further cisgender and more or less gender conforming in their day-to-day life, presumably due to the small size of the queer community in Iceland.
3. It should be noted that these societal changes are considerably less extensive with regards to queer persons more generally, i.e., individuals who identify as pansexual, transgender, gender non-conforming, and intersex+.
4. Queer here includes transgender people, intersex people, and others whose gender or sexuality is considered non-normative.

5.2 Article two.
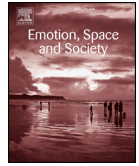
Exclusionary moments: Queer desires and migrants' sense of (un)belonging

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A B S T R A C T

Migration to Iceland has increased considerably in recent decades, and after the labour market was opened up to EU workers in 2006, migrants from countries in Central and Eastern Europe have become by far the largest immigrant group. The Nordic countries have increasingly been seen as a "safe space" for people with queer desires, and Iceland is no exception to that trend. This article discusses an under-researched area within queer migration studies: migrations from Central and Eastern Europe to a small population in Northern Europe, and their sense of belonging to their ethnic community, the queer community and wider Icelandic society. The overreaching theme of this study is "exclusionary moments," while the sub-themes relate to social class (dis) identification, shame and emotional work, and participants' sense of (un)belonging. This study is based on semi-structured interviews, and argues that shame is placed on participants through differential power structures, but also highlights participants' agency within those cultural scenarios. It applies theories of affect and emotions, and the concept of a global hierarchy of value, to demonstrate how exclusionary moments materialise in everyday settings.

1. Introduction

Despite a relatively large body of scholarship on queer[1] migration internationally, few studies have focused on migration to a country with a small population. This article highlights the "exclusionary moments" of LGPQ[2] individuals who have migrated from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and their sense of belonging within a remote Nordic country, Iceland. The term exclusionary moments is used in line with Crenshaw's (1991) notions of intersectionality to refer to those moments when exclusion occurs in particular circumstances, and when "new realities" are generated. This does not simply relate to having queer desires, or being an immigrant, and is not merely the sum of various marginalised identities, such as ethnicity, sexuality, ability, or class, but emerges when these multiple identifications intersect (Kuhar, 2009). Moments of social stigma and subordination can range from passing inconvenience to long-term repercussion, and make those who experience them feel displaced. Shame and humiliation are attached to participants in this study through differential social structures, which engender moments of exclusion that participants must navigate. Exclusion occurs, for example, through religious and governmental

institutions, as well as through the legacies of communism and the cultural attitudes toward sexual orientation in their countries of origin. In Iceland participants faced exclusion, for example, stemming from racial and ethnic stereotyping in the queer community and in wider Icelandic society, as well as homophobia in their immigrant communities. Consequently, participants often demonstrated their agency through what Hochschild (1983) terms "emotional work," to maintain connections with family members, better fit within various cultural scenarios, and attain what Butler (2004) calls "liveable lives".

Recent studies discussing issues of queer migration in Sweden have covered narratives of intimacy relating to affect and emotions in partner migration (Ahlstedt, 2016), as well as gay and lesbian internal migration and mobility decisions in connection to family ties (Wilmark, 2016a, 2016b). Studies on queer asylum seekers in Norway include an examination of sexual norms regarding immigration policy (Mühleisen et al., 2012), and the issue of translating the "genuineness" of sexuality when applying for asylum (Akin, 2016). Scholars focusing on internal migration have traditionally described gay and lesbian migration as a rural to urban phenomenon, driven by the perception that there are more possibilities and less homophobia in urban areas, and in the

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[1] Queer can refer to variety of identity markers, such as, lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, asexual, transgender, and intersex, as well as gender identities and sexual practices which do not follow the dominant norm, such as genderqueer individuals and BDSM practices. More importantly for this study, queer can also refer to the process of queering migration studies, by denaturalising categories of analysis within the study of gender and sexuality, and separating the "normative" which is morally determined from the "normal" as statistically determined (Giffney, 2004), and thus relating to queer theory.

[2] This acronym derives from the self-identification of the participants in this study as lesbian, gay, pansexual and queer. However, when referring to other scholarly studies, this article will use the acronyms that appear in those studies.

process have skewed the focus towards larger cities (Weston, 1995; Knopp, 2004; Wilmark and Östh, 2013; Jennings and Millward, 2016). Some studies have, nonetheless, stressed that other migration trends and destinations are possible (Gorman-Murray, 2007, 2009; Waitt and Gorman-Murray, 2011; Lewis, 2012). Studies have also shown that gay couples tend to migrate to high-amenity and dense regions regardless of tolerance, while lesbian couples tend to migrate to regions that are not as dense or rich in amenities but are more tolerant, and that lesbian couples are more likely to have children (Cooke, 2005; Brown and Knopp, 2006). An under-researched area in queer migration studies in Northern Europe, thus, relates to transnational migration from CEE to the Nordic countries, and more specifically, migrants' resocialisation into a small population such as that of Iceland. The vast majority of immigrants in Iceland come from countries in CEE, yet, based on the outreach undertaken in the course of this study, social participation and visibility of LGBTQ+ immigrants from CEE seems disproportionately lacking. This paved the way for the research questions: How do migrants with queer desires from the CEE experience exclusion, and how do they find a sense of belonging within Icelandic society, their ethnic community and the queer community? This study applies approaches involving affect and emotions to engage with participants' mixed feelings of queer commitment (Hall and Jagose, 2012), and also highlights the dynamics of intersecting positions, making uneven power relations visible.

There are no simple explanations when enquiring about motives for queer migrations, as they are as much economic as they are a search for sexual freedom (Binnie, 2004). None of the participants in this study initially migrated to Iceland in search of greater opportunities for sexual citizenship. But some stated that they decided to extend their stay in Iceland because of their ability to produce a self that was more in line with their sexual orientation, and because they enjoyed better legal status and social welfare. This is in accordance with the findings of Stella et al. (2017) in their study on LGBT migrants from CEE in Scotland. Thus, while participants in this study were initially motivated by economics, sexuality played a role in their long-term decision-making. Consequently, it is important to recognise contradictions inherent in neoliberal processes, make visible the class dimension of sexualities and examine them critically (Binnie, 2013).

Queer knowledge production and sexual politics in CEE has been described by Mizieliñska and Kulpa (2013) with the concept of "knotted temporality," which describes the appropriation of the Western hegemonic discourses of "secularism," "gay rights," and "progress" into cultures in the CEE, while stigma is attached to CEE countries through notions of "nationalism," "homophobia," and "backwardness". Thus, thinking beyond "centrism" is fundamental to the ongoing efforts to decentre Western sexualities. This article does not seek to reproduce notions of the East lagging behind the West, but rather, to put into context how lived lives of transnational migrants from CEE materialise in the Nordic context, and demonstrate how their migration is contributing to the ongoing process of decentring Western sexualities. The article begins by discussing theoretical perspectives relevant for this study, then addresses the Icelandic context and methods, before moving on to the specific findings and concluding remarks. The overarching theme of this article is exclusionary moments, as this seemed, in many ways, to be the thread that tied the sub-themes together. The three sub-themes relate to issues of social class (dis)identification, shame and emotional work, and participants' sense of (un)belonging.

2. Theoretical perspectives

A theoretical discussion relating to the "othering" process and racialisation is pivotal when referring to LGPQ migrants' experiences of residing in Iceland. The geographical boundaries of Said's (1979) notions of the "Orient" or the "other" have shifted throughout history, but the concept itself has remained more or less consistent. The gradation of Orients has been termed "nesting orientalisms" by Bakić-Hayden

(1995), and describes a pattern that classifies Asia as the most "Eastern" or "other," followed by the Balkans, and then Eastern Europe, in a hierarchical construction aimed towards the West as the centre. Herzfeld's (2004) "global hierarchy of value" has a similar disposition, where a universal value has been attached to one's "culture," which is then ranked and "othered" according to the gradient of nesting orientalism. Moreover, there is a tendency to isolate and essentialise features of specific groups or cultures, and make those thoughts and practices seem unchangeable and especially true for that group compared to others (Bakić-Hayden, 1995). Racialisation has always involved a consolidation of biological and cultural arguments; nonetheless, "old" racism has mainly been based on "blackness". But as racism has increasingly been regarded as socially unacceptable, "new racism" revolves more around how socially defined groups are systematically categorised with regards to culture, religion (Harrison, 2002), and ethnicity (Brah, 2000), where some groups are further seen as incompatible with modern society, and where the idea of separate races is still prevalent in the wider societal discourse (Bauman, 2000). The concept of a global hierarchy of value frames participants' experiences of racial and ethnic stereotyping within the Icelandic context in many ways, especially with regards to generalizations of socio-economic status and "backwardness".

This article addresses various forms of exclusionary moments, and thus, a theoretical deliberation of social class as it relates to structure and agency is relevant. The concepts of inclusion and exclusion are often related to social identities, and have important structuring effects with regards to why, how, and where particular boundaries are formed (Anthias, 2001). Within the European context, exclusion is often regarded as a lack of social integration and social cohesion, which is perhaps just another way of describing poverty and its effects (Berkel, 1997). Bourdieu (1990) applied the notion of *habitus* to describe how something that is socially constructed, such as a person's social class (as well as one's ethnicity and sexual orientation), can appear to be inevitable and natural, and the ways in which the social is incorporated into the self while the self is constituted in social relations. The identity assigned by society might not be the identity people would want to claim for themselves, and they might seek to avoid social spaces where they are so designated (Skeggs, 1999). Personal agency, whether it is understood as free will, resistance, or a sort of mediating relationality (Kockelman, 2007), is always negotiated within the matrix of power, and often emerges as a political privilege within the gaps of regulative norms (Miller et al., 2006). Participants in this study expressed their agency in various ways, for example, as resistance to exclusionary processes and to their assigned identities, and this will be highlighted to some extent.

Exclusionary moments are in many ways governed by shame and humiliation, and a brief discussion of theories relating to gay or queer shame is thus applicable. According to Sedgwick (1993), queer identity and queer resistance are rooted in experiences of shame, because shame generates conceptual understandings and linkages between identity and performativity. Lui (2017) discusses how the two streams of thought which have previously tackled gay shame either focus on assimilation to the dominant society to reduce shame in queer subjects, or on embracing shame in order to repoliticise the queer subject through the approach of antinormativity. However, both models produce shame as a localising object attached to a single subject, and thus, do not conceptualise shame as a movement and circulatory process between bodies. Emotions, such as shame and humiliation, are thus neither innate nor merely imposed on stigmatised subjects through social structures, but are created through this capacity to "affect and be affected" (Blackman and Venn, 2010, p. 9). Notions of shame arose in the analysis of the interviews; participants were not asked directly about these feelings, but some did mention them in connection to exclusionary moments in various social situations.

Contrasting exclusionary moments are moments of inclusion, or a sense of belonging. Baumeister and Leary (1995) have maintained that

a need to form social attachments and find a sense of belonging is a fundamental human motivation, which has multiple effects on cognitive processes and emotional patterns. A sense of belonging often directly links to one's level of civic engagement, and is also important for both positive identity formation and for individual psychosocial well-being (Heath and Mulligan, 2008). Yuval-Davis (2011) has maintained that a distinction is usually made between the politics of belonging and the individual's sense of belonging, but as Anthias (2013) and others have noted, the arenas of the political infiltrate all parts of social life, including orientations, values, feelings, and networks and resources, so a clear distinction between the two is impossible. One's belonging comes into question both through the migration process, as well as through the continued process of "coming out" with regard to one's sexual orientation or gender identity, and thus, plays a significant role in participants' daily lives.

3. The context and methods

In the last twenty years, migration to Iceland has increased considerably, and currently the proportion of immigrants stands at about 10.6% of the population (Statistics Iceland, 2017a). The vast majority of immigrants live in the capital area in and around Reykjavík, but that is also where the bulk of the population lives (Statistics Iceland, 2017b). Assuredly, the largest immigrant group in Iceland hails from Poland, making up 38.8% of the total immigrant population, followed by Lithuanians (5.2%), Filipinos (4.5%), Germans (3.3%), and Thais (2.9%) (Statistics Iceland, 2017c). Iceland is part of the Schengen agreement and the European Economic Area, which implies free movement of persons, capital, goods and services within the EU and EEA member countries. Consequently, the Icelandic labour market was opened up to EU workers in 2006, and people from these countries are given priority in acquiring work permits, compared to people from other parts of the world (Bissat, 2013; Skaptadóttir, 2015). But as Binnie (2004) has highlighted, the migration process is rarely straightforward for queer migrants, even if legislative provisions are in place.

The queer community in Iceland is small, consisting mainly of friendship circles and formations around various social groups, such as Samtökin '78 (The National Queer Organisation); the queer choir; and various sub-groups relating to specific issues of: youth, trans, intersex, etc. At present, there is one official queer nightclub located in Reykjavík, and queer people (supposedly) gain the most visibility during the festivities of Reykjavík Pride. The Nordic countries have an aura of gender equality (Pétursdóttir, 2009) accompanied by ideas of being a "safe space" for queer people (Ellenberger, 2017). Nonetheless, Samtökin '78 conducted a survey in 2014, which noted that 80% of respondents had experienced marginalisation or prejudice in relation to their sexual orientation or gender identity (in locations such as schools, bars and clubs, as well as at family gatherings) and about 70% in their place of work, in the previous three years (Bjarnadóttir, 2014). So it is clear that issues of sexual orientation and gender identity are still as relevant in Iceland as elsewhere.

The findings presented here are based on the analysis of semi-structured interviews with LGPQ migrants from the CEE that took place in 2014 and 2015. Three of the interviews were with couples, while six of them were individual interviews. Seven out of twelve participants identified as cis-women, one as a genderqueer woman and four as cis-men. Participants' ages range from 27 to 38 years old at the time of the interviews, and all of them are first generation immigrants of white ethnic origin. The interviews were carried out in English except one which was in Icelandic, and took place in participants' homes, at library cafeterias or via Skype, lasting between one and two hours. Six of the participants lived in various parts of Reykjavík, while five lived in smaller villages around the country, and one had moved back to her country of origin. Some participants had a university degree, but none was directly applying that education in their current work. All the participants had full-time employment and/or studies, working in fish

factories, health care and social services, catering, or in the tourism industry. Some participants mentioned that although they were now in working-class employment, their earnings were considerably better than in their country of origin, even when taking into account high living expenses in Iceland. Participants were located through friendship connections and social media groups, applying snowball sampling along with convenience sampling. As I do share some commonalities with the participants, regarding issues such as, gender and sexuality, social class and a sense of (un)belonging, a mutual understanding was generated in some cases, but my positionality as an ethnic Icelander and an academic researcher provided me with privileges. During the interviews, participants were asked about their experiences concerning the migration and integration/resocialisation process, ethnic stereotyping and homophobia, work, family, and friends, and their degree of "outness" with regards to their sexual orientation. Other topics of discussion included their sense of belonging in Icelandic society, their immigrant community, and the queer community. LGPQ migrants in Iceland do not fit the "ethnic" model of LGBTQ+ identities, as is discussed by Sinfield (1996), because their affinity to other LGBTQ+ migrants usually did not surpass their national identity, and in the interviews they often discussed a general lack of connection to a queer community in Iceland and elsewhere. The interviews were analysed first with open coding, and then focused coding with the assistance of the program Dedoose, to identify relevant themes and potential meaning (Esterberg, 2002). Three prevalent types of exclusionary moments, discussed below, were carved out, in connection to: social class (dis)identification, shame and emotional work, and sense of (un)belonging. As Iceland is a microstate, with a population of about 348,450 inhabitants (Statistics Iceland, 2018), and as some participants were not entirely "out" in terms of their sexual orientation, recognisable details are withheld as much as possible and pseudonyms are used throughout.

4. Social class (dis)identification

The concept of social class relates to participants' experiences in various ways, for example, in connection to deliberations about how Poles inhabit the immigrant "other" within Icelandic society (Guðjónsdóttir and Loftssdóttir, 2016), and how this othering often extends to other CEE countries. It is important to bear in mind the heterogeneity of countries in CEE, and that Poles are not representative of these countries as such. But in Icelandic public discourse, discussions concerning Poles are frequently essentialised and projected as representative of all migrants from CEE. This relates to the fact that Eastern European states are often approached as Europe's "internal others" (Kalnačs, 2016). Regarding the labour market, immigrants from countries with relatively lower wage levels and higher unemployment rates often took on low-paying jobs in Iceland, mainly in the construction industry or in services and production. The construction industry is male-dominated, while Polish women seem to be concentrated in a few low-skilled and low-income occupations, such as care or cleaning work. This brings them little prestige, and places them in a rather disadvantaged position within society (Napierala and Wojtyńska, 2016). Following the economic collapse in 2008, when many lost their jobs, foreign workers had significantly higher unemployment rates than ethnic Icelanders and had further difficulties re-entering the work force when economic recovery took place (Wojtyńska & Skaptadóttir, forthcoming). Nonetheless, authorities in Iceland tend to equate employment and language fluency with integration (Innes and Skaptadóttir, 2017).

Although migrants from CEE potentially fit the visual image of an ethnic Icelander, having roots in CEE can also be linked to somewhat humiliating ethnic stereotyping. Consequently, some participants wanted to distance themselves from their co-nationals or hide their nationality in some way. Kacper (cis-man, 28 years old) had lived in Iceland with his partner for about a year when the interview took place. He has a university degree, but worked part-time in the catering

industry along with some of his co-nationals. He elaborated on the notion of disidentification (Muñoz, 1999) from his co-nationals:

> I have a bad connection with people from [his country of origin]. (Interviewer: why is that do you think?) I think I have difficulties with people who come here mainly for financial reasons. Because they complain about everything. […] They are happiest when talking about what is on offer in Bónus [a low-cost supermarket], or how much they spent at the [country of origin] shop. But of course, I also have good friends from my country, but they are interested in things like the culture or nature, and I also want to make connections with people outside the [country of origin] community.

Kacper's exclusionary moments could be described as intersections of social class belonging, educational levels, generational gap as well as reasons for migrating to and residing in Iceland, which created distinctions between localised ethnic belonging. Social class intersects strongly with national identity, and in the process, produces different sets of cultural and social migration practices (Pawlak, 2015). Moreover, those who are ashamed of their co-nationals in some way may resist being identified as CEE representatives, and often strongly criticise CEE world-views. Shame further plays a vital role in class distinctions between Poles in London, as the behaviour of the lower class affects the overall reputation of Poles living outside of Poland (Garapich, 2016).

Mole et al. (2017) have noted that the resocialisation of heterosexual migrants from CEE in London does not necessarily result in changes in attitudes towards homosexuality as such, but rather, that they become aware of the fact that homophobic comments and public utterances, which would pass without a comment in their home country, are less likely to do so within the UK context. So instead of adopting a more tolerant attitude, they learn to "perform" tolerance towards lesbians and gays. This echoes what Piotr (cis-man, 36 years old), noted in connection to co-workers in his place of work:

> There were some ladies from [his country of origin], women who are around forty or fifty who were cleaners, and one was talking to me. I said something like, because my boyfriend this, or my boyfriend that, and she became kind of confused. She said okay, but I think she wasn't really comfortable with hearing that, she really didn't know how to respond to that and answer me. So I feel that many in the [country of origin] community are against that, but they are also changing, as they see how the Icelandic people react. Also, I was somewhere once with my boyfriend, and we were holding hands, and we heard swearing behind us, "fucking gays", and then later I heard that they were speaking [his language], and you know, I talked to them, do you know what they said? Yeah well, it really doesn't translate.

This quote shows exclusionary moments with regards to social class, gender and sexuality, as well as illustrating verbal abuse. Mole (2017) discusses how migrant women from CEE tend to be somewhat more tolerant towards difference, while still not being able to engage meaningfully when it comes to sexual orientation. Equality legislation in the UK, according to Valentine and Harris (2016), can lead to the "privatisation of prejudice" rather than actual change in attitudes and engagement with difference. An enforcement of controversial views of political correctness may only push prejudice into the private sphere. On the other hand, Stella et al. (2017) have noted that the existence of policy and legal frameworks are important in sanctioning and preventing homophobic aggression; whether superficial or meaningful, it contributes significantly to the everyday well-being and security of LGBT migrants. Both Kacper and Piotr made use of their agency within these circumstances mentioned above, through disidentification with the ideology of their co-nationals as well as by challenging cases of heteronormativity and homophobia.

5. Shame and emotional work

Shame is here predominantly viewed as a group-based emotion which relates, for example, to histories of imperialism, colonialism (Ahmed, 2004) and other institutionalised forms of structural inequality. How that materialises in everyday life is discussed by Munt (2007), who argues that we should accept shame and its role in our attachments, disattachments and self-identifications as a shape-shifting instrument that transforms feelings such as fear and vulnerability into hate and disgust, while projecting these feelings onto those marked as the "other" in society. The participants all grew up in societies and cultures shaped by Christian values, although many of them did not consider themselves to be religious today. The circulatory effects of shame, as well as the capacity to affect and be affected, is evident in participants' narratives of being forced to leave the church, as well as their accounts of practicing faith independently of the church, on account of their sexual orientation. Kacper talked about his Catholic guilt, and stated that if he entirely ceased to believe in God something bad would surely happen to him. Grigore (cis-man, 27 years old) had come to terms with religion and sexuality though his own reasoning. He notes:

> The church says that it's a bad thing [to be gay] but it doesn't hurt anyone. As I see it, you finally have this authentic feeling inside of you, and you can feel that this is love, and that there is nothing wrong with it. When there are so many bad people doing bad things in the world, it just doesn't make any sense to me. I have come to the conclusion that, I'm just going to live here with my own personal moral compass and it works for me.

Religious institutions were commonly discussed as spaces of exclusionary moments in the interviews. The Roman Catholic Church has, for example, been inextricably linked to Polish national identity and as a result, its conservative views on sexuality have been accepted without question (Szulc, 2011). Zdanevicius (2011) maintains that the best way to bridge the gap between policy and practice in Lithuania, is to advocate for lesbian and gay knowledge, which in the post-Soviet context would entail a sustained challenge to the dominant heteronormative "truth" and the cultural production of social institutions.

Some participants noted that their views and practices concerning their sexual orientation were already moulded long before they migrated to Iceland. This relates to Bourdieu's notion of *habitus*, and how histories of something that is socially constructed, such as a person's identifications, can appear to be inevitable and natural. As Justina (cis-woman, 35 years old) remarked: "it's still hard for us to be okay with who we are, it's like, sometimes I would like to kiss her [wife] goodbye when she drives me to work. But I never do, because, I feel a bit like, ashamed". This was both assumed to be inappropriate as well as a potentially dangerous act in their country of origin, and was thus not part of their everyday practices in Iceland. The shame response is of vital importance to produce social order and conformity, because through it people internalise ideas, cultural discourses, norms and expectations, and in many cases, punish and discipline themselves if they fail to live in accordance with them. In other cases, shame may promote resistance rather than conformity, and people who do not call out racist, homophobic, or sexist comments might even feel shame if they did not do so (Sayer, 2005). Critical deliberations of various stereotypes, in order to point out their essentialising tendencies can, nonetheless, be a challenging procedure, as it is seen as going against the social pressure of "getting along" with others. As Ahmed (2010) has explained, it blocks smooth communication between individuals, and in the process makes those who speak out the "kill-joy" in a specific situation.

Browne and Ferreira (2015) have discussed how incidences of exclusion not only remake a place, for example, as homophobic or tolerant, but also remake the person who experiences them as unacceptable or acceptable. Marlena (cis-woman, 29 years old) and Eliza (cis-woman, 31 years old) got married a few years ago, after having

been a couple for several years. They have a young daughter and, in many ways, represent a rather normative family unit. Nonetheless, they have experienced blatant and overt prejudice from their immigrant community and immediate family, as well as some naïve remarks from Icelandic co-workers. They expressed themselves quite openly about their family situation:

> My mum always asks me when I'm going to get married and find a husband, even though she knows we are married and that we have a child together. Yeah, and when we went for a visit to [country of origin] we are not allowed to sleep in the same room, and then there is a problem cause our daughter is used to us sleeping in the same room. We were just supposed to hide. […] But you can't be angry with them, because it's the Soviet way of thinking, back then everyone had to be healthy and sporty and even those with glasses got bullied.

Some exclusionary moments are more decisive than others, while this one contains, for example, feelings of shame and humiliation, it also requires a physical removal to maintain the heterosexual norm. This quote is an example of the legacy of communism within CEE, and further relates to the global hierarchy of value as the Soviet way of thinking is, in many ways, seen as out of place in the Icelandic context. Mole (2011) has noted that in many post-communist states, the "traditional" was equated with the "normal", and strictly defined in heterosexual, Christian and national terms, as traditional sexual and gender roles were seen as "an important aspect of the nostalgia for "normality"" (Watson, 1993, p. 472-3).

Strategically managing information that participants told their parents was often discussed in the interviews, while some participants noted that they went to great lengths to sustain relationships with parents and siblings in their home country, even if they had faced humiliation or hostility on account of their queer desires. They engaged in emotional work to communicate and reach out to their families via Skype, phone calls, and somewhat regular visits. As Weston (1991) has noted, lesbians and gays may feel alienated from their biological families, and thus often create their own families of choice (quoted in Ryan-Flood, 2009). This was true, in many ways, for the participants in this study, but none of them discussed having been completely rejected by parents or siblings, although their degrees of "outness" varied somewhat. This exercise in agency was nonetheless somewhat gendered, as the women tended to be more in contact with their parents and family than the men.

6. Sense of (un)belonging

"Home" is not a question of where one originates or of fantasies of belonging, but rather the way a space of belonging is sentimentalised, as in the expression "home is where the heart is". Consequently, addressing notions of being-at-home can only be done through affect and questions of how one fails to feel, or feels (Ahmed, 1999). Most participants made somewhat regular visits to their country of origin, and some spoke with a sense of pride about the place where they grew up, but mainly those who came from major cities. Some discussed how it was, in many ways, difficult to find a sense of belonging in Iceland due to the language barrier and cultural differences, while Piotr stated that: "when I'm going to Iceland, I think of it as my home. I know that I have a home in [country of origin], I have a family there. Always when I'm abroad, for one or two weeks, I'm always happy, seriously, I'm always happy to be back here in Iceland". Yuval-Davis (2006) has noted that a sense of belonging is about "feeling safe" as much as it is about emotional connections, and that feelings of belonging are connected to one's position and the amount of power one holds within specific groups.

As Gorman-Murray et al. (2008) have noted, the experience of exclusion that members of marginalised groups often encounter tends to increase one's need to belong to a social group. This relates to the ambiguous position of a couple who mentioned that they would have

liked to expand their circle of friends, but had difficulty doing so, because within their immigrant community they felt excluded by homophobia, and in the queer community they were disregarded as foreigners. Adrijana (genderqueer woman, 33 years old) had frequented the local LGBTQ+ club in Reykjavik and met people who were regulars there, mostly gay men and some transgender individuals, but next to no lesbians. She subsequently re-examined her sexual orientation, which had previously been bisexual but was now pansexual. Another participant said he felt that the LGBTQ+ community in Iceland was non-existent, stating that he had some gay friends but other than that he "had not really encountered a real community as such". Further, several participants had no, or at least very limited, connection to the queer community in Iceland, and did not particularly relate to LGBTQ+ organizations' struggle for equal citizenship rights, in Iceland, or in their country of origin. Zuzanna (cis-woman, 38 years old) had lived in Iceland for more than ten years, and described her impression of the queer community in this way:

> I feel as though there are just a lot of small groups within this community, which are not open or inclusive. I know there is an office [The National Queer Organisation] and that someone works there, but I have called once or twice to ask about things like the partnership laws and such, but they didn't seem to have that information, and told me to call Alþjóðahús [International House] which deals with immigrant issues, but that was many years ago.

Zuzanna had more or less given up on making "new" connections in the queer community; she was in a relationship at the time of the interviews and thus did not find it as urgent. Lewis (2016) has noted that newly arrived migrants often experience tension between where the gay community wants to place them and where they themselves seek to be placed. Some participants had minor contact with their ethnic community, but due to the small population of Icelandic society, many ethnic groups do not have a well-defined community as such. Others discussed closer connections to other immigrants in Iceland who were not from their country of origin, but, for example, who also spoke the Russian language.

Making connections with ethnic Icelanders seemed to be somewhat of a struggle for many, as Icelanders were usually willing to chat, for example, if you met them at a bar, but then an "invisible wall" came up at some point. Ethnic Icelanders have usually had their circle of friends since childhood, and seemed to the participants to be very sceptical of new ones. Lena (cis-woman, 28 years old) had lived in Iceland for some years, had acquaintances at work and was in a relationship, and discussed her experience of making friends with ethnic Icelanders as follows:

> I'm not really close with a lot of Icelandic people, I have found it a bit more difficult than having friends from other countries. In some sense, I feel like there is an invisible wall, it is possible to break through it, but it is difficult, you need a lot of time to climb this wall, ha-ha, and to have like a peak at the other side.

Exclusionary moments relating to connecting with ethnic Icelanders were commonly discussed in the interviews. In this quote, the emotional work that migrants have to perform in order to make meaningful connections with ethnic Icelanders is also evident. This "wall" between ethnic Icelanders and migrants also reflects shifting cultural notions of whiteness and racialisation. Loftsdóttir and Jensen (2012) have noted that within the Nordic counties, local understandings of national belonging are to a large extent based on racialised notions of whiteness. Histories of imperialism, colonialism and racism are rendered invisible and insignificant in the present and seen as a foreign import, which is an affective interpretation of the nation and its history (Loftsdóttir, 2017). Certain populations can nonetheless become racialised, and in the process move in and out of the category of whiteness (Fox et al., 2012). Migrants from CEE hold the privilege of fitting the Icelandic national imaginary of whiteness, but as othering further depends on

language fluency, cultural familiarity, and racialised notions of the global hierarchy of values, procedures of othering continue. Participants in this study lived their life in Iceland, participated in transnational practices, experienced numerous exclusionary moments, yet saw it as their home in one way or another.

7. Concluding remarks

This article bridges a gap in queer migration scholarship by discussing LGPQ migrations from CEE to Iceland, a remote Nordic country with a small population. The study sheds lights on the uneven power dynamics that LGPQ migrants experience, by highlighting their exclusionary moments and the way those processes produce new realities (Crenshaw, 1991), as well as how emotional work (Hochschild, 1983) works as a moral mediator in order to maintain connections with family members and make new ones with ethnic Icelanders. I have shown how participants navigate amongst identities of nationality, class and sexuality in different social settings, destabilizing these categories, while also actively working to avoid being labelled as a migrant from CEE or an LGPQ person, in order to avoid social stigma associated with those groups. Methodological implications of intersectionality in this study relate to what McCall (2005) has defined as an intracategorical approach to complexity and intersections, in which social settings of oppression are observed and a transgression of boundaries occurs (Fotopoulou, 2012).

The findings are, in some sense, in line with what Stella et al. (2017) discuss in their study, where participants searched for normality and liveable lives (Butler, 2004) in a material sense, along with a more uninhibited expression of their gender and sexuality. Binnie (2013) and others have argued for discussing issues of social class within sexuality studies, and this approach was significant to this study, in that it decentres the myth that people from CEE are a homogeneous group of people, and indicate that class dimensions are also imperative to LGPQ migrants. The findings further suggest that becoming a "transgressive" queer might depend on which group has the social capital or socioeconomic means to go against the norm and disrupt the status quo (Beasley, 2005). The participants in this study lacked the social capital of native queer Icelanders, and were thus less likely to be involved in queer activism. Within a geographically isolated population in Northern Europe that has somewhat tolerant attitudes towards queer desires, the queer community has become diffused, consisting mainly of relatively closed friendship groups, and shunning the formation of a broader subculture and queer residential spaces. The findings show that participants experienced exclusion and marginalisation in various ways, but nonetheless, some acquired a sense of belonging within the wider Icelandic context.

Associating participants' experiences with the concepts of nesting orientalism, global hierarchy of value, and racialisation was also imperative to project a paradigm of reduced cultural value. Racial and ethnic stereotyping within Iceland (Loftsdóttir and Jensen, 2012), as well as a nostalgia for normality concerning sexual and gender roles within CEE (Mole, 2011), contributed to affective feelings of shame and humiliation for some participants. Their experience of multiple marginalisation potentially prevents participants from going against the norm and pointing out cases of racialisation and homophobic abuse. However, people in a more privileged position are more able to do so on their behalf, and in the process strive towards a more inclusive society. Inclusion should be sanctioned though equality legislation, but also has to be more active though meaningful engagement with difference and an unbiased view of diversity on an individual level. Being aware of the ethos and experiences discussed in this article can assist in that quest, while noting that LGPQ migrants, and immigrants in general, contribute substantially to the overall economic growth of society, as well as bringing expanding multiplicity and vitality to their host culture. Inclusion should thus not be a privilege assigned to some, but a basic right for all.

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5.3 Article three.

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North-to-North queer migrations: privileged subjectivities and belonging in Iceland

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ABSTRACT

This paper argues for a rethinking of the ambivalences of privileged subjectivity and feelings of belonging when it comes to North-to-North mobility of queer populations. A sense of belonging is determined by sociocultural and socio-economic factors, as well as one's social locations, such as race, ethnicity, gender, language, and nationality. The paper examines how these contested categories intersect and shape interlocutors' imaginations of queer belonging, and their privileged sense of belonging, through the premise of predominant political projects of belonging. The analyses are based on 27 semi-structured interviews, a focus group discussion, and participant observations. This analysis demonstrates how images of Icelandic national identity and cultural belonging are political projects, just like the rights and responsibilities of migrants, and are thus adaptable to diversification and deconstruction. The analyses further show how imaginative geographies persistently construct hierarchies of affective queer belonging, and how transnational relations of privilege operate in queer migrations, as in other forms of migration. In line with the analyses, I thus advocate for locating one's own belonging-in-difference through queer temporalities, rather than embracing a nationalistic and normative arrangement of society. Further endorsing anti-racist, transnational, feminist, and queer solidarity across differences as well as queer worldmaking practices.

Introduction

This article addresses North-to-North queer migrations to Iceland and argues for a reconsideration of the ambivalences that accompany a privileged subjectivity, relating to whiteness, masculinity, middle-classness, cultural similarity, language fluency, ability, and age. The complexity of discussing privileged subjectivities in queer migrations stems from the fact that this grouping is

often already pre-assembled as the other. However, this privilege is intersectional and multi-layered (Yuval-Davis 2011a), especially for those who are racialised as 'non-white', who are not cis or gender-conforming, as well as those who are migrating from countries that are not part of the European Economic Area (EEA) or the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). Moreover, interlocutors may occupy different social locations in different cultural scenarios, being privileged in some cases, subordinate in others, or somewhere in between. Privileged sociocultural and socioeconomic locations nonetheless shape the experience of belonging and attachment within the Icelandic context, as elsewhere (Ullah et al. 2021). This paper thus examines how interlocutors' social locations relate to their imaginations of queer belonging, and their privileged sense of belonging, through the premise of dominant political projects of belonging. Political projects such as sexism, racism, migratism (Tudor 2017), nationalism, heterosexism, cisgenderism, homonormalisation, homonationalism and geopolitics, and thus function as overreaching power systems that produce structural violence for some but not for others (Haritaworn, Kuntsman, and Posocco 2013).

Sexual migrations or, more specifically, queer migrations, is a small but growing research area in Northern Europe, frequently discussing issues relating to people seeking international protection (Akin 2017; Andreassen 2020; Mühleisen, Røthing, and Svendsen 2012; Wimark 2019, 2020). Studies have also discussed internal mobility of gays and lesbians in Sweden (Wimark 2015a, 2015b), non-heterosexual Muslim migrant women who challenge the visibility paradigm in Norway and Denmark (Liinason 2020), and racist online patterns towards gay migrant men in Denmark (Shield 2019). Queer migration scholarship internationally tends to focus on subjects migrating from the Global South to the Global North, but there are studies that have made other trajectories visible (e.g. Ahlstedt 2016; Luibhéid 1999; Simmons 2008; White 2014). Scholars have established that queer persons migrate for reasons related to their sexuality, not exclusively due to economic or family causes, although diverse reasons overlap and interweave (Di Feliciantonio 2020; Gorman-Murray 2009; Lewis 2012; Stella, Flynn, and Gawlewicz 2018) and that migration (re)shapes sexual identities and practices (Carrillo 2004). Racism, colonialism, heteronormative nationalisms, as well as global capital and labour movements, have further all shaped queer diasporic subjectivity (Banerjea et al. 2018; Gopinath 2005).

Privileged migration generally refers to skilled migrants who have privilege with regards to race, class, and citizenship, and are thus often considered to be a 'small, invisible, adaptable uncontroversial segment of migration' (Knowles and Harper 2010, 7), drivers of positive cross-border transfer of skills and knowledge. This constitutes a cohort that is rarely addressed as migrants, but often referred to as 'expats' (expatriates) or professionals with an international background, which sheds light on the way in which migration is generally

framed. The geopolitics, socioeconomic class, racialisation, and whiteness (Leonard 2010; Lundström 2014) at the core of the widespread use of the word 'expat' thus includes a problematic reproduction of the colonial past (Kunz 2016).

Few studies have been conducted on privileged queer migrations. However, Collins (2009) discusses gay male expatriates living in the Philippines, Paisley and Tayar (2016) focus on LGBT expatriates and their identity management strategies in different spheres of cultural context, and Centner and Neto (2021) discuss expatriate gay men in Dubai. Most relevant in this context is Ahlstedt's (2016) PhD study, which examines queer partner migration to Sweden, regarding affective belonging and the non-migrating partners' privileged position within the migration process. The ambivalences of a privileged subject position in North-to-North queer migration is thus an under-examined field of queer migration studies, along with unpacking interlocutors' imaginations of queer belonging, and their privileged sense of belonging, seen through the premise of the political projects of belonging in the host society. This study can therefore also be an important contribution to the geography of belonging.

In this article, I pose the question: how do North-to-North queer migrants experience belonging in the Icelandic context, regarding the queer community, their immigrant community, and the wider Icelandic society? The study thus focuses on how processes of structural privilege materialise in the host society, through negotiations of social locations, belonging and geopolitics. I will begin the paper by discussing theoretical perspectives, then move on to contextualisation, followed by a short discussion of the study and methods, before examining the findings. The three themes carved out of the analyses are: imaginations of queer belonging, a privileged sense of belonging, and the political projects of belonging.

Theoretical perspectives

The theory of homonationalism (Puar 2007) discusses how U.S. sexual exceptionalism glosses over the maintenance of boundary policing of acceptable racial, class, gender, and (dis)ability formations, and instead only reinforces them. This process occurs amid the fostering of nationalist homosexual positionalities, which are indebted to liberalism through kinship and consumption, and which in turn police non-normative and non-nationalist sexualities though surveillance processes. This occurs in a setting where heterosexuality is the norm but homotolerance has increasingly become included in the imaginative geographies of nations. Therefore, homonationalism explains why, in the Icelandic context, certain immigrant groups, such as those from Central and Eastern Europe and the Global South, have taken over this marginalised social location, while a privileged group of ethnic Icelandic gays

and lesbians have increasingly been included in the national imaginary (Ellenberger 2017). In the Scandinavian countries, homonationalism takes shape as a moral superiority expressed through sexual and gendered freedom, alongside the exclusion of religious and ethnic minorities (Liinason 2023).

In order to place privileged social locations within the framework of queer migratory processes, I will address theories pertaining to whiteness, masculinity, heterosexism and cisgenderism. Making systems of privilege visible, such as race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability is crucial when discussing how oppression operates. Moreover, privilege can incorporate several things:

> First, the characteristics of the privileged group define the societal norm, often benefiting those in the privileged group. Second, privileged group members can rely on their privilege and avoid objecting to oppression. And third, privilege is rarely seen by the holder of privilege. (Wildman and Davis 2013, 795)

This normalisation of privilege results in those who stand outside the norm being characterised as alternative or deviant.

Critical whiteness studies problematise whiteness instead of focusing exclusively on the racialised other, and in the process disrupt racism by making visible the structures that reproduce privilege and white supremacy. Whiteness works through its invisibility as a determinant of social power, a standpoint from which white people see themselves, others, and society, and a set of unnamed and unmarked cultural practices (Dyer 1997; Frankenberg 1993). White people rejecting any role in systemic racism has been termed 'white innocence', and has been written about in the Icelandic and European context (Loftsdóttir 2011, 2014; Wekker 2016).

As much as sex and sexualities shape the environments in which they emerge, they also have a significant impact on the way those environments are organised and used. The conventional view of space and place is that they are meant to be shared by two people who belong to a gender binary, whose gender expression corresponds to their physical bodies, and whose sexual preferences are directed towards the 'opposite sex'. Heteronormativity is the attribution of biologically inevitable connections between sex, gender and sexuality that are, in reality, heavily influenced by issues of social class, as well as racial and able-bodied ideals (Browne and Brown 2016).

Hegemonic masculinity is grounded in heterosexual desire and occurs through subordination of femininity and other marginalised masculinities, such as homosexual masculinity (often conflated with femininity), and masculinities of the lower classes and other racial/ethnic groups. A refusal to be compliant with hegemonic masculinity, such as being a lesbian, is stigmatised and seen as threatening to male dominance, unless constructed as the object of masculine desire (Connell 1987; Schippers 2007).

Privileged migrants frequently share social locations with residents of the host nation in terms of whiteness (Anderson and Taylor 2005) and sameness

(Bond 2006), as well as religion, culture, language, ethnicity, income level, and profession, and are thus considered insiders who feel safe and a sense of belonging in that context. Migrants who differ on these issues are regarded as outsiders, causing discomfort, and fewer opportunities to create a feeling of belonging (Kern 2005; Ullah et al. 2021). These contentious categories further intertwine in complicated ways (Crenshaw 1991), resulting in a variety of social locations for insiders, outsiders and a sphere of in-betweenness.

An individual's sense of belonging is always in flux, since it is the naturalised construction of systematic hegemonic power relations. People feel a sense of belonging when they are able to connect with one another on an emotional and relational level, but feelings must be shared in order to form a sense of belonging (Wright 2015). A sense of belonging is often described as an affective bond, an intimate, personal, and felt experience of attachment emanating from everyday practices (Fenster 2005; Mills 2006; Walsh 2006). Belonging is an emotional connection that has to do with feeling 'at home' (Ahmed 1999), with 'home' as an ongoing project entailing a sense of hope for the future' (Hage 1997, 103).

According to Yuval-Davis (2011a), there are three different analytical layers of belonging, which are social locations; identifications and emotional attachments; and ethical and political value systems. Any critical discourse on racism, genderism, or other current political projects of belonging thus requires an analytical distinction between one's sense of belonging and the political projects of belonging. The politics of belonging is a multi-layered and multi-dimensional concept relating to the imagined or structural membership of a group, such as a collective or citizenship (Anderson and Taylor 2005; Antonisch 2010; Yuval-Davis, Anthias, and Kofman 2005). The politics of belonging involves the establishment of borders and socio-spatial processes of inclusion or exclusion of certain persons, their social locations, and groups inside these confines, *via* the use of discourse and as determined by those in positions of power. The exercise of power is what politics is all about, and different hegemonic political projects represent different kinds of symbolic power (Bourdieu 1990; Yuval-Davis 2011a).

Understanding that the familiar paths we have travelled, up to this point, are not the only ones available to us, may be freeing for people who feel they do not belong, and may encourage us to take political action. Unbelonging is a creative force that can materialise in those moments when exclusion occurs, and recurs, and can be harnessed to create socio-spatial change in line with one's sense of becoming (May 2011). Somewhere on the spectrum between the relationality of affective belonging and unbelonging lies a sense of belonging-in-difference. Belonging-in-difference, linked with queer utopian longing, delineates another modality of being and doing that is under construction, a possibility for political transformations (Muñoz 2009).

Contextualisation

Iceland has always been part of global processes, despite its relatively remote geographical location, and has thus never been entirely homogeneous. Nonetheless, immigration had a belated onset, as immigrants were only 2% of the population in 1996 (Statistics Iceland 2009) compared to 16.25% of the population in 2022 (Statistics Iceland 2022a). Poles are by far the biggest group of immigrants in the country, 34.2% of the immigrant population, followed by individuals from Lithuania (5.6%), Romania (4.1%), Latvia (3.9%), the Philippines (3.6%), Germany (2.9%), the U.S. (2.1%), the U.K. (2.1%), Thailand (2%), and Spain (1.9%) (Statistics Iceland 2022b). Migrations within the Nordic nations, as well as from the EFTA and EEA regions to Iceland, are unrestricted, in terms of residence- and work permits, which falls under the political project of belonging. However, since the opening of the labour market to new European Union (EU) member states in 2004, individuals from outside those borders and boundaries, such as the U.S., Canada, and Australia, have faced challenges in gaining access to these rights, as priority is given to people moving within the EFTA/EEA areas, as well as those classified as specialists in their field of work (Bissat 2013; Skaptadóttir 2015).

The Nordic countries, and more specifically Iceland, possesses the aura of gender equality (Pétursdóttir 2009), or has a disputed portrayal of being a 'gender equality paradise', to the point of exporting equality as a commodity or specialised knowledge (Þorvaldsdóttir 2011). Accompanying these ideas are notions of rendering Iceland a 'gay paradise' (Ellenberger 2017). Icelandic exceptionalism is thus constructed of multi-layered discourses, one being that Iceland is exempted from the legacy of racism as it did not take active part in the colonial project and was itself a colony at one point. This reflects a failure to critically engage with the privileges that come with being classified as 'white', and ignoring the fact that whiteness played a pivotal part in establishing Icelanders' worthiness to become an independent nation, along with positioning Icelanders as 'civilised Europeans' (Loftsdóttir 2016).

The notion of a 'gay paradise' has been used for about a decade by the travel industry and conference organisers to attract affluent visitors. Iceland has thus become a commercialised 'pink destination' for tourists and citizens alike. Gays and lesbians are to a lesser extent constructed as the other within society – that is, if they belong to a privileged group of middle-class, cisgender, gender-conforming, white, Christian, able-bodied, monogamous individuals (Ellenberger 2017). Othering continues to be firmly associated with certain immigrant groups, such as people from Central and Eastern Europe (Loftsdóttir 2017; Sólveigar- og Guðmundsdóttir 2018; Wojtynska, Skaptadóttir, and Ólafs 2011) and from the Global South (Loftsdóttir 2014, 2016; Sólveigar- og Guðmundsdóttir 2023; Sólveigar- og Guðmundsdóttir and Skaptadóttir 2017), and similar trends have been documented in Denmark regarding Muslims (Petersen 2011).

In general, Icelandic discourses surrounding trans* issues are more reasonable than those in the U.K. and the U.S., and as a result of persistent activism, the enactment of new trans legislation took place in 2023, moving Iceland to the top of the Trans Rights Map (TGEU 2023). Feminist scholars and activists are further commonly open and supportive towards trans* and queer issues (Josephson, Einarsdóttir, and Sigurðardóttir 2017). Nonetheless, there are instances of homonegative, but more generally, transnegative hate speech, harassment, and violence, and in the last two years, a significant increase in 'gender critical' rhetoric has been seen, which raises grave concerns within the queer community (Danks 2023; Fontaine 2019; Kristjönudóttir Jónsdóttir 2022).

The study and methods

I will now briefly discuss the study and its methods. This article is based on the analysis of 27 semi-structured interviews, a focus group discussion, and participant observations. Interlocutors were from Western Europe, the U.S., Canada, and Australia. Three interlocutors were racialised as black or brown, and 24 as white. I conducted the interviews in 2015-2017, and they ranged from half an hour to three hours in length. In-person interviews occurred at interlocutors' homes, cafes, libraries, and at the university, while two were online. I located interlocutors through snowball sampling and purposive sampling. Thirteen individuals were cis men and eight were cis women, one defined themself as gender-queer, one as demi-female, one as a gender-bender, and three as trans women. They identified their sexual orientation as gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, queer, and a woman who likes women, and two were polyamorous. Their ages ranged from 21 to 62, and almost all lived in Reykjavík, except for one who was in another country. Thirteen were native English speakers, 14 spoke Icelandic fluently, six could communicate in Icelandic, and seven could not. Nine had a postgraduate degree, nine had a university degree, five had vocational education and four had matriculation certificates at that time of the interviews.

The interviews and focus group discussion were audio-recorded, transcribed, and coded, first with open coding and then with focused coding, in the programme Dedoose. Thematic analysis, along with elements of grounded theory (Charmaz 2006), were applied for interpretation. As a 'white' native Icelander, who identifies e.g. as an educated, working-class, middle-aged, autigender, neuroqueer person, who has lived in the U.K. I have personal experience of exclusion in the queer community and wider Icelandic society, but also of privilege as a white researcher. This belonging-in-difference thus assisted me in making connections with interlocutors, and potentially decentred some predominant power relations. This study aims for socio-spatial transformations and a more liveable life for interlocutors, while also

facilitating queer worldmaking practices, by discussing queer narratives as a queer researcher (Ghaziani and Brim 2019). Interlocutors' names have been changed to pseudonyms.

Findings

Building on the theoretical emphasis mentioned above, three themes were carved out of the analysis, relating to interlocutors' imaginations for a future of queer belongingness; the relationality of a privileged belonging; and exclusionary processes in relation to the politics of belonging.

Imaginations of queer belonging

Several interlocutors expressed a yearning for a future that was constructed differently to the one they felt was conceivable in their country of origin. The interlocutors had a plethora of competing visions of what it would mean to belong, and how such a feeling might manifest in practice. Occasionally, interlocutors would want to relocate, and Iceland would be the end result of a chain of random occurrences. While some defined their motivations more in line with political refugees, wanting more equity in their surroundings, others were simply 'browsing for countries' to live in. Still others were pursuing a childhood dream, or joining their partner or children in Iceland, pursuing their interest in linguistics, nature, or culture, furthering their education, or finding work. Although some interlocutors were seeking ways to fit in with the host culture, the vast majority aimed for a belonging-in-difference (Muñoz 2009) through queer temporalities (Halberstam 2005), *via* their unequal access to privileged subjectivities.

International migrations are connected to a certain degree of agency, as well as offering the potential to transgressively re-invent oneself (Carrillo 2004). Although interlocutors were occasionally merely pursuing interesting experiences, there was a distinctly critical connotation to some of their narratives. James was in his late twenties; he was married, which granted him a residency permit, but which created a power imbalance in the relationship. He had resided in Iceland for years and described the decision-making process regarding relocating and a longing for belonging:

> I thought about this for years, and one of the biggest things that made me want to leave [country of origin], completely, was in 2004 when the [region] where Ím from passed this anti-gay amendment, where it is stated that marriage is between a man and a woman and that this is the only recognised relationship. There were professors at a [regional] university, who had health insurance through their employer and traditionally you could get insurance through your spouse, but after that it was not possible. Because the university is a [regional] institution the people voted, and like sixty-two percent of the people voted for this law change, and it just made me so angry. I was only in my late teens and in high school at the time, but I just remembered that as being a big moment, which really got me thinking.

James's reasons for migrating were in many ways unique, but it was not uncommon that interlocutors expressed a wish for a more unbiased future, and took responsibility for that aspiration by pursuing life elsewhere. The notion of an 'educated hope', or the politics of hope, is essential when it comes to marginalised populations, as the potentiality can motivate people to struggle for a more equitable future (Appadurai 2013; Bloch 1986; Muñoz 2009). Iceland is far from being a utopia for queer people, but it has a health-care system which is relatively accessible to residents, regardless of marital status, sexual orientation, or social class.

Albertina is in her forties and migrated more than a decade ago from another Nordic country. She had never experienced marginalisation as a lesbian migrant, except for once from within her own ethnic community. Albertina has several friends and is in a relationship; however, she does not want to have children. She explains how LGBTQI+ people have, in some cases, a desire for fitting in with normality:

> Everyone has children now, and everyone chose the path of having a house and a car and all of that, I mean, of course everyone is doing that, because suddenly it was allowed to have children and get married. I do not care how people live their lives, what I find tragic is when people think that the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence, that things will be better if you decide to have children, become normalised.

Assimilation into the dominant culture and active participation in heteronormative capitalism is sometimes called the march towards respectable queerness (Joshi 2012), and this has taken place in Iceland, as elsewhere. LGBTQI+ organisations have focused on gaining legal rights, and the community has followed; in the process, this has reinforced hierarchies within the queer community. Heterosexual culture depends on a reproductive future; thus, queers without biological children are often seen as people without a future, and without the complete life that heterosexual temporality has promised. Queer belonging-in-difference is suggested by the performativity of queer utopian longing. The combination of utopian yearning and queer imagination thus has the ability to contribute to political reforms (Muñoz 2009).

Queer utopian longing is experienced by Bruce, who has lived and worked in Iceland for almost two decades, although originally this was supposed to be a temporary arrangement. He has never really come to grips with speaking the language, but understands a lot, and mostly uses English in his place of work. He is in his forties, identifies as gay, and is neurodivergent. Bruce expressed his views on queer temporalities in this way:

> I read a lot of literature, and when I realised that being a homosexual was freedom from these pressures, that Ím able to define who I am as an individual, it was an opportunity. Ím not going to fit into your gender stereotype, or your queer box, you can be completely anything. You do not have to take care of your mother, you do not have to become your dad, you do not have to make babies, and if you see

this that is great, it is a free pass to become who you want to. So, I realised this quite early on, and I felt like it really mattered.

Queerness time materialises when one steps out of the linearity of straight time, which stipulates 'needs' that should be phenomenologically questioned. Queer temporalities and ecstatic moments can thus be a pathway to a more extensive openness to the world at large (Halberstam 2005; Muñoz 2007). Interlocutors thus frequently had a desire for a belonging-in-difference, through queer temporalities and privileged subjectivities.

A privileged sense of belonging

Some interlocutors mentioned a few minor difficulties throughout the reso- cialisation process (Mole et al. 2017), while the majority did not. Race, ethnic- ity, language, gender, sexuality, ability and age all influence the ease or difficulty of mobility, and the amount of effort required to move. Indeed, the unmarked capacity of whiteness and economic or social privilege to be mobile contributes to epistemological assumptions that mobility should be easy and accessible (Aizura 2018). The ability to communicate well in English and/or Icelandic is also highly valued in Icelandic culture and the queer com- munity, and thus contributes to a sense of belonging and social acceptance.

Certain interlocutors related to the notion of being more of a cosmopoli- tan than an immigrant, as they had multiple belongings and engaged in transnational practices and travel, which is a defining feature of modern sub- jectivity. This privileged sense of belonging is exemplified in Sophie's experi- ence. Sophie is in her thirties and has lived in Iceland for several years and speaks the language fluently. She defines herself as bisexual and polyam- orous and has children from a previous relationship, and described her con- nection to Iceland thus:

> I have never seen myself as a foreigner in Iceland; when I came here first, I immediately had this feeling of being at home, and that was a new thing for me, as I have never really felt that before, but that is the way it is, and I am supposed to be here. And I think Icelanders like that, that people truly feel that they are at home here. Now I speak Icelandic, and am just like any other Icelander, I have no difficulties in connecting with new people from Iceland. People often say to me, are you from the Faroe Islands, or Denmark, or ask if Ím half Icelandic and grew up abroad or something like that, as they slightly notice the accent.

Sophie actively established her life in Iceland, as her affective belonging is anchored there; she was also moving within the EEA/EFTA area, so acquiring residency and work permits was not challenging, which was not the case for all interlocutors. There is a slippery scale of superiority and dangerousness which determines who is labelled an 'immigrant' and who is not. Racialised ethnicities and privileged subjectivities have their imaginary place within a

hierarchical ranking of migrants, to determine 'what we should do with them', 'how we should treat them', and 'how we should behave' around them. (Balibar 1991, 221)

A sense of belonging and connectedness is determined by sociocultural and socioeconomic factors (Ullah et al. 2021). Interlocutors' socioeconomic status depended on diverse components; many had migrated as young adults and attended university while holding part-time jobs, while others were more defined as specialists in their field of work. Their national origin, social capital and language fluency further contributed, alongside a migration regime that allows for unhampered mobility between certain counties. Trevor's experience illustrated the socioeconomic status of some of the interlocutors. Trevor defined himself as gender-bender, as well as gay or bisexual, depending on the circumstance, and had several years of work experience on a global scale in a former profession. He described his socioeconomic status in this manner:

> I have been fortunate; when I came back in 2001, I had a sizable amount of money, like the first place I bought, I could almost pay for my house in cash, and it was not a problem. I have owned five homes, I was a landlord myself for a while, before the crash, so I have been fortunate in that sense.

In some respects, Trevor's financial situation had made it easier for him to integrate into Icelandic society, but other factors, such as his sexual orientation, remained complicated. Queer subjects, like many others, benefit from privileges of class, gender, and race, which protect their rights as global consumers rather than citizens, and often replicates the framework that defines cosmopolitan identity and mobility as white privilege (Alexander 2005; Fortier 2003).

Several interlocutors noted how they were treated differently in Iceland than non-white people from the Global South, or economic migrants from Central and Eastern Europe. They recognised that they occupied a superior social location in the migrant community and understood the boundary-setting processes that take place inside the queer community and wider Icelandic society. To illustrate this point, I highlight Frank's narrative. Frank defined himself as gay and was gender-conforming. He had lived in Iceland for many years and made a home there with his husband and child. He was aware of his position as a white, middle-class male from the Global North, and described his privileged subjectivity, in comparison to Central and Eastern European ethnicity, and the relationality of affective belonging:

> Sometimes if Ím speaking Icelandic, and I do have an accent, where people cannot tell where it is from. Sometimes they mistake me for, for example, Polish, and I think that because, that is the largest immigrant group in Iceland. Then they can be very mean, and I see huge prejudice. But if they think Ím from [country of origin], then they think that it should be easy for me to stay, and they do not realise that the rules are very rigid.

Being read as Polish provides Frank with a sense of the power dynamics at work in everyday social life, and how racialisation, cultural othering, and social class shape relational spaces, and marginalise Central and Eastern Europeans in Iceland, as in other regions of Western Europe. He is further aware that his nationality comes with privileges that provide him with a sense of safety and belonging. It is far more obvious to notice when we are discriminated against, than to spot those groups that we belong to, and which benefit from specific privileges. Discussing privilege is thus a bit like making the wind visible, but understanding it is a concrete step towards dismantling systems of inequality (Chugh 2018; Goffman 1963). The social hierarchy of belonging was therefore tangible as a sense of connectivity to socioeconomic, cultural and professional social spaces, as well as through interlocutors' experiences of subjectivity.

Political projects of belonging

The political projects of belonging occasionally contrasted with interlocutors' experience of social inclusion and the relationality of affective belonging. The politics of belonging is a discursive resource which justifies, claims, constructs, or resists forms of socio-spatial inclusion or exclusion (Yuval-Davis 2011a). Interlocutors migrated from cultures generally referred to as progressive and economically prosperous, but which frequently had histories of imperialism, settler colonialism and slavery. They thus mediated their belonging across ideologies, beliefs, and values, as well as social and political systems, in an open-ended exercise of negotiation.

An interlocutor mentioned that even though she spoke Icelandic fluently, people often continued to speak to her in English, as Icelanders tended to 'listen to her face' instead of focusing on what she was saying, and her face did not speak Icelandic. This relates to what El-Tayeb (2011) described as the inconsistency between the aural truth, or the sound of a native language, and the visual truth of a person that is not Nordic in appearance. To exemplify this consideration further, I foreground Ethan's experience of race and ethnicity. Ethan identified as queer and was in his forties; he had connections to people and places around the world but had settled in Iceland, where he had lived for more than two decades. He described his experience of the political project of national imaginary in relation to race, ethnicity, and nationality:

> It is interesting you know, I have African heritage, as you can see, and people's reaction to me, after they find out that Ím [country of origin], is a lot different than sort of their reactions to people who are from Africa. Their perception of [his ethnicity], and I get the title [his nationality], versus the title African, so there is that. At the same time, there are a lot of stereotypes that affect how people see me. Many people immediately think that I grew up in a very impoverished setting, where there is crime rampant. But no, I did not engage in illegal activities, I come

from a very middle-class family. But at the same time, there is a positive side, how sometimes people can be positive towards [his nationality], so, it is rather complex.

The racialisation processes that Ethan encountered in Iceland are conflated with stereotypes of race, class, and national origin, but also moments of admiration. He noted that people sometimes confused him with popular basketball players, movie stars, and singer-songwriters who also were black. He had difficulties adjusting to relational cultural differences, while his queerness was rarely discussed. However, queerness intersects with particularities of e.g. gender, race, class, ethnicity, nationality, ability and age, where sexuality is not seen as the singular modality of difference (Ferguson 2004). Queerness can be seen as multiple forms of belonging-in-difference, along with a politics that affords rights to all queer people, such as the working-class and racially marginalised, not just the privileged few (Muñoz 2009).

Ahlstedt (2016) has pointed out the trickiness of discussing privileged subjectivities when it comes to queer migrants, as they tend to be already assembled as outsiders. Nonetheless, non-normative gender identities are more likely to be stopped in diverse ways and contexts and viewed as being outside the norm. Zoe described her experience of being read as a gender non-normative individual. She was in her thirties at the time of the interview, identified as a lesbian trans woman, and had lived in Iceland for several years. Zoe transitioned in Iceland and described her experience of coming out at work, and the political project of cisgenderism:

> I came out some years ago. At the time, I had been the CEO of a company, and the reaction of the board of directors was very split, the founders were very unhappy with me being the representative of the company, and the other half of the board was fine with it. So, I stopped working there shortly after that. Then I worked at another place for six months and had a really difficult time with people who I had known for twelve years, and I haven't had a job since then. When I first moved here there was no problem, because then I was presenting as a white guy from the Global North, but things have changed a lot since then.

Being seen as a middle-class white guy from the Global North, as well as a native English speaker, is a privileged subjectivity in Iceland, as elsewhere. However, depending on a variety of factors, the gender transition process can alter this and, as the excerpt above indicates, even upper-middle-class trans women may encounter social rejection in the workplace. The promise of a future that is better than the present, a queer utopian temporality which provides hope to trans subjects and communities, is discussed by Malatino (2022), who notes that, in reality, one's future rarely materialises as imagined. Transitioning is a complex form of labour, with or without reassignment. Trans women are discarding the patriarchal dividend that men have in terms of professional authority, family status, and the labour market. They further risk rejection from women and violence from men (Connell 2012).

Patricia is a queer woman in her thirties, and her country of origin is outside the boundaries of the EEA/EFTA area. For people coming from outside the EEA/EFTA region, work and residential permits are dependent on their employer, except for those who are defined as specialists in their field (Bissat 2013; Skaptadóttir 2015). Patricia first came to Iceland as a student attending a summer course but returned soon after to stay more permanently. She had met and married a woman from Scandinavia, and felt at home within that context, but the way she acquired inclusion in the political project of citizenship is illustrated in this excerpt:

> There is this special clause, which states that the parliament can grant people citizenship. But it does not specify on what grounds, you just submit your application to Allsherjarnefnd [general committee], and I did that, three times. But it helps if you know the right people, as they say, in Iceland it is all about who you know, and I had a friend who knew some of the people on this committee. I made a big argument about that we were married but stuck in Iceland, as my partner needed to do her graduate studies in Scandinavia, and then I would have to re-start the immigration process from the beginning if I left the country, and there are so many rights associated with citizenship. So, I made this four-page document in Icelandic and stated how this was related to being queer, because [country of origin] does not recognise queer couples for immigration purposes, now they are starting to, but that is new. I do not know if they liked my argument, they are for sure not letting every queer person who is married get citizenship easily, but I got lucky.

Patricia utilised her resources, such as language knowledge and personal connections effectively, to obtain citizenship in Iceland, while her queer identity supported her argument. This was, however, the only incident where a queer identity might have played a pivotal role in acquiring citizenship. The network of rights and entitlements associated with state citizenship, or the lack thereof, is frequently regarded as one of the most important contemporary political projects of belonging (Yuval-Davis 2011b). It both reproduces globally stratified systems of inequality and serves as a key mobiliser within popular resistance movements around the world (Curtis and Mee 2012; Skrbiš, Baldassar, and Poynting 2007; Wright 2015). Therefore, for some interlocutors, the politics of belonging was complex and exclusionary, but for several others, dominant political projects did not substantially affect their everyday lives.

Conclusion

This article contributes to critical migration studies, as well as anti-racist, transnational, feminist, and queer knowledge productions, by examining North-to-North queer migrations to a sparsely populated island in Northern Europe. The theoretical implications of the three themes discussed above, relating to belonging, thus broadens the dialogue on privileged queer migrations. This article has emphasised that belonging is determined by sociocultural and socioeconomic factors, as well as intersections of privileged social locations,

such as whiteness, masculinity, nationality, ability, language, age, and geopolitics. It is nonetheless important to recognise that not all systems of privilege or oppression are created equally, and that privilege intersects with subordination in complex ways. Rethinking of a privileged queer subjectivity thus calls for the specification of how social hierarchies and power structures, relating to normalisation, difference and subordination, are instrumental in the intersections of social locations. Moreover, discussing how social locations intersect is crucial to comprehend the diversity of the population.

The analysis for this article depicts how queer migrations are, in many cases, grounded in the politics of hope, an educated hope for a more equitable future (Appadurai 2013; Bloch 1986; Muñoz 2009), or a desire for belongingness. When queering one's immediate surroundings is not feasible, the best solution might be to relocate. Some interlocutors want to fit in within the host society, while the vast majority had created a belonging-in-difference through queer temporalities and systems of privileged subjectivity. The ease or difficulty of movement, as well as the amount of effort necessary to move, is influenced by one's social locations. The unmarked ability of whiteness, and economic or social privilege to move, leads to epistemic beliefs that mobility should be simple and straightforward (Aizura 2018). Recognising how power structures operate and create structural violence for some but not for others (Haritaworn, Kuntsman, and Posocco 2013), through political projects such as racism, sexism, migratism, nationalism, heterosexism, cisgenderism, homonationalism, homonormalisation and geopolitics, is thus essential. It is also important to unpack how such political projects shape interlocutors' sense of belonging within the queer community, the immigrant community, and the wider Icelandic society. The political project of Icelandic national identity and cultural belonging is based on whiteness and masculine characteristics. Histories of racism, colonialism, and imperialism are often rendered insignificant in the present, and regarded as a foreign implication, which is an affective interpretation of history and the nation (Loftsdóttir and Jensen 2012). As a result, the myth of an unproblematic white identity persists in Iceland.

Imaginative geographies thus persistently construct hierarchies of affective queer belonging in Iceland, as elsewhere, and transnational relations of privilege are thus operational in queer migrations. By turning the discussion towards a privileged subjectivity and hierarchies, instead of focusing predominantly on subordination and marginalisation, a space can potentially open for those who are unable to resist the restrictive force of unequal power relations in their country of origin, their host country, and transnationally. In line with the analysis, I thus advocate for locating one's belonging-in-difference trough queer temporalities, rather than in nationalistic and normative ordering of society, further endorsing anti-racist, transnational, feminist, and queer solidarity across differences along with queer worldmaking practices.

Notes on contributor

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5.4 Article four.

National Imaginary and the Catholic Church: Queer Migrant Women's Experiences of Exclusionary Moments

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Abstract

In this article, I discuss the imagined boundaries of belonging in Iceland, the political projects of national identity and religion, and the ways in which those projects affect the everyday social formations for LBTQ+ migrant women. I highlight the interlocutors' experiences of exclusion, foregrounding resistance and resilience in facing unequal power relations, including racism, sexism, heterosexism and cisgenderism. In the article, I apply theories of critical race, postcolonialism, queer-of-colour critique, queer theology, the relationality of space and place, as well as the politics of belonging and a sense of belonging. I draw on feminist writings concerning queer migrations, intersectionality and assemblage, to analyse interlocutors' multilayered experiences within the Icelandic context, other cultural frames of reference, and transnationally. I analyse semi-structured interviews with 28 interlocutors, who identify as LBTQ+ migrant women, demigirl, gender queer and non-binary. Six interlocutors are racialised as black or brown, 22 as white, hailing from the Global South and Global North. Two themes were carved out of the analysis, relating to the genealogy and aesthetics of racialisation and othering in Iceland, and experiences of exclusion and resistance within the Catholic Church. In line with the analysis, I advocate for dismantling social hierarchies and exclusionary power structures by foregrounding structural violence and microaggressions against disenfranchised groups of individuals in addition to highlighting queer worldmaking practices.

Keywords: exclusionary moments; politics of belonging; sense of belonging; national imaginary; Catholic Church; Iceland

Introduction

In this study, I examine belonging in Iceland and the ways in which national identity and religion affect LBTQ+[1] migrant women in Iceland, their country of origin, and transnationally. Marginalised individuals are structurally othered in diverse ways yet are similar in their lived experiences of exclusion regarding bodymind[2] differences. Political projects are constructed and shaped around bodymind differences, thereby moulding interlocutors' sense of belonging within various cultural scenarios. In Iceland, exclusion relies on visual indicators, normative behaviours, passing privilege and predominant stereotypes of minority groups. This then reproduces social inequality by maintaining group hierarchies, devalued stereotypes and social othering. In this study, I therefore focus on the political projects of belonging within society (Yuval-Davis, 2011) and their relational formations in interlocutors' everyday lives (Ahmed, 2004) or experiences of affective belonging within a particular context. Structural violence occurs when people are excluded, symbolically or physically, from specific political projects that determine who gets to belong within a certain cultural context and who does not.

Alongside theories of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) and assemblage (Puar, 2012), the term "exclusionary moments" (Sólveigar- og Guðmundsdóttir, 2018) describes when exclusion occurs in specific contexts and new realities are generated. These are not just about being queer or an immigrant, or the sum of several disenfranchised social locations such as race, gender, sexuality, religion or class. Rather, these moments relate to processes of structural violence and what happens when multiple identities intersect, become entangled and form assemblages. Depending on the context, the result of social humiliation and subordination might range from minor discomfort to life-threatening (Haritaworn et.al., 2013; Kuhar, 2009; Sólveigar- og Guðmundsdóttir, 2018). In the case of enduring bodymind differences, exclusionary moments can recreate and reaffirm one's history of experiences, cementing the feeling of not belonging within particular cultural scenarios. Interlocutors' experiences of exclusionary moments regarding racism, sexism, heterosexism[3] and cisgenderism[4] are highlighted in this article.

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1   Lesbian, bisexual, transgender (lesbian and heterosexual), queer, and woman who likes women.
2   The term "bodymind" is used to challenge the idea that the body and mind are experienced separately, based in the Cartesian dualism of Western philosophy, as it is impossible to clearly distinguish between the two in most cases. The term is a materialist feminist disability studies concept (Price, 2014) but can be traced back to Buddhist philosophy (Schalk, 2014).
3   Heterosexism (or heteronormativity) refers to the presumption that everyone is heterosexual and that heterosexual attraction or relationships are the norm and superior. Heterosexism is a belief system, and is therefore indirect and hidden; like homophobia, it results in the invisibility of the LGBTQI+ community (Herek, 1990).
4   Cisgenderism "endorses and perpetuates the belief that cisgender identities and expression are to be valued more than transgender identities and expressions and creates an inherent system of associated power and privilege" (Lennon & Mistler, 2014, pp. 63).

The intersections and assemblages of minority experiences within the migratory process are therefore emphasised, allowing space for people who struggle to gain acceptance within those domains. Furthermore, critical engagement with national identity and religious institutions results in the deconstruction of such political projects. To shed light on this, I ask the following question: How do exclusionary moments and a sense of (un)belonging materialise for LBTQ+ migrant women in Iceland? In this article, I therefore look at the ways in which particular societal forces harm certain groups of individuals and not others.

In the next section, I lay out the theoretical foundations of this article, which include critical race theory, postcolonial theory, queer-of-colour critique, queer theology, the relationality of space and place, the politics of belonging and a sense of belonging. I then introduce the methodology and research context, applying elements of thematic analysis and grounded theory. The findings are then presented in two subsections which are the political projects of the Icelandic national imaginary, and the Catholic Church in Iceland.

Theoretical Foundations

In the contemporary global world, perceptions of gender and sexuality have an impact on all aspects of social life. Nation states actively intervene in gendered forms of labour, constructing heteronormativity, codifying family planning, and regulating female sexuality (Clark, 2006; Nagel, 1998; Yuval-Davis, 1997). The construction of sexuality in the West is inextricably linked to imperial projects and governance in Latin America, the Middle East, Asia and Africa, where colonial powers imposed gendered and sexual classifications (Stoler, 2002). Alongside this, critical race theorists and activist groups in the US have highlighted the relationship between power, racism and race. The critical race theory states that racism is a daily experience for people of colour in the West, but is complex to quantify, as it is not acknowledged by people in positions of power. White supremacy serves an important purpose, as racism benefits working-class white people and the white elite (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Studies of racialisation have shown the ways in which stereotypes change over time, as different minority groups become racialised based on labour market needs (Gutiérrez, 2019; Wojtyńska, 2012; Sigurgeirsdóttir & Skaptadóttir, 2011). The interlocutors in this study described their experiences of enforced Western gender regimes and racialisation.

The queer-of-colour critique deals with the cultural formations of gender, sexuality, race and political economy, and analyses racial capitalism and the racial state. Criticising the understanding of sexuality as a singularly constituted and disarticulated from other forms of difference (Cacho, 2000; El-Tayeb, 2011; Ferguson, 2004). The interplay between sexuality and migration is addressed in queer migration scholarship and is understood through multiple intersecting relations of power, underscoring that these must be addressed together (Cantú, 2009; Luibhéid, 2002; Manalansan, 2003). As noted

above, this study applies intersectional analysis, addressing interlocking systems of power as well as resistance.

Space can affect the ways in which bodies are read, and the ways in which these readings can be felt through and on the body. This takes place in everyday settings, as specific spaces are marked as white, therefore marginalising those who are "non-white" (or non-normative) and marking them out of place. This practice is familiar, as it will have been enacted and received many times before (Held & Leach, 2008). Space, place and environment all play a role in the creation of sex and sexualities, while sex and sexualities influence the ways in which place and space are set up and used. The typical understanding of space and place is that they are intended to be shared by two individuals who are clearly gendered (either man or woman), exhibit appropriate gendered behaviours (femininity or masculinity) that are mapped onto clearly differentiated physical bodies, and have sexual interests that are focused on the clearly defined "opposite sex". Heteronormativity is when sexuality, sex and gender are linked in ways thought to be natural, but which are frequently centred on specific class, race and able-bodied ideals (Browne & Brown, 2016).

Exclusionary moments in relation to religious institutions were frequently discussed by the interlocutors. Radical queer Christian theologians have termed Christian scriptures "texts of terror", claiming that they engage in "biblical terrorism" and "textual violence" against LGBTQI+ people. In the formation and contestation of truth claims, religious texts are where power dynamics play out (Goss, 2002), as political, economic and sexual aspects have always been present (Tonstad, 2018). Queer theology is made up of three interconnected elements, namely, defensive apologetics, "cruising" texts, and turning theology upside down. The first aims to recontextualise and reinterpret textual passages and verses that have been used to establish the moral exclusivity and authenticity of heterosexuality and the gender binary, as well as the moral unacceptability of homosexuality and Trans*[5] lives. Moreover, the defensive apologetics reverse the heteronormative dominant religious discourses of truth claims (Althaus-Reid & Isherwood, 2004; Goldberg, 2009; Jamal, 2001). "Cruising texts" aim to reveal same-sex sociability, intimacy, and eroticism within religious texts, not just as proof of the existence of "our own people", but also as a religiously sanctioned spiritual guide (Guest, 2005; King, 2000). The third category builds on the previous two, but rethinks theology with regard to the body, gender and sexuality. It aims to develop a theology that embraces the body, its passions, wants and desires, and conceptualises the inextricability of sexuality and spirituality, understanding sexuality not just as genital

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5   Trans* describes the categories of "transgender", "transman" and "transwoman", including all non-cisgender identities. The asterisk is further used to hold open the histories of variant bodies and the ways in which those histories have been applied. However, the term has also been criticised for its lack of specificity (Halberstam, 2018).

acts, but also as the human capacity for relationships, companionship and sensuality, mirrored in a connection to God (Althaus-Reid, 2000; Yip, 2010).

To analyse the ways in which the political projects of belonging connect to the lived experiences of interlocutors, I apply theories of belonging. A key aspect of social experience is a feeling of belonging, but within cultural and social groups; many individuals may feel marginalised, especially those who experience multiple forms of oppression (Putnam, 2000). A sense of belonging consists of a space of unfolding recognition, attachments and affiliations; the experience of exclusion that marginalised group members often encounter may increase their need to belong to a social group (Gorman-Murray et al., 2008). Belonging is a dynamic process and can be differentiated into three analytical layers: social locations, people's emotional attachments and identifications to various groups and collectives and the ways in which people judge others' belonging, as well as their own, in relation to political and ethical value systems (Yuval-Davis, 2011). The politics of belonging encompass the inclusion and exclusion of specific individuals, groups and collectives, and the establishment of boundaries around belonging, such as social categories, communities and nations. Those with the power to create such social boundaries do so both symbolically and physically (Yuval-Davis, 2016).

There is nonetheless creative power in the experience of unbelonging, which can be channelled to effect social and spatial changes and a future more in accordance with one's sense of being, and thus should not be underestimated (May, 2011). Queer life is, however, still challenging, unmanageable for some, and cruel for far too many. To inspire, we need everyday lives of safety and belonging, as well as the visionary force of queer romanticism. Universities' creative queer theory, which advocates disruption and discomfort, thus often has little applicability for non-academic LGBTQI+ individuals seeking intelligible selves and entrenched collectiveness. Moreover, there is an ongoing tension between the urge to be radical and the desire to belong (Munt, 2010).

Methodology and Contextualisation

This study is informed by transnational (Amelina & Faist, 2012), queer (Ghaziani & Brim, 2019) and feminist methodologies (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2008). Semi-structured interviews and participant observation were used in the data-collection process, along with a discourse analysis of local online newspaper articles and the online presence of the Catholic Church. This article is part of a larger study that examines queer migrations to Iceland, where I interviewed 49 LGBTQ+ migrants from around the globe. For this article, I analysed 28 interviews with migrant women, conducted in 2015 and 2020. Five trans-women, one demigirl, two gender queers, one non-binary and 19 cisgender individuals participated. The interlocutors identified as lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, queer, trans (heterosexual and lesbian), a woman who likes women, and polyamorous. Of the 28 interlocutors in this study, 15 had connections to the Catholic Church, which are relevant for this article. Their ages ranged from 21 to 62, and their

educational background from upper secondary school to postgraduate degrees. The interlocutors all had residence and work permits or had acquired Icelandic citizenship. Six interlocutors were racialised as black or brown and 22 as white. The time of residence in Iceland ranged from one year to 32 years.

I used snowball and purposive sampling to identify the interlocutors. In-person interviews were conducted at interlocutors' homes, place of work, cafes or library rooms, and four were conducted online. The interviews were then transcribed and coded, first using open coding and then focused coding in Dedoose, and analysed using thematic analysis and grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006; Esterberg, 2002; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). The two themes discussed in this article were selected owing to the affective engagement of the interlocutors when recalling those cultural scenarios. I only discuss examples from the Catholic Church, as these were the most numerous, but heard of examples of exclusion from Orthodox Christianity, and one from Islam.

Recognising that researchers' ontological and epistemological beliefs influence the research process, I incorporate a reflexive approach and clarify my positionality. I am an educated, working-class, middle-aged, autigender,[6] neuroqueer[7] individual. I have lived in the UK and was in a relationship with a Pacific Islander. I was raised Lutheran, but today I believe in spiritual practice. Several privileges are allocated to me as a "white" ethnic Icelander, but being a very late-diagnosed autistic and dyslexic has continuously propelled me into the margins, and a search for belongingness has been a recurring theme in my life. It is thus evident when hierarchical power structures, structural violence, and exclusionary moments are at work in my life, as it is for others disenfranchised through bodymind differences.

Iceland had a population of 376 000 in January 2022, with 241 000 people living in the greater Reykjavík region and the remainder living in smaller cities, towns, villages or farms (Statistics Iceland, 2022a). Iceland has in recent years become more multicultural, and the immigrant population has risen from 2% in 1996 (Statistics Iceland, 2009) to 16.25% in January 2022 (Statistics Iceland, 2022b). Poles make up 35.9% of that population, followed by Lithuanians (5.6%), Romanians (4.1%), Latvians (3.9%), Filipinos (3.6%), Germans (2.9%), Americans (2.1%), British (2.1%), Thais (2%) and Spanish (1.9%) (Statistics Iceland 2022c). Migration to and from Iceland is unrestricted, both within the European Economic Area (EEA) and within the countries in the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), but priority is given to people moving within the EEA/EFTA, as well as specialists in their field of work (Bissat, 2013; Skaptadóttir, 2015). This has made it difficult for people from outside the EEA/EFTA regions to acquire residence and work permits. It is possible to apply for citizenship after seven

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6   A gender identity that is heavily influenced by autism; not identifying strongly with one's gender assigned at birth or conventional gender roles, yet not transgender in the traditional sense of the term.

7   "Being both neurodivergent and queer, with some degree of conscious awareness and/or active exploration around how these two aspects of one's being entwine and interact" (Walker, 2015).

years of residency for people coming from outside of the EEA/EFTA but being born in the country does not automatically grant citizenship.

In Iceland, Poles are generally racialised as the immigrant "other" (Guðjónsdóttir & Loftsdóttir, 2016) and experience everyday racism (Pétursdóttir, 2013; Wojtyńska, 2012; Wojtynska et al., 2011). This frequently extends to other nations in Central and Eastern Europe (Loftsdóttir, 2017; Sólveigar- og Guðmundsdóttir, 2018) and relates to the fact that the nations of Eastern Europe are frequently seen as Europe's "internal outsiders" (Kalnačs, 2016). Central and Eastern European ethnicity also became connected to a lower socio-economic class in times of economic prosperity (Loftsdóttir, 2015). People of colour are still a notable minority, with the largest groups from the Philippines and Thailand. According to studies conducted in Iceland, migrants frequently face racism and bigotry (Loftsdóttir, 2011; Skaptadóttir, 2015; Sólveigar- og Guðmundsdóttir & Skaptadóttir, 2017). Many Filipinos report experiences of overt racism in public places and at work, while Asian women of various nationalities are frequently grouped together as Thais (Skaptadóttir, 2015).

Discourses on Icelandic exceptionalism are numerous and multilayered, including that Iceland is a "gender equality paradise" (Þorvaldsdóttir, 2011), possesses the "aura of gender equality" (Pétursdóttir, 2009), and is a "gay utopia" (Ellenberger, 2017) for normative gays and lesbians. The general conception is that as Iceland was once a colony and did not actively participate in the colonial endeavour it is thus exempt from the legacy of racism. When in fact, Icelandic national identity is constructed in direct contact with both colonialism and racism and is founded on whiteness as a normative and distinguishing category, with embedded male characteristics (Loftsdóttir, 2014, 2016).

The Evangelical Lutheran Church is the largest religious institution in Iceland, comprising 61% of the population, with the second largest group having no religious affiliation, at 7.8%. The Catholic Church comprises 3.9% of the population (Statistics Iceland, 2022d), but has grown in recent decades because of increased immigration from predominantly Catholic countries. In 2014, I did a discourse analysis (Foucault, 1972) of an article listed on the webpage of the Catholic Church, "What homosexuality is not" (Van den Aardweg, 2013). The article has since been taken down but gave an insight into the institution's understanding of the issue. The author was preoccupied with the origins and treatment of homosexuality, arguing that homosexuality is not biological (except in exceptional cases), but something that people have learned, chosen or adopted; thus, the only right thing to do is to "cure them" with appropriate treatment. The author bemoans that society, the media and authorities have adopted the propaganda of homosexuals thus giving a "distorted" image of homosexuality which potentially scares people away from seeking "healing". This carries strong signs of hate and fearmongering, rather than any theological or scientific coverage of the topic. The UN and EU human rights treaties and Icelandic anti-discrimination laws, prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation (Alþingi, 1996) and gender identity (Alþingi,

2014), and this article is a breach of these, as well as being contrary to the Icelandic constitution (Alþingi, 1995). Currently, there is no mention of LGBTQ+ issues on the webpage of the Catholic Church.

Findings

Two main themes were carved out of the analysis, concerning the political project of aesthetics and genealogy of the Icelandic national identity, and the political project of sexism, heterosexism and cisgenderism within the Catholic Church. Moreover, the analysis indicates the ways in which these political projects shaped the interlocutors' sense of belonging through microaggressions and exclusionary moments.

National Imaginary: "I Feel Icelandic but Other People Will Always See Me as a Foreigner"

In this section, I describe exclusionary moments as foundational to the aesthetics and genealogy of national identity formation and belonging. Racialisation continues to shape the lives of both people of colour and white people who experience privilege, as skin colour and physical characteristics are used to create racial differences (Hunter, 2002; Loftsdóttir, 2011; Obasogie, 2010). Anya[8] is in her late thirties and moved to Iceland when she was about five. She described her first memory of racism and structural exclusion within the social space of an elementary school system:

> There is a lot of racism here, of course it is a bit different today but twenty something years ago when I started elementary school, and having a black mother, kids can be very hateful. The punches are difficult to cope with and you get to hear all sorts of things, like, your mother is a slave, your mother is a n*****. I started in [name of school] and I did not speak Icelandic at the time, and the teachers were not sure how to handle this. I was bullied severely and became a sort of an anger management child.

Overt racial prejudice was rarely mentioned in the interviews but, in Iceland, stares, invasive inquiries and remarks are frequently thought to be natural reactions to such bodymind differences. This is grounded in the idea that racism is a foreign import located in non-white individuals, and thus not relevant in Iceland (Loftsdóttir & Mörtudóttir, 2022). Luna, who is in her thirties, described how, even though she has lived in Iceland since childhood, she will never become a part of the national imaginary, as her overall appearance did not fit there within.

> I do feel like I am Icelandic, but other people will always see me as a foreigner, because of what they are seeing, colour, skin, all that. It is just hypocrisy. Every time I introduce myself to older Icelandic people, they always ask where you are from, and I say Iceland, and they are like, No. But what they are really asking about is where are my great-great

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8   All names are pseudonyms.

grandma and grandfather are from. I came here when I was three years old, so all my memories are from here, but other people will never see at me as Icelandic. You are denied being Icelandic.

Luna's language fluency and cultural familiarity were not sufficient evidence of her Icelandicness, and thus she was always assumed to be a foreigner. El-Tayeb (2011) discussed the inconsistency between the aural truth or the sound of a native language and the visual truth, when a person does not have light skin and hair. There is a mismatch between sound and vision which is inevitably coded as foreign and othered. One example of microaggression is being excluded from the national imaginary, and hence being a perpetual foreigner (Sue, 2010), also called migratism (Tudor, 2017).

Another aspect is the inbetweenness of belonging: not really belonging here or there but having transnational ties coexisting with exclusionary moments and a sense of home. Mikayla was in her forties and had lived in Iceland since childhood:

> I am Icelandic, there is no doubt about that, and I do not define myself as anything else, but still there is a big part of me that thinks of [her country of origin] as home. When I am here, I think about how I have not gone back home for many years, but when I am somewhere else then this is my home. I am a foreigner on both sides sort of thing. But people do not realise it over here, being fluent in Icelandic and with no accent then no one considers it, people just think that I am well-tanned, or that my grandfather was from Spain or France or something like that.

Mikayla has gained passing privilege owing to her language skills, cultural familiarity and self-confidence, but she is mixed-race and an immigrant. "Mixed-race" bodyminds are often seen as divergent and unwholesome, and are often assumed to not belong (Haritaworn, 2009). People of mixed-race are also frequently forced to define their ethnicity, something that white people are not required to do (Morrison, 2004).

Some interlocutors noted that they will always be regarded as non-Icelandic, even if they are racialised as white and have gained prestigious social standing within society. This highlights the political project of aesthetics and genealogy in the national imaginary. Olivia, who is in her twenties and had been in Iceland for one year, notes that, because of her light skin and blonde hair, she was often mistaken for an Icelander:

> Everybody assumes I am Icelandic because of the way I look, so they just start speaking to me in Icelandic and when I am responding in my very broken, limited, language, it changes their perspective of me. So, I try my best not to burst that bubble for them.

This demonstrates the political project of national belonging and the underlying principles of identity-building, but the knowledge that a person with a Nordic appearance does not speak Icelandic also queers those constructions. Whiteness has been considered particularly important in local understandings of nationhood and belonging within the Nordic region, where claims to "innocence" from racism are

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founded on an affective perception of the nation and interpretations of its past (Loftsdóttir & Jensen, 2012).

The Catholic Church: "Being Accepted Within that Power Structure is Acceptance Basically"

The interlocutors frequently discussed complex issues within the church; some had emotionally charged experiences of rejection from within these power structures, while others mentioned having faith but practising it in privacy. Catholics are a minority in Iceland, but many immigrants are Catholics. Isabella, who was in her forties and had lived in Iceland for several years, described her mother's reaction when her sexual orientation was brought up within the social space of the Catholic Church.

> When I was about 25, my mother comes to me and says that we are leaving the church. She had been talking to the Priest who has known me since I was a toddler, and a nun, as she was doing charity work for the church, and the priest makes it clear that I will, of course, go straight to hell because that is the Catholic way, and she just absolutely told them off. For an Asian Catholic that is huge, this is such a big part of our culture and upbringing. As I see it, this is not about faith, we are still Catholics in our hearts, we are just not part of this institution anymore.

Many interlocutors noted that they did not view having faith as something negative but had issues with the institutional side of religion. People who feel homosexuality is unnatural or sinful often believe that humanity has always loathed homosexuality and that they can only honour their religious traditions if they oppose it. In fact, sex is arranged differently in different communities, and same-sex intimacies have not always been forbidden in Western Christian history. Furthermore, social change can be included in God's truth (Moon, 2002). Luna also talked about the social space of the Catholic Church. As a transgender person, she faced several challenges during her formative years: a rejection from the church at a young age, and exclusionary moments and macroaggressions relating to cisgenderism:

> The priest had told me to not come to church anymore, so yes, I was rejected by my own freaking religion. My mom and dad agreed that I could be confirmed in a dress. But to make that priest happy, I had to be in a suit at the ceremony. So, I went to the ceremony in the ugliest suit I could find. Yes, there were some the horrendous pictures, but as soon as I came back for the confirmation banquet, I put on the pinkest dress I could find.

Luna had a strong bond to Catholicism and traditions that she had inherited from her mother, yet her connection to God was built on paradoxical emotions. When discussing her embodiment, she remarked, "I am sorry, but you messed up, and I had to go through a lot of shit to fix your work." The "human principle" emphasises that the physical person must always be placed above any abstract doctrine and spiritual longing can be converted into forms of resistance and belonging (Scherer, 2017). Aurora was in her thirties and had lived in Iceland for 12 years. She had a religious upbringing but was now practising her religion at home, after several incidents of heterosexism:

> Before when I was working for my aunt, I always went with them to church. The priest had called me [interviewer: after you started dating your wife] yes, they might have heard it somewhere else, and then these nuns or sister came to visit, unannounced. I ask who had sent them and it was the priest. I tried to be accommodating but they asked why I stopped coming to church, and I said that I still believe in God although I had stopped going to Mass. Then they visited for the second time, when my wife was home, not me, and they were just lecturing her. She told them she was my wife, and they were just flabbergasted. I found this so intrusive and became really annoyed.

The social space of the Catholic Church appears to include structural violence and microaggression towards members who do not conform to cisnormativity and heteronormativity. This seems to be transnational, as exclusion also occurred in the interlocutors' home countries. Turning externally imposed shame into internally generated pride (Munt, 2007) is based on the existential foundation and ontological security that God is on our side and that he continues to create diversity and difference, regardless of what religious authorities say (Yip, 2010). Zoey, who was in her fifties and had lived in Iceland for more than 15 years, had a strong but well-founded dislike for the institutional space of the Catholic Church today:

> I overdosed on Catholicism when I was a kid and I have no love for the church, or priests. We lived rural and there were at least two or three of our priests that were child molesters, when I was growing up, I escaped it, thankfully. The church is an institution of oppression that preys on the innocent people in the world. Yeah, I feel very strongly about this, but I understand why. When you have a system like that is, it is such a power thing, and being accepted within that power structure, is, acceptance basically.

Zoey raises several important concerns. The issue of child abuse within an institution that prides itself on superior morals is a contradiction in terms, as is how the church has exploited its influence over vulnerable populations. Perhaps most importantly, acceptance within this power structure can be perceived as the ultimate societal acceptance, and rejection from it as the ultimate rejection.

Conclusion

In this article, I focused on queer migrant women, their experiences of exclusionary moments related to Icelandic national identity, and sexism, heterosexism and cisgenderism within the Catholic Church. I used theories of critical race, queer-of-colour critique, postcolonialism and queer migrations to explain the ways in which racism materialises. In the Icelandic context, racialisation and othering are inextricably linked to non-white individuals and labour migrants from Central and Eastern Europe (Loftsdóttir, 2016; Sólveigar- og Guðmundsdóttir, 2018; Sólveigar- og Guðmundsdóttir and Skaptadóttir, 2017; Wojtyńska et al., 2011). I described my analysis of online material on the Catholic Church website, regarding their understanding of homosexuality, as well as how queer theology has resisted and overturned dominant discourses of such textual violence (Althaus-Reid & Isherwood,

2004; Goldberg, 2009; Jamal, 2001). I examined the interlocutors' experiences in everyday life, and the ways in which women's sexual orientations and gender identities are actively surveilled, disciplined and controlled by the Catholic Church. Lastly, I discussed theories relating to the politics of belonging, as well as the relationality of affective belonging and the ways in which national identity and the Catholic Church produce microaggressions and numerous exclusionary moments. Critically interacting with belonging highlights that everyone merits recognition, dignity, care and a liveable life, regardless of bodymind differences.

In this article, I respond to the question posed in the introduction about the ways in which microagressions and exclusionary moments materialise regarding LBTQ+ migrant women in Iceland. According to my analysis, only those who speak Icelandic fluently, have a well-rooted cultural familiarity, and are racialised as "white", are not automatically excluded from national belonging. However, as the national imaginary further depends on genealogy and tracing one's lineages, not having Icelandic ancestors usually functions as an additional exclusionary factor. Those who are accepted within the Catholic Church are primarily heterosexual and cisgender, in monogamous relationships, and preferably raising children. It is clear that, within the political projects of national identity and the Catholic Church, systemic structural violence and microaggressions exist in the form of exclusionary practices, imaginative identities and disadvantaged subjectivities. The discussion in this article thus informs transnational solidarity across differences and emphasises the need for local, structural and socio-spatial changes, with the aim of deconstructing racism, sexism, heterosexism and cisgenderism.

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6   Concluding Discussion

The aim of this thesis has been to contribute to the under-explored field of queer migrations to and within the Nordic region, more specifically to the sparsely populated and relatively remote island of Iceland. A second goal was to queer migration studies within the Icelandic context, which have to date only discussed heterosexual and cisgender migrations. Moreover, to queer the political projects of sexism, heterosexism, cisgenderism, and homonormalisation. This study focused on voluntary migrations (which are taken out of personal convenience) of queer migrants of all genders, who had migrated to Iceland from all over the globe, dividing the interlocutors into three groups, that is people coming from the Global South, Central and Eastern Europe and the Global North. The overall framing of the thesis relates to the theory of homonationalism (Puar, 2007) while further discussing how a migrant hierarchy has materialised within the Icelandic context as elsewhere (Bakić-Hayden, 1995; Herzfeld, 2004; Said, 1979). The core theoretical approach of the thesis and what binds all the three analytical layers of macro, meso and micro together relates to the ways in which political projects of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2011) dictate queer migrants' sense of belonging (Ahmed, 2004a) to the ethnic community, the queer community, and to Icelandic mainstream society. In this chapter I will discuss the research questions in relation to the findings along with some final remarks.

6.1   Research questions & findings

The main research question laid out in the introduction was: What are queer migrants' experiences, from the Global South, Central and Eastern Europe, and the Global North, of residing in Iceland? To answer this question as well as the sub-questions, I conducted interviews with 54 individuals, and facilitated one focus group discussion. I further carried out some participant observations, and a discourse analysis of online material to put those discussions into context. The answer to this question runs through my analysis of the material, the themes I have identified, and the four interconnected but distinct peer-reviewed articles that make up the core of this thesis. Nonetheless, I will summarize some overall conclusions in this section.

The general conclusion that I draw from the experiences of these three distinct but interconnected groups of queer migrants is that there is a migrant hierarchy operational within the immigrant community, the queer community, and the Icelandic mainstream society. The three groups, previously discussed, roughly make up the three layers of the hierarchy, where the top layer is

occupied by queer migrants from the Global North. Migrants in that layer generally did not experience substantial social exclusion; their educational credentials were usually assumed to be valid in the Icelandic context; they often were native English speakers or had studied Icelandic and spoke it well; they came from cultures that are similar to the Icelandic culture; and were often brought up in middle-class families or saw themselves as middle-class in their present lives. Granted, experiences from the Global North were intersectional, where a person could be privileged in some situations, subordinated in others, and in a space of inbetweenness in yet others. But this intersectional social location was operational for interlocutors in all of the groups. Some individuals from the Global North did indeed experience marginalisation and exclusionary moments in connection to racialisation, cisgenderism and immigration laws that allow for unhampered migration between some countries but not others. But in comparison with the other two groups, these narratives were few and mainly connected to the issues mentioned above. Moreover, as the interlocutors from the Global North experienced privilege in other areas of life these issues were easier to deal with.

The next level is occupied by the group from Central and Eastern Europe, which also included one interlocutor from Russia. This group discussed the most numerous cases of social exclusion, microaggressions, and exclusionary moments, at all levels of social life, that is, from their families as well as their ethnic and religious communities concerning their sexual orientation, and from the queer community and the Icelandic mainstream society concerning being a migrant from Central and Eastern Europe. This multiple discrimination seemed in some cases impossible to overcome, although interlocutors made efforts and engaged in emotional labour to maintain a connection, especially with their immediate family, but also to the queer community and the Icelandic mainstream society, often without much progress. Migrants from Central and Eastern Europe are often economic migrants, and this was frequently their initial motivation for migration, but their decision to stay more permanently was often connected to their gender identity and sexual orientation. However, they did experience isolation and a figurative wall between themselves and ethnic Icelanders. Their educational credentials were often not valued in Iceland; on occasion they did not speak English or Icelandic, nonetheless some spoke English well; they often came from cultures that were occupied by the Soviet Union at some point (and Iceland had a U.S. base during the Cold War); they were often bought up working-class or middle-class but saw themselves as working class within the Icelandic context. Their privilege was nonetheless that they are white, so they often visually fitted the predominant norm of whiteness within the Icelandic context, although some further discussed an Eastern European fashion style that can be noticeable and thus othered.

Occupying the third layer was the group from the Global South. This layer of course intersects in various ways with the other two layers, and perhaps most notably with the second layer in connection to social othering. But also, in connection to the first layer with regards to border regimes and access to the labour market. This group discussed some decisive exclusionary moments and microaggressions regarding growing up and being in some way visibly queer and/or not being able to come out to their immediate family, as well as being excluded from the Icelandic mainstream society the queer community. But their connection to their ethnic community varied, some did not locate a sense of belonging there while others were active in their ethnic communities, somewhat depending on their country of origin. Furthermore, their professional credentials are often not seen as valid in Iceland, unless they did their studies in Iceland (which was the case for some interlocutors), or could be defined as specialists, which was not the case for the interlocutors in this study for individuals from the Global South; some spoke good English and/or Icelandic while others did not; they generally came from cultures that were not familiar to most Icelanders (many haven't travelled beyond Europe or the U.S.) and thus several incidents were discussed where exoticization of cultural differences were an issue; their social class varied, some had working class or middle-class backgrounds and saw themselves as either working-class or middle-class in Iceland. The predominant issue for this group was racialisation processes, but some also struggled with social exclusion on account of language issues. But even if they had learned the language, and were familiar with the culture and society, they still did not fit in with the national imaginary, which is grounded in whiteness and Eurocentric features and where thus assumed to be a perpetual outsiders.

This hierarchical ordering can further be seen in the unofficial government policy that can be read through the current legal framework for migrants, where wealthy migrants from beyond the EEA/EFTA area are able to get long-term visa for remote work, but the most vulnerable seeking international protection are frequently deported. This hierarchical ordering is thus strongly connected with migrants' socioeconomic class, cultural similarity and racialisation processes, which is the measurement of general acceptance within the host country of Iceland. It is important to note that there is an increasing awareness of the vital role immigrants play in the economy. But what is less discussed is how this importance connects to the processes of racial capitalism, wherein immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe and to some extent the Global South are often seen as cheap labour rather than valid members of society.

The first sub-question asks: What are queer migrants' gendered experiences of residing in Iceland? Within queer migration scholarship, there is a strong emphasis on researching the experiences of migration and diaspora among gay men, and thus I wanted to highlight the experiences of women and gender queer

individuals in this study, to some extent. The fourth article is a response to this question and discusses women's experiences of residing in Iceland and how political projects of exclusion dictate their sense of (un)belonging, in this case in relation to the national imaginary and the Catholic church in Iceland. Although the first three articles focus on how these three distinct but overlapping groups form a migrant hierarchy, the last article discusses the multiple discrimination of queer women and nonbinary individuals in the migration and diasporic processes. I specifically emphasised these two themes due to their notable affective and emotional uniqueness, which left a lasting impression on me, and as they had significant meaning to the interlocutors who shared their narratives.

The first article in this thesis discusses the group from the Global South, but as I did take five more interviews in 2020, I found that there were issues concerning racialisation that needed to be discussed further. There were also several narratives concerning exclusionary moments from the Catholic church that I had only briefly mentioned in article one, two and three. The aim of the fourth article was to connect these two political projects to the gendered experience of women and nonbinary individuals, as they had described in detail how this exclusion materialises in their lives. In the first article I did discuss some serious incidents of racism encountered by gay men in the queer community and in the labour market. But these incidences of racism in the queer community were only discussed by gay men, not by women (no nonbinary individuals were racialised as Black or brown), similar to what other studies have shown, for example, in Denmark (Shield, 2019), and in Iceland (Gunnarsson, 2021) and in other parts of the world (DasGupta, 2018; Havey, 2021; Nakhid, 2023; Peumans, 2014a). But in the case of women and nonbinary individuals the racialisation process was more connected to their access to the national imaginary, as they did not fit there within, and consequently were assumed to be perpetual foreigners, even if they had lived in Iceland since childhood, had acquired their education there, and most of their memories were situated there. There was a distinctly gendered differentiation concerning surveillance and discipline of female sexuality by the Catholic Church in Iceland, regarding sexual orientation and gender identity. Similar to prior studies where gender has been shown to influence LGBTQ individuals' religious experiences (Dahl & Galliher, 2012; O'Brien, 2004; Rostosky, et al. 2010; Shekrat, 2002). Priests and nuns actively interfered in the lives of queer migrant women, with unannounced home visits and performative speech acts noting that gays and lesbians would of course go straight to hell. A trans woman was rejected from the social space of the church but was allowed to take part in a confirmation ceremony on the condition that she would wear a suit that aligned with her gender assigned at birth, instead of in a dress in accordance

with her own identification. Both Poland and the Philippines are Catholic nations, and as such, a substantial portion of the immigrant population are Catholic. Although Polish queer migrants frequently discussed their Catholic guilt, and the fact that they were not welcome in the church, they had already given up on the notion of ever being welcomed there again, so they did generally not attend events at the Catholic Church in Iceland. Women from Asia who had migrated as children or teenagers, or before coming out with their sexual orientation, had however emotionally charged narratives of these exclusionary processes.

Sub-question number two asks: What are queer migrants' experiences regarding identity construction, identity management, degrees of outness and/or disidentification, or identity subversion, concerning their sexual orientation and gender identity? The response to this multilayered and complex question is as mosaic of responses, and in a sense relates to the main research question, as we are still discussing the three groups of migrants, and thus, the hierarchical order of migrants. I did ask in the interviews as to how interlocutors defined themselves, in terms of gender and sexuality, but frequently the answers to these questions were short and did not initiate an in-depth discussion. Many responded with just having always defined as a gay man or a lesbian woman, but this was in some sense connected to the person's country of origin and gender. All the interlocutors from Central and Eastern Europe identified as lesbian or gay (except for one who identified as bisexual), thus this group did not discuss issues relating to the queering of gender. In the group from the Global South, there was noticeable more flexibility concerning sexual orientation and issues relating to queerness of gender, and two of the trans women who participated in the study were from the Global South. Several interlocutors from Central and Eastern Europe and from the Global South did not come out to family members until they had lived in Iceland for some years, while others did not see the purpose of coming out to them at any point in the future, as it would only cause them pain and discomfort. Identity management strategies were thus in active use for several interlocutors, for example, being conscious about disclosing information concerning their sexual orientation on social media and in their ethnic community, so this information would not get back to relatives in their country of origin. This was a real concern for several interlocutors, and thus should not be undermined or shunned in relation to different cultural contexts. In other cases, interlocutors had come out to their parents and immediate family at some point, but the issue was never discussed and thus this aspect of their lives was totally excluded from everyday interactions with family members. This state of affairs was undoubtedly humiliating for the interlocutors and caused great concern for some, but others had moved past this and had found a way to keep connections with family

members in spite of these restrictions. I think it is also important to note, that although the Global North is generally assumed to be tolerant and accepting, and the place where most of these definitions and theorisations originate, there were several cases of interlocutors being brought up within religious fundamentalist communities, mainly in the U.S., Australia, and Canada. Within these communities, issues of sexual orientation and gender identity became life altering matters, impossible to discuss. Growing up, these individuals had to hide their identities to avoid being rejected by their families, but hiding was not always possible. If they were found out, they had to find another place to live and a way to support themselves and/or were sent to conversion therapy programs. In such situations it is easy to become houseless/homeless as is supported by statistics regarding LGBTQI+ youth (The Trevor Project, 2022).

Concerning gender identity and expression, the possibility of occupying the space of inbetweenness amidst binary gender categories seems more accessible to individuals born as women than those born as men, due to the lack of flexibility in the social role of hegemonic masculinity. But then again, the five trans individuals who participated in this study were all trans women. Other interlocutors who had given the queering of gender more thought, discussed issues of gender, for example, in this way: being a gender-bender in some situations and less so in others, depending on the safety of the situation; being a gay man but enjoying performing in drag at gay events; being a trans woman and the various degrees of passing and not passing within the two binary gender categories; being always feminine on the outside but on the inside feeling like neither woman nor man, but both at the same time; having a gender identity and sexual orientation that is strongly connected to one's neurotype, thus subverting socially constructed categories made by allistic people; determining upon waking up in the morning which gender role they would take on that particular day; being forced to wear traditional women's clothes as part of an occupation one has chosen as a career; or being a woman who likes women without relating to any of the existing sexual orientation categories of today, and actually disidentifying with them all.

The third sub-question is: What are queer migrants' experiences of the political projects of belonging and their sense of belonging, to their ethnic community, the queer community, and the Icelandic mainstream society? This is another complex question, and requires a multilayered answer, which has been explored throughout the core of the thesis relating to the four peer reviewed articles that make up the central part of the thesis. Theories relating to a sense of belonging, affect and emotions, the politics of belonging, unbelonging and belonging in difference were also discussed in the theoretical framework. However, I will briefly summarize how the political projects of exclusion have dictated queer migrants' sense of belonging. An example of the

political projects of exclusion discussed in this thesis relate to who is constructed as the immigrant other within the general Icelandic society and the queer community, and who is predominantly accepted and incorporated into those communities. Another such political project is that of access the national imaginary in terms of what an Icelander looks and sounds like, and who is accepted within the Catholic Church in Iceland. There is also the issue around who has the legal right to reside in Iceland and the extent of ease or difficulty regarding the migration processes for different groups of people. More specifically, in this thesis I have examined the political projects of sexism, heterosexism, racism, classism, migratism, religionism ethnocentrism, nationalism, homonormalisation, homonationalism, and cisgenderism, but also political projects such as laws regarding residence and work permits, as well as access to citizenship rights. Through normalisation processes, these political projects become the unquestioned "shared beliefs" that are then internalised by inhabitants of a particular community or society. The theory of governmentality (Foucault, 1978/1991) relates to how these processes marginalise people who do not fit the norm, regarding laws and regulations, in one way or another. The theory of symbolic power and habitus (Bourdieu, 1984, 1990) pertains to the use of discipline to create and strengthen an individual's subject position within a social hierarchy. This occurrence is often seen in relational interactions, and via institutional establishments. Being seen as a Black, lesbian, migrant, nonbinary individual thus potently initiates multiple discrimination on account of those social locations, and in the process, decreases one's access to communities and societies where these social locations are seen as a deviation from the norm. Queer migrants' sense of belonging to the mainstream society, as well as the queer community, and to some extent to the immigrant and ethnic communities, is dictated by the migrant hierarchy that I described as a response to the overall research question above. These experiences are also intersectional, whereas racialisation did occur in the group from the Global North, and there were incidences of a more middle-class way of being and becoming in the groups from Central and Eastern Europe and the Global South. But generally speaking, interlocutors' sense of belonging was mediated by their socioeconomic status and whether they were migrating from a similar cultural context. National belonging thus depended on being white, with light hair/skin and Eurocentric features, speaking the Icelandic language fluently and being familiar with the cultural context. However, a final exclusionary factor was blood lineage and tracing one's ancestry back to the first settlers in Iceland, which has been turned into an online pastime, though deCODES online database Íslendingabók. Exceptions to this process are nonetheless allocated to some of those who have an Icelandic partner, as becoming part of the extended family is presumably a way to break the othering processes and becoming part

of the inner circle of ethnic Icelanders. It is further critical to highlight, that a sense of unbelonging can potentially motivate political and social transformations, and thus a society which is more in line with ones sense of self. A belonging-in-difference can be a place one can settle in, as a marginalised individual who acknowledges ones social locations, and where the foundation upon which different ways of being and becoming come together to form a collective relationship as well as opening up for utopian potentiality.

The fourth sub-question is: How do transnational practices and adaptation to the host society play out in queer migrants' lives? I did ask about transnational practices in the interviews, and most interlocutors applied them to some extent, with the exception of one individual who did not have contact with people in their country of origin and had never gone back for a visit since migrating as a child. Another interlocutor who had migrated as a teenager had never been back to visit the country of origin, as they thought it would be too difficult emotionally. Many others had somewhat regular, or in some cases irregular, communications with family members in their country of origin, somewhat depending on their degree of outness regarding issues of gender and sexuality, while yet others were in daily communication with their parents. But this was also somewhat gendered, as women, and to some extent, nonbinary individuals tended to put more emphasis on having communication with family members than men generally did. Most of the interlocutors had developed a bifocal world view, where they compared "here" and " there" , as is discussed briefly in the first article of this thesis. But those who had migrated as children or teenagers presumably did this to a lesser extent than those who had migrated as adults. Those who had migrated as children were generally the individuals in this study who were best adapted to the Icelandic society, as they had gone through the educational system there and had a deep-rooted knowledge of the society. Those who had migrated as teenagers were, to some extent, emotionally scarred by the migration process taking place at that age, describing this time as extremely difficult and disappointing, as they felt excluded everywhere, at a time where people their age were finding partners, starting work or preparing for university. I did not specifically ask about adaptation (also termed as resocialisation or reciprocal inclusion), nor did I specifically carve that process out of the analyses, but in my opinion, adaptation is closely related to one's sense of belonging to a community or society. In the response to question number three, which discusses belonging, I describe the processes of finding a sense of belonging, and the way this feeling is dictated by predominant political projects within a particular community or society. Adaptation for adults is also closely connected to the migrant hierarchy, where this process is presumably most accessible for people migrating from the Global North, but less accessible for people coming from Central and Eastern Europe and the Global South. But

again, this is an intersectional process, and one's social locations thus play important roles. A white, cisgender gay man, well educated, middle-class, a native English speaker or fluent in Icelandic, able bodied and with good communication skills, is probably the person who most easily adapts to Icelandic society, the immigrant community, and the queer community. Basically, he is as "normal" as possible, with just this one issue of sexual orientation that differs from the predominant norm. It should nonetheless be noted that it is important to think of the adoption process as a two-way street, more in line with the meaning of term reciprocal inclusion, as it is no less the responsibility of ethnic Icelanders to adapt to immigrant cultures and ways of being in the world. Immigrants play a key role in the advancements and well-being of individuals and collectives within the society and should be respected as such. Structural changes need to take place, where immigrants are seen as equals, and not othered and utilized in line with notions of racial capitalism.

The fifth and last sub-question relates to: How do queer migrants utilise their agency and show resistance and subversion within those processes? As this is not something I asked about directly, my analysis suggests that the interlocutors showed resistance and subversion both in latent and more concrete ways. This can initially be seen though narratives from their country of origin: one particular story is discussed in article three, where a person felt excluded from society in relation to a change in the law which excluded some queer people from access to health care through their spouse and then started to think about living in other cultural contexts; another example described how a teenager had to move in with a friend, as he was accidentally outed to his parents, which made it possible for him to finish high school; yet another story discussed a person who was looking for an interesting country to live in and had made online connection with an ethnic Icelander in the process and later migrated to Iceland. My point here is that moving to another country is not easy and accessible for everyone, as it is costly financially and requires time and emotional work. Making that leap of faith is a clear sign of agency, whether it was initially for work, studies, or interest in the culture or language. Migration requires agency and subversion of local realities, as well as a longing to construct a life more in line with one's hopes for the future, or to find a sense of belongingness. Within the Icelandic context, interlocutors illustrated their agency and subversion in different ways. In the group from the Global South, some were active in their ethnic community through events and gatherings, while others found their ethnic community ethnocentric and adhering to traditional gender roles and sexualities. Some were also active in the queer community and were attempting to subvert predominant stereotypes within that community. Everyone from the Global South was active in the labour market and placed great importance in being familiar with the Icelandic culture and

language, in order to subvert ideas of the exotic other within the Icelandic mainstream society. For the group from Central and Eastern Europe, their agency and subversion could, for example, be illustrated through their disidentification with more working-class individuals within their own ethnic group and emphasizing their interest in the Icelandic culture and landscape. They were generally actively establishing their life in Iceland or were moving back and forth as was most convenient for them. They occasionally attempted to make connections in their ethnic community and the queer community but were generally excluded from their ethnic community on account of their sexuality, while maintaining other connections within the wider immigrant community. Many felt excluded altogether from the queer community, and others had some friends but did not connect to a community as such. All interlocutors from Central and Eastern Europe were active in the labour market and spent a lot of their time within that context. Concerning the group from the Global North, two thirds of the group's interlocutors had gone to university in Iceland at some point, which was a considerably higher proportion than within the other two groups. As previously stated, they often did not encounter any considerable struggles within the Icelandic context, especially if they came from the EEA/EFTA area, but those who came from beyond those boundaries did used their agency to acquire either a residency and work permit or a citizenship. My analysis suggests that queer migrants from the Global North migrate often without giving thought to how strict immigration laws can be, which is further an indication of their cultural privilege. People from the Global South, on the other hand, would hesitate to start such a journey, without, for example, having previous connections in the country. Some individuals from the Global North nonetheless dealt with the effects of cisgenderism and racialisation processes and used their agency and subversion within that context. Three of the trans individuals were from the Global North and they had different stories to tell: two of them had gone through the transition process in Iceland while one did so in her country of origin. One person discussed how the process had forced her to leave her job as a CEO of a company, and had made her, in a sense, unemployed for a long time. Another mentioned that as soon as she came out on social media, she got an email from her place of work concerning how the company could assist her with this transition, in relation to a name change and an informative lecture about trans issues for coworkers. People who engage in transnational migration thus always illustrate their agency, although some in more obvious ways than others.

6.2   Final remarks

Iceland has moved from being an emigrant nation for queer individuals (Guðnason, 2008) to becoming a host country for queer migrants in recent years

and decades. These shifts have taken place along with other social transformations and the diversification of the population. Icelanders will thus undoubtedly need to adjust to increased immigration in future years and decades, in line with global conflicts, economic disparities and environmental degradation, as well as decreasing birth and fertility rates and ageing of the population (Statistics Iceland, 2022). The remoteness of the island and its historical isolation is an element that people living on the mainland Europe generally do not comprehend unless they have also grown up in similar circumstances. Thus the "newness" of seeing "foreigners" is something that people in Iceland over the age of 40 can easily relate to but others perhaps less so. During my childhood mass tourism had not yet started, and immigration did not really take off until in the late nineties. I nonetheless think that this experience of homogeneity does not rule out differently constructed experiences, and the potential of adjusting to and accepting deep diversity, as this is more of a decision rather than a specific skill. Moreover, Iceland's isolation is perhaps one of the contributing factors to the reason why Icelanders are now the most mobile of the Nordic nations. Icelanders frequently go abroad to study or work, but then again, more than 70% return to Iceland at some point (Skaptadóttir & Garðarsdóttir, 2020). Although this is dependent, to some extent, on social and economic factors, several Icelanders do thus have this pivotal experience of migrating from the "island mentality" and becoming a foreigner in another cultural context.

Another aspect of these more current cultural transformations is the shift towards gender neutral pronouns as has been widely discussed recently. While some find this process impossible to comprehend or argue that it does not adhere to the principles of the language, others do not have a problem with it and can easily make concrete attempts to respect people's preferences (Rögnvaldsson, 2022; Þorvaldsdóttir, 2022). The increased visibility and activism of trans, intersex and non-binary people have further diversified the population and initiated some much-needed societal transformations, making the gender binary less rigid and including more gender variations.

Although lesbians and gays are now to a lesser extent constructed as the other within society, there are still issues to be addressed concerning homonegativity and homonormalisation, and perhaps more urgently issues of cisgenderism and transnegativity within society. This has become especially potent in the last year or two, where a backlash has taken place within Icelandic society, as elsewhere. This centres especially around Reykjavík Pride week, where there have been several incidences of homo- and trans negativity, such as rainbow flags being cut down or burned, spit ball guns being used, as well as shouting and barking at queer people (Arnardóttir, 2023). This backlash was at first traced to a Neo-Nazi organisation that has its roots in Sweden and is thus

potentially migrating to the Iceland (Másson, 2018; Regal, 2022). But more recently, it seems to be also connected to youth culture, and there are speculations that it was motivated by social media trends, a rise in bullying, and possibly the mental health repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic. This violence must of course be taken seriously and resisted when it surfaces. Discourses regarding anti-trans sentiments have also become more concrete with the forming of the Organization 22: Interest group of homosexuals (Samtökin 22: Hagsmunasamtök samkynhneigðra). Organization 22, previously called LGB alliance Iceland, had at first mainly an online presence, but has more recently been staging protests in writing and in person, for example, against a parliamentary bill on making conversion therapy for trans people illegal, and informative lectures on sex education in primary schools and the possibility of mentioning there that a BDSM identity exists. The organisation nonetheless only consists of a handful of people and has been identified as a far-right extremist group with an exclusionary political agenda, originating in the UK (Samtökin 22; LGB alliance). Organisation 22 has been widely condemned within the queer community and the mainstream Icelandic society, and a large group of gays and lesbians signed a petition called "Not in my name" to make clear that the organisation did not speak for them (Daðason, 2023). These two examples might give the impression that heterosexism and cisgenderism are mainly being imported from abroad, which is not the case, as these views have always existed in Iceland and can, e.g. be seen in comments on online news articles, but had previously not found an organised outlet. Although LGBTQI+ legal rights have not been jeopardised in Iceland, as of yet, this backlash demonstrates the fragility of calming a queer subjectivity.

As queer people have now gained access to citizenship rights and are thus less considered to be the outsider within the mainstream society, it is important to note that immigrants, mainly from Central and Eastern Europe and from the Global South have taken over that subject position (Ellenberger, 2017). Although not always explicit, homotransnationalism is an underlying organising principle that can be detected in Iceland and in other Nordic countries, especially concerning people seeking international protection or more specifically with regards to groups of LGBTQI+ quota refugees who are invited to take up residence in Iceland by the government. Liinason (2022) has discussed a form of strategic homonationalism implemented by government officials in Scandinavia, but as Icelandic governance and society is less strategic in its practices, and more opportunistic, I hesitate to apply this term to the Icelandic context. Nonetheless, government officials tends to follow the lead of the other Nordic countries. Discussions of refugees and people seeking international protection has overshadowed other discussion about immigrant issues within the Icelandic context, as well as within queer migration research,

to the point that if you mention queer migrations, people automatically assume that you are speaking of refugees or people seeking international protection. But there are many migration processes at work, in Iceland as elsewhere. This study illustrates the diversity of queer migration and diasporic processes, as the most populous section of queer migrants are people who migrate "voluntarily", and where refugees and people seeking international protection are only a fraction of the general immigrant population in Iceland. From the year 1956 until 2019, 778 individuals have been invited to take up residence in Iceland as quota refugees, and from 1997 until 2019, 1781 individuals who came independently were granted a refugee status (Government of Iceland, nd; Statistics Iceland, nd). 528 individuals were granted a refugee status in 2020 and 526 in 2021 (Directorate of Immigration, nd.) which is a result of a unique government policy regarding the Venezuelan crisis and the subsequent war in Ukraine in 2022. Iceland did not have colonies at any point in history, but did nonetheless, actively take part in the colonial project. Being one of the wealthiest nations globally and experiencing a rise in ethnic diversity due to an influx of foreign workers, particularly from poorer countries, there exists a noticeable disparity in power relations that necessitates attention in both daily social interactions and policy formulation (Einarsdóttir & Gústafsdóttir, 2008). This study illustrates how structural adjustments must be implemented to ensure that immigrants are seen as valid citizens, rather than being marginalised based on the principles of racial capitalism (Ferguson, 2004).

The findings indicate that communicating information regarding one's sexual orientation and gender identity can be complex, both in the Icelandic context as in other cultures, for example regarding sexism, racism, migratism and cultural othering in the queer community and sexism, heterosexism and transnegativity in ethnic and religious communities. But in the Icelandic mainstream society, queer immigrants face a certain relational process that consists of being constantly labelled as the immigrant other by ethnic Icelanders, and this kind of othering turns out to be insurmountable in certain cases. This othering of migrants is nonetheless strongly embedded in racial, cultural and class hierarchies. The migrant hierarchy is organised in such a way that queer migrants from the Global North who are considered to be "white", are often middle-class and from similar cultures, experience belonging in the various communities and in the mainstream society in a completely different way than those who are considered to be Black or brown and are from the Global South. Interlocutors who are queer migrants from Central and Eastern Europe, however, encounter that they are allocated a subordinated and more working-class social position in society compared to other white immigrants. This process of cultural othering is perhaps best seen in how people from the Global South are considered to be the most exotic or the most other, followed

by people from Central and Eastern Europe, in a hierarchical structure where certain Western states (such as northern/southern/western Europe, North America and Australia) are seen as the centre of the universe (Said, 1979; Bakić-Hayden, 1995; Herzfeld, 2004). I have written an additional article in Icelandic, in relation to the lecture series Queer Iceland in an international context (Hinsegin Ísland í alþjóðlegu samhengi) which is edited by Elín Björk Jóhannsdótti and Ásta Kristín Benediktsdóttir. In that article I describe the migrant hierarchy, while using analysis from this study. The article it is called, "'Then I'm sometimes categorised as Polish': Migrant hierarchy and queer migrants experience of belonging" („Þá er ég stundum flokkaður sem pólskur": Samfélagslegt stigveldi og reynsla hinsegin innflytjenda af því að tilheyra).

Further research is needed into several areas within the field queer migration studies and the context of this thesis. Firstly, an examination of the experiences of LGBTQI+ refugees and people seeking international protection in Iceland is lacking. This is a particularly vulnerable group of queer migrants and thus it would be beneficial in terms of structural alterations of the asylum system and the deportation regime to conduct such a research. It would also be imperative to document the experiences of those who have been deported from Iceland and the Nordic countries, on account of the Dublin II regulation, in order to support the abolition of that regulation, or at least an amendment to the practices around the regulation and its interpretation. As it turned out, I am currently a researcher in the project Queer Refugees in Queer Utopias: Inclusions and Exclusions, which looks at the experiences of queer refugees and queer people seeking international protection, in Iceland as well as those who have been deported to Italy or Greece. Further looking at professionals within the system with a comparative aspect regarding a researcher in the Netherlands. In this research project, I'm responsible, for example, interviewing the refugees, NGO's and professionals. I would further want to see an examination of the experiences of differently abled LGBTQI+ migrants, as well as transgender and intersex individuals who have migrated to Iceland or the Nordic countries from all over the globe. I have recently written a paper which firmly connects to these issues, an article called "Bodymind differences and unbelonging: Transgender and neuroqueer migrations to Iceland", which is currently under review for a book called *Affective Communities*, edited by Heidi Kosonen, Tuija Saresma and Johanna Turunen. There I discuss the similarities of trans and autistic individuals coping mechanisms, concerning the survival strategies of passing as a transgender individual and masking as an autistic individual. This article analysis interview data from this study, and thus is a second bonus article of this PhD research project. A more comprehensive examination of LGBTQI+ migrants from Central and Eastern Europe would also be imperative, as this is

the largest immigrant group in Iceland, along with attempts to queer the Polish diaspora. Proportionally few individuals from Central and Eastern Europe were willing and able to discuss issues of gender and sexuality for the purpose of this study, as only 24% of the interlocutors were from that area. Which indicates that more research is needed.

Additionally, I would be interested in a comparison of the queer communities, for example, with regards to activism, in the three neighbouring countries of Greenland, Iceland, and the Faroe Islands. This was one of my ideas for a doctoral project, but got put on hold for various reasons, one being financial issues. There is further a need to conduct various studies within the queer community in Iceland, as there have mainly been studies with young LGBTQI+ individuals, in elementary schools and upper secondary school, and concerning young people and their mental health. These studies are of vital importance, especially with the current climate of bullying, social media, and the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic for children and youths. Personally, I am interested in the experiences of the older generation, what happens to queer people when they get older, and become less desirable and more excluded both within the queer community and the Icelandic mainstream society. Furthermore, there is a need to conduct research on the experiences of transgender children, which could also be a longitudinal study to document their progression through the years. These and so many other questions remain unanswered until further studies will be conducted.

In the concluding remarks of the second article, I state that we need to focus on a more inclusive society for all, and view inclusion as a basic right for all. In retrospect, I want to highlight that focusing on inclusion can be an ideological trap, unless it includes both the politics of belonging and one's sense of belonging, and perhaps most productively focuses on social and legal citizenship rights and structural transformations. Gaining access to racist, capitalist, heteropatriarcal institutions is, in fact, not desirable, as the access itself does not change the continual structural violence, microaggressions, and exclusionary moments that the institutions continue to mandate (Haritaworn, et al., 2013; Jackson, 1999; Nair, 2010a/2010b). My addition to that article is thus that fundamental structural changes is the only way forward.

The context of this thesis is the increased immigration to Iceland in the recent years and decades, and the diversification of the population regarding issues such as, "race", ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, polyamory and BDSM, as well as differently abled individuals. I thus found it interesting to document the experiences of queer migrants in Iceland and examine how processes of racialisation and classism materialise within the queer community and the wider Icelandic society. These experiences

are differently constructed than those of cisgender heterosexual migrants and thus address various issues that are not discussed in mainstream migration scholarship. However, it is also intriguing to see how certain political projects transcend the issue of sexual orientation and gender identity, as for example, is the case with racialisation processes and classism which are operational in the queer community as they are in the mainstream society. During the research process, I did make use of my marginal positions as a neuroqueer, autigender, and dyslexic individual with a working-class background, to make connections with interlocutors and to inform the analyses of the data. In the process, I did attempt to carve out a place in academia, for "people like me", by using queer theory and the queering of time and space, which is in line with queer and feminist methodologies. Assistance regarding my disabilities would have been appreciated, but as that was usually not possible, and in some sense against all odds, I did make it through eventually. My initial aim with this research was thus to queer migrations scholarship within the Icelandic context, while also highlighting how the theory of homo(trans)nationalism (Puar, 2007; Bacchetta & Haritaworn 2011) frames the study and how the migrant hierarchy materialises (Bakić-Hayden, 1995; Herzfeld, 2004) within the framework of queer diaspora in Iceland. Moreover, by applying the analytical lens of belonging, or how political projects of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2011) dictate interlocutors sense of belonging (Ahmed, 2004a) to their ethnic community, the queer community and the Icelandic mainstream society. Political projects such as, sexism, heterosexism, cisgenderism, homonormalisation, homonationalism, racism, migratism (Tudor, 2017), nationalism, ableism, as well as laws and regulations relating to border regimes, residency permits, work permits and citizenship. Political projects are established by those with the authority to create the predominant norm, relating to the theory of governmentality (Foucault, 1978/1991) and symbolic power (Bourdieu, 1984, 1990), and as they are man-made, these projects are adaptable to accommodate societal transformations and decentring processes, which should be the aim of queer migration studies, but more importantly should be the objective of policy and law makers. The thesis also touched upon the affective and emotional sentiments associated with the concepts of "home" and "race". In this context, affect is connected to the subconscious level of the mind, and an experience is considered worthless if it lacks emotional intensity (Gould, 2009). The analytical lens of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989; 1991) has further been an essential tool throughout this undertaking, to capture the full range of interlocutors' experiences, as well as to analyse how social locations intersect and form new realities (Kuhar, 2009). Or, in the cases of enduring bodymind difference, how intersections of particular social locations recreate old realities and experiences of exclusionary moments, that have been felt numerous times

before, and thus only cements reoccurring feelings of unbelonging. A belonging-in-difference (Muñoz, 2009; 2020) through queer temporality (Halberstam, 2005) is a nonetheless a foundational space which allows for the convergence of many ways of being and becoming, leading to a communal connection and an avenue for growth and expansion. The feeling of being excluded affectively, emotionally and structurally, which is often referred to as a sense of unbelonging, or not being accepted within a particular cultural scenario, may be degrading and lead to the perception of being completely disconnected from others. Nevertheless, in some instances, this feeling of unbelonging may catalyse social transformations, if ones agency is utilised, resulting in a reality that better aligns with one's identity. Social transformations may thus create conditions, where the norm adheres to queer worldmaking practices, and a possibility for everyone to have a liveable life (Ghaziani & Brim, 2019b; Ahmed, 2016) regardless of their social locations or geopolitical constraints.

Wool Hart

Though I talk a lot I crave silence about my life.

In the foreground of my life sits you.

To you I bring the words that my life drives away.

And all I have and all that I have yet to have.

In sleep I live for myself but in waking I live for others.

More precisely:

In sleep my heart counts down.

In waking my heart is made of wool and there inside I keep your palm.

<div style="text-align: right">Kristín Ómarsdóttir. - Waitress in Fall.</div>

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