

Salla Tuori



The Politics of Multicultural Encounters
Feminist Postcolonial Perspectives



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1. Introduction: The Politics of Multiculturalism

Genuine encounters are challenging and do not arise independently, but they need favourable conditions. [...] The world changes. Where, before, a territory could be defined by the dominant culture, nowadays it is not so easy. Finnish culture is coloured by many kinds of people from many kinds of cultures. (The Globe brochure, my translation)

This study is an ethnographic analysis of *multicultural politics* in Finland. Its main ethnographic location was a project, the Globe, which aimed to enhance labour market participation of migrant women. With this particular project as the base, I have examined multicultural politics in Finland more broadly, by participating in seminars on multiculturalism and gender equality, and have gathered material from projects other than the Globe in this field. This is a case study of the Globe *and* the context of multicultural politics in which the Globe works. The title of this book is *The politics of multicultural encounters. Feminist postcolonial perspectives*. The first part of the title describes the focus of this study: the conditions and agendas for multicultural encounters. I approach multicultural politics through an analysis of gendered and racialised encounters (Ahmed 2000a; Hautaniemi 2004; Fortier 2008). Multiculturalism presupposes certain understandings of race and ethnicity, but these ideas are themselves, in turn, produced within the framework of multicultural politics. The second part of the title reflects one of the key focuses in my study, which is the relationship between (postcolonial) feminist knowledge and multicultural politics.

The very broad question in this study is *how the politics of multiculturalism is shaped in the context of Finnish project work*. As the study is based on ethnographic fieldwork, the focus is on the making of the politics of multiculturalism in everyday encounters. I understand multicultural politics

as consisting of “small events”. These can form hegemonic understandings within multicultural politics while they can also be in conflict with one another, and thus make the politics appear more diverse. Politics in my study refers both to the planned agendas and strategies of the project work, and to the effects of less conscious or unplanned practices formed in multicultural encounters. While the context of this study is Finland and it refers to Finnish versions of multicultural politics, I link the study with Nordic and European constructions of multiculturalism and constructions of race and nation.

The opening quote is from a brochure produced by the Globe. The Globe formed a physical space where people with a range of interests – participants, employees, migrants, non-migrants, policy makers, authorities and multicultural activists of different kinds – encountered one another. The Globe could also be described as a space where different kinds of knowledge about multiculturalism, gender, ethnic relations and migration were exchanged. Providing spaces for multicultural interaction is often considered to be a way to improve ethnic relations. Through positive encounters, racism can be reduced or even prevented. In order to better understand multiculturalism and multicultural politics in Finland, it is important to examine the *conditions* for multicultural encounters. These conditions are essentially about power relations. Shadowy figures are also mobilised in these encounters, such as that of “the migrant woman” and “the strong Finnish woman”, to whom actual embodied women are related.

Understanding multicultural politics as a series of encounters marked by power, politics and affect, has two main sources. Firstly, the Globe has formulated its own work as offering opportunities for encounters. Secondly, my own interest is in examining the kinds of racialised and gendered exchanges that take place in different kinds of encounters, both textual and face-to-face (see also Hautaniemi 2004). In Sara Ahmed’s words (2000a, 156): “in the encounter in which something might be said or heard, there are always other encounters, other speech acts, scars and traumas, that remain unspoken, unvoiced, or not fully spoken or voiced. Particular modes of communication do not involve the rendering present of the other’s voice, precisely because they open an unfinished, unheard history, which cannot be fully presented, even if it is not absent.” This suggests that any meeting between a person understood as a migrant and another understood as a

Finn, will be informed by numerous previous encounters. These are partly personal histories, but also – and this is the primary interest in my study – collective histories, such as patterns of trade, global distributions of labour, histories of colonialism and state relations, and, importantly, the ways in which these histories are described and taught. Encounters also include understandings of class and gender relations, which are shifting and contextual positions. In other words, I am interested in the complex ways in which the different levels of power – the structural, the representational and the individual – interact in the context of multicultural politics. This kind of approach could also be said to be ethnographic: “[e]thnography has traditionally been concerned with how social structures, relationships, and processes produce cultural forms that in turn shape individual consciousness and practices” (Cerwonka 2007, 14).

In this study I explore the kinds of representations that are mobilised in the encounters that take place in the present-day Finnish context of multicultural politics. My study develops a postcolonial theoretical approach to multiculturalism in Finland. I am interested in whether and how the representations mobilised in multicultural politics relate to colonial histories and patterns of thought (and what colonialism means in the Finnish context in the first place). This approach does not imply a determinist understanding of multicultural encounters. Rather, I understand these as performative (Butler 1990): for while these encounters may be constituted by different structures and legacies of power relations, they are not cemented but produced over and over again.

I understand multicultural women’s politics as a field where different kinds of knowledge encounter each other and also battle over the meanings. Many of the concepts that I analyse in this study – such as “gender equality”, “multiculturalism” and “empowerment” – are used in research literature, in policy documents and are put into practice in grassroots politics. For instance the concept of empowerment is used in research literature in fields such as Women’s Studies, Pedagogy, Theology, Sociology, Social Work and Human Rights. It is also a concept used in European Union (EU) social policy documents, in allocating EU funding as well as in development policies. As part of the project design, projects put empowerment into practice and (re)formulate their own understandings of it on the basis of their experiences in the project. Therefore, many of these concepts make

complicated journeys through a range of disciplines, but also through different kinds of institutions (Bal 2002). Rather than using feminist theories merely as tools for critiquing multicultural women's politics (for instance for not taking power relations into consideration), my aim is to explore, firstly, how multicultural women's politics as it is practiced in Finland could bring more nuance to feminist thinking; and, secondly, how feminist theory could open up multiculturalism in the Finnish context and perhaps introduce new perspectives to the existing debates.

My study is in many ways interdisciplinary. It belongs to the disciplines of both Women's Studies and Sociology. I participate in the debates within postcolonial feminist research in a European and particularly Nordic context, while contributing to research on international migration and ethnic relations in the Finnish context. Some of the debates in this study are familiar within feminist theory and activism in particular. One example of this is the debate about the transformative potential of empowerment on, for example, the relationships between knowledge, power and subject positions. To introduce a perspective that combines postcolonial feminist research, queer theory and an analysis of power relations to Finnish research on migration and multiculturalism will challenge and hopefully nourish these debates. Interdisciplinarity means that there are many travelling concepts (Bal 2002) in this study, both across disciplines and across geographical locations. Some of them, such as the notion of multiculturalism in Finland (Clarke 1999), are considered to "come from outside", while others are considered to be more at home in the Finnish context of race and ethnicity. Postcolonial theory in particular is one of those approaches that are considered awkward, as Finland is traditionally seen to exist outside global colonial relations. However, there is an increasing interest in considering Finland from a postcolonial perspective (see Kuortti et al. 2007; Löytty 2006; Kivinen 2007; Keskinen et al. 2009).

The Globe was in many ways typical for the early 2000s: it was a short term project with a base in a non-governmental organisation (NGO) and funded by the EU, and it worked in cooperation with the municipality, the university, a cultural collective and an independent education institution. The participants in the Globe had diverse backgrounds and the project was targeted at "any" migrant women in the city it worked in. The core of the Globe programme consisted of mentors who were themselves migrant

women. According to the Globe the mentor “is a woman who has experienced immigration personally. She is trained to give peer group support and guiding in a gender sensitive way. The goal of the mentor is to help other immigrant women to cope with the situations that a move into Finnish culture brings and make the community familiar and safe for her” (English original). Apart from the personal support offered by the mentors, the Globe also organised different workshops and activities. The main goal of the Globe was empowerment and thus, apart from being a labour market project, the Globe also aspired to improve the situations of migrant women in a broader way. The Globe had strong links to the independent women’s movement, which made it rather unusual among the EU-funded projects.

The Globe was funded by the European Social Fund’s (ESF) programme *Equal Community Initiative* (2000–2006). 90 projects in total were funded by the Equal programme in Finland, of which 27 dealt with questions of multiculturalism or racism, and had people from migrant backgrounds, asylum seekers or the Roma as target groups. The Equal programme was divided into six different “priorities”, of which two were named: *combating racism and xenophobia in the labour market* and *social and occupational integration of asylum-seekers*. Altogether 14 projects were funded within these priorities. It is interesting that the priority title includes the words “racism” and “xenophobia”, while the projects themselves use the language of “promoting cultural diversity”, “multiculturalism” and “ethnic competence”. The Equal programme was intended to be a testing laboratory for new and innovative social policy methods and practices.

The objective of the EQUAL Community Initiative is to develop new methods for preventing social exclusion, discrimination and inequality on the labour market through transnational cooperation. This is linked to the improvement of employment and human resources, with special attention to supporting the entry into working life of those in the weakest labour market position and the difficult-to-place unemployed. One major goal is to formulate measures for increasing the competence, life management, life quality and independence of individuals. (www.equal.fi, accessed 15.11.2008)

Most of the projects funded within the Equal programme were small and lasted for a short time (like the Globe), which means that the administration of the projects took a significant share of the funding (Kankare 2006). The

mode of funding places the Globe in the frame of neoliberal policies where social policies are increasingly organised as short-term projects (see also Koskiahio 2008). On the one hand, these initiatives emphasise participation and grass-roots activism, and, on the other hand, the projects are constantly evaluated, compared and controlled (Sulkunen 2006). The funding sets a framework for the focus of the work and requires a certain vocabulary. The Globe is one of the projects which would have been unable to employ staff without the proliferation of this kind of funding. One of the questions in this study relates to the negotiation of politics: whose politics of multiculturalism is put to work and what kinds of effects does the funding have on the work?

To describe the object of my research, the Globe, and its context, has been a challenge due to the newly institutionalised form of project work. Can an NGO-based EU-funded women's project be understood as *activism*? If not, should it be considered to be politics or work? Is it *welfare* activism/politics/work? Is it *feminist* activism/politics/work? Or would it be best described as *women's* activism/politics/work? EU-funded projects could perhaps be said to form a new institution somewhere between state welfare institutions and activism. The projects are expected to answer the "new challenges" posed to the welfare state and even perform some of the tasks that usually fall to the state services. The EU-funded projects are most often coordinated by public institutions and old and established NGOs (with permanent state funding). Projects have even been a central, or at least highly visible, way of organising anti-racist activism in the 2000s in the Finnish context¹, which make them an interesting object of study. I understand the projects to make up the *politics of multiculturalism*: regardless of whether they are closer to public institutions or activist groups, they construct multiculturalism in Finland.

I use the concepts *multicultural politics*, *multiculturalism* and *multicultural encounters* in this book. Multiculturalism is a contested concept. Despite its vagueness, it is used frequently in research and public discourses. Homi Bhabha (1998, 31), for instance, argues that multiculturalism has become "a portmanteau term for anything from minority discourse to post-colonial critique, from gay and lesbian studies to Chicano/a fiction". One

1 For instance, in the *Shadow Report 2008: Racism in Finland* by the European Network of Anti-Racism (ENAR 2008), all but one of the "good examples" of NGO initiatives, were indeed created in different EU or nationally funded projects.

can distinguish three most common ways of using the concept of the multicultural (Wahlbeck 2003; Huttunen et al. 2005, 20–21). It has been used to describe a space (such as a nation-state, school, city or suburb), where there are different cultural communities. In this sense, there are few places that would be “monocultural”. Another way to use the concept is to describe conscious politics that aim to take cultural differences into consideration. Thirdly, it has been used to describe a political vision not only about a society where there are many cultural communities but about the ways in which these communities live side by side (e.g. Werbner and Modood 1997). Multiculturalism, thus, is a concept that encompasses ideals, norms and futures (Huttunen et al. 2005, 21). The concept of multiculturalism has been criticized both for *the multi* and *the culture*: it is said to presuppose that different and separate cultures live side by side, as if “cultures” were neat, internally harmonious entities that never mix or change (Hall 2000; Parekh 2000; Huttunen et al. 2005, 25–28; Fortier 2008). The understanding of multiple and separate cultures is common both to those who are “for” multiculturalism and to those who are “against” it. Therefore the battle between those who consider multiculturalism as “good” or “bad” seldom challenges the pre-existing ideas behind the concept (Hage 2000, 17). Homi Bhabha (1998) challenges the understanding of cultures and people as stable, unchanging and coherent through the concept of *cultural hybridity*. This illustrates an understanding of culture and cultural identification as multiple and unstable, and better captures the realities of the numerous people who are not part of “a culture” in a straightforward way. Stuart Hall (2000), too, outlines the possibility of a radical multiculturalism, where cultural communities are not understood in essential ways, and the relations between people and culture are not understood as coherent. His version of the multicultural as a political vision largely concerns negotiation about, and access to, the public space.

In my study I draw on analyses of multiculturalism particularly in the Nordic, British and Australian contexts (e.g. Ahmed 2000a; Hage 2000; Bhabha 1998; Hall 2000; de los Reyes 2001; de los Reyes et al. 2003a; Wahlbeck 2003; Razack 2004; Rastas et al. 2005; Fortier 2008). Multiculturalism is an object of study in my work; my interest lies in the ways in which multiculturalism is understood as a form of politics and the various ways in which it is imagined in the present and the future (see also Hut-

tunen et al. 2005, 21). One of the questions I ask concerns the Finnish version of multiculturalism: what is it composed of? Is there a specifically Finnish version of multiculturalism and what kinds of normative ideas are at work in it? In relation to racial and ethnic relations and racism, Finland is often understood as exceptional, meaning that the nation is seen to exist outside of racist histories and pasts (Rastas 2007a; Mulinari et al. 2009)². This “Finnish exceptionalism” is mobilised for instance in claims that certain words (the *n*-word) and visual representations would not be racist in the Finnish context, even if they were understood as racist elsewhere (Rastas 2007b; Rossi 2009).

I use concepts derived from the idea of *the multicultural* (multicultural politics, multiculturalism and multicultural encounters) to denote spaces, situations, encounters and work where ethnic and racial differences are formulated as the significant differences. Most of these situations are not primarily about *culture*. I have ended up using the concept of the multicultural partly because of its use in public debates, and partly through a process of exclusion of other concepts. I find the term *ethnic minorities* – which is used in Finnish research literature to some extent – problematic in the context of my research. To talk about ethnic minorities can have “minoritising” effects, meaning that the number of people described is understood to have bearing on the significance of their experiences. This phrase can also imply that some people are more ethnic than others (see for example Huttunen 2005, 118–119). Also, as I am interested in encounters and politics, and not primarily identities or identifications, “ethnic minorities” – and even less “ethnic politics” or “ethnic encounters” – do not make sense as concepts. Another reason for preferring multiculturalism over concepts derived from words like ethnic or migrant, is that it can refer to different positions vis-à-vis Finnishness, and not only those of migrants (Honkasalo et al. 2007), even if the presence of migrant or ethnic communities are considered to form the multicultural (Tuori 2007b; Fortier 2008). As my study is not about a specific group of migrants (such as Finnish Palestinians), there is a need for concepts that refer to ethnic and racial differences in more general

2 This kind of understanding is not exclusive to Finland; for instance in Norway there is an understanding of being “*victims* of Danish colonialism and Nazi-German occupation, and not as being influenced by an unacknowledged racist culture” (Gullestad 2004, 182).

terms. Diversity is a concept that is becoming more frequently used, and refers to gender, sexual orientation, class, age and ability differences alongside race and ethnicity. The term “multicultural politics” in the Finnish context seldom concerns diversity in a broader sense, even though the latter concept is becoming more common. Also, as racism is seldom a main focus in the work here described as multicultural, one cannot describe it as anti-racist activism (see also Suurpää 2005). For these reasons I have ended up using the concept of multiculturalism.

Multicultural politics refers to a broad context of organised activities around multiculturalism: NGO work, projects, official integration policies and the contexts where these interact. This work can be, but is not always, about managing differences (see Hall 2000). Politics can be understood as a conflict: a process of negotiation about the aims and the agenda for work (Saukkonen 2007, 25). This is one starting point for the way in which I understand politics in this work. Politics means for instance negotiations about how to perceive and cope with differences in Finnish society and about the understandings of multiculturalism. My understanding of politics implies a focus on how the mundane, small everyday acts intertwine with the structural and the representational (see Gordon et al. 2000). In that sense my approach also comes close to the study of “everyday racism” (Essed 1991). *Multiculturalism* refers to the ways in which the differences relating to race and ethnicity in the nation are imagined. In Finland multiculturalism is sometimes seen to “begin” in the 1990s, and sometimes prior to WWII, when Finnish cities in particular were described as multicultural, with a large proportion of the population speaking different languages and having different nationalities. *Multicultural encounters* are encounters where racial and ethnic differences are significant. These encounters can be textual, face-to-face or they may be found both in policies and practices.

Studies in history and social sciences often suffer from what is termed “methodological nationalism”, meaning that “society” is automatically taken to mean “a nation-state”, and furthermore, the nation-state is understood to be the natural context of research (Kettunen 2008). This happens in my research: the primary context of the analysis of “multiculturalism” is the nation-state of Finland, even if embedded in European politics. However, I often refer to the “Nordic” in this book. There are several reasons for this. First of all, the study is largely indebted to Nordic, and particularly Swedish,

postcolonial and feminist scholarship (e.g. Bredström 2003; de los Reyes et al. 2003a; Mulinari and Neergaard 2004; Razack 2004; de los Reyes and Mulinari 2005; de los Reyes and Gröndahl 2007; Keskinen et al. 2009; Yang 2009). Secondly, as the Nordic countries are often considered to be similar welfare states with similar class and gender structures, I have found it relevant to situate this study in a Nordic context. For instance, in a recent special issue on “The Rights of Women and the Crisis of Multiculturalism” (Ethnicities 2008) the editors state that “these (Denmark, Norway, Sweden) are the countries that stand out as having a particularly strong gender equality mission, reflected in the high proportions of women in elected office, and social welfare regimes that provide substantial public funding for the typically feminized work of care. With the rights of women becoming an increasingly central trope in the debates on multiculturalism, these countries move into greater prominence – although to markedly different effect” (Phillips and Saharso 2008, 298). Even though Finland was not specified in this statement, in many cases all the Nordic countries are treated as similar nations.

An interesting issue in relation to the perceived similarity of these countries is that of their very different histories and contemporary situations in relation to migration and multiculturalism. The “foreign-born population” is minimal in Finland (4,0%), and slightly larger in Iceland (6,8%), Denmark (8,8%) and Norway (9,7%), while Sweden has the largest percentage of all the Nordic countries (13,4%)³. These statistics have different histories behind them; Sweden, for instance, has a history of labour migration and refugee migration particularly since the 1950s, while migration to Iceland first started to increase over the past ten years. Furthermore, in relation to multicultural politics, anti-racist activism and migrant activism, there are significant differences between the Nordic countries. Multiculturalism has become a central political agenda in Sweden (Mulinari and Neergaard 2004), while in Finland it is often considered as a marginal question and

3 Finland: http://www.stat.fi/til/vaerak/2008/vaerak_2008_2009-03-27_tie_001_fi.html, accessed 22.4.2009 Denmark: <http://www.dst.dk/Statistik/ags/DKital.aspx> Norway: <http://www.ssb.no/emner/02/01/10/innvbef/tab-2008-04-29-07.html> Sweden: http://www.scb.se/templates/tableOrChart____26040.asp, accessed 28.9.2008. The figures are not exactly comparable, but they reflect the situation in the different countries. The statistics for Denmark and Sweden are from 2007, and those for Finland, Norway and Iceland are from 2008.

particularly a question that concerns “migrants” rather than the whole society. Denmark has shown a rise in xenophobic policies on a different scale to other Nordic states. Despite the significant differences, there are many recurrent concerns, such as gender equality and the presence of substantial welfare services, which characterise the discourses on multiculturalism in the Nordic contexts (and informs the way in which these countries are perceived). Despite the similarities between the gender equality discourses in the context of multiculturalism in the Nordic countries, there are significant differences in gender equality politics. For instance, in terms of the labour market position of women, the rights accorded to LGBTQ⁴ families and the scale of violence against women, Finland is clearly at a disadvantage to the other Nordic countries. The Globe also made study trips both to Sweden and Denmark, and the organisation of multiculturalism in the other Nordic countries has been one of the reference points for work in the Globe.

The structure of this book

The book consists of nine chapters. The first four chapters introduce and contextualise the project under scrutiny. In chapter 2 I introduce and contextualise the Globe and multicultural politics more broadly. I discuss the “project” as a way of organising social policy and particularly multicultural work. I offer background and context for the broader setting in which the Globe worked, intertwined with examples from the empirical material. In this chapter, I also introduce the questions of the study, and the Globe, in more depth. In chapter 3 I present and discuss the theoretical framework and questions in my work. This chapter focuses on the possibilities, and usefulness (or otherwise) of postcolonial theory in the Finnish context. What could a postcolonial perspective on Finland mean? What implications would an analysis of the Finnish context have for postcolonial approaches? In chapter 4 I discuss the methodological process and questions in this book. I have been particularly interested in the ethics and politics of ethnographic research and will discuss what an ethnographic project in the context of multicultural politics in Finland means.

The second part of the book consists of four chapters, which form the core of the empirical analysis of *multicultural politics in the making*. In each of these chapters I analyse specific questions and sets of material. Versions

4 Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer

of these chapters have been previously published as articles (Tuori 2007a; 2007b; 2007c; 2009) and they have been re-written and broadened in the process of transformation from articles to book chapters. The main topics in these chapters are: 1) the mutual construction of nation and gender equality, 2) discourses on “migrant families” and heteronormativity, 3) gendered constructions of knowledge and feelings and 4) empowerment. These four topics shed light on the constructions of multiculturalism in the Finnish context. Together they form an intersectional analysis of multicultural project work. “Intersectional” refers to the way in which categories and differences are seen to be mutually constructed (Crenshaw 1991; de los Reyes and Mulinari 2005; see my discussion on pages 57–59). The questions I pose are informed by the theoretical discussions in postcolonial theory, feminist theories and Cultural Studies research. This theoretical approach implies a focus on how *differences* are conceived of and coped with, as well as how gender and race appear and are constructed in the material. The focus on power relations as constitutive of multicultural encounters also stems from this theoretical approach.

Ethnographic analysis could be described as a theoretically informed engagement and the topic of each chapter has emerged in this interaction between theoretical ideas and the ethnographic material. Gender equality was a topic that appeared frequently in the material: it was one of the central topics of the Globe; and many seminars and publications on multiculturalism also dealt with gender equality and women’s position. Many researchers (e.g. Lempiäinen 2002; Markkola 2002; Bredström 2003; de los Reyes et al. 2003a; Holli 2003; Koivunen 2003) have pointed out the close connection between gender equality and nation-building in Finland and other Nordic countries. Gender equality discourses work as ways to define the inclusions and exclusions of the Nordic countries. The kind of nationalism typical in the Nordic states has also been described as “welfare state nationalism” (Mulinari et al. 2009). Gender equality is the focus in chapters 5 and 7 in particular, but it also forms such a general framework in multicultural politics that it comes up throughout the work. In chapter 5 I analyse the model that the Globe produced as part of mainstreaming the results of the project. This chapter focuses on the constructions of gender equality and nation in the specific institutionalised framework of funding.

Chapter 6 concerns heteronormativity in discourses about migrant families. This subject arose when I began to focus on the apparent lack of discussion about non-heterosexual identities, practices and relationships. What does it mean that multicultural contexts appear strongly heteronormative? The discussion on heteronormativity, which I have analysed along with sexuality, gender and family relations, lead me to focus more on the discourses about migrant families and how it might be possible to open up these discourses through the concept of heteronormativity. The core question in this chapter concerns the reproduction of the nation. Who can be seen as adequate to reproduce the nation? And what might this tell us about the Finnish landscape of race and ethnicity?

Chapter 7 deals with the constructions of knowledge and feelings in the making of multicultural politics. The focus on power relations led me to consider the racialised positions of “expertise” and “experience”. One of the central concerns of this study is the interaction between different kinds of knowledge. Which statements or utterances are understood as knowledge and which are understood as feelings or experiences? How are these racialised? Knowledge is often tied to gender equality in the context of multicultural politics. In this chapter I explore, for example, the ways in which the notion of gender equality enables Finnish women’s agency in multicultural politics.

Chapter 8 is about empowerment. This is a concept that has become widely used in multicultural work and in social policy projects. The genealogy of the concept can be traced back to the women’s movement, to pedagogies of liberation (particularly as developed in Latin America), to the work of the United Nations (UN) and to development work. It has recently become part of the EU-funding vocabulary for social work projects. The Globe described its mission as empowerment. In this chapter I will, on the one hand, analyse how empowerment is put into practice in the Globe. On the other hand, I will discuss the ways of approaching empowerment as a theoretical, political and possibly pedagogical question. Empowerment raises central feminist and sociological questions about the relationship between the individual and the structural.

The last chapter of the book, *Transformative politics of multiculturalism*, wraps up the main contributions and discussions of my study. The main focus of the chapter is on the possibilities of ethical encounters. A potentially

transformative politics is developed through a dialogue between the ethnography and the theoretical framework. However, the relationship between these two is awkward in many ways, and in the concluding chapter I will consider the potential fruitfulness of these discomforts.

2. Viewing multicultural politics through the lens of an employment project

The Finnish nation, migration and multiculturalism

Finland can be characterised as a country peripheral to the economic and political centre of Europe. A common narrative about the Finnish context in relation to multiculturalism is that it has been transformed from a country of emigration to a country of immigration. Since the Second World War up until the 1980s Finland was a country of emigration, with large-scale migration particularly to Sweden. Despite the rapid increase in migration into Finland after the 1990s, the population of those born outside Finland is still very modest by comparison to Europe (see for example Wahlbeck 1999, 74–77). Migration and refugee policies have been restrictive since the formation of the Finnish state (in 1917). Unlike other Nordic countries, there has been very little labour migration into Finland and thus the most common reasons for immigration have been marriage, family reunification, asylum seeking, refugeehood and importantly, “Finnish ancestry” (e.g. Lepola 2000; Wahlbeck 2008). The last category refers to people from the former Soviet Union who have Finnish ancestry themselves, through their parents or their grandparents. This is a peculiar category as it is based on ethnic identity. The narrative of the founding of this legislation is always told in the same way: it is traced back to the speech by president Koivisto in 1990, after which it was prepared by the authorities. It is often formulated as an apology towards people with Finnish ethnicity who were deported (back) to the Soviet Union after the Second World War⁵ (for a discussion of this, see Huttunen 2002, 212–214).

5 On the details of the legislation and the requirements for obtaining residence permits, see the English translation of the Alien's Act (2004), section 48, <http://www.finlex.fi/en/laki/kaannokset/2004/en20040301.pdf>, accessed 14.11.2008.

By the end of 2008 the foreign born population was 4,0% of the total population, with people who speak a first language other than Finnish, Swedish or Saami making up only 3,6% (Population Statistics 2008⁶). Of the total number of “foreign nationals” in Finland, most have migrated from Russia, Estonia, Sweden, ex-Yugoslavia, Somalia and European Union (EU)-member states (other than Estonia and Sweden). Kurds from Iran, Iraq and Turkey also form a significant proportion of migrants. The narrative of factual changes in migration patterns often includes an idea of Finland being previously homogeneous or monocultural as a nation (see for example Gordon et al. 2000, 197). In this narrative, multiculturalism is defined by the presence of migrants. The idea of the nation as homogeneous until a certain date in its history is by no means unique to Finland. Stuart Hall (2000, 217), writing in the British context, argues that “[t]he national story assumes that Britain was a unified and homogeneous culture until the post-war migrations from the Caribbean and the Asian subcontinent.” This view however is changing in Britain, where multiculturalism is seen in some instances as inherent to the nation (Fortier 2008).

A fairly common understanding among researchers in Finland is that migration has intensified and changed in the 1990s, even though there is nothing new *as such* in migration or multiculturalism (Huttunen 2002, 46; Suurpää 2002; Horsti 2005; Wahlbeck 2007b). A canonical description of Finland and its people was written in the late nineteenth century by Zacharias Topelius. In the early accounts the Finnish and Swedish population form the basis of the nation and there is no mention of the Saami (“Lappish”⁷ in the later editions of the book) or the Roma (who do not appear even in the later editions) (Topelius 1875, 139). At the time “Book of our nation” was first published, Finland was a Grand Duchy of Russia (until 1917). In an

6 http://www.stat.fi/til/vaerak/2008/vaerak_2008_2009-03-27_tie_001_fi.html, accessed 22.4.2009

7 The term “Lappish” was used until the late twentieth century of the Saami by the Finnish majority researchers and authorities. The Saami themselves have not used the name “Lappish”, and thus naming, too, reflects the history of the Saami whose position as colonised people has been recognised only recently (see for example Kuokkanen 2007).

1875⁸ edition of the “Book of our nation” (*Boken om vårt land*, *Maamme kirja*) (1875, 139), he describes the population in following manner (my translation):

In this country live people of different origin and different languages. Of 100 inhabitants in Finland, 86 are of the Finnish folk, 12 of the Swedish, 1 of Russian and 1 of other nations, mostly German. Many have a Swedish father and a Finnish mother, or a Finnish father and a Swedish mother; some have a Russian father and a Finnish mother, or their parents or grandparents have migrated from a foreign country. Few are of such unmixed origin that that foreign blood would not flow in some of their relatives. But what is said, is that everyone, who recognises and loves this country as their fatherland, – all who obey the laws of this country and work for its welfare, – are part of one country.

Until 1809 Finland formed the eastern part of Sweden. The idea of Finland as a nation first started to emerge during the nineteenth century, at the time the quote above was written (Tarkiainen 2008). Topelius’ understanding of the nation relies heavily on an idea of separate nations and people, but it is however not altogether exclusive. Anybody who considers the country as a “fatherland” and works for it can be part of the nation. This kind of argument has appeared in the more recent debates on multiculturalism in the form of an expectation that migrants show pride and allegiance to the nation to legitimate their presence (Fortier 2005a). In more recent studies on the Finnish nation, the idea of homogeneousness has been contested through the so-called old minorities: the Saami, Roma, Tatars, Jews, Russians (those who have been residents or who have migrated prior to circa 1920) and the Finland-Swedish, as part of the Finnish nation. The Finnish nation has been historically understood in Hegelian terms, meaning that the nation, its people and the state have been understood as coherent (e.g. Liikanen 2004; Pulkkinen 2000). Furthermore, citizenship in Finland is often understood according to an ethnic or folk model, which means understanding citizenship primarily as a right for “ethnic Finns” (Clarke 1999, 103–105; Lepola

8 There are many editions of the book published in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. In a 1930s edition, this included a description of language groups (Finnishness is thus shown as marked by language on the one hand and race and ethnicity on the other.)

2000). Thus, Finland (as a nation-space), Finnish people, and Finnish culture are seen as natural and coherent in relation to each other (see Gupta and Ferguson 1997). Where the nation is understood as homogeneous, multiculturalism has primarily been seen as either a challenge, or as a welcomed fresh wind; but in both cases, it is seen as coming “from outside” (Clarke 1999; Huttunen et al. 2005, 22). Finnish discourses on multiculturalism, then, draw on the interdependence between the established idea of Finland as a homogeneous nation, and the fact that there has been relatively little migration when compared to most European countries.

Integration, unemployment and the proliferation of projects

The central role of the nation-state in Finland is visible in the emphasis it places on governing multiculturalism: the authorities and policy makers are expected to play an important role in responding to the “new diversity” (Wahlbeck 1999, 74–87; Horsti 2005, 197–199; Huttunen et al. 2005, 23–24). The role of the public sector (both state and municipalities) means different measures of *integration*⁹. For instance, all refugees and those migrants, who are registered as unemployed or receive social assistance, have a right to a “personal integration plan” during the first three years of residence:

An integration plan is an agreement between a local authority, an employment office and an immigrant on measures to support the immigrant and the immigrant’s family in acquiring the essential knowledge and skills needed in society and working life. The integration plan may be an agreement on providing support for studies in Finnish or Swedish, labour market training, self-motivated education or training, vocational counselling and rehabilitation, practical training, preparatory education and the integration of children and young people, and on taking other measures supporting integration that can be considered reasonable (Act on the Integration of Immigrants and Reception of Asylum Seekers, hereafter Act on Integration, English original).

9 These are mainly defined in the Act on the Integration of Immigrants and Reception of Asylum Seekers, 493/1999 <http://www.finlex.fi/en/laki/kaannokset/1999/en19990493.pdf>, accessed 29.8.2008. Integration was initially aimed particularly at refugees and asylum seekers, while other groups of migrants were included in these measures later (Wahlbeck 1999). On integration in Finland, see also Kerkkänen (2008).

The definition of the integration plan shows clearly how employment and integration are understood as intertwined (see also Wahlbeck 2007a). The integration plan has been criticised for including some migrants while a large proportion of migrants are left out of its scope (Arajärvi 2009). Other organised services include language training and one-year introductory courses for labour market participation. In addition to the integration plan of individual migrants, all municipalities have “integration programmes” designed in co-operation with the employment office, other local authorities and the Social Insurance Institution (KELA). According to the Act on Integration (section 7) “The programme contains a plan for objectives, measures, resources and collaboration in the integration of immigrants. When programmes are drawn up and implemented, immigrants, NGOs, employee and employer organizations and, when possible, other local parties shall be heard”. Most often integration means a range of actions that the “migrants” should perform, while the “majority” population is seldom expected to integrate into the rising multicultural society. One instance of the governance of multiculturalism is the creation of “multicultural agendas” in many public institutions such as municipalities and schools (Horsti 2005, 197).

Despite the investment in integration policies, the employment situation for migrant people in Finland has remained chronic (Valtonen 2001; Wahlbeck 2007a). The unemployment rate for residents who speak a first language other than Finnish, Swedish or Saami¹⁰, was 24% for men and 32%, compared to 12% (for men) and 11% (for women) of the general population (in 2004, cited in Joronen 2007, 293). In the public debates and in the research reports, the reasons for the high unemployment rates are typically explained with reference to migrants’ insufficient knowledge of the Finnish language (alternatively, the unreasonable demands for Finnish language skills in any work), or to the claim that migrants’ education and work experience do not match the available jobs, or that the education gained outside western and northern Europe does not (officially or unofficially) qualify. Employers’ negative attitudes to migrants are often cited among the reasons for high

10 Finnish statistics classify people according to language, citizenship and place of birth, but not for instance according to ethnicity or any related category (see Silius 2007). Even if such categories are problematic in many ways, particularly as they essentialise and simplify the way in which people are allocated to different “ethnic/racial groups”, the current statistics make it increasingly difficult to track how unemployment is racialised (for instance Martikainen 2007 on the classifications and use of statistics).

unemployment rates, as well as “cultural differences”, and in the cases of women, the high number of children is seen to play a role (see Forsander 1992; also Martikainen and Tiilikainen 2007).

If migrants in general have a high unemployment rate, there are further significant differences between migrants, depending on the country from which one has migrated (see also Heikkilä and Pikkarainen 2008, 54–56). There are also significant differences between women and men in the unemployment rates. The following tables show how unemployment is differentiated according to the place from where people have migrated. The numbers show the highest and lowest unemployment rates, and refer to migrants who have moved to Finland in 1989–2004 from the below mentioned states and who live in the Helsinki metropolitan area (in 2004, source Joronen 2007, 296).

Table 1: Unemployment rates in percentages for people migrated to Finland (the highest rates):

Country of emigration	Women	Men
Somalia	62	51
Maghreb countries	61	43
Former Yugoslavia	50	38
Iran	58	39
Iraq	53	65

Table 2: Unemployment rates in percentages for people migrated to Finland (the lowest rates):

Country of emigration	Women	Men
Sweden	13	12
Canada and the US	3	12
China	14	6
Oceania	6	8
The rest of Europe	15	12

Research in the Finnish context also shows that people who have migrated from western Europe and Estonia with a high level of education are in the best labour market position. For other groups, education and language skills

do not translate into employment as easily (see Martikainen and Tiilikainen 2007; Heikkilä and Pikkarainen 2008). In addition to high unemployment rates, racialised groups and people from migrant backgrounds are in many other ways at the margins of the labour market (Valtonen 2001; Forsander 2007). It is a question of precarious labour market positions: short-term and part-time jobs, which seldom correspond to a persons' actual education or work experience. Even if precariousness in the labour market has increased in general after the 1990s, it is racialised in significant ways, as is shown by research statistics (Forsander 2002, 2007; Heikkilä and Pikkarainen 2008).

The analysis of the levels of salaries indicates similar differences to the employment patterns for migrants. Among migrants from Europe, India, the United States and Japan the salaries lay above the Finnish average, while the salaries for migrants from other countries in Asia and from countries in Africa lay significantly below the Finnish average. In the latter groups, most people worked as cleaners and storage workers (Katainen 2009). In general, the level of education has little impact on the level of employment for people who speak a language other than Finnish or Swedish as their first language (Ranto 2008, 32). These patterns are clear evidence of how the labour market is structured racially. Class, race and ethnicity are thus intertwined so that race and ethnicity become markers of class (de los Reyes and Mulinari 2005).

The labour market position of women who have migrated to Finland relates also to the ways in which the general labour market in Finland is gendered. There is strong gender segregation of the labour market in Finland. Migrant women¹¹ find employment in the low paid and female dominated sectors of the labour market, such as care work, cleaning and service. This pattern is reinforced by employment policies, which push women – regardless of their former education or work experience – into occupations corresponding to gender segregation within the Finnish labour market¹² (Forsander 2007; also Heikkilä and Pikkarainen 2008, 65–78). Women's participation in the labour market is also often described as part of the Finnish (and Nordic)

11 See pages 42–44 for a discussion of the concept of “migrant women” and who are understood to belong to this category in the Finnish context.

12 Employment policies have interesting effects on the labour market situation of migrants. For instance, work in fast food outlets has been encouraged through public measures, such as funding for traineeships and apprenticeship contracts (Wahlbeck 2007a, 553).

gender equality regime – often in contrast to other imagined national cultures (see for example Magnusson et al. 2008; Siim and Borchorst 2009). However, in comparison to Europe, women’s position in the labour market in Finland is weak in terms of the rate of the employment, the level of salaries and the positions held within the hierarchies of the labour market (Kivinen and Nurmi 2009). Therefore, the cherished notion of the high level of gender equality in Finland is not evident in labour market patterns.

The position of being outside the labour force (and sometimes even unemployed), is easily seen to be the choice of individual women, related to a supposed “cultural background”. A significant number of migrant women do not belong to the labour force, often because they are taking care of small children. This could also reflect the general situation in Finland, where most children under three years old are taken care of at home. Thus, there is a strong culture of mothers staying at home despite the presumption of women’s wide participation in the labour market. Culturalist understandings of labour market patterns also affect employment policies. If migrant women are understood to choose to stay at home because of “their culture” rather than because they have been forced to, due to their difficult position in the labour market, or because they have been encouraged to by the policies and practices in Finland, these understandings affect what kinds of services are created.

Despite clear evidence of discrimination on the basis of gender and race and ethnicity, there is little analysis of intersectional discrimination within the labour market¹³. On the one hand, Finnish research on the employment patterns of migrant women tends to emphasise explanations relating to the culture and ethnicity of the women themselves rather than to structural and institutional questions. On the other hand, general assessments of the employment situation, such as the impact of recession, of wealth distribution or the like, seldom include an analysis of the effects of belonging to different language groups or nationalities (the two statistical entities used in Finland). This shows how the effects of ethnicity and migrancy on employment are not

13 As a comparison, in Sweden the state has published an official report titled (my translation) “Beyond us and them. Theoretical reflections on power, integration and structural discrimination” edited by Paulina de los Reyes and Masoud Kamali (2005). These kinds of research reports and other interventions by critical scholars has made an impact in the Swedish public discourse in a way that has been largely absent in the Finnish context (see also Mulinari et al. 2008).

considered as matters concerning society at large, but are seen as problems specific to migrants.

During the 1990s and 2000s, the social policy sector in Finland has undergone great changes towards a market-led service economy from a state-led social system (Koskiahio 2008). A part of this development, and one response to the problems of high unemployment rates, has been to create employment projects funded by the EU or through national funding (the most important of these funding institutions in Finland is the Slot Machine Association, the RAY/PAF) (see for example Kankare 2006). One could also say that the racialised structures of the labour market create space for these projects. The number of projects during the late 1990s and early 2000s is impressive: the European Social Fund alone has funded over 5000 different projects in Finland during the time period 1995–2006. From the point of view of the funding institutions, the projects are ideally conducted in cooperation with NGOs, authorities and employers. On a general level, the projects are expected to enhance *innovation* and *competitiveness* and to create *new policy measures*. The Globe is one of these projects with the thankless task of establishing “innovative new measures” to enhance labour market participation for migrant women. From the statistics, it is apparent that employment-related education and projects have not reduced long-term unemployment or marginalisation (Kankare 2006). Therefore, one could say that the projects are being asked to perform an impossible task. Another question is whether their own agenda matches the funding agenda, and whether the projects have the opportunity to use the funding strategically. In as far as they follow its funding strategies, the projects could also be said to be complicit with the EU in manifesting its sense of European superiority. These strategies are designed to guarantee the security and stability of the region, by seeking to keep a hegemonic understanding of the European way intact (White 2000, 68).

In addition to finding employment for the participants, the projects themselves create employment. While the number of employees in each project is usually small, when all projects are added together, the total number of employees becomes significant. The number of people employed by the projects themselves is also included in the project descriptions and reported in the results (Final report of the Globe 2006). However, most of the job opportunities provided by the project world as a whole are to be found within

the EU, the national ministries and other institutions where the programmes like Equal are planned, the funding is administered and the projects are controlled and evaluated. The large number of funded projects means that most of the projects receive very little funding (and therefore they have only a few employees) and that administration takes the lion's share of the funding (Kankare 2006, 129). The employees in the administration, in the ministries and in the Employment and Economic Development Centres, (T&E Centres), are also more likely to have long(er)-term employment than those working in the projects themselves (despite the fact that the public sector in Finland has a very high percentage of short-term contracts). One question to ask is: who gains from the employment projects? Who do they employ? My cautious suggestion is that employees at the higher levels of project management benefit, if not most, at least significantly from the projects (see Kankare 2006). The project employees have the smallest salaries and are employed only for three years at a time. However, due to the difficult labour market situation for migrants and racialised groups, projects are still an important source of employment for job seekers with academic education (particularly those in fields other than medicine, science and technology).

Projects have also become an important way of organising multiculturalism in Finland. A mapping of projects targeted at migrants in 2005–2006 included 139 projects altogether (Ruhanen and Martikainen 2006). Most of the projects were funded either by the European Social Fund (ESF) or RAY/PAF and they were classified under the headings *integration*, *education*, *promotion of multiculturalism*, *employment* and *women and families* (Ruhanen and Martikainen 2006, 6, 67–68). As part of the broader field of multicultural politics, the projects also intersect with the world of non-governmental organisations (NGOs)¹⁴. The authorities have encouraged migrant communities to form associations or NGOs, as these have been considered desirable cooperation partners (Pyykkönen 2007a). The NGOs have also been encouraged to adopt “integration” as part of their agenda, for instance through allocating funding for it. Thus, practically all migrant associations (whether

14 I have chosen to use the word NGO for the associations working in social policies. In the Finnish context, there is not a strong tradition of non-governmental organisations in the sense the term is most often used. Instead, there are a lot of associations with different aims and scope. However, in the context of EU-funding and the increasing significance of the third sector in social policies (e.g. Koskiahio 2008) I find the term NGO more suitable than association.

they are ethnic, sports related, women's or political associations) are in one way or another working with "integration", or at least have included it as one aim in their work (ibid.). The NGO work is always regulated to some extent by public initiatives through funding (see Lagerspetz and Joons 2004). However, very few of the so-called migrant NGOs have themselves gained EU project funding. One of the reasons for this lies in the funding structure of the European Social Fund (ESF), which pays the expenditure, such as salaries, retroactively¹⁵. Therefore, even if the projects are meant to enhance the possibility of third sector participation, and look for solutions that are "new", innovative and bottom-up, few of the migrant NGOs have benefited from the new funding possibilities (Pyykkönen 2007a). Moreover, as ESF funding is based on networks and partnerships, many of the so-called migrant NGOs are partners in the projects.

The Equal Community Initiative of the ESF, of which the Globe was part, ran from 2000 to 2006 (www.equal.fi, accessed 15.11.2008). The Equal Initiative was planned to be a "testing laboratory" for new measures. Projects funded within the Equal programme were to focus on people who are in a "difficult labour market position", which meant that the target groups in the projects included the Roma, migrants, asylum seekers, unemployed youth as well as women (the latter targeted particularly in relation to technology). The ultimate aim of the ESF-funded projects – from the point of view of funding – is to produce "best practices" that are to be mainstreamed locally, nationally and at the level of the EU (Equal 2008, 8). Most of the projects were placed within public institutions or large and established NGOs (such as the reception centre for asylum seekers, universities, trade unions, etc.), from where the results were meant to be *mainstreamed* into the "normal" work of the institution itself. The projects were meant to function more as instruments of good practices, rather than as actual agents in the field of their work. This was, at times, in conflict with the projects' own aims, as project funding, particularly in the NGOs, is often a way to fund "normal work" (Ruhanen and Martikainen 2006, Wrede 2006). The Globe was a new kind of activity created by the people who were part of the NGO behind the

15 The most important national funding agency, Finland's Slot Machine Association (RAY) has a different system, which has created more opportunities for smaller NGOs to receive project funding as well. These projects are often even smaller in scale, typically employing only one person.

Globe. Thus, the NGO running the Globe did not do the kind of “normal work” into which the best practices could have been mainstreamed.

Equal-funded projects worked as collaborative networks, called Development Partnerships. These were defined as:

a project which is delimited in its goals, functions and duration. It is based on a working programme and an agreement between the parties involved. A project can include subprojects on individual activities related to the overall project goals. [...] Partnerships can be regional or sector-specific, depending on their goals. In regional partnerships, the parties in a certain region (a city, a rural area, a local administrative district or a commuting area) pool their resources to solve a shared problem. In sector-specific partnerships, the parties act together to eliminate inequality and discrimination in a particular field of business (www.equal.fi, accessed 15.11.2008).

The funding was coordinated and controlled by the Ministry of Labour and it was administered through the Employment and Economic Development Centres (T&E Centres) (ESR 2006, 5). The T&E Centre was the body that controlled the funding of the individual projects and whose representatives were members in the steering group.

T&E Centres are the funding agents that have power over the projects in concrete forms: through accepting (or not accepting) the expenses from the project, it could decide which activities promoted the goals set in the project plan. Thus, in my material the T&E Centre is often almost personified, frequently as the figure against whom the project battles. In the staff meetings for instance, there were discussions about how to explain the principles of the project “to the T&E Centre” so that it would understand. My study does not include an analysis of the practice of the T&E Centres in administering the projects, and thus I refer to the T&E Centre as it appears in the everyday-life of the project. The representatives of the T&E Centre were part of the steering group and in that sense there was personal contact with it, not only through the reimbursement procedures.

The Globe

The Globe lasted for three years, during which time it was supposed to create its domain of work, make this domain function, and derive conclusions about the work which would then be written up as “best practices”. The core

idea of the Globe was that women from migrant backgrounds worked as “mentors” for the participants, who were other women from migrant backgrounds. This was planned as a collective process in the sense that the participants, called “skilled women”, formed small groups with each mentor, and women could form networks within the Globe. One of the starting points for the Globe was to provide a space for encounters. The physical office space itself was decorated in order to be welcoming and cosy and the participants were encouraged to visit the Globe when they wanted. There were also informal events organised by the Globe, which aimed to gather together migrant and non-migrant women alike. These were mostly “cultural evenings” and different kinds of parties. The Globe was placed in a women’s centre that had functioned since the 1980s. Many women’s and feminist NGOs had used the space for meetings, courses and events; for instance the women’s helpline worked in the same space. Originally there had been a strong connection with political women’s NGOs. The origin of the Globe was an “international women’s living room” that had formed in the women’s centre. The Globe was planned (and later carried out) by women who had been organising different activities in the women’s centre. Some of the staff members in the Globe had previous experience of project work from working in projects on violence against women.

The Globe had a staff of seven people, of whom four were mentors. The other staff members were a project coordinator, a group work instructor and a PR person. In the context of multicultural projects in Finland, this was a fairly large staff: it formed a work community. Many projects were carried out by one or two employees only. Initially, it was thought that participants would stay in the Globe for half a year, and that each mentor would tutor five participants. These five women would form a small group led by the mentor. The mentors worked thus both with groups and individual women. The design changed soon as participants entered the project continuously (instead of twice a year), stayed for the time that they needed and wanted to, then left the project and possibly came back. The Globe organised a range of different activities during the three-year-period it existed. These could be grouped as following: 1) personal tuition and group work, 2) workshops to develop specific skills considered to be of use in the labour market (computer workshops, language courses), 3) workshops that used arts or handicrafts to work with personal, cultural and identity related issues, 4) events, trips,

workplace visits, 5) diverse workshops (including sewing, aerobics, a mother-child club) led by the participants.

Personal tuition and group work by the mentors was considered the most important activity and the backbone of the work. Part of the work of the Globe (in which particularly the coordinator, the group work instructor and the PR person were involved) was about reporting and producing material for the recruitment of new participants and “mainstreaming” the results of the project. The material that is produced in order to mainstream the results of the project is primarily aimed at professionals working with questions of “integration”, “multiculturalism” or labour market participation, but also to the broad audience. Some of the material is aimed at migrants and is intended to spread information to possible new participants. These materials would include, for instance, the monthly newsletters and posters. The funding given by the Equal programme had three distinct purposes: it was directed at planning, implementation and mainstreaming. The uses of these funds were fixed in the sense that, for instance, in the last period one could only use funding for mainstreaming.

The aims of the Globe were “to increase the labour market participation of migrant women,” and to “enhance (gender) equality and equal rights” (formulated in a brochure presenting the Globe). The Globe was an all-female project and just over half of the employees were migrant women, which seemed a large proportion by Finnish standards¹⁶. There was an explicit claim that “the working principles of the project” involved methods that were non-hierarchical, open and inclusive. Female exclusivity and attachment to the women’s movement make the Globe fairly unique in the Finnish context of EU-funded projects. As empowerment has become one of the key words in the project world and in social work, claims for non-hierarchical and participative relationships are part of the ideologies of most projects. The whole idea of a *project* has been to move from centralised top-down planning to bottom-up planning, meaning that people who are working in the field are

16 There are no statistics on the employees of different backgrounds. In a seminar on gender equality and migrancy, the director of the International Cultural Centre, “Caisa”, in Helsinki raised the fact that there were hardly any employees from migrant backgrounds among the permanent staff when she started. She also noted that this kind of situation would have been completely impossible in the development context that she came from, which makes an interesting contrast to multicultural politics in the Finnish context.

part of planning and developing the work (Alavaikko 2006). This has both positive and negative effects. It should increase the employees' autonomy and their ability to shape their work. The downside (particularly considering the whole field) is that the separate projects often invent the wheel over and over again, as "learning from the projects" seldom works very efficiently. The main drawbacks for the projects themselves are the short time-span and the amount of work that goes into administration, evaluation and creating models.

In most of the bigger cities in Finland, there are women's NGOs with similar working methods and objectives to those of the Globe. In the context of the women's centres, the Globe had a somewhat different emphasis in that its funding was employment related. The multicultural spaces for women that organised programmes similar to those of the Globe also tended to emphasise empowerment, knowledge of the Finnish language, and society and social activities (see also Pyykkönen 2007b). Different models of "mentors", "mediators" and "cultural interpreters" have also been fairly common in the projects for migrants (see Ruhanen and Martikainen 2006, 56–57). These models often function in a strong framework of integration; that is, the purpose of mentoring is to teach migrants about the Finnish society and culture (*ibid.* 70). The mentor work in the Globe included broader support for the participants in their lives, which could mean helping them to find employment or education, but it could also mean support for problems relating to families or other personal issues.

The period of three years in which to build up a new kind of space in the city, along with relevant activities, to mainstream it and then bring it to a conclusion, was extremely short. For the employees and participants in the Globe it was quite a disappointment that the project and its activities actually ended. One characteristic of the projects is that they offer a sense of doing something new and personal: the group develops the work out of their experiences. This creates a special kind of drive in the projects. This is probably the aspect of the projects that could offer useful lessons. But the question then is how to combine this with work that would be more long-term, less precarious and less intense?

Migrant women as a target group in multicultural politics

The Globe was a project directed at “migrant women”, and more specifically at “all migrant women” in the city it worked in¹⁷. The participants in the Globe partially reflected the pattern of migration to Finland, except that there were few participants who had migrated from Sweden and other EU-member states. Most participants had migrated from the former Soviet Union and from Middle Eastern, African and Latin American countries. The women who attended the Globe occupied varying positions in terms of their legal status in the country, as well as within the gendered and racialised landscapes of Finland. Women’s official status ranged from those who were residents and returnees¹⁸ to asylum seekers and women with refugee status. The Globe was not unique in its focus on specific measures and services for migrant women (see Ruhanen and Martikainen 2006; Pyykkönen 2007b). The “immigrant woman” has become a powerful figure in the (racialised) European imagination (Lewis 2005).

The general focus on “migrant women” can work strategically and offer an opportunity for understanding multiple belongings. It can, however, also serve to further erase the differences between the women’s own lives and the specific way in which they are positioned in Finnish society. One result of the generalisation of the “migrant woman” is imagining “her” as a figure that can be subjected to debates about *who she is* or *what she is like*. To problematise the figure of the migrant women as a general category does not mean to suggest that women-specific employment measures or projects with a focus on migrated women are not necessary. However, the projects with “migrant women” as the target group also construct the category and often also serve the will for knowledge about “migrant women”. Without context, specific histories are erased, which again reinforces imagined homogeneities (Brah 1996, 184–5). Yet, the term “migrant woman” also appears in this book. One reason for using this category is because it is the term that is used in the material that is being analysed. Furthermore, simply not using the word does

17 I have chosen to use phrases “migrant women”, “women from migrant backgrounds” or some other paraphrase of this instead of “immigrant women”. On the word “immigrant”, see for example de los Reyes et al. 2003; Lewis 2005; Tuori 2007b. However, “immigrant” is the term used in the policy texts in Finland, and therefore it appears in the quotations.

18 “Returnees” refers to people with “Finnish roots” in the former Soviet Union, see page 27.

not serve to deconstruct the figure of the migrant woman. It is a concept that should be used only “under erasure”, meaning that the impossibility of the category is present when it is used¹⁹. In my study, the category of migrant women, as impossible as it may be, denotes both generalised figures and embodied women, such as the participants in the Globe.

In a leaflet of the Globe, there is a heading “Why immigrant women?” and the answer is given as follows:

Immigrant women are a group who have great difficulties finding employment. Cultural matters and practical problems with childcare make women’s integration into Finnish society more difficult than men’s. Therefore it is important to emphasise women’s networking, their development of language skills, as well as issues concerning their own life management. All these issues open up the paths to employment in Finland. (My translation)

“Migrant” is a peculiar category as many researchers have pointed out. On the one hand, not all who have migrated are described as migrants, and on the other hand, people who have themselves not migrated can also be considered to be migrants (see for example Lewis 2005). This is clear in the quote above, in which “cultural matters” are seen to make migrant women’s access to the labour market more difficult. Migrant women are also portrayed as mothers of (many) small children and more bound to traditions, cultural values and the home than their husbands (see chapter 6). This kind of description hardly refers to women who have migrated from Sweden or the US. However, the category is shifting, contextually built and it is hardly possible (or desirable) to fix its content. The concept of migrant has also been criticised for defining a person forever through migration and suggesting the impossibility of becoming part of the nation. In the Finnish context, migrant (as it appears in the public discourses) cannot be equated with non-white, as there are many migrants who are white (like many people from Russia, southern Europe and Latin America) and who are described as migrants. At the same time those who are non-white are often placed in the category,

19 Stuart Hall (2000) uses Derrida’s concept *under erasure/sous rature* to denote how multiculturalism should be addressed. Spivak (1976, xiv) explains the concept in the Translator’s Preface to *Of Grammatology*: “This [under erasure] is to write a word, cross it out, and then print both word and deletion. (Since the word is inaccurate, it is crossed out. Since it is necessary, it remains legible.)”

whether they have migrated or not. The public discourse on migrants, as the quote from the Globe implies, seldom means white people migrated from the Nordic countries, north-western Europe or North America (although research or administrative texts may include the latter as migrants).

Thus, migrant in the Finnish context is definitely a racialised category, but not through a simple division between white and non-white. It also refers to a distinction between the west and the rest, with some people who are part of the west being described as migrants and vice versa. The term “migrant” is also at the heart of definitions of Europe: often those who are seen as migrants also serve to mark that which lies outside Europe, but which is found within (on racialised constructions of “Europeanness” see White 2000; Asad 2002; Balibar 2003; Goldberg 2006; Yeğenoğlu 2006). Ghassan Hage (2000) has coined the term “third-world-looking people” to denote the most significant marker of difference in Australia. In the same spirit, one could talk about “migrant-looking-people” in the Finnish context. The category would refer to the ways in which looks, however subtly, are attached to racial, ethnic and cultural differences. I am not suggesting that research texts should use this category; rather it makes visible the way in which migrancy is understood in Finland. When migrant women become portrayed as certain kinds of people, it means also that concrete women are seen as embodiments of the *figure* of the migrant woman. Particular “migrant-looking” women become understood through the meanings that are attached to migrant women as a general group (see Huttunen 2004; Horsti 2005 about the migrant as a cultural figure; and Illman 2004).

Even though the Globe was aimed at all migrant women and attracted a diverse group of women to participate in the programme, the participation of women in the project was not random. There were other projects that focused on further education and equivalence of the degrees, for instance for nurses and doctors. Thus, people looking for specific further education responding to their education and employment history would choose those projects. Women who already were in the labour market would also fall out of the project. This means that the Globe probably attracted less highly educated migrants, those who could not find work in their own area of competence, or those planning to change career. Thus, *class* is also a relevant difference in the project, in complex ways. However, both the ethnic and the educational backgrounds of the women were diverse and particularly at

the beginning, the networks of the employees were important in recruiting the women. Later the employment office and the social centre were active in informing their clients about the project.

Many of the employment projects focus on the “migrant women’s qualities” that need developing in order for the women to gain employment: their language skills, their IT skills, their general labour market skills (whatever these may be) should be enhanced. This is one of the dilemmas in project work: while it is important to work with and find ways to support individual women, many of the reasons for unemployment are beyond its reach; namely the structure of the labour market. The Globe wanted to create a model where each woman’s skills and wishes were the starting point for their path to employment. This responds directly to the current labour market practices where migrant women are often directed towards care work and cleaning regardless of their education, expertise, or aspirations. In order to emphasise the importance of the participants’ competences, they were called “skilled women”.

Skill is defined as follows in the Oxford English Dictionary:

Capability of accomplishing something with precision and certainty; practical knowledge in combination with ability; cleverness, expertness. Also, an ability to perform a function, acquired or learnt with practice.

In Finnish skill (“taito”, MOT New Dictionary of Modern Finnish) is defined in a very similar way – it refers to²⁰ “a (practical) skill that is natural or acquired through practice or learning”. The dictionary mentions skills such as ability in language, singing, swimming, driving and professional skills. In Finnish the word “skill” has an even stronger connotation of practical knowledge than in English, such that a practical subject in school is called a “skill subject” while a theoretical subject is literally called a “knowledge subject”. To call the participants *skilled women* is an act intended to render the women experts, to make visible the claim that the women have many skills from before. It is meant to counteract the racism that is evident where some people are seen to have skills, while others are rendered de-skilled. However, I would like to pose the question of what it means that the word “*skilled*” is

20 harjaantumisen t. oppimisen avulla saavutettu t. luontainen (käytännön) kyky, jnk toiminnan tm. hallinta, taitaminen, osaaminen. Esim. Suomen kielen taito, kielitaito, laulutaito, uimataito, ajotaito, ammattitaito. Taitoaine vs. tietoaaine.

used for this purpose? As it connotes practical skills so strongly, what kind of expertise and class position does this imply? In chapter 7 I discuss further how knowledge is racialised in multicultural women's politics.

Employment measures in the Globe

The Globe's employment measures started from the premise that migrant women have qualities that are not appreciated in the labour market. The core of the mentors' work was to map aims, skills and life situations of the participants and to try to build a bridge (through further education, work placements or changes in personal life) between them. Each of the mentors developed their working methods according to their own interests and experience. One could describe the way in which the mentor work was presented as a kind of *standpoint* politics: only women who have themselves migrated can understand the experience of other migrant women. The most important working methods in the Globe were offering peer support, making space, time and resources (such as computers) available, and offering knowledge about Finnish labour market practices and legislation.

Apart from the mentor work, the Globe organised different kinds of workshops, seminars, training and other events. The Globe developed the working methods gradually as the project continued. The initial idea was that the Globe would not offer practical courses such as language or IT courses, but would inform participants about the courses offered elsewhere. The Globe and its "Development Partners" (DPs) would offer courses that would focus on the participants' cultural identity and empowerment. The workshop designs changed during the course of work because many of the participants wanted courses that were related to practical skills or language skills. Towards the end of the project, many of the workshops were planned and led by the former participants. Through the activities that were led by the participants, the Globe wanted to promote agency (*yrittävyyys*) rather than entrepreneurship (*yrittäjäyys*). *Yrittävyyys* is not translatable as it is a word the Globe has made up through changing one letter in the word entrepreneurship to mean (more or less) "agency" and "aspiration". The creation of such catchwords relates to the mainstreaming and evaluation of the results: it is important to present the project as innovative – and worth future funding. However, one could contrast this positive vision of entrepreneurship with the realities of entrepreneurship in some migrant communities. There

are relatively high numbers of migrants establishing small firms, particularly restaurants, making the trade profitable through long hours of work and small salaries (Katila 2005; Wahlbeck 2005). This kind of entrepreneurship is often chosen out of necessity as an alternative to unemployment, rather than an opportunity for self-fulfilment, in the way that entrepreneurship was sometimes presented in the Globe.

One part of the programme was to offer information about legislation, social services, and employment services through, for instance, round-table discussions with invited experts. The Globe cooperated, among others, with the employment office, and one of its representatives regularly held office hours at the Globe. The mentors worked as support persons for the participants, and were often described as building a bridge between the women and the authorities, and between migrant women and society at large. One approach to the work at the Globe was to appoint women with very little knowledge of Finnish, or any other shared language, as trainees in the project. The trainees often performed everyday office tasks and “housework” in the office. The idea was that the employees and the trainee would learn to know each other better and traineeship would also be a means of learning Finnish in a relatively supportive environment. This practice made it possible to engage some of the women to attend the project on a daily basis. However the practice also caused confusion among the participants, as it was not altogether clear what it meant to be a trainee.

In a brochure one of the employees summarises the work of the Globe in the following way (my translation): “When the quarter of an hour of the clerk ends, our domain begins”. One principle in the Globe was that nobody was turned away from the project for not being part of the labour force, such as women who were taking care of young children at home, elderly women, or asylum seekers waiting for a decision on their status. Therefore, employment was not necessarily the key objective for all of the women (at least not for the immediate future). These principles produced schisms with the Employment and Economic Development Centres (T&E Centres) that administered the funding.

The Equal initiative required “transnational cooperation” of the projects, which mainly meant joint seminars with other similar (or not so similar) projects. One of the transnational partners of the Globe was a migrant women’s employment project in Austria, which the Globe visited. In order to dis-

cuss the dynamics of funding and the principles of work in the Globe, I will include an extract from a discussion during this visit. Here the employees of the Globe describe the project for the Austrian partner project during the visit (February 2004). In this short discussion, many of the tricky questions about the relationship between funding and the work arise; namely the control by the funding institutions and the tension between official politics and the true politics of the Globe. Esther is a “mentor” in the Globe, Kirsi is an employee of the Globe from a Finnish background, and Joana is an employee in the Austrian project. The quote is from a general discussion where Esther and Kirsi describe the Globe for the employees in the Austrian project. There are several people from both projects sitting around the table, including myself (English original).

Esther: We're always there to listen to whatever problems they have. [...] But anyway, people who are standing on our finance, they don't really care what we are doing apart from that people go to school and so on. But you can't really drive your car when it's full of snow; you have to clean it first before you can get into it and drive. The same [applies to] human being, you have problems at home, help them get rid of the problems and then you can go to school. And we always give the women 6 months, [...].

Joana: Do you teach [something]?

Esther: No, but we have our own study circles. We have had computer,

Kirsi: Sewing, photo,

Esther: Photograph workshop, we have all kinds of workshops we are giving for free.

Joana: So what is your main goal?

Kirsi: If we are speaking [of the goals written] in papers, the main goal is to find a job.

Joana: So this is the official goal

Kirsi: But our goal is empowerment

Esther: That the women are healthy...

[...]

Kirsi: And have a good life as they want it

Joana: But there are women who choose not to go to school?

Kirsi: Yes and that's ok of course, for us

Joana: But is it ok for them to remain in the program?

Kirsi: Yes, yes, because we can always say "they are on the path" to the authorities

[...]

Kirsi: But we have some women, a Chinese woman who is very active. She doesn't want to go to work and she doesn't need work, but she wants to do voluntary work

Esther: And she is seriously studying Finnish language.

As Esther describes above, there was a constant tension between the Globe and the Employment and Economic Development Centre (T&E Centre) that administers and controls the funding. The project was expected to translate the results into statistics about work placements, education, traineeships, or participation in events. Much of the time and energy at the project went towards develop ways of quantifying results that would satisfy the donors. In the case of empowerment, which was the main goal of the Globe, as Kirsi puts it in the quote, this led to absurdities. How would one measure a person's empowerment in terms of numbers? Or could you answer on a scale of 1–5 how empowered you are? This was a result of the fact that the Globe was funded as an employment project. From the perspective of employment politics and funding, the only real results were about whether the women found work or not.

The funding directs the opportunities available to the NGOs. In the early 2000s in Finland, it was possible to initiate activities that were focused on employment. This is not to say that the Globe considered employment to be unimportant or that it was a problem that it became an employment project. The ambiguous role of the Globe as an employment project is even reflected in a report which lists different social policy projects directed at migrants in Finland, in which the Globe was not listed in the section of employment projects but under the heading "women and family" (Ruhanen and Martikainen 2006). On the one hand, this can be interpreted as showing that a

women's project is understood to be always primarily about women. On the other hand, the Globe emphasised the "life" part in the term "working life" (for example in the Final Report) and also presented itself as a project supporting migrant women more generally.

Culture as a skill for the labour market

Culture is a much theorised and contested concept in research. There is a rich body of critique of the concept of culture in Anthropology, feminist scholarship and Sociology. In relation to multiculturalism and questions of migration, culture seems to have become a privileged concept and a primary way in which to explain and make sense of differences and diversity. In the Globe, culture intertwined with employment in a concrete way in the form of workshops that focused on *cultural identity*. Culture could perhaps best be understood as an intelligible (even if vague) way of addressing "differences" in multicultural contexts. It is such a strong discourse that it is difficult to avoid, particularly without having a clear alternative. The discourse on culture can also be understood as a kind of capital: it is useful to use. Considering the dominant position of "culture" in multicultural politics, it is not surprising that many of the projects, including the Globe, have chosen to focus on culture. In the Globe culture is interestingly mobilised as a *skill* and a form of *expertise* that will support women's *empowerment*:

Empowerment in the project means for example that *working skills* will be improved by supporting concrete actions strengthening the participants' special *culturally inherited skills*. This will support immigrant women's empowerment and development of their *expertise*. This is a way to *find out and make use of immigrant women's own resources* in working life. (A leaflet of the Globe, my emphasis, English original)

Migrant women are seen to have culturally inherited skills, which should or could be mobilised for the labour market. If the participants' "working skills" will be improved by supporting their culturally inherited skills, the question arises of what these skills might be. Here culture seems to stand in for education and work experience, which would be the main ingredients of a person's working skills if the text addressed non-migrants' position in the labour market. The text can also be seen to imply that migrant women do

not have any (relevant) education or work experience, and perhaps therefore their resources and skills for working life are drawn from their “culture”.

Annika Forsander (2002; 2007) has written about “ethnospecific” occupations or work placements, which refers to such work in which one’s ethnic background is a pre-requisite, and part of the competence. These include for instance those who teach “heritage languages”²¹ to their pupils, liaison interpreters, and employees in welfare services and projects that relate to integration or multiculturalism. For instance, the mentor work at the Globe could be described as ethnospecific work, even though what was required was not a specific ethnicity, but rather an experience of migration. This kind of employment is one way in which ethnic and cultural backgrounds and the experiences of migration can be transformed into capital in the labour market. One of the Globe’s DPs offered courses that combined studies in culture with handicrafts. For instance, there was a workshop on sewing puppets, which would represent the woman and her culture. There was also the idea of collecting stories for children that would be told by the puppets. Other workshops focused on culture that took place at the Globe (not all organised by the same DP) were a clay workshop, a photography workshop and, during one spring, a crop cultivation project in which different crops typical of women’s “home countries” were grown on a patch rented from the municipality. These allotments are aptly called “colony patches” in Swedish.

The workshops on cultural identity and handicrafts were not always successful. Some of the women enjoyed the workshops and they functioned as places to get to know each other and as spaces for informal chatting. Some of the problems that emerged were related to the workshops themselves: the participants did not always embrace the goals of the workshops, or these had remained unclear, and there was dissatisfaction with (some of) the workshop leaders and a lack of clarity about the role of the mentors. There were also administrative problems relating to the regulations about funding for the partners in the project. Due to the problems in the workshops, the agenda of “empowerment through culture” faded somewhat towards the end of the

21 There is no agreed expression for the languages taught to pupils from migrant backgrounds or whose parent/s come from migrant backgrounds. Other terms that are used include “immigrant minority language teacher”, “community language teacher” and “mother tongue teacher of immigrant children”. Some of the obvious problems with these phrasings are that few of the pupils are “immigrants” and they can also have several “mother tongues”.

project. In the Globe's final report, there was an emphasis on the "bottom-up" methods of working in which all the workshops and activities were initiated either by the participants or the employees from migrant backgrounds. There was an addition in parenthesis that this excluded the puppet workshop at the beginning. The workshops on cultural identity were not conducted during the last year of the three-year project.

The courses tended to emphasise concrete skills or activities (such as sewing, or aerobics) and were mainly led by former participants. Empowerment here focused less on "one's own culture" and was more closely related to self-confidence, and an improved ability to take care of matters relating to the Finnish social service system or other issues. The Globe developed the activities to focus on the methods of working that were found to be most effective; namely personal guidance and small group work. My interest in discussing the workshops on cultural identity lies in the fact that handicrafts and culture are included in many of the women's centres' agendas. Even if these workshops did not play a major role at the end of the project – they were perhaps even considered to have failed – it is nevertheless important to include them in the analysis. They are indicative of the fact that these are topics and methods of working that easily occur to people working in projects on multiculturalism, which highlights once again the privileged position of the concept of culture.

In national mythologies women often become abstract symbols for a national collective (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992; Yuval-Davis 1993). In Finland, a female figure known as the "Finnish Maiden" represents the country and its borders (Gordon et al. 2002; Koivunen 2003; Valenius 2004). Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992) also point out that women in a concrete way are seen as bearers of traditions, those who transmit traditions to the following generations (see also Mattsson 2008). This idea was the explicit starting point for the workshops that were meant to focus on women's cultural identity by the means of handicrafts. The Development Partner that organized this workshop presented them in the following way in a report:

The different cultural background of the migrant is usually seen as an obstacle to employment. The starting point of the courses is to regard the *ethnic background of the migrant woman as a resource*. Culture offers means to survive, to get along and to fulfil oneself. The innovative goal of the [...] project, to find new means for gaining

employment for migrants, will be realised exactly *through reinforcing the strengths of the migrants, i.e. their own culture*. Alongside this we will get to know the *demands of and opportunities available in the Finnish labour market*. In the foreground here are those areas of the labour market, where the migrant can make use of her or his cultural richness. *The aim of the courses is to find those sectors of the labour market where cultural richness is a resource*. (Report 2003, my translation and emphasis)

According to this report, the courses were closely linked to the labour market. The idea seems to be that culture is a resource that will enable women to acquire a better position in society – here in the labour market. In the workshops on cultural identity, there were two simultaneous agendas: that of transforming the cultural background into a resource, and that of creating employment in the field of handicrafts. One could ask why handicrafts were chosen as the area of the labour market that would appreciate cultural richness. “Culturally inherited skills” might equally be useful for other kinds of work, such as the ethnospecific jobs mentioned above, or, for instance, consultancy work in intercultural communication. These would be more lucrative areas of work than handicrafts. To focus on handicrafts as a “culturally inherited skill” suggests that migrant women – as a group – are handy, and perhaps “still” possess knowledge of the traditional ways of living. To focus on handicrafts in projects for migrant women is not unique to the Globe, but in fact is part of most of the programmes in women’s centres. The idea that women in a disadvantaged labour market position would make a living from handicrafts is also familiar in development aid projects, where “Third World women” produce items to be sold to the tourists and imported to the north. Katri Komulainen (2005) has examined discourses on women’s entrepreneurship in Finnish newspapers and notes that particularly for rural women, care work and handicrafts were considered as the primary areas of entrepreneurship. This seems to be the case for migrant women as well, even if the focus on entrepreneurship was fading towards the end of the project.

One of the courses that focused on culture was the previously mentioned puppet workshop that was organised three times (lasting for a half a year each time). The participants sewed puppets that were called “woman of the world” and they were supposed represent the culture of the sewer. The organiser defined the “woman of the world” in the following manner (course

plan 2003, my translation): “[t]he woman of the world is a feminine creature, who recognises similarities to the experiences of other women who live in the world. Aware of the meanings attached to womanhood in her own ethnic tradition, she also respects other women’s cultural difference.” The workshop’s aims were described as both theoretical – which involved learning about traditions and gender – and practical – which involved learning about one’s own strengths. One goal was also to learn such skills that could be transferable to the labour market. Concretely, the course involved sewing the puppet, collecting stories, and other handicrafts workshops, such as working with clay and felt, as well as learning about traditions.

It was intended that the stories that women would tell through the “woman of the world” puppet would be collected and published as a children’s book. The women wrote stories during the workshop in their own languages. During the fieldwork process I was quite confused about the puppets. I saw the puppets as fixing the “migrant women” to “culture”. One workshop would focus on making bride puppets, which was then explained as reflecting a core part of the life span of women, and thus a figure that all women could relate to. This hinted at a rigid, binary and heterosexual conception of femininity. Working with one’s cultural background also seemed imposed upon the migrant women by the Finnish workshop leaders. An analysis of the puppet-making workshops shows interesting and complicated links between traditions, roots, culture, sexuality, multiculturalism and skills. The workshops also led to important negotiations and discussions of the place of “culture” in the projects. In an interview, one of the mentors talked about the resistance the participants had to the workshop. Some of the participants felt the workshop imposed a definition of *who they were* (“woman of the world”) upon them. The workshop was constructed around the idea (or problem) that migrants’ culture is not appreciated in the labour market or society at large. The workshop aimed to tackle the problem through “reinforcing the strengths of the migrants, i.e. their own culture”. In a way the idea of the workshop resembles the arguments in gender equality debates where gender difference is emphasised: the argument goes that the whole of society can gain from women’s input, as it is different from that of men. Migrant women’s strong side is their “cultural richness” that should be appreciated and put to use in Finnish society. In chapter 7, I will also discuss

how differences between women are sometimes invoked through a bonding *as* women.

In one of the newsletters the puppets were described as the “trademark” of the project. The puppet workshop worked directly with the idea of women as bearers and transmitters of “culture” and “traditions”. One of the Finnish employees, who reflects on the workshop in a meeting (steering group, October 2003), states that: “I was thinking about this passing on of traditions that in my opinion, I don’t have any traditions, but I notice that when I’m bringing up my child, there are [ways of doing] things that have been in my home, that I want her to have” (my translation). She goes on to reflect that this kind of passing on of traditions, specifically to one’s child, might be a motivation for the migrant women to participate in the workshop. There is a close link between womanhood and motherhood in the project. The realities and conditions of mothers of small children are often seen to be the realities of the “migrant women”. The centrality of motherhood could be interpreted as a reflection of the stereotypic understanding of “migrant women” as mothers of numerous children. It can also be a useful assumption because of the idea that motherhood forms a point of contact for women from different backgrounds. It can further reflect the centrality of motherhood in Finnish gender equality politics (about the mother-citizen see Nätkin 1997; Helén 1997). One can identify an unreflective assumption of heterosexuality in multicultural women’s politics, even if the discourses concerning heterosexual relations are diverse. In chapter 6 I will analyse the ways in which heteronormativity and discourses about families take shape in multicultural women’s politics (see also Tuori 2007b; 2009).

The name of the puppet, the “woman of the world”, indicates that womanhood unites across geographical spaces and across differences. The “woman of the world” however has roots in, and belongs to, a certain culture. The puppet was also meant to “give voice” to the women through the stories she tells. The puppets were exhibited at different events (such as a book fair) and some of them were hung on the walls of the office together with other objects from the workshops. The agenda of working with women’s cultural roots was a serious one, and included Finnish culture: all of the employees created their own puppets, and part of the course programme was to present Finnish traditions as well. This is interesting in relation to Frankenberg’s (1993) study for instance, where white women in the US did not consider themselves as

having a culture. Here, too, the employee in the quotation above reflects upon whether she has traditions or not, and what it means to have traditions. Some of the Finnish traditions presented in the workshop would seem exotic for many Finns, (such as a Finnish tradition of shamanism), which implies that culture is often equated with the exotic. The workshops could resonate both with the Finnish regard for the importance of “roots”, as well as signal a nostalgia for something (traditions, perhaps?) that “we” have lost (see hooks 1992, 25; Wyatt 2004).

3. Postcolonial Finland

Intersectional questions

In this chapter I discuss my theoretical approach to the analyses of *racialised and gendered encounters* in multicultural women's politics. Theoretically my study is situated in postcolonial (feminist) theory, and it refers to theories on race and ethnicity, and analyses of power. These are the tools that I use to make sense of the Finnish context of multiculturalism. The focus on encounters is also theoretical: I am interested in the encounters that take place between people (and within written texts) who represent their social differences in various ways and in how power relations both define and may be challenged within these encounters. One way of referring to different axes of power, or multiple differences, is by using the concept of *intersectionality*, which has become prevalent in studies that seek to examine multiple differences (e.g. Crenshaw 1991; Lykke 2003, 2005; de los Reyes and Mulinari 2005; Phoenix and Pattynama 2006). My method of posing questions to the empirical material can be described as intersectional.

The idea of intersectionality is simple in the abstract, yet complicated as a (theoretical or other) practice: an intersectional analysis shows how no categories – race, class, gender, sexuality, ability and age – are separate but are mutually created, interdependent, and internally heterogeneous (e.g. Hill Collins 2000; Lykke 2003, 2005; de los Reyes and Mulinari 2005). The term was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) and was primarily used to describe the position of black women. The position of black women had not been captured in research on either gender or race inequalities, and the term intersectionality was thus intended to promote a kind of understanding other than that of “double or triple discrimination”, which could be understood as placing discriminations – working on the same principles – on top of each

other. Such a model did not work because the racism that women experience is qualitatively different from the racism that men experience and the sexism that black and/or migrant women experience is qualitatively different from the sexism that white women experience. This kind of understanding of differences is not tied to the concept of intersectionality as such, but is characteristic, for instance, of black feminism (e.g. Lorde 1998/1984; Hill Collins 2000; hooks 2000/1988). Intersectionality has become a widely used and debated concept in Nordic feminist research (Lykke 2003, 2005; Carbin and Tornhill 2004; de los Reyes and Mulinari 2005; de los Reyes and Gröndahl 2007). For Karen Barad (1998), the concept of “intra-sectionality” underlines the fact that categories are not separate and internally stable but intra-acting. The benefit of this concept is that it effectively and economically summarises what many researchers aspire to accomplish in their research.

Despite its roots in black feminism, intersectionality as it is used in the Nordic contexts today can refer to all kinds of differences, not necessarily, or not exclusively, race and gender. The term is also contested: it is criticised for equalising differences as if they worked with the same logic (e.g. Verloo 2006; Yuval-Davis 2006). Another criticism relates to the way that the concept, if it is translated into celebratory diversity politics, can lead to a politics that disregards power imbalances and contradictory interests (see Carbin and Tornhill 2004; de los Reyes and Mulinari 2005). Further, the fact that categories “intersect” does not necessarily imply a change within them. The term may also sound technical and alienating.

However, most often intersectionality is used to denote the importance of looking at different axes of power relations and of not reducing politics or people to one category. Singular categories, such as women, migrants, gays, or the disabled, do not capture the realities in which we live, or the ways in which these differences affect and define our lives. Further, actual people and categorisations do not match, and it is important to be aware of this incoherence in research. However, and importantly, not all categories are equally significant all the time (see also Yuval-Davis 2006). The debates about the usefulness of intersectionality concern primarily whether it can be applied *as a theory*, while the importance of addressing multiple differences and power relations is widely acknowledged.

One of the most interesting approaches to intersectionality comes from the Swedish researchers Paulina de los Reyes and Diana Mulinari (2005),

who develop it as a theory addressing different levels of power. This is another way in which intersectionality is relevant in my work. De los Reyes and Mulinari ground their understanding of intersectionality in feminist thinking, race critical theory, Marxism and poststructuralism. They emphasise that it is important to examine closely *how* power works in specific situations (2005, 16). Even if feminist theorising has been concerned with power relations and theorising power (e.g. Butler 1990), an analytical discussion of power is generally not included in empirical studies focusing on racial and gendered relations. De los Reyes and Mulinari (2005) examine power relations as intersectional at the different levels – the structural, the institutional and the individual – and further they examine how these different levels of power interact.

To characterise my way of asking questions as intersectional means that I focus on how different aspects of multicultural politics are racialised and how they construct nation and ethnicity. I ask questions about how heterosexuality, gender equality, empowerment, nation-building and womanhood intertwine with race/ethnicity. Even if I regard intersectionality as a useful way of asking questions and conceiving of the webs of differences, I still need specific theoretical approaches with which to analyse the range of differences at work. In this research project these are primarily race, ethnicity and nation, which I aim to understand through ethnographic work. Often I have approached race, ethnicity or a sense of belonging to the nation through another difference; for example, by asking how discourses on heterosexuality are racialised. While I describe my approach and way of asking questions as intersectional, in the analyses I do not often use the concept. The reason is simply that in the analyses themselves, the focus is on specific differences which have their specific genealogies.

My approach to understanding race, ethnicity and nation in the Finnish context of multiculturalism stems primarily from *postcolonial feminist approaches*. What can the “postcolonial” mean in a Finnish context and what makes the postcolonial a relevant concept for an analysis of multicultural women’s politics in Finland? Furthermore, what kinds of nuances could an analysis of Finnish multiculturalism bring to the theorising on postcolonialism? In this chapter I discuss the categories of race, ethnicity and nation in relation to my research. Writing about “theory” also means writing about travelling concepts (Bal 2002; Knapp 2005). Concepts travel both across dis-

ciplines as well as across different national research contexts. Some of these concepts, such as *ethnicity*, are established and have a long history of academic discussion in Finland, while others, such as *postcolonial*, have become the subject of debate much more recently.

Throughout the book I focus on power relations in multicultural politics. In this chapter I discuss how power relations are conceived in postcolonial perspectives, Foucauldian feminist perspectives and in intersectional approaches. I follow a Foucauldian perspective which considers differentiated forms of power: power as productive (of subjects), legal power (over somebody) and power as knowledge. A Foucauldian understanding of power as *productive* has become the predominant way of understanding power in much of the research done in feminist theorising, in Cultural Studies, and in the social sciences. The aim of many research projects is to study how subjects – whether they are migrants, working class women or lawyers – are produced in the webs of power in a particular context. Foucault (1994/1977, 120) famously stated:

If power were never anything but repressive, if it never did anything but to say no, do you really think one would be brought to obey it? What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, it also traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression.

Here Foucault explains power as a force that produces things: pleasure, knowledge, discourse. To understand power in this way means that it is not only “negative” but nor is it something one can “escape”. Therefore, in this kind of framework, politics cannot be about imagining a world *without* power relations. Of course, even before Foucault power had been considered as more than merely “repressive” and Foucault’s analysis of power extends the “repressive hypothesis”. For instance, Weber was concerned with different forms of legitimate power (e.g. Matheson 1994). Foucault’s writing has sometimes been read as suggesting a complete shift from understanding power as repressive (over somebody) to understanding power as productive (e.g. Brown 2001). In this study I follow those readings of Foucault that suggest *multiple forms of power* and I will examine what kinds of *effects* the

multiple forms of power have (Hoy 1986, 134–137; Spivak 1993b, 30–37; Honkanen 2004). Foucault (1990/1978, 92–93) argues that “[p]ower’s condition of possibility [...] must not be sought in the *primary* existence of a central point, in a *unique* source of sovereignty from which secondary and descendent forms would emanate” (my emphasis). Thus, I would understand this as meaning that there is no *one* form of power that would be on a higher hierarchical level and from which other forms of power would be derived (also Foucault 1994/1982). The different forms of power also *support* each other or cause *contradictions* (Foucault 1994/1982, 93).

In addition to a Foucauldian understanding of power, I also rely on some more sociological understandings of power. In particular, in order to understand *empowerment*, a nuanced analysis of agency is needed. Foucauldian approaches in empirical studies sometimes equate agency with resistance, with reference to Foucault’s utterance that “where there is power, there is resistance” (1990/1978, 95). Power is intimately linked with resistance and freedom in Foucault’s thinking, freedom being the condition of power relations (Foucault 1994/1982). Like de los Reyes and Mulinari (2005, 16), I find it important to theorise both inequalities and agency. In their words:

We see the force of intersectionality primarily in developing a theoretical perspective that connects power and inequality to individuals’ potential to act as subjects within the structures of society, institutional practices and current ideologies. (My translation)

Thus, I will not take the productive nature of power as the only way to understand it; rather I will consider the different ways in which power operates in multicultural politics. These include: power as productive (of subjects such as migrants and Finns), power as knowledge (as expertise) and legal power or power over somebody. These different forms of power can either support each other or contradict each other. To illustrate my approach, I will consider the position of an asylum seeker in Finland, which shows how the different forms of power support one another. On the one hand, an institution, the Finnish Immigration Service (*Migri*), has the legislative power to decide *over* the asylum seeker’s life, namely whether she or he will be granted asylum, a residence permit, or be expelled. On the other hand, the “asylum seeker” is also a figure that is circulated and re-produced in the media, administrative texts, research reports and in the practices of reception centres. The production of the asylum seeker “as a figure” could be analysed within

a framework of productive power (see Tyler 2006). In the case of the asylum seeker (and of course, as this is an illustration, it is also a simplification), “productive power” is supported by “legal power”, i.e. the legislation and the practices whereby the authorities can decide over the asylum seeker’s life. Power as knowledge can also support the other forms of power through “expert knowledge” about the asylum seeker’s realities, such as “knowledge” of backgrounds and the motives for seeking asylum (for instance, in the Ministry of Interior Affairs and the Finnish Immigration Service).

The above account presents power following a Foucauldian perspective. This perspective (particularly as it is most often conceived) does not provide extensive tools to examine the strategies and practices of the asylum seekers themselves. There have also been a few cases in the past few years in Finland, in which the Lutheran church has given so-called church asylum to asylum seekers who have received a negative decision by the state. Here, for instance, an institution with symbolic power (compared with the legal power of the Immigration Service) can make the situation more complex. Mulinari and Neergaard (2004) use the concept of *subordinated inclusion* to denote the ways in which migrants can be included in the state, but not in the nation.

As this study is about employment, class is also a relevant concept. It is not the primary focus in my work, but it is, however, important to be aware of the slippery slope between “culture” and “class” in the case of migration. Debates on precariousness, which relate primarily to the insecurity of the labour market, have on the one hand brought class to the centre of a cultural analysis, but these are not yet very visible in research literature in the Finnish context. The debate on precariousness has highlighted how “permanent instability that has been distinctive for the poor world is now forcing itself through the walls of welfare into the rich world” (de los Reyes and Mulinari 2005, 19, my translation). Importantly, the labour market has not become equally unstable for everybody, but there is a clear gendered and racialised division. The instability is racialised and gendered so that not everybody gains equally from a strong economy. At the same time, some people are more dependent on economic fluctuations than others. Even if this study mainly focuses on discourses and practices at the “grassroots” level of a project, the material conditions for project work are important. The Globe was part of the “project economy”, one of numerous short-term projects that employ people for three years.

Postcolonial readings of Finnish multiculturalism

What does a project that works to enhance labour market participation for migrant women in Finland in the twenty-first century have to do with colonialism? And what about a seminar that brings together gender equality professionals and NGOs to discuss the topic of “gender equality and migrant women”? In Finland the legacies of colonialism²² are not part of the nation’s understanding of itself. Indeed, Finland has not been regarded as participating in colonial projects, despite the recently acknowledged colonisation of the Saami (Kuokkanen 2007; Vuorela 2009). In this section I discuss the meanings of the colonial in a Finnish context and what kinds of implications a postcolonial perspective could have for understanding present-day Finland and the negotiation of differences. The “postcolonial” in this work relates primarily to two issues: first, we need to understand Finnish landscapes of race and ethnicity today as legacies of particular relations to colonialism, and, second, we need to consider whether thinking about Finland as involved in colonialism or *complicit* in colonial processes might change or affect our understanding of the nation.

A postcolonial approach refers to a theoretical perspective that considers how histories of colonialism have shaped the contemporary world. A postcolonial analysis has a dual nature: on the one hand, it relates to an analysis of specific histories and their legacies in the world; on the other hand, it is a means of understanding how racial differences and otherness, as well as centres and peripheries, are created. Even if my work is not about historical forms of colonialism, these forms are mobilised as a means of understanding the world of multicultural encounters in twenty-first century Finland. Postcolonialism emphasises the altered continuities and traces of colonialism in

22 The concept of the postcolonial is closely related to the concepts of the colonial and neocolonial. In my understanding, the postcolonial refers, on the one hand, to theoretical “postcolonial” approaches and, on the other hand, to the continuation of the historical forms of colonialism. Both postcolonial and colonial refer primarily to those colonial relations and their continuities which are traditionally referred to as colonial (particularly European colonial projects since the sixteenth century). Neocolonial refers to colonial-like forms (particularly economic forms), which are not related to the historical forms that are referred to as colonialism. Neocolonial relations could include, for instance, US politics in the Middle East (which could also be defined as imperial politics), the Finnish forestry industry in Uruguay and Argentina, and perhaps also Chinese interventions in Africa. However, these relations could also be examined using postcolonial theory.

the world today. There is no single postcolonial theory, but there are many kinds of perspectives that are labelled “postcolonial” (e.g. Löytty 2006). The kind of postcolonial approach I apply is one which has its roots in race critical theories and black feminist thinking (e.g. Mohanty 1984; Spivak 1993a; Lewis 2000; Ahmed 2000a, 2004a). These discussions have taken place particularly in the fields of European and Nordic Cultural Studies and feminist theories, and in research on migration and ethnicity/race.

In Nordic academic discussions, the postcolonial has most commonly been used as a theoretical perspective that explores the ways in which the Nordic countries bear the legacies of colonialism in cultural representations, such as literature, music, lyrics and visual images, and what kinds of processes of othering take place in Nordic contexts. Ulla Vuorela (2006) has asked why we need the words *post* and *colonial* in order to discuss unequal power relations in the Finnish (and Nordic) context. What does postcolonial theorising contribute to the analysis, which is not reducible to “unequal power relations”? According to Vuorela, colonialism can be understood as “small events” rather than as a singular and monolithic conquest. She develops the term “colonial complicity”²³ to describe the kind of engagement with colonialism that was typical of Finland and the other Nordic countries. Colonial complicity also refers to the fact that the ways in which colonial relations in Finland have been performed or produced were not necessarily perceived or understood as such.

Colonialism has been regarded as a phenomenon that is foreign to Finland due to the fact that the country was never an expansionist nation-state during the historical era of colonialism. Finland, together with other Nordic countries, has in more recent times considered itself, and been considered by others, to have international relations marked by an active role in development aid and peacekeeping rather than by colonial practices (Mulinari et al. 2009). There are two primary responses to the claims that the postcolonial perspective is irrelevant in the Nordic countries: first, these countries are culturally part of the colonial order of the world; second, commercial and business relations with the south are very similar to those of so-called colo-

23 The concept of colonial complicity also refers to a position where one is subjected to colonial rule, yet also benefits from it. The concept has been used to refer to, for instance, the Indian upper classes that benefited from British colonial rule (Hirsiho 2005).

nial nations and are also formed in the context of historical colonial relations (Lehtonen and Löytty 2007, 105).

The position of Finland in terms of historical colonial rule has had different meanings. On the one hand, the debate has examined the ways in which Finland has been part of global colonial relations. This is the primary way in which colonialism is relevant in my study. In addition, the colonisation of the Saami in Lapland constitutes an internal colonisation within the nation. Rauna Kuokkanen (2007) has studied the position of the Saami people in the light of postcolonial theories. She argues that there is a tendency, even in critical research, to emphasise the importance of “modernity” and “advancement” for the Saami people in the form of introducing Finnish educational institutions and welfare state services. These have been seen by the Finns primarily as a positive development, which has hindered the discussion of the colonial effects of these institutions, such as the rendering invisible of Saami history in Finnish schools and the re-organisation of both education and decision-making according to the terms of the Finnish state (Kuokkanen 2007). This aspect of the colonisation of the Saami people in Finland gives new content to the concept of a “welfare state nationalism” (Mulinari et al. 2009). The discrimination against and racist attitudes towards the Roma have also been acknowledged as a kind of internal colonisation (Vuorela 2009). On the other hand, the debate has concerned whether Finland itself can be understood as having been colonised, either by Sweden or by Russia. During the era of European colonialism (from the sixteenth century) what is now Finland was the eastern part of Sweden, and in 1809 it became an autonomous part of Russia. Whether or not we regard the Swedish or the Russian rule of Finland as “colonial”, there are many kinds of civilising missions and complex relations that could be addressed through postcolonial theorising (see Lehtonen and Löytty 2007, 107–110; Greedharry 2007). When talking about different colonial rules and practices, it is also important to consider the effects these have had on the area. As far as violent conquest is concerned, the Swedish or Russian rule in Finland cannot be compared with the colonial projects in African countries.

Another question in relation to colonial pasts in Finland are the concrete relations between Finland and Finnish people and colonial regimes; as well as, the more general colonial heritage in Finland which is manifested particularly in cultural representations. Both Mai Palmberg (2009) and Ulla

Vuorela (2009) have tracked concrete traces and routes of colonialism in the Nordic contexts. Palmberg (2009) argues that the Nordic countries have been both ideologically and practically committed to colonialism. She reminds us that the colonial administration in Congo also employed Nordic people. The relationship between colonialism and eugenics is a close one and, according to Palmberg (2009), eugenics is part of the “colonial mind”. Eugenics was particularly strong in Sweden and Finland (although less so in Denmark and Norway, Melby et al. 2006, 149–155; see also Molina 2005, 95). Vuorela (2009) discusses colonial complicity through the seduction of colonial imagery, for instance, in children’s literature. Seductive colonial images could include tales of princesses, as well as the story of Pippi Longstocking, which is radical in its representation of gender but includes strongly colonial features²⁴. She raises the important point that this seduction of the colonial invites, for instance, feelings of pity through empathy. Another trace of the colonial in the Finnish context is the fact that the founding figure of Finnish Sociology and Anthropology, Edward Westermarck, was professor of colonial Anthropology at the London School of Economics (Vuorela 2009). Missionary work has also been studied as a type of colonial or colonial-like endeavour (Löytty 2006).

There has been a cherished understanding of Finland as “exceptional”, both in relation to gender relations and in relation to its position on questions of race and ethnicity (e.g. Koivunen 2003; Rastas 2007a). For instance, there have been public debates about whether certain words and images are racist in the Finnish context. One of the ongoing public debates has been about the forcible defence of the “n-word” (Rastas 2007a), another one about certain images on candy wrappers as an important part of the national culture, and their defence as not being racist in the specific Finnish context (Rastas 2007b; Rossi 2009). Racist caricatures on coffee and cocoa packages and candy wrappers were a part of common colonial visual imagery all over Europe in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century (Goldberg 2006; Rastas 2007b; Rossi 2009). The assumption of non-complicity in the

24 Canonical anarchist children’s stories by Astrid Lindgren about a girl who lives with her horse and ape, while she fantasises that her father is the “king of cannibals”.

colonial enterprise makes the defence of the visual representations as “not racist” possible in the Finnish context (Mulinari et al. 2009; Rossi 2009)²⁵.

The perception of Finland as a positive international agent has recently been damaged by the actions of Finnish multinational companies. The forestry industry has established large pulp factories on the border between Argentina and Uruguay, among other places (see Pakkasvirta 2008). In the Finnish media the factories have been discussed primarily with a focus on environmental issues. The media has often framed the local resistance to the factories as misconceptions towards the Finnish factories in regard to pollution and environmental impact. In Argentina and Uruguay there have been activist initiatives and resistance to the factories and the neo-colonial practices of the companies, and to the exploitation of the resources in the south in order to make money for the north. The huge investment during recent years in national and global competitiveness in Finland also challenges the perception of Finland as a positive international agent. The ideology that emphasises national competitiveness has encompassed practices such as development aid, labour migration, and a range of guarantees of favourable working conditions for Finnish multinational companies, to ensure that they keep their headquarters in Finland (see Irni 2009; Keskinen et al. 2009). These kinds of (neo)colonial practices challenge the self-image of Finland as an innocent, small, yet strong nation.

In my view and in the context of this study, the postcolonial is particularly helpful in understanding what are often called essentialising conceptions of ethnicity, stereotypes and ethnocentrism. For instance, migrants – as figures – are in different ways imagined as traditional, religious and collective, while the Finns – as figures – are defined as modern, secular and individual. These assumptions are mobilised in everyday encounters as well as in project plans and official politics. To conceptualise these assumptions as “stereotypes” or understand them through “ethnocentrism” are valid approaches, but they can be further explored. How is it that some ethnocentrisms are more powerful than others? Where do the stereotypes come from? Why do the stereotypes take certain forms and not others? How does power work in stereotypes and ethnocentrisms? Looking at the traces and current forms of

25 Similar debates have taken place in the Netherlands, for instance; see Goldberg 2006.

colonial relations, representations and practices can answer these questions and help to contextualise them.

In the Finnish context, multiculturalism is often understood as a result of migration, and even as a phenomenon that started in the 1990s. Using this logic, racism is an unfortunate, but natural, downside of migration and multiculturalism. However, one can argue that even if multiculturalism in Finland changed shape after the 1990s, those migrating to Finland have moved to a place where there are many preconceptions about them. If migrants should not be regarded as a “tabula rasa” or without history, neither should the so-called host society. A postcolonial perspective places migration occurring today in a longer history of relations between different places and people, such as “Europe” and “Africa” or “Asia”. Also, racism is seen as constitutive of the nation, rather than a question concerning “others” (see also Mulinari et al. 2009). The Finnish context has been analysed from a postcolonial perspective, at least in relation to literature (e.g. Löytty 2006; Nissilä 2007), visual culture (Rossi 2009), media texts (Rastas 2007b; Kivinen 2007), children’s experiences (Rastas 2007a), violence against women (Keskinen 2009; Jungar 2003), multiculturalism (Tuori 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2009; Laukkanen 2006), housework practices (Latvala 2009) and oriental dance (Laukkanen 2006). These analyses have traced the histories of colonial thought in the Finnish context. There are also analyses of Finnish participation and complicity in the colonial rules and the ways in which Finnish people share the colonial mind (Kivinen 2003; Löytty 2006; Vuorela 2009; Palmberg 2009). All of these analyses show continuities in the histories and understandings of race relations from before the 1990s.

Thus, from a postcolonial perspective, neither multiculturalism nor racism is *the result* of migration. A postcolonial perspective helps to trace more concretely where the different figures of “migrant”, “African” or “Arab” come from and what exactly is mobilised in multicultural encounters. The relation between colonial pasts and presents is not simple or determinist. A postcolonial perspective does not mean that Finnish multiculturalism of the twenty-first century can be easily *explained* by the colonial relations of the past.

Postcolonial thinking is therefore one way of analysing how racialisation in multicultural encounters today can be understood as a legacy of (colonial) pasts (e.g. Alexander and Mohanty 1997, xxi–xxvii; Ahmed 2000a). To consider encounters today as being affected by previous encounters and

histories should not imply that the colonial relations of the past will explain the Finnish present in a straightforward way. This kind of understanding of relations between past and present comes close to the concept of the *politics of memory* (Boyarin 1994; Hirsiaho 2005, 42; Vuorela 2006), which refers to conceiving “of ‘past’ events as truly effective in the present” (Boyarin 1994, 2). Not all past events are equally effective in the present, which can also show how historicising is a political act (Honkanen 2004). Ahmed (2000a, 10–11) describes postcolonialism as a failed historicity, meaning that the postcolonial cannot be reduced to a disruption with the past, nor to a simple continuation of it (see also McClintock 1995, 9–17).

In order to rethink differences in the Finnish context, the politics of memory could mean “remembering Finland” as constituted by colonial processes both through the histories of “old” minorities (particularly the Roma, the Saami, Russians, Tatars, Jews and the Finland-Swedish²⁶), through relations to other places, as well as through fantasies and images of other places and people. Not only is the politics of memory of the so-called Finnish pasts important; so too is the politics of memory of the migrant pasts. As research on diasporas has particularly shown and contested, migrants are often referred to as a “tabula rasa” or without history (and particularly without relevant work experience etc.) prior to migration (e.g. Wahlbeck 1999). Yet, paradoxically, migrants are at the same time intimately attached to the “past” through routine questions such as “where do you come from?” (Fortier 2008, 93–95; see also chapter 6).

Distinguishing colonial patterns of thought in encounters between migrants and non-migrants does not mean that those encounters would be *defined entirely by colonialism*. It is also important to be sensitive to how the colonial processes are mutual ones, never affecting only one party. Both “colonisers” and “colonised” share the same world, albeit in very different ways (e.g. Ahmed 2000a, 11). This perspective can be explored further by quoting Spivak (1996, 9), who has described her project as the “careful un-learning our privilege as our loss”²⁷. This could mean that the privileges are dependent on and formed by the world of oppression. Thus, the privileges imply

26 All of these minorities have specific histories and positions, which differ greatly from each other.

27 I want to thank the Spivak reading circle at the Department for Women’s Studies at ÅAU, where we discussed at length the meaning of this sentence.

such losses that the privilege itself could be “unlearned as a loss”. In the following pages I examine more concretely the ways in which the postcolonial can be understood in the particular context of Finland and its multicultural women’s politics. In my research, I have found the postcolonial to be a useful concept to understand encounters in the politics of multiculturalism. On the one hand, it provides tools to analyse the different figures, or shadows of these figures that are present in the encounters (such as the migrant woman, or the strong Finnish woman). On the other hand, a postcolonial perspective is helpful in analyses of practices of non-hearing that often relate to these figures. A postcolonial analysis is useful as it addresses the structural, social, psychic and symbolic levels, and focuses on how they are intertwined. Understanding how racialised patterns or racism work in the individual person’s life requires an understanding of the relationship between these different levels.

Frantz Fanon, one of the founding figures of postcolonial theory, has analysed the psychological effects of racism. I include here a quote where he writes powerfully about the way in which a symbolic figure, i.e. that of the dangerous black man, is mobilised in an encounter. This passage has been analysed by Sara Ahmed (2004, 62–64) who shows how fear is constructed in the encounter: “fear opens up past histories of association [...], which allows the white body to be constructed as apart from the black body in the present”. The encounter takes place in a train where a small white child becomes afraid of the black man. Fanon (1986, 113–114) writes:

My body was given back to me sprawled out, distorted, recoloured, clad in mourning in that white winter day. The Negro is an animal, the Negro is bad, the Negro is ugly; look, a nigger, it’s cold, the nigger is shivering because he is cold, the little boy is trembling because he is afraid of the nigger, the nigger is shivering with cold, that cold that goes through your bones, the handsome little boy is trembling because he thinks the nigger is quivering with rage, the little white boy throws himself into his mother’s arms: Mama, the nigger’s going to eat me up.

Past encounters (be they visual, textual, or in the form of stories or face-to-face interactions) are not revealed in the moment of a current encounter, but are strongly present in it. The little boy has learned to be afraid of the black man. Fanon (1986) writes that he “was responsible for my body, for my race,

for my ancestors” and shows in an effective way how racialised figures matter in everyday encounters. This passage was originally published in 1970 and since it sounds familiar even today, it can be seen as a marker of the continuities in the histories of race and racial relations.

All theories or perspectives have their possible pitfalls, and require special sensitivity when listening to the empirical material or the phenomenon under scrutiny. In much research on migration and ethnic relations in the Nordic context a common pitfall has been not to consider power relations and not to name and analyse racism. In postcolonial analyses the risk is rather the opposite. Sometimes a postcolonial perspective can lead to a locked analysis of “us” and “them” when the researcher is particularly eager to show, detect and contest unequal power relations (see also Löytty 2006). This can portray the world as a more dichotomous place than it would need to be. Aihwa Ong (1999) criticises the postcolonial concept for its Eurocentricity, as if everything, in any context, is related to Europe and its colonial histories and legacies. This is an important criticism: it is important to be aware of the moments where the postcolonial implies self-centredness so that everything in the end returns to Europe, Europeanness and its (perceived) superior position. The danger is that this kind of analysis dichotomises the world into Europe and rest of the world, or into the west and the rest²⁸. Another way of looking at (post)colonialism is not to consider European colonialism as the only colonial rule in the world history, but to think about different colonial-style rules and empires and the traces they have left in the world (e.g. the Ottoman Empire, the Soviet Union or China in different epochs, see Huttunen 2009; Vuorela 2009). For instance, migration patterns in the world have largely followed colonial relations.

There is another critique of the postcolonial which I find important. There are scholars who argue that postcolonialism is not a particularly appropriate tool for the analysis of racism in Finland because there are forms of racism that are not related to the histories of colonialism, such as racism against the Roma and towards Finnish Russians (e.g. Rastas 2007a). One pitfall in postcolonial theorising is that the history of European colonialism, particularly in Africa, South East Asia and South America, easily becomes

28 There is a rich literature on the identity, exclusions and boundaries of “Europe” (e.g. Balibar 1998; White 2000; Lewis, Fink & Clarke 2001; Asad 2002; Griffin with Braidotti 2002; Lewis 2005; Yeğenoğlu 2006).

the only history through which the world is understood, i.e. the only history that is repeated and reproduced (see also Ong 1999; Griffin with Braidotti 2002). This particular history is important for the world as we perceive it today, but equally important is the intra-European history of race, consisting primarily of eugenics and anti-Semitism. Eugenics has often been explained by colonialism: the conquest needed legitimation from race biology. How we (still) think through race stems from this complex history. The Roma and the Jews have been subjected to violence and discrimination, much of which has been based on ideas of race. The postcolonial analyses have often failed to discuss anti-Semitism as part of race relations (Back and Solomos 2000, 10). Postcolonialism is the “umbrella term” through which I understand or analyse race and ethnicity. Most often I use “race/ethnicity” to indicate that I find both concepts important. In the Finnish context, race is a term seldom used in research on migration and ethnic relations, and I think it is important to explore its place in the Finnish context.

Race, ethnicity and nation

I use the concept of race alongside ethnicity and nation in this book. I explore how these different concepts make sense, and what their implications are in the Finnish context. In academic discourses in Finland the preferred concept in research on migration and ethnic relations has been *ethnicity* rather than *race*. In public debates, the term “ethnicity” is used to some extent, while “race” is absent – “culture”, here, is the preferred concept (see also Anis 2008). In a fairly recent publication on the position and life conditions of migrant families, the editors state that “[i]n research and also everyday language the concept of race has luckily disappeared and it has often been replaced by the concept of culture” (Alitolppa-Niitamo and Söderling 2005, 9, my translation). The authors do not elaborate on why race has *luckily* disappeared, but we can surely understand this as a reference to race as an essential category. Both ethnicity and race relate to ideas of common origins or ideas of people’s characteristics that can be derived from the common origin. These two concepts are commonly distinguished thus: ethnicity relates to an idea of common “culture”, while “race” is a concept derived from bodily or even biological differences, and has a clear connection with eugenics. My aim here is to discuss the use of these two concepts in Finnish multiculturalism. Ethnicity and race relate to somewhat different theoretical traditions; the

former to research on international migration and ethnic relations, the latter to, for instance, race critical theory, black feminism and postcolonial theory. I will not take either ethnicity or race as a starting point or as the appropriate way of describing the Finnish context, but will rather explore how these two are invoked in the material. I argue that it is important to consider how *race* works in the Finnish context. I regard both race and ethnicity as gendered and sexualised, and they are not singular or isolated from other axes of difference (see the discussion on intersectionality).

Discussing race/ethnicity in Finland, as many researchers have pointed out (Ruuska 2002; Horsti 2005; Löytty 2006; Rastas 2007a), is a messy business involving not only both these concepts, but nationality as well. The national term “Finnishness” is more often defined ethnically than as a concept indicating “mere” membership of a nation-state (e.g. Clarke 1999; Lepola 2000; Ruuska 2002). This is not particular only to Finland, but rather common in European nation-states and part of nationalist ideologies (Eriksen 1993, 118; Huttunen 2005, 132). If it is not always possible to distinguish race from ethnicity, these two are also intertwined with belonging to the nation. Laura Assmuth (2004, 140–141) points out that ethnicity needs to be examined in the context of political entities and forces, such as states, and not only as a cultural identity. Many researchers have noted how the national and ethnic term Finnishness conflates with race, i.e. whiteness. For instance in Anna Rastas’ (2007a, 101) research on children’s experiences of racism, the interviewees continuously referred to Finnishness as whiteness. Ruth Frankenberg (1997, 4) writes that it is important to ask “[w]hen has whiteness been visible and when has it been ‘unmarked’? When has whiteness ‘disappeared’ into national, ethnic, or cultural namings?” She also points out that the “unmarked” nature of whiteness is unmarked only for those inhabiting that position.

Despite the common conflation of Finnishness with whiteness, there are few analyses about *how* that happens, or in what ways different whitenesses are racialised. Certainly “eastern” or “southern” whiteness is racialised in different ways than “western” or “northern” whiteness. Whiteness does not always imply a self-evident inhabiting of the norm (see Griffin with Braidotti 2002, see the discussion on the position of Finnish Russians). Many Finnish researchers have ended up not speaking in racial terms, partly due to the fact that some of the main differences within the nation exist within what is seen

as whiteness, rather than as a question of white and non-white. The strong connection of race to racial biology has also meant that many researchers as well as policymakers have considered it better not to use the term at all (for a discussion, see for instance Rastas 2005, 82; 2007a). “Race” has not been redefined as a political term in the Finnish context, apart from research contexts using postcolonial and race critical theory and Cultural Studies approaches²⁹. *Ethnicity* has therefore become the concept with which to understand differences in Finland. There has been an air of innocence around ethnicity, as if it does not carry the problems of race, as if it is somehow unproblematic. This innocence has been contested many times, and as Hutunnen (2005, 123) points out, the term “ethnic cleansing” has at least taken away the innocence of the word. I find it important to focus both on ethnicity and race defining the Finnish landscapes of difference.

Like the term “postcolonial”, “race” has also travelled primarily from British and American contexts to research in Finland and the other Nordic countries. The Finnish history of eugenics and race biology is important to address in studies on race. The history of racism is long and ugly, and it is important to address it, instead of pretending it does not exist (by using other words). Finland, along with Sweden, Switzerland and Germany, was at the forefront of eugenics in the late nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century (Hietala 1996; Ahlbeck-Rehn 2006, 323–326). Eugenic politics had two primary aims in Finland. First, a large-scale research project, funded by the Finnish Academy of Science, was carried out in order to confirm the whiteness of “the Finns” (Hietala 1996, 199; also Ruuska 2002). The second aim was to “enhance the quality of the population”, and the methods of achieving this ranged from health campaigning to forced sterilisations exercised by the state.

In the Finnish language a breed of dog or cat or cow is called “race”. This becomes particularly problematic with English terms like “multiracial” or

29 Gudrun Axeli Knapp (2007) discusses the problems of the term “race” travelling to Germany. In the German context researchers use the English word *race* in German texts, as the German concept *Rasse* is too loaded with the history of Nazism. In Finnish texts, race is most often written with quotation marks to show that the writer means race as a constructed category (e.g. Rastas 2007). I use the quotation marks at times, particularly if I am unsure of how my text will be read. However, I do not use quotation marks around other concepts that refer to constructed categories, for instance, gender, gay or woman. These concepts have different kinds of histories and effects, which affects the choice to explicitly mark the fact that race refers to a construction.

“mixed race”, which sound like “mixed breed” when translated directly³⁰. The words relating to race are uncomfortable and they are linked to violent histories and present situations. Not only has the academic discussion dealt little with race, but there has also not been a tradition of strong anti-racist activism, which affects the discussion of the concepts of race and racism. The discourses around multiculturalism have been much more about “tolerance” or “promoting equality” than about racism (see Suurpää 2005, 59–62). The preference for using “ethnicity” to “race” also relates to the violent history of racism. The historical connection to eugenics and slavery, where the roots of thinking in terms of racialised hierarchies can be found, are important in understanding how race works. Paul Gilroy (2002) views race as “a precarious discursive construction” and suggests that it should be linked with politics and history and not only culture and identity. Therefore race, as a discursive construction, has many material effects.

30 In an e-mail discussion group for researchers working on racism there have been lively debates about the translation of various English words into Finnish.

4. Ethnographic approaches: situating the subjects

A methodological account of an ethnographic process weaves theory, empirical material, and research questions together alongside an account of the fieldwork process. Ethnographic work can be described as an improvisatory practice: theorising evolves in social situations that need rapid responses (Cerwonka and Malkki 2007). This study started to take shape when I was first writing drafts of a research plan with a focus on minority media production and conditions for such media. I had been previously involved in a mapping of minority media production in Finland (Kauranen and Tuori 2002). At the time the Department of Women's Studies at Åbo Akademi University had agreed to conduct an evaluation for the Globe. My initial interest was to get involved in some kind of feminist anti-racist activism and this seemed to be a good opportunity. Fairly soon I realised that I had "in my hands" an interesting, and in many ways challenging, PhD project. From the beginning, I considered the study an ethnographic one. This meant primarily that I would participate in the activities, and spend time in the project and not only pop in for an interview or collect all the printed material the project produced for discourse analysis. It also meant that I could participate in different kinds of settings and listen to different kinds of discussions, formal and informal, intimate and public. These were the kind of activities I thought of as invaluable to ethnographic research. Ethnography means more than "participating", "observing" or "hanging around": it is a specific way of producing knowledge (see also Cerwonka 2007, 20).

The way in which I have learned to think about methodology stems mainly from Sociology (inspired by Cultural Studies), feminist (particularly black and postcolonial) theories and feminist ethnography. To consider the world as socially constructed, and knowledge as created in the research set-

ting, is the kind of methodological and theoretical thinking I first learned. There is no data “out there” to be found, but it is always created by the researcher (Silverman 2000). It is important to set out in detail *how* it is created: that is, to give a detailed account of what was going on *in the specific situation* and in the interaction between the research subject and the researcher. Feminist methodological discussions led me to think about the position of the researcher and the research subject as both participating in *formative power relations*, and not just as two separate parties who interact in the research process. The researcher and the research subject exist in a hierarchical relationship to each other, although this may be contradictory and changeable. For instance, the researcher could be in a privileged position in terms of education, race or their place in the labour market and not only because of her or his position as *researcher*. Or conversely, the researcher might be in a less privileged position than the research subjects because she or he is younger, or is disadvantaged in the situation by race or class in some way. These kinds of positions have effects on the research encounters and can, for instance, mobilise issues about who is entitled to ask questions³¹ (see Silius 1992).

To write in the tradition of ethnographic research includes writing myself into the ethnographic accounts of power, objectivity and representation. From the beginning I considered ethnography to be a complicated practice and therefore, perhaps strangely, a meaningful way of producing knowledge. Feminist ethnography has meant to be forced to deal with questions of the ethics and politics of research in everyday situations, and the complex constructions of hierarchies in a research project (e.g. Stacey 1988; Ahmed 2000b; Naples 2003). I gladly situate myself in the tradition of (feminist) ethnography partly *because* it makes things complicated.

To conduct a research project while being the evaluator at the same time is a complicated position. I agreed with the Globe that the evaluation would consist of participation in the project and delivering an evaluation report, and that the aims of the evaluation would be developed together with the project. The Globe gave me a more or less free hand in drawing up the evaluation and using the data gathered for my PhD project. The Equal-programme, like other forms of funding by the European Social Fund (ESF),

31 For instance my right to ask questions was never questioned or discussed, which partly reflects the whole setting of multicultural politics in the Finnish context.

requires different levels of evaluation. The project was evaluated externally but also evaluated itself continuously (see Kankare 2006; Sulkunen 2006). The evaluation by the Department of Women's Studies would be something in between; officially it was a self-evaluation, as the department was one of the development partners (DP's) of the Globe. To be involved in an EU-funded project was a new experience both for the Globe and the department. Therefore none of us had a clear picture of what an evaluation of an ESF-funded project meant. I considered the main benefit of the evaluation to be that I could contribute something to the project, in that I could help it to fulfil a funding requirement. However, evaluation as my point of entry to the project had many implications, all of which I was not quite aware at the beginning³². On the one hand, it gave me access to many positions. I could for instance participate in the staff meetings and trips that the project undertook. Being the evaluator made my participation in any meetings or events self-evident and (at least at the beginning) desirable. On the other hand, easy access can be a complicating factor for ethnographic work. As my access partly relied on a formal position and not trust and good-will, it had an influence on what kinds of questions I could ask and what kind of participation was possible for me.

The two positions often became blurred; or perhaps I could say that the ethnographer was lurking somewhere behind the evaluator. Mostly I was presented as the evaluator, and it was not always possible to explain my double position in the project. Sometimes I felt rather uncomfortable, partly because I considered the evaluation, on a larger scale, to be a dubious process: are all these evaluations necessary? What do the projects gain from the evaluations? If nothing, then who gains from them? Moreover, the evaluation is also a specific genre of research with a specific vocabulary and particular interests in which I had no training. The department had not promised to deliver an evaluation in this genre, which would have meant using models for measuring the short-term and long-term impact of the project on the participants and on society, and for assessing how well the project succeeded in building cooperative networks (Työministeriö 2007). The whole idea of

32 Partly this was due to the "rush" that comes with starting a new project: everybody is keen and loving, the project embraced me and I embraced the project. Being a recently graduated young person, I did not consider myself to be in an officially powerful position, which I nevertheless was because of the evaluation, and this had an effect on the work, particularly towards the end.

the evaluation was that it would be of a fairly practical nature, and produce information that the project could use in its work. My stated purpose, in addition to assessing, collaboratively, the activities of the project, was also to analyse racial and ethnic power relations in the project work: I asked how the work tasks were distributed, and how communication and information was seen to function by the different groups of employees.

Even if the main ethnographic site was the Globe, the fieldwork soon extended to the networks and the broader context in which the Globe worked. The Globe can be described as the starting point from which I have followed various routes to understanding multicultural politics as it is carried out in Finland today. I have gathered printed and internet material produced by other projects funded within the Equal programme, and participated in seminars that the Globe organised or which were about themes of interest to the Globe (such as multiculturalism and gender equality). What I call “multicultural women’s politics” is such a small field that most projects or events could be linked to each other in some ways. Thus, I used a kind of “snowball method” to track textual, virtual and physical encounters in multicultural women’s politics. In what follows, I discuss how the ethnographic process took shape and what it meant to conduct ethnographic research on “Finnish multiculturalism”.

The ethnography of meetings

To describe ethnographic material in quantitative terms is always a somewhat awkward project. Anna Rastas (2007a, 93) describes how she imagined the possible and most adequate ways to present her ethnographic material. Would it be best to present the material in terms of the number of interviews, participants, chats or notebooks, or according to the length of time spent gathering it (the hours, months or years), or even, perhaps, in terms of the kilograms of paper involved? Moreover, what is counted as “material” if one does ethnographic work in one’s hometown? Are printed matter, web-pages and face-to-face encounters all regarded as appropriate material? Ethnographic material can usually be divided into two types: that which is taped and gathered in an organised manner, and that which stems from more spontaneous and informal encounters. This is one of the advantages of an ethnographic inquiry: even the unrecorded encounters are valid material, even if they are of a different nature from those on tape. The different kinds

of data are used in different ways: in my work I do not cite the more random encounters, but they have deeply influenced my analysis of multiculturalism in Finland.

Below I offer the data presented numerically. This excludes daily encounters, such as informal chats, reading newspaper articles or listening to a discussion on the bus. The ethnographic process began in 2002 and continued up until 2005, but it was at its most intensive for a period of two years, 2003–2004. The process, therefore, did not have a clear beginning and end, as is often the case when conducting ethnography in the same place in which one lives (see Mulinari and Neergaard 2004; Rastas 2007a). Meetings and seminars constitute the main body of data: during the two years of intensive ethnography I recorded 10 meetings and participated in 24 staff and steering group meetings altogether. In addition to these, I participated in 15 events, seminars, round-table discussions and trips organised by the Globe. I also conducted interviews with six of the employees in the Globe in order to track their individual routes into the project, and their views on the politics, agendas and work of the project. I recorded three seminars (9 hours in total) and one international workshop (lasting 8 hours). In addition I wrote a 50 page research diary on computer and filled 10 notebooks during the fieldwork (not only with fieldwork notes). I also have a box³³ of different kinds of data such as leaflets and reports from the Globe and other projects or public administration offices, several bookmarks in my internet browser and plenty of e-mails about projects, activism and seminar programmes that relate to multiculturalism in Finland. The printed data (leaflets, brochures, newsletters and reports) and material on the Internet are not collected in a systematic manner. I have collected printed material in seminars and meetings or followed links that have been sent in emails and sometimes ordered reports from different seminars.

The Globe responded to my ethnographic project with interest but also showed little or no wish to control what I was doing, writing or recording. During the fieldwork I participated broadly in different activities and meetings, which was also a wish of the project. I participated in staff meetings as often as I could (minimally once a month, and sometimes more regularly) particularly during 2003 and 2004. These weekly meetings would be a time

33 One box full of this kind of material was accidentally thrown in the dustbin by a substitute cleaner at the university.

when the whole staff of seven was gathered (more or less) without interruptions. Otherwise, the project work was fairly hectic and there were always people coming and going in the office. The staff meetings would start with a “round”, a defined time between one and two minutes for everyone to talk about whatever was on their mind. This is a method that is widely used in feminist radical therapy (FRT). There would typically be a discussion about the situations of participants and the planning of coming events. The mentors would inform the group about what they had been doing during the week. The staff meetings included discussions of varying kinds and I have used this data quite selectively. I turned off the tape recorder when confidential matters were on the agenda and did not analyse discussions where participants’ (who were not present in the meetings) personal matters were discussed. I mainly refer to discussions that deal with questions of principles, working methods or division of labour in the project, all of which relate to the agendas and politics of the project.

I was also a member of the steering group as a representative of the Department of Women’s Studies. The group consisted of representatives of the organisations cooperating with the Globe by offering workshops or evaluations (DPs), a representative from the municipality, a representative from the employment office, a representative of the Employment and Economic Development Centre (T&E Centre), a representative of the NGO that had started the Globe, and some of the employees of the Globe. The group had meetings once a month (sometimes once in two months) and the meetings were formal but could also involve lively discussions related to the work of the Globe. This group was supposed to be a body that would actively participate in the work of the Globe, but in practice it had little relevance for its everyday work. One of its formal functions was to handle expenses, which would then be submitted to the T&E Centre for a decision. The main purpose of the meetings, as I came to perceive it, was to inform the funding institutions, the T&E Centre and the municipality, of the results and current position of the project. As there was a constant schism between the project and the T&E Centre, the meetings seldom involved open and thorough discussions of what was going on in the project. The mentors would participate in the meetings, but it was only during the third (and last) year, that some of the mentors were officially appointed as members of the steering group. Often they would also physically sit outside the circle, not at the table but

somewhere along the wall. I have recorded some of the meetings and this material partly consists of very detailed discussions about expenses and administration, but at other times there were discussions on more substantial issues. Some of the members in the steering group were there because of their work, and others because of NGO connections, and they had varied knowledge and experience of multicultural work.

My fieldwork could be best described as an ethnography of meeting and seminar situations. During the first study year of the fieldwork, I worked full time in another research project, which meant that I did not have endless time to spend with the project (and the Globe would only last for these three years, which meant that the ethnography could not wait). In addition to the meetings, I participated in seminars and trips as well as in several events such as “cultural evenings” or other celebrations, and I also “hung around” in the project space. To have data that consists mostly of semi-public and semi-official events had implications for the kinds of questions that could be asked and the kinds of claims that could be made. I was interested in the *discourses* and *agendas* that were formulated and negotiated in the project. I use discourse as a concept that refers to utterances, written texts as well as practices (Alasuutari 1999; Jokinen et al. 1999) and relates to power relations. It is thus not only “a way of speaking” (see Bacchi 1999). I have been interested in analysing the encounters in multicultural work rather than focusing on either the “migrant” or the “Finnish” women (see also Hautaniemi 2004). The drawback of this approach to the fieldwork is that I have very limited data that describes what the participants thought of the project’s agendas or what they considered important in the project. Later in this chapter I discuss my reasons for not trying to “get close” to the participants.

Seminars on gender equality and miscellaneous material

The other clusters of data are taken from seminars organised around migrancy, gender equality and multiculturalism, and material from other projects and NGOs working in the field. The seminars could be regarded as sites for the construction of multicultural and gender politics, often in the context of welfare politics. The seminars gather activists and employees from NGOs working with multiculturalism and gender equality, as well as representatives from municipalities and other policy makers. In a Swedish context, Mulinari and Neergaard (2004) write about how migrants who are active in a trade

union describe seminars as the Swedish solution to any problem: it gives the impression and feeling of engagement while no real changes have to be made. For instance, to organise a seminar on racism can turn it into an issue to be dealt with in a seminar, rather than a more profound question about the structures which constitute the trade union movement, or the labour market for that matter. I have participated in five seminars and had one recorded for me. Two of these seminars were organized by the Globe, two by other NGOs and one by the Board of Ethnic Relations (ETNO, see Lepola and Suurpää 2003).

To include data from organisations other than the Globe was important for several reasons. First, it is important in order to situate the Globe in the field of multicultural work. Projects funded by the Equal programme are also supposed to cooperate with one another, and therefore cooperation was an important part of the work of the Globe. Much of the cooperation or participation in seminars is of course part of “normal” (NGO) work and not only an imperative from the funding institutions. To include other material (than that of the Globe) has also been helpful in order to put the discourses and the organisational methods of the Globe into a context. There are strong discourses on multiculturalism and gender equality that are often repeated, while they take particular shapes in particular contexts. For instance, the centrality of the gender equality discourses within multiculturalism in general became evident through the seminars (see also Martikainen and Tiilikainen, 2007). It was not central only in a project explicitly working with women and having feminist starting points, but part of normative discourses in multicultural politics in a broad sense. The seminars are rich material. In the prepared talks the participants talk about issues they consider important in that context. On the other hand, seminars often include more free discussion and dialogue between people from different contexts and speaking from different positions. The dialogue in the seminars can often be understood as attempts to define the important issues or perspectives in multicultural politics. Therefore one can analyse the different positions of the participants in the seminars, but one can also think of the comments made and conversations that take place as acts *towards* acquiring power, and not necessarily as acts of power.

Texts as things in the world: on the relationship between different sorts of data

As with any ethnography, this one consists of many sorts of data, which are produced in different contexts and for different purposes. Part of the material from the Globe is internal to the project and part of it produced for people and projects collaborating with the Globe, and finally some of it is produced in order to disseminate the results of the project. The materials from seminars and from other projects are mainly for distribution or to facilitate cooperation with other similar projects. These documents can be described as “things in the world” as Sara Ahmed does in an interview (Tuori and Peltonen 2007, 261):

This process made me very interested in policy documents as objects, as things in the world. In *Strange Encounters* I read the documents as texts and I did a critique of them. In the process of writing such a document, I realised firstly, how impossible it is not to sound liberal; secondly, how impossible it is for the documents not to fail. So the cause and the failure of the document cannot be attributed to it, but to the work that it is being asked to do. But I also became very interested in the work that produces a document, the work of actual embodied actors, the conversations I had or the group had about, for instance, of the use of the word diversity.

In the fieldwork process reading becomes part of ethnography: I have some knowledge of where, by whom and, at times, also how the texts have been produced. In the Globe there was a tendency to value practical work, as being more “real”, and reports were sometimes referred to as “mere papers”. Reports and written material were considered an obligation intended to satisfy the donors as well as a more general audience. To write in a strategic way and choose the style according to dominant discourses is a double-edged practice. On the one hand, it can be an important strategy that allows the work of the project to make an impact. On the other hand, in order to alter the discourses on “migrant women” or to diversify the available discourses, more challenging ways of speaking would be needed. The Globe also used language politically, to change perceptions of migrant women, such as calling the participants “skilled women” (see chapter 2). Thus, it was not only my concern to address words critically and to consider words and ways of speak-

ing as transformative acts, even though the Globe and I sometimes addressed different words and different acts. I understand the reports and other textual material to produce “multicultural women’s politics”. They were disseminated by the project to policy makers. The imperative to write reports also forced the project to articulate certain views, such as their view on gender equality, empowerment or mentor work. The reports also often “failed”, even from the perspective of the project. The reports circulated certain terminology partly defined by the Equal programme, and partly constructed in work around multiculturalism (in, for example, seminars, gatherings and written reports). This terminology and the work it does in the reports also trickle down into the practices.

One of the differences between “text” and “practice” is that many concepts (like gender or culture) appear more binary and less complex in textual form (this may also apply to conversations when these issues are addressed on a generic level). Therefore I find it fruitful to relate texts to the ethnographic material, which is much more complex and controversial. I understand text and practice as two different arenas, which formulate “multicultural women’s politics”, without one of them being “more real”. One could ask what work the texts do (Ahmed 2000a). What kinds of practices are they? On the one hand, I understand texts as practice in the following ways: first of all, the texts have particular effects; secondly, an active practice (such as planning, discussing, writing, reading, correcting, rewriting) has taken place in order to make the texts appear in the world; and finally the texts are circulated to people in the field of multicultural politics, thus impacting on the field. On the other hand, the way in which I analyse the transcribed face-to-face discussions resembles the practice of analysing texts. One may think that power works in somewhat different ways in texts compared to face-to-face encounters. Texts often construct expertise or knowledge and produce subjects. Sara Ahmed (2000b) has written about how “the other” is fixed in ethnographic accounts through the description of *who s/he is*. Even if people can be “fixed” in face-to-face encounters, particularly in some institutional encounters, there is more room for negotiation than in a text. The difference in the workings of power relates to the different spaces available for agency.

Language is not only important in discourses, but also in interactions. Most of the interactions – meetings, interviews and casual discussions – during my fieldwork took place in Finnish, apart from the occasional use of

Spanish or English. Even where the analyses of the material are based on the original language (Finnish or English) all the quotes from discussions in Finnish have been translated into English. Through the process of transliteration and translation, the discussions have been transformed into normative spoken English from different forms of spoken Finnish. I have been careful in the transliteration and translation of expressions and word choices. In the Globe and the seminars, some people spoke Finnish as their first language, while for others it was a language managed well, but nevertheless learnt as an adult. Therefore, language is part of the power dynamics of the project and of multiculturalism in Finland at large.

Language, and more specifically the language skills of migrants, is the one issue that is widely discussed in the Finnish context of migration. However, it is most often addressed both as a problem of, and a solution to, “integration”. In the projects, language easily becomes an arena of power particularly if practices concerning language are not considered properly. For instance, most often Finnish employees take care of writing the reports and other material, while the employees of migrant backgrounds serve as “informants”. One could instead develop practices of joint writing or pay attention to editing and translating so that the authorship of the texts would not fall to the Finnish employees only³⁴. I do not pay attention to differences in language skills in the analyses of specific discussions³⁵. The power aspect of language is perhaps most pronounced in the meetings with the T&E Centre and the steering group meetings, in which the employees of migrant backgrounds seldom participated actively.

Different types of data are produced in different contexts. For instance, there are seminars for policy-makers in Finland, staff meetings or meetings

34 Different practices of co-writing have been widely debated in feminist ethnography (see e.g. Ahmed 2000b) and these are not unproblematic or simple processes. Nevertheless, in the context of project work it is important that writing is not only the domain of employees from Finnish backgrounds.

35 Linguistic research (Kurhila 2006) on conversations between “non-native speakers” and “native speakers” of Finnish language show that the “native speakers” tend to underestimate the language competence of the “non-native speakers”. This is evident for instance through the fact that the “native speakers” understand errors as a result of incompetence rather than as a slip of the tongue (ibid. 222). However, the research also shows that the discussions between “non-native speakers” and “native speakers” do not essentially (and linguistically) differ from the discussions between “native speakers”.

that gather people working in a similar framework. For whom or for what purpose is the text produced? I will later discuss in this chapter the ways in which context affects ways of speaking. I will include an example where some of the same people say diametrically opposite things in two different contexts (that is, at a seminar in Finland, and at a workshop in Austria). Such instances show how the Finnish context of multiculturalism demands certain ways of speaking that make some utterances impossible.

Ethics and politics: the ethnography of distance

The Globe was a meeting place in terms of networking and in terms of people coming and going. There was a constant flow of new people, participants, workshop organisers and trainees in the project. This meant that I never properly got to know a large number of the women who participated in the project. Some came for short visits, while others stayed longer and had lasting relationships with the space and people of the project. This setting, in which I met new people every time there was an event, or often encountered visitors to the project, made it impossible to present myself as a researcher every time, which would have taken a lot of space. There could for instance be a visitor from somewhere and the employees would briefly present some of the people in the room. This happens in most ethnographic research projects and it means that not all people “participating” in my research were aware of what I was doing. How this material is used becomes an ethical question. I found myself in situations where somebody whom I had met several times asked me: “so Salla, what is your PhD about?” I probably blushed and mumbled something about multiculturalism and hmm, well, this project, this very meeting we are in. Even if these kinds of situations were difficult to avoid, I found them troubling. However, it is also indicative of the nature of the project (and the larger context for it): there were a lot of people coming and going and it was impossible to keep track of what I had said to whom.

I have started to think about the ways in which certain ethical concerns about acting correctly in fact echo certain disguised positivist ideals in ethnographic work, or a desire to control the fieldwork. In 2003, after I had been involved in the project for about a year, a Sociology student from my department wanted to do ethnographic work in one of the workshops of the Globe for her Master’s thesis. I thought the situation of having two ethnographers in the same project would be unbearable. I discussed this with my senior

colleagues, who, like me, thought that the situation would be problematic. Everything she would do (from presenting herself to conducting interviews) would have an effect on the interaction I would have with the people involved in the project (and the other way round, of course). This would mean that on the top of all the other complexities of the study, interaction with another ethnographer would become part of my fieldwork. This is why I first made contact with the project coordinator, explained the situation and asked her not to give the Sociology student permission. She was not convinced, and said that she was not going to say no just for the sake of saying no. She also enumerated several other people, for instance from the Polytechnic, who had been in contact with the project for research or other documentation purposes. As I was still concerned, I emailed my colleague and asked whether she could find another project for her ethnographic study. In the end, she put herself in contact with some women through the Globe, but did not do ethnographic work at the Globe. Now looking back, my reaction seems quite controversial, perhaps even paranoid.

Two points emerge here: first, behind my response lies the notion that I could somehow reduce the “interferences” to a “controllable level”. In a way, this reflects a laboratory-like idea of research. Yet, most people who are doing workplace ethnography (which this was, in a sense) would find it problematic to have another ethnographer in the same office at the same time, but working on different projects. What I have called “disguised positivism” has also to do with situatedness; with being able to contextualise the research. Reflexivity is part of ethnography, but when does it turn into the desire to control? Further, the participants and employees of the Globe had had a completely uncontrollable number of encounters in their lives, which had had effects on their interactions with me and with each other. Sara Ahmed (2000a) writes that the past endures in the present but is not quite revealed in encounters. This also suggests that I cannot unfold or situate “everything”. It makes the rush of people moving through the project less problematic and my wish to control the site more problematic.

Why two ethnographers in the office would have not been absurd in this context leads me to the second point. Namely, that there are scores of people who want stories from “migrant women” in multicultural projects and spaces. The Finnish context of multiculturalism is characterized by a fairly small number of “migrants”, but with many different professionals interested in

their lives. I do not know the exact number of journalists, researchers, artists or students who wanted interviews, written stories and in-depth-interviews for a range of different purposes, but there were many of them. At one time there was even a box on a table with a note asking migrant women to leave their life stories in the box³⁶. As far as I know, the flow of people was not documented either. This is not uniquely a Finnish phenomenon, or only due to the fact that there are “few migrants” in the country. Sara Ahmed (Tuori and Peltonen 2007, 262) points out how, for instance, the “black and minority ethnic” staff at universities are constantly asked to answer questionnaires on “race equality” or participate in research projects on the theme. In this kind of context, with a lot of attention paid to certain people, it is particularly relevant to think about the benefits of one’s research to the research subjects. Likewise, Mulinari and Neergaard (2004) write that it can be considered as a sign of privilege not to be the focus of the researcher’s will for knowledge.

At some point I called my method *the ethnography of distance*. This term reflected a conscious political (or ethical) choice, as well as my feelings of discomfort. Furthermore, the term enabled me to relate my work to the feminist critique of the ethnographic method, and particularly to Ahmed’s (2000b) critique of the desire to “know the Other” (see also Mulinari et al. 2009). The epistemological desire to “know the Other” refers to a voyeuristic fascination with the Other, to know what s/he *is* like. Closeness, trust and intimacy have been privileged ideals in the relationship between the researcher and the research subject in feminist methodologies (see for example Oinas 2004). Of course, “closeness” or “distance” as such does not produce better or worse ethnographies or more or less voyeuristic ones³⁷. However, in the context of my study closeness, understood as intimacy, would have been problematic. Perhaps “closeness” could be understood in more diverse ways: closeness does not necessarily equal intimacy, but could imply for instance engagement.

The situation described above in which a crowd of people, all seeking stories and information, surrounded the project, – was one of the principal

36 I am sure there had been a meeting with the researcher and more information about the research project, but as there were new people coming all the time, there must be others who, like me, just encountered the box.

37 There is a rich tradition of reflexive Anthropology, in which the researcher and the research subject become close (also to the reader), without it being voyeuristic. Ruth Behar’s (1994) *Vulnerable Observer* is one of the impressive accounts in this genre.

reasons that led me to take a distanced approach to the fieldwork. Being a white Finnish researcher I was part of the crowd, whether I wanted to be or not. Just like most of the Finnish people (apart from the employees) involved in the project, I came in and out and was often busy³⁸. I did not want to ask too many questions of the women who participated in the project as there was such a strong sense that certain people had an unquestioned right to ask questions in that setting, and others had the duty of answering those questions. As I entered the project as the evaluator, I had an expert position from the beginning. Thus, my double-role as evaluator and ethnographer also contributed to the choice to keep a certain distance in the fieldwork. I am not suggesting that keeping distance would be the only, let alone the best, way to deal with a situation like this, but for the purposes of this research and the research questions, I found it to be a valid approach to ethnography. The desire to know “the Other” and the wish for stories from migrant women was also evident when the employees from immigrant backgrounds presented the project. It would nearly always include a routine re-telling of their personal stories: how long they have lived in Finland, how and why they migrated. This is also something that made asking questions difficult and sometimes probably even ridiculously difficult.

About being critical

In a postgraduate class on feminist ethnography, I heard a story about a midwife who was doing ethnographic research for her PhD. She was going to observe midwives’ work during deliveries. Every time a birth began, she found the midwives doing the work in the “wrong” way, and, in the middle of the delivery, she started to organise the situation to get it “right”. She did this many times and in the end her (male) PhD supervisor sat next to her at the deliveries to keep her, quite literally, from getting in the way and to get her to concentrate on observing. This was told as an amusing but cautionary example of how *not* to conduct ethnographic research. In some ways I feel like the midwife-researcher, with the difference being that I was not as capable in action as she was. Apart from believing that she was right, the

38 I have started to consider business as a specific kind of unethical practice. It is what most disturbs me in my fieldwork, and this is not because I need “more material”. Rather, business could be considered as a specific kind of posture taken in relation to the world.

midwife's problem was perceived as not being able to distinguish ethnography from politics. She was unable to sit back and observe when things started to "go wrong" from her perspective. The story did not describe how she was received in the maternity ward, or whether her interventions were regarded as disturbing, embarrassing or perhaps helpful. In this section I am going to discuss participatory ethnography and "midwifery" approaches to ethnography. What does it mean to participate? How much and what kind of participation is good?

From the beginning my agenda, inspired by Spivak, was one of "speaking to" (Spivak 1993a; Visweswaran 1994). The politics of "speaking to" bears a close relation both to the patronising or colonial practice of "speaking for" another, and to the idealistic, but illusory practice of "speaking with". I was convinced that the most ethical approach would be to have an open (even if troubled) dialogue with the Globe, which would also give the employees the opportunity to contest my potentially different views. I thought it would be unethical to sit back and "observe", and then subsequently publish texts which contain unexpressed criticisms. Because of the evaluation, I had to take some kind of stand about certain matters I would not have necessarily had any opinion on as a researcher³⁹. My idea was also that, through active discussion with the project employees, they could use my academic knowledge, while I could learn from their activist knowledge. This was also the wish of the project. Of course, these two were not completely distinct: research knowledge can be based on activism and activism can draw from academic knowledge⁴⁰. "Speaking to" meant specifically that I took up or commented upon situations that I thought could be defined as racist or unfair. Therefore, the politics of "speaking to" could also be described as an anti-racist research methodology, meaning that the researcher has a responsibility to act in situations that can be defined as racist, and not only to write a critical account of it in the research paper (Rastas 2007a; Honkasalo et al. 2007). Here I

39 Even if the evaluation did not follow a standard format of evaluations, I had to be concerned about whether the project delivered what they promised in the application and the work plan submitted to the funding institutions (on evaluations of ESF projects, see Kankare 2006).

40 Sometimes researchers are inclined to see their research as activism, which Mulinari and Neergaard (2004) criticise by referring to the actual and unpaid labour that is required in order to do activism and politics.

will discuss what it means to have a critical view on the data, phenomena or discourses one is looking at.

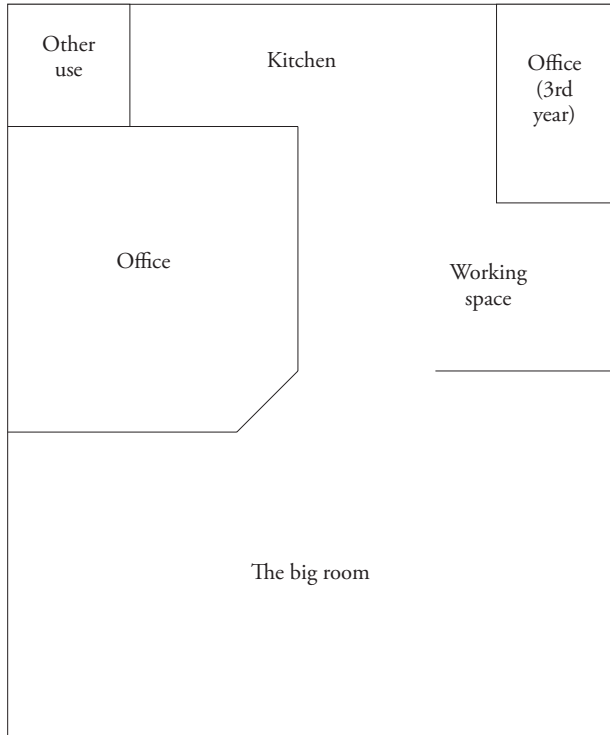
I soon learned that “openness” and “dialogue” are not very easy to accomplish. I came to the project with a certain vocabulary and with a certain package of knowledge, strongly influenced by postcolonial feminist theory and knowledge from a women’s helpline movement. With this background I focused on certain issues, such as power relations, in the everyday life of the project and on how *culture* or *women*, for instance, were talked about. I had the fairly ambitious goal of trying to use this vocabulary about power, race, ethnicity and feminism to speak to the project employees. This way of thinking and speaking was quite unfamiliar in the context of Finnish work on multiculturalism, even in a project such as the Globe where many of these issues were on the agenda. Two difficulties emerged: first of all, my concerns were not always considered important by the entire project. Second, I found I was not as talented a translator as I had hoped. I have a meeting on tape where an ethnologist (who led a workshop in the Globe) and I start arguing about the different meanings of the concept of culture. One of the women from a migrant background stops us, and points out how it is absurd for the two of us to have a discussion in terms that nobody else in the room could understand. Thus, I was often also unable to explain clearly what I thought was a problem, which meant that I probably just sounded vaguely critical.

I experimented with different kinds of responses to situations that made me uncomfortable. Neither the aim nor the result was to establish a “right” way to act or react. Rather, it was useful in order to make visible the many ways to approach a specific situation. If ethnography is understood as an improvisatory practice as Allaine Cerwonka and Liisa Malkki (2007) suggest, then it cannot be considered as a method, in the sense that it would simply consist of a set of practices. Much of the time I would simply listen, and pose some questions about practices I considered problematic. Once I walked out of a workshop (this episode is analysed in detail in chapter 6) because I felt uncomfortable being there. This was an experiment in what it would mean to take the discomfort seriously and act accordingly. In most situations this would probably not be the smartest thing to do, but in this specific situation I thought it was worth a try. In a way I acted as if I was not a researcher, except that had I not been a researcher, I would not have been there in the

first place. After having walked out of the workshop, I discussed this decision with the workshop leader and the project employees.

If feminist theory describes itself as being inherently critical (Liljeström 2004), feminist ethnography is also invested in being empathetic and empowering. I approached the Globe as a project that was doing feminist work, a rare position in the Finnish context. I thought I would embrace the aims, methods and practices of the project, at least on a general level. The project worked within a framework of integration and thus also reproduced mainstream discourses on multiculturalism. I turned out to be more critical towards the practices of the project than I had anticipated, particularly in cases where I thought there was a reluctance to acknowledge the significance of racialised practices or racism in everyday work. For instance, towards the end of the project only the “Finnish” employees participated in the official meetings with Employment and Economic Development Centre (T&E Centre). I understood that this was considered strategic and smart by the Finnish employees, but seen as an unequal practice by the migrant employees. As I understood the issue, the Finnish employees were concerned about the migrant women speaking the “wrong language”, using words such as “soul”, “heart” or “human connection”, instead of speaking strictly in terms of statistics and using a certain administrative vocabulary. There were also other sudden changes in the division of labour that were not properly discussed with the entire project. At some point there was inequality in the use of office space and the distribution of computers (see the sketch on the opposite page, which is not exact in scale). The space was divided so that the “Finnish employees” (3 persons) shared the office with two computers and a door that could be closed, while the “mentors” worked in the corridor space between the big room and the kitchen. In one meeting we discussed the problems of the space and the sharing of computers. The space was undeniably too small for seven employees and there were different solutions offered during the project. In the end, the mentors worked in the big room and there was an additional meeting room on another floor in the same building.

The implications of being critical in the field are different to those of being critical in writing. When the research is about an ongoing project, written comments can impact on future funding. Even if this particular project was not affected (as it ended before any of my papers were published), it could affect other women’s projects run by NGOs. Speaking to and par-



ticipating in the project also meant that I was sometimes more concerned with ethics and politics than “good material”. Moreover, it is difficult to say looking back what would have been ideal politics. On the one hand, it might have been good to keep a lower profile, but on the other hand, this approach might not have supported an anti-racist research agenda (Rastas 2007a). The example of the midwife teaches us that the researcher should not believe too much in her own convictions about “right practices”. From the beginning (perhaps less towards the end) I considered myself as a “fellow activist” and I suppose that was how the project saw me as well. If I had studied a setting that had been indifferent or even hostile to feminist knowledge, my strategies of speaking would certainly have been different. Even though here I have particularly addressed the aspect of being critical, “speaking to” as politics also meant other kinds of dialogues with the project.

Reading strategies

Questions of methodology continue to arise in the processes of analysis and writing. There are many kinds of stories that could be told about the same material, and I discuss in what follows how I came to tell the stories I have told. The analysis and definition of the material have developed in dialogue between theoretical questions and issues that have repeated themselves in the material, been “absent” from it or otherwise caught my interest. My analytical method could be loosely described as either “deconstruction” or “critical discourse analysis”. I do not understand deconstruction to apply only at the stage when I print the transcript of a meeting or seminar or read my notes from the seminars. “The linguistic turn”⁴¹ has affected my thinking and listening since my early student years. Many of the discussions I have participated in during the fieldwork have also dealt with language: how is gender equality or expertise discussed in the material? The focus is not only on what is said about different issues and the terms in which they are raised, but also on what the effects may be of the language used. As this is an ethnographic analysis, the deconstructive and discourse analysis approaches are informed by the ethnography, and thus it is not a question of any “pure” form of analysis.

Ethnographic work also means that one has to react and analyse instantly, while being in the middle of events (Cerwonka and Malkki, 2007). As mentioned above, my analysis of the ethnographic material, particularly the taped and transcribed parts of it, also draws from the methods of deconstruction. In my study, this term relates more to methods of analysing the language of the material (Derrida 2003/1986; Tuohimaa 2001) than to alternative ways of representation and writing (e.g. Clifford and Marcus 1986; Visweswaran 1994). Deconstruction, in my study, implies paying attention to words and their contexts, as well as to the power relations evident in the material. Further, it is important to regard the controversies and movements within the text or transcript. Deconstruction has been described as a contextual encounter between the reader and the text (Tuohimaa 2001), which, in an ethnographic context, would be more broadly an encounter between the reader and the material. My analysis is also deconstructive in that it focuses

41 The linguistic turn refers to the understanding of language as not merely descriptive, but rather as productive or performative (e.g. Butler 1990).

on deeds, texts, acts or utterances and their *effects*. I am not analysing the *intentions* behind these acts or utterances⁴². To analyse effects is a common way of analysing texts, although it has been less common as an ethnographic practice (even though recent ethnographies seldom aspire to focus on intentions or “learn the native’s point of view”).

In this research project, the empirical data and the theoretical texts I work with seem often to be in an “awkward relationship” to each other (Visweswaran 1994, 20). Approaching this tension, I have ended up thinking quite a lot about what theory is for, and what kind of relationship it has and could have to ethnographic data. In my research, the empirical data and theoretical texts often *share the same questions*: both are concerned with racial relations, with ethical and/or political ways to act, for instance. Ideally, of course, theory enables one to look at a phenomenon, a question or a text from a new perspective, and thus create new knowledge. However, with “theory” and “empirical data” at odds with each other, I have ended up criticizing the politics of the Globe for not applying a postcolonial feminist perspective on its work, or working with an inadequate conception of power. In some instances, this can be a good and even necessary way not to silence a critique of racism in multiculturalism in Finland. Different theoretical perspectives open up different kinds of reading strategies. In my thesis I develop reading strategies that would on the one hand not silence the discussion of racism, but on the other hand do not reproduce monolithic hegemonies (that in fact are not necessarily so hegemonic), such as Finnishness as an all-encompassing norm of multicultural politics. Thus, my purpose is to engage in critical analysis without silencing either empathy between participants, regardless of their positions, or resistance to the dominant discourses of the project.

Much of the work done in critical theory (whether feminist, Marxist, postcolonial, or queer) has been engaged with detecting hidden or overt power relations in empirical material. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (2003) has provocatively termed this kind of approach *paranoid reading*. According to her, analyses in queer theory (and one could extend this to postcolonial theory) tend to rely on a paranoid epistemology, that is, a desire to reveal underlying power structures and to detect systematic oppression. In a para-

42 Kamali (2005, 36) also points out how racism cannot be researched through examining “intentions”, as people seldom *intend* to discriminate. Rather, discriminative and racist acts (also) happen on other levels than the intentional.

noid reading, the researcher eliminates all possibility of surprise (as “you can never be paranoid enough” (Sedgwick 2003, 127)). An epistemological outlook that would not be paranoid, Sedgwick calls “reparative”. In this kind of reading one would accept discrepancies and different kinds of power relations within the texts (and in my case, in ethnographic data). Even if it seems slightly risky to discard paranoid epistemologies completely (where would it lead us? what kind of knowledge would be produced?), it might be a risk worth taking. Sedgwick makes these theoretical points from within not only queer theory but also queer activism, which makes the argument particularly interesting. What kinds of effects would there be for theory and politics if one let go of paranoid readings?

During this research process I have noticed how a safely critical standpoint can be limiting. Olli Löytty (2006) also writes about the risks of post-colonial analysis becoming circular: one looks for certain power relations and then analyses how they appear in the data. The way in which Sara Ahmed (2000a) describes “ethical encounters” as replete with power, but including the possibility of surprise, reminds us of Sedgwick’s discussion on reparative and paranoid reading. A paranoid epistemology, at least in this kind of research on racial politics, could lead to a focus on what is missing rather than on what is there. Thus, a certain openness and will to listen in multicultural women’s politics, as well as a willingness to consider what it can contribute to feminist theory, are some of the theoretical and methodological challenges of this work. These are also issues that have emerged slowly during the research process.

Feminist scholars working on race and racism have discussed at length how one easily reinforces hegemonies despite an explicit agenda to deconstruct oppressive power relations (e.g. Eisenstein 2004). Much of my work is about analysing Finnishness and the unequal power relations at play in multicultural women’s politics (Tuori 2007a; 2007b). During the process, I asked the employees of the Globe to read and comment on texts that I was working with. One article the employees read was about gender equality (Tuori 2007a, an early version of chapter 7). According to their reading, the article reinforced an image of migrant women as dependent or subordinated in relation to Finnish women. In the article I critiqued the discourses in which this image is reinforced, such as those which do not recognise migrant women’s knowledge as such. I could of course refer to the deconstructive

(and thus possibly alienating) language of theory, as well as to the fact that it was an early version of the article, and thus discard the criticism. However, this incident raised important questions about how to analyse the empirical data and how to do justice to it. By focusing on hegemonic practices one can indeed make them seem even more monolithic than they necessarily are. Thus, it is important to listen to the contradictory voices in the material. There is a fine line between taking inequalities seriously on the one hand, and on the other, not silencing such discourses and practices that do not reinforce the hegemonic discourse of “equality”.

The following extracts from my material exemplify how postcolonial analysis and deconstruction turn into modes of analysis. How does my analysis proceed? And which kinds of utterances or practices are understood as “colonial”? As my data is mainly from the more official contexts of the multi-cultural work meetings, seminars and workshops, Finnish hegemonies seem to be rather strong. When analysing the data it is important to keep this in mind. How should one for instance address voice and silence in the data? In the analysis, I pay attention to who is speaking, what is said and how, and further, how it is responded to. I will also explore, with reference to examples from my data, the importance of the context in which the discussion takes place. One frequent mode of talking to migrant women in my material (in the seminars, staff meetings and reports; see Tuori 2007a; 2007b) is to address the women in a patronising manner, as if they were not quite adults, or at least in need of teaching and guidance. This is an extract from a staff meeting (March 2003) where the group is supposed to think about the “values and vision” of the Globe (my emphasis and translation):

Project Leader: So, how would we continue with these values? Because we should get to our vision. *Do you remember what a vision is?* Do you remember, in general terms, what it means when you talk about a vision? It's a long time ago [that we last talked about it], but just like that, what would it be, Natalia, *if you didn't think whether it is the right answer?*

Here the project leader asks one of the migrant employees to define a “vision” without thinking about “the right answer”. I read tutelage in this way of addressing a colleague, placing Natalia and the other employees in the position of pupils, who possibly are even afraid of (the humiliation of) not knowing. The project leader puts herself in a position of somebody who knows; most

probably she has not forgotten the meaning of vision. Does this kind of positioning mean that the migrant women “have” less power? On the one hand it does. It says something about who is considered to have knowledge. But, importantly, on the other hand, as Visweswaran (1994, 30–31, 51) points out, silence can also be a refusal to speak, and a conscious strategy.

Many of the migrant women chose to focus on the work they did with the participants rather than on the meetings. Yet, these situations, and the mode of talking in them was experienced as problematic. The discussion develops in an interesting way: after Natalia has answered by offering her idea of a vision, all the employees (the non-migrants showing particular eagerness), start discussing what is meant by vision. Thus the discussion does not simply reproduce the division between migrants and non-migrants, even though the project leader addressed the question explicitly to one of the migrant employees. To focus on how dichotomies (such as the one between migrant and non-migrant) are challenged and/or reproduced has been one of my interests when reading the data.

Below are two longer extracts taken from these discussions to show further my analytical approach. In both situations exclusionary practices and the problem of “belonging” are discussed. Some of the same people appear in both of the discussions that take place in two different contexts: one is a seminar in Finland and the other one a workshop in Austria. One reason for choosing these two instances is that they show clearly how the context makes a difference to what is said and how. The first discussion takes place in a seminar in Finland organised by a cluster of projects funded by the Equal programme. The seminar was intended to disseminate good practices from projects to policy makers and employers (who were not present, as is often the case). At one point in the seminar somebody in the audience asks “what should Finns learn from immigrants and what should immigrants learn from Finns?” The chair of the seminar asks the audience to answer this question, but starting with the question “what should immigrants learn from Finns?”

Chair: *What should you learn from the Finnish society?* What do you think?

Ismail: Well, it is such a personal question, *everybody can take the piece that they need* in order to manage here. *So I don't think there is any one answer.*

Chair: So everybody takes what they need.

Ismail: Yes, everybody takes their piece.

Chair: Anything else? Other comments from immigrants?

Natalia: I think learning is a lot about concretely learning about the other country, but it is important that it is an *exchange*. That you first get to know the culture you are entering, but it does not mean that you should lose your own. *It's just like if I looked like Sarah or Liu it would not matter how much I took on [culture?], nobody would believe I am Finnish. And even though I look like an ordinary Finn and my passport says I am Finnish, it doesn't take away the fact that I am an immigrant. Not even though I feel myself much more Finnish than the Finns*, because my childhood language is Finnish and we have a lot of the Finnish culture that was destroyed here. [...] I have grown up in the Finnish culture and religion and it is really important for me, even though it was hidden in many ways. [...] *But even now, I don't feel like I am like this Finn in Finland.* [...] I sing in a multicultural song group with eleven languages, perhaps it could unite. [...] And when we sing in Finnish, Finnish people are content, even though they sing Russian songs translated into Finnish and keep them as their own and I keep them as mine. There should be no controversy here. One should be respectful of the new country and one's own country. [...]

Chair: And Sarah, the last intervention for immigrants.

Sarah: Yes, me? (sounding surprised, laughter)

Chair: That's a good attitude: "I'm not an immigrant!" (Big burst of laughter in the audience)

Sarah: I don't know if I disagree with Natalia, but when I'm outside the door and they don't let me in, when somebody behind me says look, a negro, (somebody in the audience laughs) [...], I myself want to see the negro, I look everywhere, I don't remember because (big burst of laughter in the audience) I don't know which colour I am, I'm Finnish as long as I'm here. At home I'm Sudanese because I say to my child, this is what I am doing in Sudan. But when I'm on the street, I am Finnish even though I'm dark or black.

First of all, I find this discussion not at all simple to interpret. This discussion takes place towards the end of the day and earlier there has been a mostly technical discussion about the projects' administrative practices with very

little discussion of the contents of the projects (which were all targeted at migrants). The question “what should Finns learn from immigrants and immigrants learn from Finns” itself suggests that these are intelligible and separate groups that can “learn from each other”. However, my reading is that the audience starts a discussion about the premises of the question, rather than answering the question itself directly. The first speaker, Ismail, suggests that the question is impossible and says that each person moving to Finland learns what they “need in order to manage here”.

One way to analyse this discussion would be to focus on what the seminar participants say about identification – “I feel more Finnish than the Finns”, “it does not take away the fact that I am an immigrant” or “at home I’m Sudanese”. These statements suggest that identities are multiple and that belonging implies constant negotiation of the shifting boundaries of “Finnishness”. In particular, the statement that “I am more Finnish than the Finns” blurs a boundary between Finns and non-Finns. One could also conclude that Finnishness is constructed through exclusionary practices. This is definitely evident in the discussion, and the question itself suggests that Finnishness is constructed through exclusions. Even more interesting than identities and identification, I think, is to consider the discussion about race, and the reactions of the participants to different utterances. Race (or racism) is not discussed very often in the seminars or in other public forums in Finland. Sarah describes a situation where she is reminded of the racial boundaries in Finland that she herself had forgotten in the situation. She has a style that is often understood as funny. On re-reading the passage, one starts to wonder what is so funny when Sarah says she does not remember she is “black” until she is reminded of it with a racist comment. Is it hilarious because it seems absurd for the audience that she would forget her colour? The audience laughs also when the Chair comments on Sarah’s surprised voice by saying “good attitude, I’m not an immigrant”. This is also somehow funny. Natalia, too, suggests that if she looked like Sarah (black) or Liu (Asian) she would never be accepted as a Finn. The situation is different for her as she looks like a Finn, but it does not erase the fact that she is immigrant. Natalia also points out, in my interpretation, the slipperiness of race. Natalia is white, and therefore she is not subjected to the same kinds of racialising practices as Sarah or Liu, but at the same time there is racialisation within whiteness as

well. Sarah in turn suggests that she is a Finn, “even though dark or black”, but that she is reminded of not being Finn.

This discussion is staged as a dialogue between “immigrants” and “Finnish” people. Therefore I analyse what Natalia and Sarah say as something they are specifically saying *to* the Finnish people. All those participating in the discussion, even though they speak “as migrants” of their “experiences”, are also speaking as employees of projects working on multiculturalism. One could therefore understand the situation as one where the “Finnish” part of the audience is offered knowledge on racialisation and exclusionary practices in Finland.

The other discussion is from a visit that the Globe made to a similar project in Austria. The Austrian project is located in a migrant women’s NGO that started working with sex workers and has now many different projects with migrant women. In this meeting eight people from the Globe are present, of whom four are non-migrants. The staging is very different in this discussion compared to the previous one: we are guests of the migrant women’s NGO⁴³ and from listening to the tape you would not know that there are hardly any non-migrant Finns in the meeting at all. The discussion here starts by comparing the numbers of migrants in Finland and Austria and the public discourses on migration. It is stated that in both countries migration is understood as a threat, irrespective of the numbers of migrants, and that “any number is too much”. The discussion is followed by the migrant women living in Finland discussing their experiences of exclusion and racism. Esperanza and Sarah work at the Globe and Flavia works in the Austrian project (the discussion is originally in English).

Esperanza: And the bureaucracy, when you call somewhere, they never take responsibility, they always say like, I give you a number, call this one, when you get this one, no it is not my department, call that one..

Sarah: Yeah, indoor racism is the worst.

[...]

43 This NGO was established by women who had migrated to Austria. At the time of the project, there was only one “Austrian” employee. The NGO had well developed feminist and anti-racist politics, such as clearly defined practices on decision making in the organisation (for instance, the Austrian employee never made decisions alone) and also an outspoken position against homophobia.

Flavia: It's the same, there is not much difference in the situation here. I think it is a phenomenon in [the] whole [of] Europe.

Sarah: And the people who are having it worst are our kids. Because they are Finns. Their colour is destroying their life because, people say where are you from [and they answer] I'm a Finn. Hahaha. How can you be a Finn? And then the kid comes home and says what am I? Where was I born? But you have to get the idea that you are born African and Finn, so have it all. Because it is as if they don't belong anywhere, they don't belong to Finland they don't belong to my country. But they can only create their own future.

Esperanza: In household job [it] is the same situation. They ask you for language, when you go for language they ask for certificate, when you give them certificate they ask you to translate it, when you translated it, they say it's not the same. They always have some excuse!

Sarah: And it doesn't matter how much Finnish you speak, it's always something missing

Flavia: It's like here. It's the same and people who start learning German, they always hope that through the language they are going to be assigned and it's not true.

Sarah and Esperanza: Its not true!

Flavia: We know it's not true, and you can never be good enough! [...]

Sarah: Like me, I never say I'm Finnish, I say I'm foreigner and I have been here for eighteen years and I have my passport. We were speaking about the European passport. I have the old Finnish passport and I don't want to change it because I don't like the red colour (laughter). So we were speaking about the colour [of the passport], just like these stupid things, I was saying that I'm not so worried because I have my passport, it finishes [at] the end of this year but I'm still sad to give the blue one [away] because I don't like the red one. And then there was Kaisa (an employee at the Globe) who said "Why? The red one is very good, it's European" and I said "who cares where I am from, when they see me they see a foreigner". So what does the passport do, it doesn't do anything! And this is what the foreign people when they immigrate to some country, they come to understand that we never become this person, they will always be foreign. So, make the best of it, be your own so you accept. You are not born here, you

come here, you try to get the most of it. Don't try to make yourself become Austrian or Finnish, you will not become it.

Flavia: I think here, it's not at all the goal of our work [of the Austrian project and NGO] to achieve this kind of integration. You know, it's almost impossible and also it's not our interest. We are fighting for changing the laws, the rights must be the same for all, equal. Rights for all people. All this social acceptance, these kinds of rules we are not really [trying to] change. [...] We also say what Austrian people don't want to hear, we say "why do you think we want to be with you?" It's quite arrogant of Austrian people to think we want to be integrated, we want to stay in contact.

This is an extract from a long discussion where different aspects of race and racism in Finland and Austria are discussed. This discussion shows in particular the importance of the context of the discussions. What I find interesting and significant in this extract is how racism is discussed openly in a different way than in any of the Finnish discussions that I have on tape. It does not mean that these kinds of discussions would not take place in Finland, but they do not take place in public multicultural settings such as seminars or workshops – where the aim often is to discuss the conditions of work for migrant people. The contrast shows the particularity of the Finnish public discourses on multiculturalism that emphasises “positive” discourses and good examples. The discussion in Austria presented above was held on the migrant women's terms, which also makes it different to most other discussions I have on tape.

Esperanza and Sarah take up many issues that are in a way “obvious”, such as racism in the labour market which is reflected in unreasonable demands for language skills. Therefore I find it significant that this kind of talk is absent in multicultural settings. Nor is this discussion staged as “funny” and nobody laughs in response. Laughter is often used as a way of overcoming disturbing or uncomfortable situations (see e.g. Haakana 1999; Soilevuo-Grønnerød 2005). To take up racism in a predominantly (or at least hegemonically) white and Finnish context seems to constitute such a situation (see pages 102–103; also Sawyer 2006). It is also worth noting that in the Finnish context, language is often presented as the most important reason for unemployment and therefore other obstacles in the labour market are seldom taken up – as if other issues only become relevant once everybody who

has migrated to Finland speaks Finnish fluently. Flavia's comment: "it's quite arrogant of Austrian people to think we want to be integrated" is a sentiment that I never have heard expressed in any Finnish seminar, or at the Globe. Flavia indicates that it is a controversial statement in Austria too, because she claims "we also say what Austrian people don't want to hear".

My research is not focused on individuals or their identifications, but on different encounters. Workshops and seminars are encounters between people in different positions in a very literal sense. Questions of representational politics and situatedness are relevant when studying multicultural politics, and therefore it is important to consider the relationship between the speaker and the utterance. It is important to pay attention to who is speaking about what (Ahmed 2000b; Mulinari and Neergaard 2004). I have chosen to mark in the text whether the speaker is a "migrant woman" or a "Finnish woman". In most cases I think the distinction matters. Yet, there is no simple relation between "the one who speaks" and what is said. In many cases those "who speak" also speak as representatives of a project or an association with more or less standard ways of representing the project, or of addressing a specific problem. There are also certain discourses that are useful in a specific field. For instance, the final brochure that the Globe produced is designed so that all employees featured in the brochure express their view on what was most important at the Globe. The stories are very similar in style and content. The stories have been edited and perhaps even written by the Globe's Public Relations (PR) person. I am not suggesting that there would be a similar editing process when somebody speaks in a seminar or a meeting, but I suggest that even then the relationship between the speaker and the utterance is complicated. In conclusion, I do not analyse individual speakers, but rather encounters, positions, struggles and negotiations, and further understand these as a process that forms multicultural politics in the making.

5. Multiculturalism and nation-building

In this chapter I examine *the model* that the Globe has produced as an outcome of the project, and which is set out in a document entitled: “Recipes for Multicultural Finland Soup”. The formal aim of the Globe, that is, the purpose for which it was funded, was to produce *a model* that could be *mainstreamed* into the work of public and private sector institutions. The document should not be understood as a final conclusion of the findings of the Globe, nor does it give any exhaustive picture of the work done in the project. It could be described as a working paper that summarised many important principles and approaches in the Globe. The recipe book was produced in the context of funding, as “mainstreaming” of the projects was a requirement in the funding agreements. It was distributed in several versions and on various occasions, such as visits and conferences. This model, which raises questions of gender equality in particular, is closely linked to questions of belonging to the nation. Gender equality has become a concept that feeds into the Finnish national self-image. As the political scientist Anne-Maria Holli (2003, 19) argues: “[l]ately, ‘gender equality’ seems to have evolved into a concept the main purpose of which is to maintain the sense of ‘us’ as a national community”. Other researchers have shown how migrants and particularly migrant women serve to reflect the construction of the “equal self” in the Nordic contexts (see Tuori 2007a; Magnusson et al. 2008; Vuori 2009; Yang 2009).

The focus in this chapter is on the interconnectedness between gender equality and multiculturalism in the constitution of the nation. I will also participate in the discussion on the relationship between multiculturalism and feminism. A strand of this discussion emphasises the question of the (non)compatibility of these two concepts (e.g. Okin 1999; Saharso 2003; Fisher 2004). This question concerns whether multiculturalism is a threat

to gender equality or feminism⁴⁴. Another way in which this perceived non-compatibility appears is through racist responses and conservative politics where women's rights are mobilised as a justification for racist attacks, either at the level of military interventions (such as the US war on terror, Eisenstein 2004) or at the level of discourse (Phillips and Saharso 2008). I will analyse how gender equality – as an ideology and as a set of practices – is deeply embedded in the production of otherness in the Finnish context.

Analyses of gender equality discourses in Finland, have shown how “advanced gender equality” is often described as something inherently Finnish (Holli et al. 2002; Lempiäinen 2002; Holli 2003; Koivunen 2003). The understanding of an advanced gender equality regime is routinely produced in all of the Nordic countries (Eriksson et al. 2005; Magnusson et al. 2008; Mulinari et al. 2009). Gail Lewis (2005) also notes how gender equality understood as a “more advanced gender system” has been considered as something European. The advanced status of gender equality in Finland is also seen to stem (at least partly) from Finnish history; the agrarian and economically poor past when women and men were working side by side (Lempiäinen 2002, 24). However, the “agrarian assumption of gender equality” relies on an idealisation of illusory gender relations of the past. The gendered division of labour and the heteronormative order of complementary genders of the agrarian societies was more complicated than a simplified “side by side” picture might suggest (see Östman 2000, 200–204; Tuomaala 2004, 221). It is also tied to a certain agrarian past of small farms that is class specific (Markkola 2002). “Gender equality” is thus a field in which Finland, as a nation, willingly sees itself at the forefront. It is also seen as an export commodity, something to deliver to other parts of the world, including other European countries (Carbin and Holli 2002; Raevaara and Saarikoski 2002, 282).

Unlike gender equality, multiculturalism is often understood as “an element that comes from outside of Finnish society” (Clarke 1999, 36). Multi-

44 This discussion dealt particularly with so called group rights and whether one can criticise cultural practices (that are considered patriarchal) “from outside” (Okin with respondents 1999). I will not participate in the discussion of group rights as such, but through analysing discourses of multiculturalism and equality discuss how these are embedded in national and colonial discourses (see also Eisenstein 2004, 200–201 for critiques of universalist liberal feminist views on multiculturalism and Okin specifically).

culturalism, when considered desirable, can be described in terms of bringing “colour”, new ideas or openness into society⁴⁵, all of which imply something other than (dull) Finnishness. Whereas gender equality is seen as something “we have”, and as part of “ourselves”, multiculturalism is something that “we face” from outside. The notion of multiculturalism as a political challenge posed from outside produces nationalist discourses through the idea of an originally homogeneous nation that is stable and coherent (Hall 2000; Wahlbeck 2003). This chapter poses questions about how the discourses of gender equality and multiculturalism form part of nation-building. That these two discourses cite each other and rely on each other is visible for instance in the debates about the compatibility of gender equality and multiculturalism. How are the racialised and gendered power relations constitutive of the nation in the context of multiculturalism?

The “Recipes for a Multicultural Finland Soup” model could be best understood as a product that has a task: namely to spread information about the work done in the Globe in order to establish certain understandings, policies and practices in multicultural work. The analysis in this chapter could be described as paranoid: I will track “hidden” power relations in the text and show how different subjectivities are produced through hierarchies. I analyse the text in the ethnographic context: as documents that are meant to do something. Further, the text in focus is produced in the very specific context of European Union (EU) policies and for a certain purpose, namely the dissemination of the experiences gained in the project. Mainstreaming is a concept that has been introduced particularly through the EU. In the European Social Fund (ESF) programme that funds the Globe, mainstreaming is defined as

[T]he transfer of the results of an experiment to be implemented in other programmes and strategies. It refers to the dissemination of the [project’s] experience[s] and good practices and their inclusion into strategies both within the Member States and at the Union level. Learning from projects should be organised locally, regionally and nationally. (Equal 2001, 58).

45 This is illustrated in a poster part of the campaign on multiculturalism by the Ministry of Labour in 2004, in which multiculturalism was conceptualised through a pair of chopsticks holding a typically Finnish sausage, thus bringing new ideas.

Mainstreaming emphasises cooperation at different levels (local, regional, national) and elsewhere in the programme. There is even a formulation that the projects must be “capable and willing to cooperate at national and transnational level” (ibid, 59). These kinds of requirements have necessary implications for an NGO-based project. The projects need to be strategic about their politics and the language they use, in order not to endanger the cooperation⁴⁶. The requirements for cooperation are part of the funding agreement and also influence the chances of future funding. All of these requirements and aspects of funding have an effect on the work. Particularly texts like the model analysed in this chapter cannot be understood outside the context of funding.

A multicultural soup

As a result of three years of project work, the Globe designed a model, a collection of *best practices* in EU-terms. The model was called “Recipes for making a multicultural Finland soup”. This choice of words is interesting. On a general level, the title reflects the way in which multiculturalism is often about *consuming* “others” through food, music and other cultural products, both materially and metaphorically (see hooks 1992; Ahmed 2000a; Hage 2000). In an online-dictionary (MOT Englanti 4.7) the Finnish word for “recipe” (in the figurative use) was translated as “formula”. Thus, offering “recipes for a multicultural Finland” suggests that the project can give concrete and exact advice for successful multiculturalism; multiculturalism can be as easy as cooking a soup. Apparent simplicity is important to the framework of mainstreaming and best practices, and makes this book of recipes more appealing to policy makers and authorities working on issues of multiculturalism. In this kind of framework, where the “cooperative spirit” (Equal 2001, 59) is a requirement, there are fewer possibilities for generating troubling discourses that might, for instance, challenge assumptions about “Finnishness” in society.

46 The dependence on the donors raises a dilemma about the language used in work on multiculturalism. On the one hand, the projects themselves are aware of how only certain ways of speaking “work”, i.e. the language must appeal to the funding institutions and the other organisations with which they cooperate. On the other hand, as nearly all work on multiculturalism is conducted in projects working within these conditions, there is very little space to challenge the hegemonic discourses.

On the other hand, the word “soup” in Finnish (“soppa”) is also a metaphor for a messy and complicated situation. The tension between simplicity and messiness is important. Easy as it might seem, it leaves a certain uncertainty about the result – what kind of soup are we actually cooking and for whom? The messiness is apparent already in the term multiculturalism. The term has been used in a variety of ways and it is seldom defined (see pages 18–22 for a discussion of the concept). I will here concentrate on multiculturalism as an object for analysis – how multicultural Finland is imagined in the recipes – rather than as an analytical tool. Another important concept in this chapter is gender equality, which, like multiculturalism, is often used without being defined. These two concepts are embedded in discourses of Finnishness and the Finnish nation. All this is served, through the recipes, to cook, eat and enjoy!

The EU-framework and notions of “best practices” have many implications for how the multicultural is conceived. Sara Ahmed (2004b) shows that when organisations acknowledge the appearance of racism within the institution, racism is often understood as a “bad practice”. As “bad practices” can always be replaced with “good practices”, racism and racist structures are defined as surface or external elements, so that they are not seen to constitute the organisations. The discourse of best practices, thus, frames multiculturalism as a set of practices that are better or worse. At the same time this kind of approach fails to see how organisations are constituted through racialised and gendered structures and hierarchies (Ahmed 2004b). The focus on practices can also imply a focus on what is done on an everyday basis, and not only on abstract ideologies or values, which are widely circulated in reports and seminars on multiculturalism. The “recipes”, which disseminate the project’s best practices, can then be read as texts that aim to define and establish the meanings of multiculturalism and equality in the Finnish context.

One of the versions of the recipes was introduced in the following way (my translation):

Dear Reader,

We here at [the Globe] in [the city] have cooked a multicultural soup for everybody to taste. The cooks are our immigrant mentors. The main ingredients used are: paying attention to gender equality, finding one’s own strengths and capacities, and grassroots wisdom.

Spices are the colours that different cultures bring to Finnish society and the salt at the bottom is support and help for each other.

First of all, I would like to pay attention to the division of labour. The word for “cook” (keittäjä) used in this paragraph refers to the soup (keitto), literally “somebody who cooks the soup”. But a “cook” (keittäjä) is also somebody, often a woman, who works under the chef and particularly in mass kitchens (like school kitchens). The writer, who tells us the cooks are *our* immigrant mentors, apparently is not one herself. There is a tone of tutelage in the voice of the writer, in addressing the cooks as “our” immigrant mentors. The notion of the cooks being the immigrant mentors (instead of the members of the Globe as a whole group) can be read as an appreciation of the work the mentors do: it is upon their professionalism that we can rely on when cooking multiculturalism. Secondly, it can also indicate that the change, that is, the creation of a multicultural society, is the responsibility of the migrant women. And finally, it also confirms that multiculturalism is about “otherness”, marked through the migrant women, who are seen as the origin of difference that enables multiculturalism (see Fortier 2005a). The eater of the soup is an all-inclusive “everybody” in the spirit of mainstreaming. “The salt at the bottom” paraphrases an idiomatic expression in Finnish (sugar at the bottom) referring to an extra delicacy on top of the normal work.

Despite the easy tone of the recipes, the ingredients are not at all easy. Gender equality, and developing strengths, capacities and grassroots wisdom are all complicated issues, even if they also are vague. The ingredients that are not so easily digestible are made more appealing with reference to the “spices” of diversity. As bell hooks (1992, 21) writes: “[t]he commodification of ‘Otherness’ has been so successful because it is offered as a new delight, more intense, more satisfying than normal ways of doing and feeling. Within commodity culture, ethnicity becomes a spice, seasoning that can liven up the dull dish that is mainstream white culture”. One could argue that the vagueness itself helps to construct the Finnish nation as a space in which smooth, non-antagonistic cultural interaction is fostered. That spices add colour also shows how Finland and Finnishness are strongly marked by whiteness (see also Rastas 2007a). The introduction and title of the recipes seem to draw on the way in which the discourse on multiculturalism celebrates diversity⁴⁷,

47 Horsti (2005) has written about the celebration of diversity in the Finnish media context.

while the content of the recipes does not reproduce such understanding of multiculturalism.

The model consists of eight recipes. Some of these describe forms of organisation developed in the Globe, such as the immigrant mentors, small group activity and personal guidance and support. Others describe the approach to work and the central conceptual tools used in the Globe, such as empowerment, gender sensitivity, cultural awareness, set up of place⁴⁸ and equality training. Many of the recipes start with definitions of central concepts, such as culture, and explain their use in the Globe. The outcomes of the different recipes are also described. Multiculturalism is not mentioned or defined in the individual recipes. One could, therefore, think that the recipes together form the definition of multiculturalism. In order to explore questions about the alliance between the concepts of nation and equality in multiculturalism, I examine two of the recipes closely: cultural awareness and equality training. I will also focus on how the resulting soup is described, which can be read as a description of what kind of nation is desirable.

Given that the Globe is an NGO run project, there is astonishingly little (or no) critique of Finland and its policies. This can be interpreted in several different ways. In the first place, this is surely due to the context of mainstreaming and EU funding – and to a concern about future funding. In this sense it can be understood to be a result of how the projects put funding discourses into use. Secondly, it can also be about the way in which the recipes wish to imagine Finland as multicultural. The texts can thus be understood as productive utterances (e.g. Butler 1990); for instance where the recipes make claims about Finland as being equal or democratic. Thirdly, it reflects the general discourses on multiculturalism in Finland that mostly avoid criticism and disturbing ways of speaking. Finally, the reasons might lie in the way in which the Finnish welfare state has been seen as “women-friendly” and the nation as “almost equal”. If the state is seen as women’s ally rather than enemy, there is no reason to criticise it. Historically much of the so-called autonomous women’s movement has worked in cooperation with state institutions and seldom in opposition to it (Bergman 2002). Close relationships between the state and civil society are not exclusive to the women’s movement in Finland, but rather are considered typical of Finnish and Nor-

48 “Set up of place” is a phrasing used in the Globe to refer to the design of office space as part of the Globe programme.

dic societies (Pulkkinen 2000). After the economic depression in the 1990s there was a quite radical deconstruction of the welfare state, which also has led to more criticism of the assumed “women-friendliness” of the state (see Julkunen 2002).

Nation and culture

One of the recipes of the *Globe* focuses on “cultural awareness”. This recipe starts with a one page description of culture, which can be traced back to certain anthropological understandings (see Hannerz 1999). The first statement of the recipe is: “[w]hen working with immigrants you are dealing with culture bound values, practices and structures” (English original). This statement reiterates a popular understanding of culture as something that marks “the Others” (see also Frankenberg 1993). The culture of the others is often understood as problematic, as is the case here: “The aim is to recognize and more often also influence them – to question their meaningfulness in the changing world and alter them”. The “culture bound values, practices and structures” are thus a marker of a past world and should be altered.

The recipe goes on to explain that culture is learned through growing up in a community and that culture is an inherent part of one’s identity. There is also an affirmation that no culture is homogeneous, but that there are subcultures and individual cultures. Despite the acknowledgement of the heterogeneity of cultures, they can be classified into different groups. The following quote from the recipe book explains what “ethnic cultures” are like:

Cultures can be put into groups according to a range of basic qualities of which one is the extent to which a culture is considered individualistic or collective in orientation. Individually oriented cultures emphasize the separateness, independence and uniqueness of the individual. On the other hand, collectively oriented cultures emphasize family ties and a person’s dependence on his or her community.

This division of cultures into “collective” and “individual” once again draws on academic understandings of culture, particularly in the fields of cross-cultural psychology and intercultural communication (see Hofstede 2001/1981). Analysing these descriptions of culture, it is clear how my theoretical framework – which draws on Cultural Studies approaches and postcolonial and feminist theories – is in an awkward relation to the material while simultaneously posing similar questions. Like the “recipes” model, I am also

interested in how to make sense of culture, or how the relationship between the individual and society should be understood, even if our answers might be quite different. These are also interesting examples of multicultural politics as a site of negotiation between different knowledges.

The recipe describes gender relations as part of culture, stating that “most gender structures have been formed mostly on men’s terms and they support their power and possibilities to act. Woman exists through her men and children” (English original). Even if this claim could apply to any culture, only the gender relations of the “collective cultures” are given special attention. This shows how the category of migrant does not refer necessarily to people who have migrated, but rather to people who have been racialised in certain ways; and this perceived racial difference is seen as marked by a certain form of gender relation (for a further discussion of this, see pages 42–44 in this book). Gender relations in “collective cultures” are described as rigid: the choice of husband/wife is often made by the parents, sex is only sanctioned within marriage and the husband deals with public matters and the wife with the household.

When the recipe describes the results of the “increased cultural awareness”, nation and culture are brought together:

The migrant person is integrated into Finnish society. The former home country and its culture are seen as a valuable *tradition*, a basis for your own *individuality*. The new culture is valued and the differences are recognised as facts. The country from where you have come is *no longer your home country but your native country, which gives you strength*. Life between two cultures is seen as a valuable and enriching experience. The decision-making power and resources of the migrant woman and man are increased (English original, my emphasis).

As a result of the training, “the migrant person” will see “the former home country [...] as a valuable tradition, a basis for your individuality”. The former culture is thus valuable as history, as the past. As a mark of integration, it will form the basis for her or his *individuality*, which can be read as a departure from the supposed collective of the “former culture”. Individuality is a central marker of Nordic/European civilisation through, for instance, inscribing *culture* to others and *values* to the west (e.g. Razack 2004). The “migrant person” learns to become an individual in the shift from having been bound to culture, but now being separated from it (see also Keskinen

2009). As a result of the cultural awareness training “*life between two cultures*” should now be seen as a “*valuable and enriching experience*”. Life in Finland should thus be *enriching*, and increased cultural awareness even gives “the migrant woman and man” more power in decision-making and increases resources. This relates to the concept of empowerment (chapter 8), which is defined as the mission of the project, and is most often talked of in terms of increased strength and independence. The cultural awareness training is clearly focused on effecting a change in the migrants. This could be criticised as an individualistic approach to relations in society as it implies that the change towards a greater cultural awareness will happen through a transformation of migrants. It also reflects the discourses on integration, where the Finnish majority is not required to integrate to the multicultural society. Multiculturalism is thus exported from the domain of racialised, sexualised and gendered power relations, into the migrant’s individual sensibility, and is thus seen as her responsibility. The way in which strength, power and independence is emphasised in the recipe, relates to the Finnish discourses on equality and the figure of the “matron-mother” (Koivunen 2003) or the “strong Finnish woman” (Markkola 2002), where the migrant women are invited not only into the sphere of European civilisation but also asked to represent “Finnish womanhood”.

The idea that migrant women live a “life between two cultures” suggests that cultures are separate from each other. Furthermore, one of these is cast into the “past” and the other into the “present”. Movement in space, in the form of migration to Finland, becomes movement in time; that is, a step towards individuality, which can be read as modernity (McClintock 1995). Thus, “integration” becomes a narrative of progress in which the past forms a basis upon which to stand and make the leap in history towards (post)modernity. The aim of the cultural awareness training was defined as enabling participants “to recognise and more often also influence [culture bound values, practices and structures] – to question their meaningfulness *in the changing world and alter them*” (my emphasis). This movement towards modernity is essentially about gender; the values, practices and structures that should be “altered” have to do with gender relations⁴⁹. This becomes particularly clear in the context of “equality training” in the Globe. There is a

49 Women’s emancipation in European contexts has also been discussed in terms of modernisation (Assmuth 1997, 241–250).

tension between the expectations that migrant women should become more Finnish (i.e. gender equal) and transgress their own cultural boundaries, and at the same time stay in their places “as the other” in order for the Finnish subjects to be multicultural. This tension is essential for understanding the dynamics of discourses of multiculturalism (Fortier 2005a). As Lewis (2006, 94) shows, the accepted limits of difference – that is, what kinds of difference and how much of it will be respected – become exposed through the figure of the migrant woman.

Becoming Finnish through gender equality

The aim of the recipe on Equality Training is “equality between all women and men living in Finland”. This statement locates equality between *women* and *men*, representing these as two different and coherently separate genders without differences other than those of gender. This is typical of the Finnish gender equality discourse in general (see Honkanen 2003; Vuori 2009). It also suggests that the recipients of the equality training are “all women and men in Finland”. This could of course indicate that Finland is *not* equal as training in it is needed. Equality is defined in the following way:

Equality is valuing the person as him/herself and valuing and tolerating all his/her characteristics – masculinity, femininity, intelligence, education, origin of birth, etc. Still, it is very hard to change issues concerning equality, because the structures of the society – even [if] they would be for equality in principal – support the current practices (Recipes for Multicultural Finland Soup, English original).

Differences are first described as *personal characteristics*, so that “intelligence” and “race” or “masculinity” and “femininity” are the *same*, or *different in the same way*. To think of differences as personal features individualises the differences. This way of understanding differences as “human variation and characteristics” is typical of diversity rhetoric, while many researchers point out that it is important to understand these in the context of power relations and structures in society (de los Reyes and Martinson 2005, 9–11). In the spirit of diversity rhetoric, the recipe suggests that an “equal society” is a mix where no difference is to be dominant or more significant. Fortier (2008, 16–17) shows how “multicultural Britain” is described as an equivalent mix of cultures in no relation of dominance to each other (see also Hage’s (2000) discussion of the Australian “stew”). Hence, asymmetrical power relations,

or how these differences intersect, become difficult to analyse when conflated by the logic of the symmetry and the sameness of differences. The concept of intersectionality has been criticised for this kind of conflation of categories: race and ethnicity function in ways that are qualitatively different to gender and sexuality, even if they all include hierarchical relations and oppression.

Furthermore, equality is achieved through valuing and tolerating these features and valuing the person as him/herself. The person “as him/herself” can be interpreted to be constituted both by sexual, racial and other differences as well as “personal characteristics” such as intelligence. There is a tension here between the equivalence of differences and the valuing of the other as other (see Fortier 2005b). Tolerance always includes the power not to tolerate, and therefore reproduces power relations (e.g. Hage 2000, 85–88). Valuing differences, again, can reflect the way in which migrants are often marked through difference, as the “spices” that add “flavour” (hooks 1992; Hage 2000, 117–118; Lewis 2005; Löytty 2006). The recipe also suggests that equality is a structural question, which could be understood to mean that structures impede people from valuing and tolerating each other.

Equality is also understood as a question of rights, so that equality as described in the recipe “should make it possible for women and men to have the same rights and opportunities to fulfil their hopes and [use their] personal resources and make individual choices, which are not restricted by gender but humanity” (Recipes for multicultural Finland soup, English original). Two different issues emerge here. The first is that individuality is presented as an important component of equality, which links equality to the European/Nordic project of civilisation and to modernity (White 2000, 78; Razack 2004). Secondly, equality (as an ideal) is conceived of as a state of non-power. This has been prevalent even in feminist research on equality where a state of equality, that is non-hierarchical relations between men and women, is the ideal to which “we” fail to live up (Honkanen 2003). When equality is understood as non-power, it also means that inequalities are, in a way, seen as bad practices (Ahmed 2004b), which can be replaced with good practices. Within a poststructuralist framework of understanding power as constitutive of subjects (e.g. Butler 1990), Sara Ahmed (2000b) argues that gendered and racialised power relations make “us” possible, and that therefore “we” cannot deconstruct them through our own actions. In the context of gender equality this would mean that instead of fantasising about conditions free

of power relations, the different racialised and gendered positions would be taken seriously. Thus, to think of equality as freedom from power on the one hand, means a specific understanding of power (as power over somebody), and on the other hand, also works to conceal the ways in which gendered and racialised subjects are constituted through power relations.

The aim of the equality training is, according to the recipe, “to give such education to migrant women that can strengthen them in daring to influence their own issues and help them to recognise inequality”. Like in the previous recipe, it is the “migrant woman”, who needs to be educated in equality. For her to “recognise inequality” could refer to an awareness of how the gendered and racialised structures and discourses in Finnish society have an impact on the migrant women’s position. However, if this is read both in the light of “cultural awareness training” and how gender relations of “collective cultures” were presented, it seems that the inequalities are found in the “migrant family” or the gender order of “migrant communities” rather than in Finnish society (see also Razack 2004 and chapter 6). In the quote below the results of the equality training are presented.

Equality training helps to recognise the fact that the world is different for women and men – in Finland as well – and that they have to face a different world with different expectations and assumptions. When these assumptions are made visible we can enhance the well-being, equality and existence of diverse possibilities in life [of] and choices [available to the individual]. *The migrant person will also be integrated in Finnish society when helshe understands Finnish equality and historical and political views connected to it.* (My emphasis)

To point out that “the world is different for women and men – in Finland as well” indicates that the writer of the recipes is aware that there is more to “gender equality” than the national story of advancement. At the same time the statement echoes the narrative of Finland as an “almost equal country”. If one considers multiculturalism and gender equality as necessary ingredients for a nation-building project, the recipes could also be understood as *conditions for belonging to the nation*. Thus, understanding “Finnish equality and historical and political views connected to it” is a necessary requirement for belonging.

Gender equality, as it is represented in the recipes, seems to be synonymous with a certain gender order, typical of Finland and other Nordic coun-

tries. Equality is therefore less about politics or bad conditions that need improvement. Rather it is a claim about something “we are” (also Holli 2003, 19). Much of the equality training is, in fact, about “teaching the Finnish gender order”, and specifically, teaching a mythical Finnish gender order based on the agrarian assumption of working side-by-side. According to Gail Lewis (2005), a claim to a superior, more equal gender order is constitutive of Europe and its civilisation. Hence, the belief in nearly achieved gender equality in the Finnish context is part of this construction of Europe as modern and civilised in relation to its others as backwards. Gloria Wekker (2004, 490) also points out how white Dutch women are represented as “the epitome, the teleological endpoint of emancipation, the example for black, migrant and refugee women, who apparently have a long way to go before they can measure up”. The discourse on gender equality could also be seen as a part of a manoeuvre to position Finland as European. The affirmations of equality can also be read as reiterative acts that firmly establish Finland’s uncertain Europeanness to itself. Apart from being a European story, the emphasis on gender equality is also a particularly Nordic story. There are of course both similarities and differences between the Nordic countries, and here I refer to the discursive formation of the Nordic countries as nations where gender equality and social welfare are particularly developed and that such development is seen as evidencing their superior stage of evolution (see for example Carbin and Holli 2002; Razack 2004; Mulinari et al. 2009; Siim and Borchorst 2009). The idea of Finland as an almost equal or advanced nation became prominent in the 1980s when the social policy measures improved to match those in the other countries (Julkunen 2002).

In the narrative of equality, there is also the “strong Finnish woman” (or the matron-mother) who lurks as a figure against which the “migrant women” are imagined. At the same time, the figure of the strong Finnish woman is constructed through her migrant counterpart. This figure of the matron-mother (Koivunen 2003) is not always described in positive terms – she is also described as a monstrous character, a power hungry despot (and essentially anti-feminine). However, in women’s politics or feminism, she is more often embraced, even if not without reservations. The figure of the strong Finnish woman could be read (loosely following Sara Ahmed 2000a), as the kind of figure that is present in the encounters between Finnish hegemonic womanhood and migrant women, yet not exposed in them. The notion of

Finland as advanced and equal is particularly viable with reference to others. These “others” could include anyone outside the Nordic countries, but references to “collective cultures” in the recipes suggest that these “others” are more likely to be located outside the whole of (the discursively constructed) Europe than within it.

The multicultural nation

The instructions in the recipes suggest that it will be the migrants who are altered as an outcome of the recipes: they are the key ingredients of the “soup”. At the same time, migrant women are the cooks; that is, they are those who are responsible for cooking the soup and therefore are both the products and the agents of change. Furthermore, migrant women figure as the *objects* of knowledge in the recipes, like when collective cultures are described, apparently for the Finnish audience. This relates to what Anne-Marie Fortier (2005a, 14) describes as “multicultural intimacy”, which is fostered through “‘understanding’ the other [...] being able to describe her, to ‘know’ her, but where her identity is reduced to her lifestyle: her values, rituals, the food she eats”. The problem in focusing on the transformation of individual migrants as the path to multiculturalism is the way in which it leads focus away from racialised and gendered ideologies and structures that constitute Finnish society (including the multicultural projects). Thus, in constructing multiculturalism, the migrant women are both the ones to cross over and change, as well as the ones who are responsible for multiculturalism to emerge. This kind of focus implies both an individualistic understanding of power, as well as a voluntaristic one, which is common in neoliberal conceptions of nation and citizenship (Fortier 2005a).

“The recipes for making a multicultural Finland soup” are richly invested in an idea of Finland as a good society, a society of democracy, gender equality and individuality. The recipes’ aim is to construct this society as multicultural through educating the “migrant woman”, and sometimes the “migrant man”, and particularly teaching them to unlearn the supposedly more patriarchal gender order in which they live. This resonates with Spivak’s (1999, 291) notion of how “[i]mperialism’s (or globalization’s) image as the establisher of the good society is marked by the espousal of the woman as the object of protection from her own kind”. The best way to protect migrant women seems to be through altering the migrant woman to become more

Finnish. To establish Finland as a good society can be strategically important in the context of funding: it becomes important to work with goodwill and thus to appeal to the Finnish institutions that control funding.

The recipes offer a particular account of how nation, gender equality and multiculturalism are perceived in multicultural politics. One aspect that arises from the recipes is the interesting tension between crossing over, changing and staying. There is a clear expectation of change in the Globe; migrant women are those who are supposed to cross over cultural boundaries and perhaps those who are seen to be capable of crossing over. At the same time, as Fortier (2005a, 2008) and Ahmed (2000a) have pointed out, in order for the nation to imagine itself as multicultural, the other must stay in place as the other. Hence, the tension between change and stasis are part of the messiness of the multicultural soup. Another part of the messiness of the soup is the tension between the easy and the complicated. The idea of comparing multiculturalism to cooking stems from understanding multiculturalism as being about “richness” and familiar daily habits; the “ingredients” in the recipes, which include power relations and constructions of the nation, are, on the other hand, rather challenging.

Multiculturalism and gender equality cannot be understood as separate from each other. Discourses of the multicultural are often defined through gender equality, and the latter is shaped in relation to “somewhere else” as the opposite of Finnish advancement in that area. Rather than asking whether feminism and multiculturalism are compatible (a question which tends to invoke the idea of multiculturalism as a possible threat), it is important to examine closely these discourses in their different contexts, and to consider how they are invested in producing European and white subjects as “equal” or “more advanced”. The recipe book for “a multicultural Finland Soup” has offered one opportunity to examine the interconnectedness of multiculturalism and gender equality.

6. The reproduction of the nation in multicultural politics

[T]he reproduction of life itself, where life is conflated with a social ideal ('life as we know it'), is often represented as threatened by the existence of others: immigrants, queers, other others. [...] The reproduction of life – in the form of future generations – becomes bound up with the reproduction of culture, through the stabilisation of a specific arrangement of living ('the family'). [...] [H]eterosexuality becomes a script that binds the familial with the global: the coupling of man and woman becomes a kind of 'birthing', a giving birth not only to new forms of life, but to ways of living that are already recognisable as forms of civilisation. It is this narrative of coupling as a condition for the reproduction of life, culture and value that explains the slide in racist narratives between the fear of strangers and immigrants (xenophobia), the fear of queers (homophobia) and the fear of miscegenation (as well as other illegitimate couplings). (Sara Ahmed 2004a, 145)

The reproduction of life is intimately linked with the reproduction of nation, or culture, as noted in the quote above. In this chapter I examine how the reproduction of the nation is presented, challenged and produced in multicultural politics, particularly through discourses about families. The reproduction of life has always been a central question in nation-states, concerning which kinds of families, and particularly which kinds of mothers, are suitable to raise new generations. The desirable form of the nation is shaped in discourses on the family. Who can reproduce the nation? What differences are acceptable in the nation?

In the Finnish context, for instance, the reproduction of the nation is intertwined with eugenics. The history of eugenics from the late nineteenth century until the first half of the twentieth century included forced sterili-

sations by the state, mainly justified on the grounds of mental illness and alcoholism, which in practice meant the sterilisation of poor women (Hietala 1996; Ahlbeck-Rehn 2006, 323–326). Other forms of eugenics – family planning and health guidance of the population – have become part of welfare state services.

In most European countries the issue of an ageing population and there being too few children is a serious one (see Irni 2009). Yet not just *any* children are desired as the future generation. Migrant families are perceived as having many children, but despite the concern about an ageing Europe, these families are not regarded as a potential solution to the problem⁵⁰. Another heated family debate in Finland during recent years has been the one on the rights and the existence of queer families⁵¹. The debate has drawn on religious, biological and nationalist discourses (Kinnari 2007). This chapter examines the ways in which families and heterosexuality play a role in multicultural women's politics. I am interested in how different normative and non-normative conceptions of sexuality and family relations appear in the semi-public space of project work and seminars⁵². I will discuss the questions of reproduction, families and sexuality with reference to the concept of heteronormativity. Migrant women, as the category appears in my data, are self-evidently regarded as heterosexual, and the families are seen to consist of husband, wife and children, if the women are not single mothers. The migrant family can therefore be understood as a *cultural figure*, meaning that there are preconceptions about what the families *are like*. These preconceptions affect the ways in which the families are spoken about, as well as how the families are received, and provided with services. In my data the image of the cultural figure of the family appears very clearly in policy papers and

50 Instead, there are suggestions of bringing care services workforce into Finland from, for instance, the Philippines. In the public debates the workforce is often defined as individuals without families and as people who will not grow old in Finland.

51 These debates have concerned two legislative initiatives in particular: the Act on registered partnerships (passed in 2003) and the Act on assisted insemination (passed in 2007).

52 It is important to note here that I focus on the discourses and agendas of the project work. The way in which normative sexualities are shaped and challenged in “private” encounters is another issue. Here I am interested in public heteronormativity in particular: the fact that women who participated in the project certainly had different experiences and identifications is not the focus.

guidelines for the work in the Globe, as well as in reports that are produced to meet funding requirements.

Heteronormativity means, in the narrow sense, an assumption of all-inclusive heterosexuality. It is also used in a broader sense to refer to the regulation of heterosexualities as well as non-heterosexualities (see for example Lehtonen 2003; Rossi 2003). An often cited definition by Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner (1998, 548) states that “[b]y heteronormativity we mean the institutions, structures of understanding, and practical orientations that make heterosexuality seem not only coherent – that is, organized as a sexuality – but also privileged. Its coherence is always provisional, and its privilege can take several (sometimes contradictory) forms: unmarked, as the basic idiom of the personal and the social; or marked as a natural state; or projected as an ideal or moral accomplishment.” Berlant and Warner further describe heteronormativity as a “tacit, society-founding rightness”. It is often a question of an unconscious sense of rightness rather than a set of norms that can be listed. They also point out that “contexts that have little visible relation to sex practice [...] can be heteronormative”.

Berlant and Warner’s understanding of heteronormativity includes what Leena-Maija Rossi (2003, 2006) has defined as normative heterosexuality: not all sex practices or relationships (one could include family formations here) between women and men have the “society-founding rightness” of heterosexuality. Thus, heteronormativity can mean that a *certain* form of heterosexual organising is placed as a norm, and every other practice that differs from it is seen as deviant or Other (cf. Sedgwick 1991; Berlant and Warner 1998, 548; Juvonen 2002a, 30–31; Rosenberg 2002; Lehtonen 2003, 30–31). I find this broader understanding of heteronormativity to be a fruitful way of examining discourses on sexualities in my research. In the context of multiculturalism, it is particularly interesting to consider the ways in which heteronormativities intertwine with race and nation.

Heteronormativity is a useful concept because it seems that migrant families, as a figure for culture, seldom stand for the right kind of heterosexuality. Discussions about migrant families tend to focus on the image of a patriarchal, problematic family. Frequently, even the critique depends on the discourse criticised – thus the image of migrant families is powerful both when uncritically reproduced and when criticised. In the following discussion I will contrast different kinds of utterances that relate to migrant families as

they appear in the data. We are often caught up in the discourses on migrant families in ways which produce routine responses. The discourses on families here are mainly “Finnish” discourses on “migrant families”. There are a few instances where migrant women talk about families, and these instances are not as bound to such cultural generalised representations as those that will be the main focus in this chapter. Migrant women talk in much more mundane ways about families in the material.

For the purposes of the chapter I have looked at all the instances where *family* is mentioned in taped discussions, reports and other material. I have also examined instances where motherhood and children are mentioned. The data consists of passages from annual reports and a Globe leaflet, a discussion during a visit the Globe made to Austria, and a workshop on “women and family life” at the Globe, as well as passages from a founding seminar for a network against racism. My aim is to look at politics in the making, which consists of small streams rather than one uniform agenda, and therefore the data for the chapter is diverse. The inclusion of different kinds of data and ways of speaking is also an attempt to take the challenge of reparative reading strategies seriously. Thus, even if there are marked tendencies to talk about migrant families as somehow problematic, it is also important to pay attention to the places where the positions are ambiguous or more complicated. For instance, families and motherhood certainly relate differently to heterosexuality. The common representation of migrant men as patriarchal husbands and fathers affects the way in which families are talked about by Finnish employees and activists in multicultural politics and in the data produced by the multicultural projects (see Huttunen 2002, 290–304; Bredström 2003). Motherhood seems to be discussed in somewhat more positive terms. Therefore, one thread in this chapter is the nuanced relationship between the representation of families and that of motherhood. My suggestion is that the discrepancy between discourses on families and motherhood can be understood through the concept of heteronormativity. The families that appear in these discourses fail to reproduce a proper heterosexuality, while motherhood is not always as tightly connected with heterosexual relations. The detachment of motherhood from heterosexual relations may be one reason why it appears in a more positive light in my material.

The place of families in multicultural politics

Families from the “south” and “east” are usually depicted as large, tightly-knit, caring – and potentially suffocating. This image of non-Finnish families also appears in multicultural politics in the Finnish context. The particular importance of families for migrant women has also been emphasised in research in Finland (e.g. Martikainen and Tiilikainen 2007). Women are often described as central figures who bear important and necessary responsibilities in their families. Within the framework of gender equality discourse the place of women in this imagined family, even if appreciated, is also controversial. Gender equality discourse has stressed women’s position in the labour market and public life in general (e.g. Siim and Skeije 2008). Migrant families are portrayed as problematic precisely in relation to (the lack of) gender equality (see also Mulinari 2009). The Globe has formulated a set of principles for relating to families in a working paper titled “The impact of the family for the integration of the immigrant woman”. The paper begins by stating that families are an important source of support for migrant women. Immediately after this opening statement, women are described as bearing the entire responsibility for taking care of the family, and they are also shown as possibly having no networks outside the home. It seems that there is a fine line between supportive and suffocating: even when families are portrayed as supportive they can always become repressive. Families are sometimes mobilised to represent whole cultures, so that family forms and cultural spheres are linked together. For instance, in “Recipes for making a multicultural Finland soup”, family life in “collective cultures” is described in detail:

In collective cultures marriage is not a private matter but a concern of the community. Often parents have chosen the spouse for their child. Marriage is seen as life-long, divorces are rare. Sex life belongs to marriage. Man is often the public figure in the family: he goes to offices, shops, takes women and children to the doctor, deals with the money. Woman takes care of the home, prepares meals, takes care of children. Immigrant women suffer many times in this lonely situation because they are missing their previous social networks. The relationships and support between women is important. (English original)

The style in the report is matter-of-fact, presenting collective cultures and the position of women to a reader who is supposedly not familiar with this way of life. Family forms are directly linked with “cultural spheres”. The descrip-

tion is at once generalising (commenting on immigrant women, collective culture) and detailed (setting out who takes the children to the doctor or does the shopping). Gender relations in “collective cultures” seem to imply rigid binary positions and the clear division of labour. Migrant people are often understood through these kinds of cultural assumptions. For instance, gendered racism towards “Third World-looking”⁵³ men is often related to the assumption that they are violent and controlling as husbands or boyfriends (Huttunen 2002, 291–304). While the quotation about marriage is written in a descriptive rather than a normative manner, it nonetheless runs counter to the ideals of what could be described as Finnish/Nordic gender equality discourse (Vuori 2009; Honkanen 2008; Magnusson et al. 2008).

On the one hand, gender equality can be said to be part of Nordic heteronormativity and can be seen as a characteristic of “Nordic families”, particularly when compared to “migrant families”. Here it is important to notice that I talk about heteronormativity in the sense of heterosexuality “projected as an ideal or moral accomplishment” (Berlant and Warner 1998, 548). On the other hand, gender equality itself implies a heteronormative order; it means equality in relationships between men and women. As several researchers have pointed out (see, for example, Honkanen 2007), the men and women of gender equality are also most often middle class, white and Finnish. This is of course a simplified picture of discourses on gender equality in the Nordic countries, but most discussions of gender relations engage with these discourses, even if they are critical of them in various ways (see Honkanen 2007).

In the annual reports of the Globe (2003 and 2004) families make rather short-lived appearances, as in the following examples:

Other results during the spring:

- skilled women have received support for health-related problems, family problems and for skills development in relation to working life
- they have received professional help for custody-related problems and difficult problems in life

53 This is a term coined by Ghassan Hage (1997, 18–19), which he describes as a category by which white people (in Australia) classify those regarded as migrants. He claims that the perceived division does not lie between Europeans and non-Europeans, or between those who have an English-speaking background and those who have a non-English-speaking background (NESB, the official term in Australia), but between “those who are Third World-looking and those who are not”.

[...]

Each participant has received one to three hours of personal guidance and advice per week. Work and study placements have been found, and other problems relating to employability have been dealt with, for instance, problems with family, child custody or health.

[...]

Problems in the project:

The situation of refugees and asylum seekers has emotional aspects that may hinder the search for employment and education. For many women, part of their family is either in another country or has disappeared, which makes it difficult for them to focus on their current concerns. Many have also had to leave some of their children in their former homeland, either because a power-wielding husband or the authorities prevented the children from leaving.

In the reports, families are briefly mentioned as “problems” or as being absent, and therefore a cause for worry. The Globe worked extensively with questions of violence against women and several women approached the Globe because of its expertise on issues of violence. The last paragraph, “problems in the project”, is worthy of some reflection. It seems that the discourse on violence against women is so strong in the Globe that most problems relating to family relations are understood as part of it. In cases where women have been forced to leave their children behind, the problem is located in the husband as “power-wielding”. It might be that the framework of violence against women leads to the focus being on the husband (as an individual) instead of on larger power structures and global inequalities. It does not make the problem any less for the women, but the problem does not (necessarily) lie with the husband, but rather with the system which dictates what will happen to children in cases of parental separation. Second, there is a brief mention of the authorities elsewhere who may not allow children to leave the country. The fact that Finnish authorities also prevent children from entering Finland goes unmentioned⁵⁴.

54 There is an EU directive, which member states can use if they wish to (Finland has not done so), in terms of which even children of 12 years and older may be obliged to prove that they are “suitable for integration”.

An integration framework is dominant in discourses on multiculturalism in Finland. An integration framework is concerned with how “migrants integrate in the new country” and seldom sees the realities of migrant people as actively transnational (Wahlbeck 1999; Bryceson and Vuorela 2002; Huttunen 2006). In multicultural politics there seems to be very little critique of the practices of the authorities, because of the strong emphasis on integration and the fact that authorities are somehow involved in most multicultural work through the projects. Apart from the kinds of brief notes quoted above, absent families (both spouses and children) are talked about surprisingly little in the data (cf. Bryceson and Vuorela 2002). Talking about the absent families would also require a focus on global inequalities and issues of a more structural nature.

The families that appear in the data seem to refer mainly to families where both partners have migrated and have similar backgrounds. These are the families that represent the figure of the migrant family. However, many of the participants, those who were not single or living in other kinds of family arrangements, were married to or cohabiting with men of Finnish backgrounds. From my fieldwork I know that the project raised issues of racism and violence, and other problems, in these relationships. It is telling that these issues do not appear in the data produced by the project for general consumption. The following is a description in a brochure that summarises the main outcomes of the project as perceived by the employees (and edited by the project’s public relations officer). The voice in this description is that of one of the Globe’s employees from a migrant background:

The woman’s networks – her family and friends – are seen as a resource and problems can be solved together with them. This is however not always possible. Sometimes the context – her family, husband or her background community – does not support growth and independence. In these cases the woman has to be helped to become stronger in searching for her own goals and taking charge of her life. In the worst cases, a woman may have to abandon her community in order to live her life as she has chosen to. (My translation)

This is one example where family slips easily from being a resource to being potentially unsupportive, to the extent that the women might have to leave their community. However, my interpretation is that this passage is written so that it leaves some kind of space for the networks of women who

do not end up in difficult situations. There are other instances in the data where there is hardly any room for families as a resource or as a supportive network.

The figure of the migrant family as problematic seems to be such a strong construction that even critical ways of speaking tend to speak against it, and therefore be intimately linked to it. As an example of a critical discourse about the problematic migrant family, I will discuss one presentation in the founding seminar for a women's network against racism. The seminar was organised by the Finnish League of Human Rights and a migrant women's NGO. (The employees of the Globe participated in the seminar, but did not organise it). The presentation was made by Marja Tiilikainen⁵⁵ and dealt with Somali women's everyday lives and transnational networks. She situated her presentation about changing family patterns and transnational relations in the conditions of racism, discrimination and Islamophobia in Finland. In her presentation the women were part of the families in many ways. The dispersal of the "extended family" has, according to Tiilikainen, affected the everyday lives of the women so that they have less daily support from family networks. Therefore the women are also more dependent on their husbands than was the case in Somalia (see Tiilikainen 2003, 2007). In Finland the welfare state practices have replaced many of the functions of the family. She stated:

According to the traditional division of labour Somali women still bear the responsibility for the household and small children even if they study and work. And the situation is very similar in Finnish families of course. Furthermore the structure and functions of Somali mothers' everyday lives are very similar to the everyday lives of Finnish mothers. Somali mothers get as tired as Finnish mothers.
(My translation)

She also reminded the audience that one third of the Somali women in Finland are single mothers. In her presentation, there are problems in migrant families, including violence against women, but the families are not defined *as a problem*. By pointing out that women are responsible for home and children *just as in Finland*, and explaining the reasons for Somali women being

55 I have chosen to provide her real name, even though all other people have been given pseudonyms. She has published extensively on the subject and her talk was based on her research and publications.

dependent on their husbands (i.e. not because of “Somali culture”, but as a result of their refugee status, backed up by the Finnish welfare system) she could be seen to be critical of the stereotypical image of the migrant family. In her analysis, if the families are shown as problematic, they are just as problematic as Finnish families. Thus, even her presentation reproduces this way of figuring the family, even if it does so by rejecting it. The problem with focusing on the figure of the “migrant family” is that the discourse silences or overshadows ways of speaking that could exist *beside* this figure, and the rote responses to it. In newspaper coverage, as well, the stories about migrants (and particularly the “positive” stories) are written in reaction to pre-existing assumptions about how the readers think and are therefore based on this kind of counter-argumentation (Horsti 2005, 234–235).

I do not find it remarkable that migrant women face different kinds of problems in their families or that these problems are discussed in the data. What I do find remarkable however is that families are seldom discussed other than as problematic or absent. If the absent families were more visibly on the agenda, it would also be necessary to talk about global and structural inequalities. I also expected there to be more said about families as important or as a resource for the women. Throughout the material, mostly “Finnish” women talk (either in the meetings and seminars or in written reports) about “migrant families”. In fact, in the material from the Globe, one of the very few instances where family was spoken about as an ordinary phenomenon was when one of the employees with a migrant background spoke about a planned exhibition that the participants would work on, saying: “I think the point is that people will be proud; that for instance their families could come and see it”.

Violence against women as ruptures in gender equality

In feminist politics in Finland, central questions of gender and power relations have arisen in the context of “violence against women”. Violence against women is one of the topics under which families are discussed in the data. The notion of “violence against women” appeared in the public discourse only during the 1990s, alongside the notion of “family violence”, which did not articulate violence as a question of gender relations (e.g. Keskinen 2005). The rate of violence against women in Finland is high: 20 percent of women have experienced violence from their husband or partner at some point in

their lives (Piispa et al. 2005). In feminist research and politics, violence has been taken up as evidence of the fact that “advanced gender equality” in Finland is an imaginary construction. The high rate of violence against women has also triggered critique about a gender equality discourse that has focused mainly on labour market participation and child care services (and thus placing Finland among the “most advanced” nations). Thus, apart from being a serious problem in Finland, violence against women has also been an arena in which Finnish gender relations have been re-negotiated and the positive image of Finland questioned (Eriksson et al. 2005). Therefore it is interesting to consider what happens to the discourses on violence against women (or family violence) in multicultural settings. Is there also potential for criticism in multicultural contexts?

I contrast two extracts where violence against women is discussed. The first quote is from the founding seminar for an anti-racist women’s network, in which an employee from a domestic violence shelter gives a talk about the violence migrant women face in their relationships, and the problems shelters face in dealing with these women. She talks about violence against migrant women as a problem of “migrant families”, which is somewhat surprising considering that a little over half of the migrant women in shelters are married to or cohabiting with “Finnish” men (Nurmi and Helander 2002):

[O]ur resources, our working methods and the number of staff we have are suitable for addressing the problem of Finnish domestic violence, for which we have been able to build an operational model. But we don’t have the resources for women with migrant backgrounds. [...] And what also makes organising the services difficult are the severe threats made, which do not seem to be part of the problem for Finnish families. These threats include kidnapping the children, killing the woman outside the shelter, really dangerous situations. (My translation)

She ends by expressing a wish for a separate unit for migrant women who have faced violence, where there would be different kinds of therapists that could help migrant women and men to deal with the experiences they had before moving to Finland. Apart from constructing violence against migrant women as a question of “migrant families”, she also makes a clear distinction between the violence in Finnish families and the violence in migrant families. Even if the shelter employee mentions the generally high number

of cases of violence against women at the beginning of her statement, this fact is forgotten when she starts speaking about migrant families. Also, it seems as if Finnish violence is not “as bad” as the violence in other kinds of families (Kivinen 2007). It is described as somehow manageable, despite the fact that Finland is one of the five European countries that have the highest rates of violence against women. Katarina Jungar (2003) has analysed the approach of Finnish shelters to cases of violence against migrant women. She shows that when there is a lack of knowledge about racism in Finland, the practices can be unsupportive and, in the worst cases, are dangerous for migrant women.

Violence against women was one of the central areas of work in the Globe. The project helped women in situations of violence, but it also addressed the ways in which violence against women is spoken about by organising discussion events and education on the issue. In the following quote, during a visit to another EU-funded project in Austria, with which the Globe cooperated as part of the Equal programme, one of the employees, Rebecca, describes the way the Globe operates:

In our office, you don't have to call and say I'm coming. The coffee is always there and we're always there to listen to whatever problems you have. And so many women are facing violence at home, men are beating them, [...], they don't know who gets the child allowance, the income goes to the man and the man uses it however he wants so that the woman stays at home and they always say, don't go, I'm going to kill myself. All those kinds of things. This woman is afraid, oh, that man is going to kill himself so I stay. They are serious so they stay. But now they see there is help. And it doesn't matter, you can get away from your husband ten times – you go out, and you go back to your husband, that's your problem, and whenever you go, we're always there. We don't say, why did you go back? We say, fine, this is the situation. [...] But we also try to talk about equality. Because in Finland, everybody has to be equal. Because, like they say (Pirkko mumbles something in the background) in their country, they say, the men are the king of the house. [...] But before you start talking, they just think this is the women's centre – you eat cake and drink coffee and go home. (February 2004, English original)

In this quote violence is regarded as a problem that many of the participants in the Globe are facing. In my interpretation, Rebecca refers primarily to

the violence and control that the women experience from their Finnish husbands who, for instance, use the fact that (migrant) women are perhaps not familiar with Finnish welfare services, such as child allowances. She describes how the men threaten suicide, which is a particularly cruel threat, and how they use the well-known fact of a high suicide rate among men in Finland. By threatening suicide, the men make the women responsible for their well-being. One of the important aspects of work on violence against women in the Globe was that women are not blamed for returning to the marriage, and that leaving and returning is understood as a usual pattern in relationships where women face violence (see for instance Lundgren 2004).

I am interested in Rebecca's claim that "we also try to talk about this equality. Because in Finland, everybody has to be equal". First she talks about violence by Finnish men, which suggests inequality, and thereafter she notes that "in Finland, everybody has to be equal". I would not interpret this as her saying "in Finland, everybody *is* equal", which would be contrary to what she just said about the rate of violence against women. Rather, she uses the understanding of "the gender-equal Finland" as a resource for (migrant) women: she shows how gender equality is an ideal right that can be mobilised even if it does not *exist* as such. This is different from the kind of discourse where gender equality is referred to as something "we have" (see Holli 2003, 18). When gender equality is understood as something one can "have", the implication is that gender equality is achievable for an individual, and does not require social change. To mobilise gender equality as an ideal right could be a more fruitful approach to it, a way of putting it to work.

Heteronormativity in multicultural politics

One of the workshops in the Globe that explicitly dealt with families and gender relations was called "women and family life". The workshop was held by a person outside the Globe. The relationship of this workshop to the rest of the work in the Globe was somewhat ambiguous: the workshop leader had herself offered to run the workshop, and there had been little or no discussion of her perspective on "women" or "family". This was due to an ideology that emphasised the existence of multiple perspectives and openness regarding the programme. The person organising an event was responsible for the content, which was not necessarily discussed with the whole group. Therefore, I do not regard this workshop as having been an integral part of the

programme of the Globe. However, an analysis of the workshop is important as it was part of the kinds of discourses and events that are organised around sexuality and family life in multicultural contexts more broadly. I was going to participate in this workshop; my notes from the first session follow:

We meet with the Finnish leader and seven participants: two work in the Globe, four are participants in the project, and I am the researcher/evaluator. She begins by introducing herself and suggests that everybody else introduces themselves as well, telling us where they come from and whether they are married. She tells us that she has been married for 24 years and has two children. She talks at length about her husband and her children and a little bit about her education. A discussion follows:

Leader: So, introduce yourselves. Who are you? Could you talk a little bit about your background, where you come from, are you married?

Participant 1: I have been married for one and a half years.

Leader: Where do you come from, maybe not everybody knows?

P 1: Iran.

L: And you then, are you married? (and so on, around the table)

P 2: I'm Salla, from Finland and I'm not married.

L: Yet? (smiling broadly)

P 2: (mumbling) Or maybe I'm not going to get married.

One of the women says that she has been married for 28 years, which is admired. (Fieldwork diary 9 March 2004)

After the presentation the leader asks "why we fall in love with a certain kind of man". The answer she wants is that we are looking for a man similar to our own father. Thereafter we are given an assignment in which we have to think about "how our parents were good with each other". The starting point is the nuclear family, consisting of mother, father and children. Everybody in the room is expected to share the experience of having grown up in a heterosexual nuclear family and living or planning to live in one herself. Through asking "are you married?" and later "what kind of man do you fall in love with?" she excludes any other possible identifications than the heterosexual

one. When I said I was not married, I was identified as a single woman who wants to get married. The question about “how our parents were good to each other” also excludes the experiences of having grown up with one parent, one’s grandparents or in any other kind of family or setting. The question also excludes the experience of living with parents that were perhaps *not* “good to each other”.

The invisibility of non-heterosexualities can, on the one hand, lead to the fact that non-heterosexual women either choose not to participate in the projects or choose to “stay in the closet”. On the other hand, it is important to ask what it means that migrant women are always identified as heterosexual. It certainly relates to the migrant woman as a cultural figure, where “she” is imagined to be a certain way (see Fortier 2000, 34–36). The assumption in this workshop that migrant women are always heterosexual is not unique, but this assumption is seldom articulated in such clear terms. This kind of assumption can be partly explained by general heteronormativity in the Finnish context, but an important question is also *who can be thought of as non-heterosexual*. The way in which gender equality discourses also often rely on a binary, heteronormative gender order has been debated in Women’s Studies (e.g. Holli et al. 2002; Honkanen 2003, 2008; Edenheim 2005, Dahl 2005). Therefore, I argue that heteronormativity has to do with Finnishness, whiteness and Finnish images of “otherness”.

The leader of the workshop, who is white and Finnish, positions herself as an expert on heterosexual relations through talking about her education but also through her experience of being in a long-standing marriage. The need for (routine) testimonies comes up here: participants are asked to talk about their origins and marital status. I found these two questions – “are you married?” and “where do you come from?” – problematic and embarrassing. Being expected to answer personal questions about our family settings and our parents’ relationships could be said to put all of us in the position of children (see Fanon 1986; Mulinari 2003, 114–115). Migrant people are often put in the position of children and expected to fulfil the “will for knowledge” of those in the majority (Honkasalo 2003).

“Where do you come from?” is a question that, in a Finnish context, is repeated in most, if not all encounters where “Finns” meet “migrants” or people otherwise defined as racially different, like adopted children (Rastas 2007a; Hübinette and Tigervall 2008). In multicultural contexts, the ques-

tion is most often posed as a friendly gesture, in order to show an interest or as simple small talk. However, for the person who needs to answer the question over and over again, it can mean a continual questioning of one's place in Finland (see also Visweswaran 1994, 114–140; Huttunen 2002, 50). The two seemingly innocent introductory questions – *are you married?* and *where do you come from?* – speak of power relations and normativity. While one of the questions indicates that one's place in Finland is continually questioned, the other question assumes a condition that is taken for granted – heterosexuality. I can only imagine the discomfort of the repeated question “where do you come from?” The way in which the question is posed for anybody who does not “look Finnish” (cf. Hage 2000, 18) indicates how deeply our ways of perceiving are affected by a binary categorisation of us and them. Both through questioning their place in Finland and taking their heterosexuality for granted, migrant women are attached in specific ways to culture and family. The two are intimately linked: “ethnic cultures” are often represented as family-based, “traditional” and therefore homophobic (Fortier 2000, 127).

The way in which migrant people are assumed to be heterosexual and often also homophobic relates to the way in which the “Third World” is imagined in the west. In mainstream media coverage (Thorpe 2005, 17) but also in gay and lesbian contexts (Alexander 1997, 68–69), the “Third World” is depicted as generally backwards, and even barbaric⁵⁶. Jocelyn Thorpe (2005) has analysed, in a Canadian context, how LGBTIQ⁵⁷ rights, marriage and gender systems are, interchangeably, used as evidence of generally “backward” societies or cultures. This offers an obverse image of western contexts, which are portrayed as advocates of human rights and liberalism. These analyses from different contexts show how homophobia is seen to belong to the “Third World” (as a monolithic whole) and further understood as a marker of underdevelopment. Therefore, I can conclude that the heteronormativity of my data is also linked to the construction of Finland as a progressive country that respects human rights.

After the first assignment about our parents' relationship, the leader goes on to discuss the (sad) state of marriage in Finland today:

56 The Netherlands, for instance, has produced a video including a scene of a gay couple kissing, which was to be shown to potential migrants from countries that are predominantly Muslim. This could be described as a state practice that mobilises the image of the Third World as “backwards”.

57 Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer.

L: If you compare marriage today and before, women didn't complain, you just stayed married. Our parents and us? What has changed? There were fewer divorces. Women demand more. They start to demand... And think how different women and men are; we are completely different. Women function with feelings and start making demands of men, and they can't. Men in Finland are brought up to cope [with life], and they aren't good with feelings.

P1: She (refers the woman next to her) says that perhaps in Finland, people divorce, women are independent, women want to be equal, like men. This is new for her. She also hates the fact that children are treated so badly here.

L: How would you describe a good relationship in your culture?

P1: Well, people also think that women should get more power, decide about things as much as the man. I think men should be men. She (refers again to the woman next to her, who talks and she translates) got married [in another country], and has lived here only three weeks and already now her husband has started to threaten, has become completely different, he wants her to stay more at home. [He has] betrayed and changed completely.

L: Yeah, yeah, that can happen. It's sad. (silence)

But you said you think a man should be a man. That's what we all probably think, but also that women are women. In Finland men are seldom regarded as men. For example, you are at the airport and the baggage disappears; it's most often the women who take care of it and the men sit there on the bench. Men from other countries start to take care of the matters. It's like we don't leave space for the men to be men.

The discussion takes place in a room with mainly migrant women, one of whom talks about her experiences of violence shortly after the introduction round. The leader leads the discussion towards (Finnish) men and their space, for which women should be responsible. *Women* and *men* are not only coherent and separate categories, but also "totally different". Women "function with feelings" and men would function through agency, at least if women left them the space to do so. Gender difference is portrayed as positive, perhaps even necessary. Women should understand that they should not demand such things (like coping with feelings) that are not part of what

men *are*. Men should be men and women should be women. As women are even responsible for men's agency, it seems that women should actively give up their agency in order to give men the space for it. This yearning for the real man and the real woman could even be seen to imply that men are oppressed (they do not have agency) because gender equality "has gone too far" (not a completely foreign construction in the public debate in Finland, see Honkanen 2007).

It is also interesting to examine this concern about (Finnish) men's space and agency in relation to the discourses about migrant men: they are instead regarded as having too much agency, or at least somehow the wrong kind. The short discussion shows how a focus on men's agency can obscure the problem of violence against women. If men's control is desirable and seen as part of the heterosexual relation, how can it be interfered with when the control is expressed through violence (see Keskinen 2005)? The leader's response that "it is sad" and "that can happen" can be understood as part of this kind of understanding of heterosexuality and gender relations. In other words, if men's control is desirable, there are no tools for tackling violence (apart perhaps from individual explanations, such as childhood-related or alcohol-related problems). On the other hand, the leader shows, even if unintentionally, that violence is closely related to normative masculinity through attaching the need for control and a need for space to "man as a man". Several researchers (Lundgren 1992; Jokinen 2000; Eriksson 2003) have shown that violence is one of the arenas for the construction of masculinity. On the one hand, this way of presenting heterosexuality defines women's space according to men's requirements. On the other hand, masculinity becomes reduced to power and control, as if no other forms of masculinity exist (see Jokinen 2000). Men, as a category, are also represented as unable to "deal with feelings". As a discussion in a women-only space with many women who are married to Finnish men, I found it particularly problematic how women's space and agency in a relationship was discussed.

After this discussion, I left the room and called a colleague of mine as I did not know what to do next: I was horrified by the leader's approach to a workshop within a project that was working seriously on issues of violence against women. My colleague and I decided that I might simply leave the workshop. I told the leader and the participants that my understanding of

gender and sexuality was so different that I could not stay⁵⁸. The workshop constructed marriage between a man and a woman as the ideal – the longer one had been married, the better. In her introduction to the workshop the leader said that the institution where she studied, the Finnish Population and Family Welfare Federation (*Väestöliitto*) worked to enhance the status of marriage and family⁵⁹. She continued by saying that this work is particularly important because working life always takes precedence over marriage in Finland. These statements are interesting considering that the women who participated in the workshop were unemployed or otherwise outside the labour market; for instance, they were taking care of small children at home.

This workshop represented quite different views on sexuality and gender than those otherwise produced in the Globe, and particularly regarding relationships and violence were discussed. Even if the employees in the Globe disagreed with the leader of the workshop, they did not want to disrupt the workshop (which was my suggestion). The employees thought it was important to give space to different points of view. Another argument was that her approach to gender and heterosexuality corresponded with the way “migrant women” think. In that sense it reinforced a very familiar, yet stereotypical, image of migrant women who live according to more “patriarchal gender roles”. Further, if this kind of thinking is imposed upon migrant women, it means that living according to patriarchal gender roles is detached from Finnish women. Finnish women, familiarly again, represent gender equality in their heterosexual relations. Normative heterosexuality is therefore constructed around the idea of Finnish gender relations as equal.

The relationship of the workshop to the gender equality discourses is interesting. Through emphasising men’s need for space and women’s respon-

58 After I left the workshop, I did not return to participate in it. I felt I could not sit “observing” in a small group of seven or eight people and I did not know how to participate either. It is difficult to say what would have been the ideal thing to do. I had a discussion with the project employees, the workshop leader and a couple of the participants after the workshop. As I emphasised openness about my views towards the project in many ways, being critical about the workshop and taking it up with the project was part of this dialogue. The project was also characterised by people coming and going, which meant that popping in and out of a workshop was not unusual. Thus, walking out of a workshop might sound more dramatic than it was in this context. I also thought about it as an experiment, to consider different possibilities that are open to an ethnographer in the context of research.

59 These are the workshop leader’s statements about *Väestöliitto*, not its view.

sibility for it, the leader distanced herself from the gender equality discourse characteristic of Finland (see for example Vuori 2009). Gender equality politics in Finland and the other Nordic countries has traditionally emphasised women's participation in the public sphere: women's waged work, equal pay, and day care services (see for example Widerberg 1995). Her critique of Finnish gender relations could also be understood as a gesture of hospitality towards the migrant women and what migrant women are thought to represent. Otherwise, the Globe promoted the gender equality discourse with an emphasis on women's participation in "all spheres of the society" (see my discussion about gender equality on pages 108–109). Thus, the workshop differed from much of the multicultural work in the way genders were constructed not only as binary, but also as oppositional and complementary to each other. In a way this workshop also hints that there is more to understanding gender relations in Finland than through the familiar framework of gender equality.

The workshop also functioned strongly within the discourse of romantic love. Marja Kaskisaari (1997, 243, 250) has analysed the ways in which discourses on romantic love maintain public heterosexuality and therefore also the social order. It is interesting to consider how the discourse on romantic love is not only heteronormative, but also constructs Finnishness and Europeaness. Gail Lewis (2005, 550–551) suggests that the Asian family (for instance, Indian and Pakistani families, where arranged marriages occur) could be read as "queer" as it deviates from normative – western, love-based – heterosexuality. This suggestion is interesting, considering how migrant families seldom stand for the desired heterosexuality. Those families Lewis suggests that could be read as queer are the ones whose cultures are depicted in public debates as "non-modern" and "under-developed". To extend the notion of queer to denote practices that deviate from western heteronormativities is fruitful, even if it also can be problematic. It should not lead the focus away from different links between heteronormativity and racism (Ahmed 2004a, 144–145) or make "Asian queers" invisible (see Miyake 2008). It is also worth noting, as Sara Ahmed (2004a, 155) emphasises, that *queer* does not mean freedom from (hetero)normativity, but it can re-work the norm. In this sense, one could regard the "queer migrant family" as stretching normative Finnish heterosexuality, but not as being "outside" it.

There is a close connection between the regulation of sexuality – heteronormativity – and the reproduction of the nation (Berlant and Warner 1998; Rosenberg 2002; Gopinath 2003; Rossi 2003; Lehtonen 2003; Sorainen 2005). Jasbir Puar (2006) develops the concept of homonormativity⁶⁰ in relation to spaces where white lesbians and gays can be patriots in the US context; that is, they can represent the nation. Thus, the connections between non-heterosexualities, race and nation are not by any means simple. In debates on multiculturalism, it is precisely belonging to the nation that is under scrutiny. Who is entitled to belong? Who can formulate the terms of belonging?

Both “race” and “homosexuality” have been pathologised in medical discourses. Both categories have formed the basis for persecution, and their histories have intersected in many, often violent, ways. If “homosexuality” today is understood primarily as a “western” and urban phenomenon, in the colonial literature, for instance, it was, on the contrary, attached to “Others” (e.g. Schleiner 1996). Non-white men were feminised in colonial discourses, and were therefore also considered deviant in their sexuality. The sexuality of black women, in particular, has been the focus in scientific racism and been pathologised as excessive (Gilman 1985, 79–108). In the anatomical examinations of the eighteenth century, “the excess” of black women’s genitalia was seen as leading to lesbianism (Gilman 1985, 89).

The relationship between whiteness, western-ness and non-heterosexual practices has been debated in Queer Studies and Anthropology. On the one hand, the understanding of non-heterosexuality with its origin in the west, slowly but steadily spreading towards the east and the south, has been criticised. On the other hand, there is also criticism of the idea of “global gayness”, which assumes that “gay” has the same meaning all over the world. Anthropologists have studied many forms of non-heterosexual practices in non-western contexts and, together with the queer theorists, have also challenged the binary construction of homosexuality–heterosexuality as the only way of understanding sexual practices (e.g. Bolin 1996). LGBTIQ rights, along with women’s rights, are sometimes mobilised as a question of moder-

60 There is no unanimity about whether one can talk about “homonormativities” in the same sense as “heteronormativities”. Berlant and Warner (1998) refuse the concept of homonormativities as, according to them, homosexuality will never have the same “tacit, society-founding rightness” as heterosexuality.

nity and used to legitimise racist or colonial practices (see Eisenstein 2004; Phillips and Saharso 2008). Even if one could say that there are places where even a “queer body” can stand for the nation in the Nordic context, the place of non-heterosexuality in the nation is easily questioned, particularly in relation to reproduction (Charpentier 2001; Kinnari 2007).

Who can reproduce the nation?

Migrant families are most often constructed as problematic in two ways: either they are patriarchal or they are absent (and therefore a source of anxiety for the women). The discourse on migrant families is so strong that it informs both uncritical repetitions of its terms, as well as attempts to challenge it. The representation of migrant families is stereotypical and familiar: the families are close and on the verge of becoming suffocating. In the light of my data, I would argue that the “problematic migrant family” is best understood by looking at the imagined heterosexual relations of these families. The families fail to embody the right kind of heterosexuality, that which offers “tacit, society-founding rightness” (Berlant and Warner 1998). For instance, the way in which migrant families appear in the discourses on violence against women – in this chapter exemplified by the shelter employee’s words – shows the Finnish family (and even Finnish violence) to be the idealised norm. The migrant family is depicted as patriarchal, and the violence is even worse than in Finnish families. In the Recipe’s description of families belonging to “collective cultures” (see my discussion on the page 115), the gender roles are described in a detailed and static manner: the husband is responsible for interacting in the public domain, and the wife is responsible for the private domain (primarily caretaking). The gender order in the families is such that men are portrayed as hypermasculine and women as hyperfeminine. The gender order of the imagined migrant families resembles a caricature of heterosexual relations (also Huttunen 2002, 291–304; Farahani 2007; Mulinari 2009). If an ideal heterosexuality in the Finnish context includes an ideal of gender equality (which emphasises women’s influence and agency, particularly in the public domain), the imagined migrant family fails to represent it.

Even though many of the migrant women are married to Finnish men, and many others are single mothers, discussions about families in my data most often refers to migrant families. In my view, it is not that the Globe

employees or the shelter employee are unaware of this information – rather this shows that the discourse on migrant families is so strong that it easily dominates the discussion about family relationships. Single mothers could of course be said to form “migrant families” together with their children, but I suggest that the discussion about migrant families refers primarily to the imagined heterosexual relationships within families. Motherhood seems to offer a slight shift in the position of the migrant women from the one they are given in families. In the following quote migrant women are idealised through their role as mothers. The quotation is from a brochure presenting the results of the project. The writer is one of the employees, and of Finnish background.

When this project started I remember I wrote in the leaflets that migrant women need more support, because it is more difficult for them than for men to integrate in their new homeland. I have removed this, because now I am of the opinion that women throughout the world are extremely strong, survivors. They push the child in the pram to day care in the dark snowy mornings, rush to the next bus to attend a Finnish language course, plan the daily grocery shopping on the way, smile and make contact with the majority population. They are polite, even if they often receive cold looks in return. In the darkness of the afternoon, they pick up the children, prepare dinner for the family, ensure that homework gets done and put their little ones to bed.

Migrant women are represented as heroic and Finland as a dark, cold country with impolite people and bad weather. “Women” and “mothers” are equated in this passage. Even if this description of migrant women is a romanticised one, the Finnish employees of the Globe will be able to relate to the reality of the daily life of a mother with small children. They are either living it, or have lived it recently, so that pushing a pram in the snow and darkness is familiar, and not only a sign of extreme bravery. The husbands do not seem to play any significant role in the description of the mothers’ daily lives, even though they would be included in the family for whom the women prepare dinner. In addition, many of the instances where children are mentioned in the research material show problems that relate to the Finnish welfare system rather than to the family. These include discussions on the scarcity of day care centres, or other welfare services, that mothers of small children must

face. In the quote the lives of the migrant women as mothers is also described as difficult, but the difficulty relates more to the conditions of life in Finland than to the conditions of “culture” or “family”.

Representations of migrant families relate to the ways in which Europe has portrayed itself, through sexuality and gender relations, as more civilised than the rest of the world (Lewis 2006; Mulinari 2009). These fantasies may have altered in shape: if the colonial and oriental fantasies of the Other were sexually excessive (cf. Gilman 1985, 83–89; Lewis 2004, 253), the current figure of the migrant is rather constructed as gender conservative. Perhaps the figure of the migrant relates more to the division of the world into “modern” and “traditional” and is therefore more about “culture”. The figure of the “excessively sexual Other”, on the other hand, is a primarily racialised figure and is strongly present in the gendered racism that certain-looking women face, as well as in commercial and popular cultural products (e.g. Rossi 2009). Discourses about migrant families have many implications for those people the discourses claim to describe (Rastas 2007a). Representations are not “out there”, but are part of the everyday lives of those people that are seen to embody them. This means that certain people face assumptions about their way of life and face racist comments that draw from these images. For example, the assumption that migrants are always heterosexual has implications for those migrants who are not. As Raisa Gulzar Charania (2005) has shown, a person becomes unintelligible as both Muslim *and* lesbian.

The intersection between queer politics and migration within the discourses on family and reproduction is interesting. Neither queer families nor migrant families are seen as suitable reproducers of the nation (see Charpentier 2001 about the way in which homosexuality is constructed as a threat to the nation in Finland). If heteronormativity is understood, broadly, to refer to a certain form of heterosexuality that is set as the norm, migrant families could be seen as queer, even if the assumed heterosexuality of the migrant families is constructed as an excessive heterosexuality rather than as an absence of it (see also Lewis 2005, 550–551).

The racialised fantasies about migrant families take mundane forms. People with certain looks (such as those who are identified as southern, non-European or “Third World-looking” in Hage’s (2000) terms) are faced with assumptions about their family formation (in particular, that they belong to heterosexual families with many children) and the distribution of labour

within the family (that is, an “unequal” one, in which the wife bears the burden). These kinds of images and fantasies are present even in the seminars dealing with gender equality and multiculturalism, and in the brochures and reports produced for mainstream EU initiatives. Many of the encounters analysed here are attached to hierarchised binaries, like that between the “west” and “the rest”, “us” and “them”, “man” and “woman”, “heterosexual” and “non-heterosexual”. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (2003) suggests that one could perhaps think *beside* the binaries, rather than beyond them. Perhaps an alliance between queer families and migrant families could open up the possibility of stepping beside the discourses on migrant families?

7. Expertise versus experience in multicultural politics

I suggest that multicultural women's politics and project work is essentially about questions of gender, alongside those of culture. In this chapter I will analyse the way in which womanhood is constructed in the discourses of these fields. In my material, different ways of knowing and feeling seem to be central to the construction of womanhood. These relate to the question of "*voice*" that is central in feminist theory. Whose knowledge is "heard" in multicultural women's politics? And what information is heard *as* knowledge? In postcolonial theory and ethnographic accounts, the concept of *voice* points to the power dynamics involved in speaking and being heard. For example, questions arise such as who can speak about whom, and what are they able or allowed to say? Under what conditions is it possible to speak? Sara Ahmed (2000a, 60–63; 2000b) adds the question of "who knows" to the question of "who speaks". This foregrounds the structural and institutional conditions of speech acts, as well as their relationship to knowledge and power.

The question of *who speaks* has become classical in feminist research, often with reference to Spivak's famous question "Can the subaltern speak?" (1993a). Spivak has added to this the question of *who works for whom*, as a way of revealing economic power relations that may have bearing on the question of voice (ibid. 83–84). In the microcosm of the Globe, and in the project world more broadly, the question of work is relevant as the labour market is strongly hierarchised, and segregated by gender, race and ethnicity (Forsander 2002, 13). Speech acts in this context are situated in a complex web of power relations. Class and material relations have started to reappear⁶¹ only recently in poststructuralist feminist research, as well as in research on

61 There is a tradition of Marxist feminism in which class relations have played a significant role (see Gimenez and Vogel 2005).

ethnic relations and migration (unless this is directly concerned with the labour market) in the Finnish context (see for example, Tolonen 2008). Thus “voice” has been primarily treated as a question of representation in feminist research in Finland. To explore the connections between constructions of gender and voice (which, in my usage, includes: being heard, and being seen to have knowledge) I will analyse a seminar organized in an International Cultural Centre⁶² on the topic of gender equality and migrant women. The title of the seminar could be translated as “Being equal in Finland – even as an immigrant woman”. In addition to this analysis, I will examine one particular staff meeting at the Globe at a fairly turbulent time in the project. Here I focus on how power as knowledge (expertise) manifests in multicultural politics and how this affects constructions of race and gender.

The construction of sisterhood in gender equality politics

The seminar was organised by three non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The first of these could be described as a multicultural NGO, the second primarily as a women’s NGO and the third as a multicultural women’s NGO. Representatives from municipalities and other authorities often work together to organise seminars, events and projects. Cooperation between bureaucrats, activists and politicians has been the usual practise of the Finnish feminist movement (see Bergman 2002). EU funding policies have encouraged increasing cooperation between NGOs, authorities and policy makers. In these seminars, representatives of NGOs, municipal employees from offices that deal with migrant work, and researchers⁶³ give expert talks. These seminars offer a forum in which different actors encounter one another and make (competing) claims about the central agendas of multicultural politics. The people who gather in the seminars can be considered to be experts on multiculturalism. They may be involved in multicultural politics through their work, or they may write about multiculturalism in the media or produce reports and other written material (for more about seminars as material, see the discussion on pages 83–84).

62 See Joronen 2003 and Pyykkönen and Saukkonen (2008) on this international cultural centre.

63 I have also participated in constructing the field by giving talks in some of these seminars.

The seminar in question was explicitly about the position of migrant women in relation to gender equality in Finland, and thus it offers rich material with which to examine Finnish constructions of gender, nation and race and ethnicity. The aim of the seminar was to “strengthen the dialogue between Finnish women’s organizations and immigrant women’s organizations about societal influence, participation and differences and samenesses between women” (Caisa 20.1.2004). All the organisers and most of the participants represented NGOs. The seminar consisted of several presentations with time allocated for general discussion and comments.

The title of the seminar “Being equal in Finland – even as an immigrant woman” could be interpreted in several ways: firstly, it may suggest that migrant women should be included in the realm of “Finnish” equality. Secondly, it could describe the perceived lesser state of (gender) equality of migrant women. I would understand this second interpretation to refer to the position of migrant women within their families and their perceived cultural worlds, and also perhaps to their positions within the Finnish labour market. The opening presentation was made by a representative of a migrant women’s NGO. She started the seminar by raising critical points in relation to multicultural work and how it is ethnically and racially organised:

I represent [the NGO] “Monika – Women from many cultures”. When the question was raised about five years ago about how I could work in Finland as a migrant woman, I noticed that in this society I am an object and not a subject, [despite being] an independent agent and [an] educated [person]. In the 1990s many projects and advice centres for immigrants were founded. The agents [in them] have mostly been Finnish women. At the same time it has felt like we migrant women [who are] those who urgently need help, are unhappy and marginalized. [...]

I look critically at the participation of migrant people in the following way: [...] migrants only fit under the wings of the Finnish employees. Cooperation is needed with Finns, but [it seems like] migrants would preferably be only little represented [sic] and they would only work as promoters of their own ethnic group and seldom independently. These are the critical points that should be opened up. (My translation)

In the quote, the speaker clearly constructs herself as an expert. She knows how multicultural projects in Finland tend to work: migrant people are in a subordinate position as employees and agents in multicultural politics. She also makes reference to how race and ethnicity are intertwined with class: despite her education, she has not been in a position to work independently. As a further example from the project world, I can add to her critique that none of the Equal-funded projects aimed at migrants have had a migrated person as the project leader⁶⁴. Her critique raises three issues: first of all, migrant women are seen as objects and not subjects; second, migrant women seldom have independent working positions; and third, they are given a narrow field of work as representatives of their own culture or own ethnic group.

Many speakers in the seminar referred to this talk in their own commentaries, and in that sense acknowledged her position as an expert. Further discussion in the seminar however mainly dealt with the first critical point, that migrant women should not be seen as objects, but as subjects. This was understood as a question of *agency*, and relates to the image of migrant women as women who “stay at home” (which is further understood as a problem for their proposed “equality”, and a sign of passivity).

Most of the talks addressed the importance of cooperation and working together, which was indeed the main purpose of the seminar. The first speaker’s other points were not discussed. These related to the *conditions of the cooperation*; that is, the different and unequal positions of, and opportunities available to, the different actors. In the following commentary the chair of the seminar summarised the important points raised in the first two presentations of the seminar:

I think the most important here is that as women and as women’s organisations we work together, strengthen this dialogue, because that is the only way we can have the greatest possible impact. And at the same time we can avoid the pitfall of these discussions, which is that migrant women are seen to be a helpless and problematic group.

It is of course important that these special needs and problems will be raised, but it easily leads to a view of migrant women as some kind of problem group, rather than a view that acknowledges their rich resources. When we work together, and this is also true when

64 This claim is based on my reading of the names of the project coordinators, which means that my reading may be inaccurate. www.esr.fi, accessed 15.11.2008

working with Finnish women, we can avoid this kind of labelling.
(My translation)

Cooperation is important because, on the one hand, it can produce the *greatest possible impact*, and, on the other hand, it can allow space for migrant women's agency. This talk constructs a women's movement that has common goals. These are defined with reference to a unifying notion of a womanly "we": it is important that we work together, and furthermore it is important that we work together *as women*. The "pitfall", for the Finns, however, lies in their relationship to migrant women.

The speaker also states that women (as women) have the same problems. The discourse of a unifying womanhood is a powerful and enchanting claim about sisterhood, and constructs solidarity in spite of differences. One can understand the utterance "us women" as a response to the differences, which womanhood is seen to be able to overcome. However, it raises, once again, the classical question that was posed early on in Sojourner Truth's famous speech in 1851 "Ain't I a woman?"⁶⁵ during the US abolition struggle; namely, which women we are referring to when we pose the notion of a universal sisterhood (see also hooks 1982; Lorde 1998/1984). The discourse about "us women" is problematic if it leads to silencing the experiences of other women (like migrant, queer or handicapped women). Honkanen (2003) notes how an uncritical understanding of womanhood as unifying constructs gender difference as binary. To emphasise cooperation can also help to create space for Finnish women to be agents in multicultural politics (cooperation implies that their participation is needed).

The other talk summed up by the Chair was given by a representative from the Finnish-Philippine Society. She addressed the sexualised racism that women from the Philippines in Finland face: they are often seen to be "purchased wives" and faced with racist comments relating to this (cf. Sverdljuk 2009; Saarinen 2007). In addition, she addresses the racism many of the women from the Philippines face in their marriages to Finnish men, who expect them to take care of all household tasks and of the men themselves. This kind of racism can be understood in relation to Europe's long history of colonial and oriental perceptions of Asian women. The speaker makes refer-

65 Found for instance in <http://gos.sbc.edu/t/truth.html>, accessed 17.11.2008. See Haraway (1992) for a discussion of the forms and language in which the speech has been reproduced.

ence to global inequalities and a culture of poverty, and criticises the stereotyped images of Philippine women. She also mentions that the position of women in the Philippines is relatively good. This can be understood as a response to the general representation of exceptionally high levels of gender equality in Finland along with the implication that it is low elsewhere. The way in which the Chair of the seminar refers to women who have migrated from the Philippines or other places as having “special needs and problems” can turn these into the individual problems of these specific women. Instead, the experiences of the women who have moved from the Philippines could be seen as an expression of the racialised structures in Finland. It is important to consider whether the gender equality claimed for Finnish society (in, for instance, the ratios of labour market participation and the positions occupied, in access to education, in the sharing of housework and so on) applies equally to women who are seen racially or culturally as “the Other”. And, if it does not, what does this mean for the Finnish claim to a “high level of gender equality” (Saarinen 2008)?

Some issues came up repeatedly in the discussions in the seminar. “Migrant women” appeared often as the objects of concern and were frequently given advice about how to act in Finnish society.

When we were talking about what [the first speaker] said previously, that we often see migrant women [as being] helpless as a group. So I think we have to take into account the other side, which is that these migrant women really don't know what happens in this society, they don't know what to expect. And there we, the fellow-sisters, like I say, are needed, to guide migrant women among us other women. And in that way networking.

This comment is typical in the sense that the speaker knows that migrant women are often treated as helpless or problematic – and that this kind of treatment is problematic. Yet, she considers migrant women, *as a group*, as lacking relevant knowledge of Finnish society. “Finnish women” could guide migrant women in society. These women, “we”, are described here as “fellow-sisters”⁶⁶, which emphasises that the guidance should be (or that it is?) equal. In this quote migrant women should be guided to knowledge. It is unclear from the short passage what exactly the description of women “not knowing”

66 Sisterhood has been under much debate in feminist research, see e.g. hooks 2000/1988, 43–67 and Lorde 1998/1984.

refers to. Given the work of the Globe, one could understand it simply as a need for better information about welfare services, the education system and legislation. The utterance “migrant women really don’t know what happens in this society, they don’t know what to expect” can only be made from a majority perspective, and can be said to express certain knowledge. However, one could learn much about racism and sexism in Finland from the presentation by the woman from the Finnish-Philippines Society. As a standpoint-inspired argument, one could claim that women who are defined as being cultural or racial “Others” in Finland can provide important information about Finnish society precisely because of this position. Of course, there is a more complicated relationship between “being” and “knowing” than this. The argument here is not that the knowledge of migrant women about Finnish society would be more authentic or more true than other knowledge, but that it is one type of knowledge that is seldom *heard*. Furthermore, this knowledge offers a view of Finnish society that differs from the more common and familiar representations.

Discourses on gender equality tend to emphasise the binary gender differences between men and women in the Nordic contexts. In the material from the seminar the construction of gender difference is intertwined with the way in which difference between the migrants and non-migrants is understood. One seminar participant who works in a large women’s NGO, comments on the Finnish women’s movement in the following way:

I think migrant women are women just like we Finnish women and many of us Finnish women have experiences of migration. [...] But what we Finns have as a really good thing is that we have deep roots in the women’s movement. We have history. If you take the top ten countries, then Finland belongs at the top in women’s issues. And you, who have moved here from other countries, you have good opportunities to come along!

The unifying power of womanhood is reiterated in the quote above: “migrant women are women just like we Finnish women”. Finnish women are portrayed as the experts on the women’s movement: they have experience and success. Women who have moved from other countries have “good opportunities to come along”. This implies that these women who join the ranks of Finnish womanhood from other countries do not have similar experience or knowledge of women’s issues, which have largely been about “gender equal-

ity” in Finland (Bergman 2002). To “come along” can also be interpreted as an invitation to participate in the gender equality work that *is being done*. In this case, the women’s movement and gender equality are not subject to change when women who have moved from other places join. In the next comment the speaker wishes to dispel the fears about gender equality implying a pressure to become like Finnish women.

When [the first speaker in the seminar] presented the [migrant women’s] network that will be founded in Malmö, [she gave] a really good list that you want to take up. I only want to make a small point here, I was talking to a couple of Roma women, [who belong to] a traditional Finnish minority. [...] They feel that when we talk about gender equality, it means a pressure or demand for sameness. They have certain fears [...] that when gender equality is emphasised [...], minority women are made similar to majority women. So, also because of this, it is really important that different kinds of women get to participate, and men of course as well, when we talk about gender equality. But personally I would like to emphasise [...] that when we talk about gender equality from a normative perspective, it is absolutely not a pressure to become similar, but we talk about the same basic rights, human rights, which have been referred to here. In that sense I would like to emphasise what we also talked about with these Roma women; that it would be important to also discuss what is meant by equality. Equality includes the right to be different, really, that if people experience this kind of fear, to become like a mainstream Finnish woman, these fears have to be dispelled with these kinds of discussions. (My translation)

In this comment, the Roma women’s knowledge of the pressure to conform to a certain kind of womanhood is represented as fears that they experience. The speaker positions herself within a human rights discourse and talks about legal normativity, which, according to her, does not include a demand for sameness. Her commentary can be interpreted as an assertion that gender equality should not be understood as certain kind of womanhood. However, the knowledge position of the speaker appears solid as she represents herself as “dispelling the fears” of others (with knowledge). The way in which the voice of the Roma women is taken into the argument, could also be interpreted as reinforcing the truthfulness of the message of the speaker (see Trinh 1989). In this quote, the problem is not Finnish gender equality work, but the women who have a

“false” understanding of, and ungrounded fears about, what gender equality means. To apply a politics of listening would involve listening carefully to the Roma women’s knowledge about how and when gender equality discourse indeed means the demand to perform a certain kind of womanhood.

Different positions in society have an impact on the way in which gender equality and its important agendas are understood. My aim in critiquing the discourse of “we women” is not to suggest that dialogue, or even a common politics, across differences would not be important, but rather that it is important to examine the terms of the dialogue (also see Ahmed 2000b). The way in which gender inequalities are racialised means that the most urgent issues to do with equality might be different for “migrant women” and “Finnish women”. Many feminist researchers have distanced themselves from the concept of gender equality because it seldom takes differences among women into consideration. Particularly Lesbian and Queer Studies have drawn attention to the heteronormativity of gender equality; that is, they show the way in which gender equality discourses reinforce and construct a heterosexual order (Juvenon 2002b, 254; Kantola 2002, 302; Dahl 2005; Honkanen 2008). Gender equality is based on the idea of equality between the two sexes, and is therefore dependent on the binary gender system (see Honkanen 2003; 2007).

If power relations are not seen as multidimensional, it is easy to reinforce an understanding of gender equality as simply about relations between men and women. This again reproduces the notion of binary gender differences, along with a view of women as a uniform group. Within women’s movement(s) and gender equality politics, there is no unanimity about how to relate to or take various differences into account. Considering multiple differences has sometimes been conceived as a threat to an analysis of gender inequalities. It is often a question of concrete politics, as there is competition for the same money and resources among different groups of people (see Verloo 2006 for a discussion of intersectionality in the politics of the EU). The analysis of the examples from the seminar shows that gender equality discourse seems to create space – even in contexts that can be described as striving against racism – for understanding “us” as experts, as those *who know*, and therefore those who can teach and guide “other” women.

The quotes from the seminars show how despite (or because of) the unifying construction of “we women”, gender equality easily assumes the white Finnish woman as its norm. There seems to be readiness to invite other women

into the realm of equality, but not necessarily to change it. In the presentations and commentaries in the seminar, none of the speakers actually explicate what they mean by “gender equality” or “women’s issues”: are they referring to women’s position in the labour market, to access to welfare services, to violence against women or to the division of domestic work? Therefore it seems that the discussions about gender equality, which could be about politics, legislation or the like, primarily turns into a (somewhat abstract) discussion of womanhood. Analysing dominant discourses within women’s politics might give the impression that these are dominant discourses in Finland at large. This is not necessarily the case. Women working in the women’s movement might be positioned at the margins of politics or official bureaucracy. However, I find it important to analyse the way in which racial and ethnic divides are put into practice and constructed in women’s politics. It is clear how women are positioned quite differently along these lines. For a feminist emancipatory politics to be possible, it is necessary to analyse and take into account power relations between women as well.

Knowledge and feelings: the construction of expertise in the Globe

In the previous section I looked at the ways in which knowledge can be constructed as expertise, and the impact these constructions may have on the claims of sisterhood in multicultural women’s politics. Now I will consider different subject positions through the lens of *knowledge* and *feelings*. I also focus on how the politics of multicultural work is defined in this specific context. These questions will be addressed through an analysis of a discussion at a staff meeting of the Globe. The meeting started with a discussion of the vision of the Globe and of the principles of the project; one of them was the aim of the Globe to help migrant women who come to the project, whatever their situation in life. The meeting coincided with a time when the Globe had been working with lawyers, the police and politicians on cases relating to asylum and domestic violence. The discussion that I have chosen here is initially about the role of the Globe in relation to migrant women, but this turns into a discussion about the different positions of the employees.

One of the employees refers to a text – an early research proposal that I had previously distributed to the staff for reading. In the research proposal I discuss the relationship between the researcher and the research subjects, and consider

possible ways of *speaking to* – instead of speaking for, or speaking with – as an ethical position, with reference to Spivak (1993a). The discussion is interesting because it concerns the positions of various employees in the everyday life of the project. Pirkko, Hanna and Kaisa are employees from Finnish backgrounds, and Sabrina is an employee from a migrant background, and Anna is a participant in the Globe. Another employee from a migrant background was also present at the meeting, but she did not participate in the discussion. The italics are added to draw attention to the key points that interest me here (Staff meeting March 2003).

Pirkko: This is an important thing, what we can do in different ways, of course create space, but also being a voice for migrant women.

Hanna: It occurs to me what I read in Salla's paper, [was that] there was this *speaking for them, to them* or *with them*. [...] If we talk, or we, who are we then, are we *we the Finns*, or are we *we all* who work here or who. Anyway, we have filtered our experience through us [...] What were they, at least *for them* was one, *to them*, but then it should probably be we also *with them*, together [...]

Pirkko: Beside or next to or something

Kaisa: Together

Pirkko: But what are the *to* and *for*, then?

Kaisa: On the behalf of (Pirkko is taking notes on the white board), but I think they are not

Pirkko: Exclusive [...]

Kaisa: That it would all the time be *with them*, or that empowerment would be the only [thing to work with], you need everything [...].

Pirkko: Of course we don't need to like lose ourselves, we can talk, we can be with us.

Salla: What are the *they* and *we* here?

Pirkko: Well, we in this room and they, hmm

Salla: I guess the idea is that speaking with could be impossible in a way

Pirkko: But there are all these levels

Hanna: But say what you mean

Salla: I mean if you think about the asymmetry that exists, then the asymmetry should be taken seriously and then try. Like if you think “oh, we all here together and here is no asymmetry”, if you don’t take it seriously, then I don’t know

Hanna: But they are not exclusive

Salla: But power

Hanna: Because I think of Anna, I feel that we are in such a situation with her that we speak with Anna [...]

Pirkko: And she speaks for the migrant women as well. [...] But a person can be in the situation that you just need to speak to her, and give advice, really. I think of Friday when you couldn’t [do] anything else, when the person says in every second sentence: help me, help me [...] and then you really take power, even [take] over, so that the other can feel safe. Well, of course you can unpack this after the situation is over.

Sabrina: At this point I’d like to ask how it is with [the employees from migrant backgrounds at the Globe], is it the same as with Anna that one can speak with [them]? In which situation are [the employees]? That one can speak with them of the matters that concern others, or plan and do for the migrant women [that participate in the project], or do [the employees] also need the same talking *with them*, or *with us*, or *for us*? (My translation)

The discussion starts with Pirkko presenting some of the roles of the Globe: to create space for migrant women, but also becoming a voice for them. This starts a discussion of the different ways to do politics outside and inside the Globe: what it means to think in terms of “speaking to”, “speaking with” or “speaking for”. Who is the subject “speaking”, who belongs to the “we”? In the research proposal I had distributed I criticised “speaking for” (as colonial/patronising) and described “speaking to” as a more ethical perspective (Spivak 1993a; Visweswaran 1994). I considered “speaking with” as a fantasy of non-power. Hanna and Pirkko are relating to their experiences in the project and want to emphasise that these positions are not mutually exclusive, and that one needs to use all kinds of methods of speaking. The utterance “one needs everything” can be understood to express a sense of urgency experi-

enced in the project at least during this period. Pirkko also addresses the contextual nature of power relations: even if there was a situation in which one could “take power over” somebody, it could be unpacked after that particular situation has ended.

This discussion is also one example of the way in which I brought academic knowledge to the project and how it is under discussion among the project employees. My self-assigned function in the Globe was to point out power imbalances within the project (see also chapter 4). This is visible in the quotation and the project employees would have liked me to give a more nuanced picture. I also belittle my expertise through saying that I *guess* the idea is that without taking power relations seriously it is not possible to “speak with”. I also say “I don’t know” what it leads to if the asymmetry is not taken seriously. Yet, to analyse power and power asymmetry are part of my expertise as a Women’s Studies scholar. The discussion also shows that even if there is a strong emphasis on cooperation, togetherness and “we”, it is considered fragile by the migrant employees (here represented by Sabrina). Sabrina’s question shows that differences between the different categories of employees (migrant–non-migrant) are present in the daily life of the project. The discussion continues when Pirkko turns Sabrina’s question about the position of the migrant women in the project into one of being psychologically weak or strong.

Pirkko: Yes, and this is not really about this, or it is, but I also think that as [...] we are four close friends [...] and now one of us is really weak, it has been me also, [...] but this person who is really energetic, takes big decisions, is now in this situation of [being weak] [...]

Kaisa: But Sabrina, wasn’t your question one of principle?

Pirkko: I noticed it was about principles, but it’s not really a question of principles, that we cannot make rules, that [mentors] here, Pirkko there, you saw when I was really weak at that point. [...]

Sabrina: But I mean will the mentors become independent agents like Anna for instance? She has a certain goal, she knows what she wants.

Pirkko: Well, but she would not for instance, [be able to do] this work, but she has started these courses. And together we plan and think, but Anna knows the part we do not know at all. So I mean

it does not end [some more discussion that does not seem to lead anywhere]

Pirkko: What do you want?

Sabrina: Exactly that for the mentors, do we have a too low profile?

Hanna: Well, I at least meant, said, that we all here, we seven already can talk with one outsider, that is Anna.

Sabrina: I understand that. But I just mean that how ready would I as a mentor be to take part in these talks outside the project (...)?

Pirkko: How much it would be, I don't know. (...) okay, but would you Sabrina want that someone of us others, like Salla, me or someone else, assess [you] or say how ready you are?

Sabrina: No, not that, not anybody assessing. When you talk all the time about our project and the purpose: to create a model for mentor work (...), what, then is the image, the vision of the mentor? How does it work in reality, how much can I work together with my participants, it is an important question for me.

Kaisa: So you mean Sabrina how much can mentors influence things?

Sabrina: Yes exactly, influence, as I said.

Here Sabrina tries to raise the discussion to a general level, where it concerns the politics of the Globe, while Pirkko takes it as a question of an individual situation or “personal development”. When the employees read a draft of an article (Tuori 2007a) in which I analysed this discussion, they pointed out that the meeting was held during a time when they were developing the team and their working methods, and there was quite a bit of turbulence. I consider the discussion instructive exactly from this point of view. In a multicultural project, questions about the terms of the cooperation will always arise in some way or another, and here they were explicitly under discussion. Thus, unlike the employees of the Globe I do not consider these dynamics specific to this project, but instructive of multicultural work more generally. For instance, in the Austrian project that the Globe cooperated with (see pages 47–48, 103–106) the working plan included specific methods of decision-making that would take into account and work against the power dynamics that allowed “majority women” to claim the expert positions with

ease. In the examples from the seminar *Being equal in Finland – even as an immigrant woman*, this kind of critique was presented by the representative of a multicultural women's association, and even then the critique was not grasped. Ghassan Hage (2000, 232–234) shows how “multiculturalists” too, (and not only “racists”) self-evidently define the terms of who can belong and who cannot, and in that sense act as gate keepers. This is evident in the discussion above: Sabrina is the one asking where she (and the other migrant employees) belongs, and the employees from Finnish backgrounds answer this question. The position as researcher also implies an expert position, which Pirkko here mobilises when she asks Sabrina whether she or I (as the evaluator) should tell her when she is ready to work independently.

The discussion that started after Sabrina's last question about the position of the migrant employees went on for a while. There seemed to be a reluctance to answer Sabrina's question at the level of politics, which is the level at which Sabrina poses the question. Instead, the employees start talking about many different situations and ask Sabrina precisely what they should have done in those situations. It could be helpful to look at concrete events as expressions of politics. However, in the discussion Sabrina's question is turned into a matter of her personal feelings and experiences, rather than seen as a question about the working methods and principles of the project. One of the (Finnish) employees present supports Sabrina in raising the discussion to the level of principle. Thus, instead of listening to and learning from Sabrina's knowledge about how the project works, Sabrina is subjected to interrogation. The following quote is from the end of the discussion.

Pirkko: What should we do so that you would not feel bad like you do now?

Sabrina: It is not about feeling bad.

Pirkko: I hear clearly that you are offended.

Sabrina: I don't get information about the situation of my [participant]

[...]

Pirkko: What should we do then?

Sabrina: It's not cooperation then.

Pirkko: So what should we do then?

Earlier in the discussion Sabrina has pointed to issues in the working methods that should be reassessed, such as the flow of information. Sabrina's critical remarks are however called "feeling bad" and being "offended". The discussion ends with Pirkko asking her "what should we do then". This could be interpreted as an invitation for Sabrina to bring her knowledge to the project work. I interpret the question also as a way of placing the responsibility for a change in project work practices onto Sabrina. To discuss feelings (and not only knowledge) within the workplace can be traced to the women's movement the Globe has its roots in. However, in this kind of situation where a critique is turned into a question of "feeling bad" also relates to the way in which migrant people are often infantilised (Fanon 1986; Mulinari 2003, 114–115). In this case infantilising is closely connected to not listening, and knowledge is not acknowledged as knowledge. In this discussion both power and resistance are mobilised. Sabrina makes an open critique of the working practices of the Finnish employees in the project, who do not recognise this critique. Sabrina also poses an important question in regard to politics: what kind of influence do the migrant women have in the project, and in multicultural politics more broadly?

Subjectivities, knowledge and feelings

In this chapter I have examined how racialised and ethnicised subjects are constructed by means of the distinction between "knowledge" and "feelings". The focus has thus been on power as productive (of subjects) in the context of multicultural politics. This form of power implies that it is not possible to "escape" it or fantasize positions outside of it. "We" are constituted in and by different power relations (Foucault 1994/1982; Butler 1990; Ahmed 2000a). Therefore, feminist individuals or feminist organizations are not (nor can they be) outside racialised and gendered subjectivities, which affects the work that is done in the actual projects. When multiculturalism is understood as a celebration of differences, or what Fortier (2008, 16) calls "feel-good politics", differences are often understood superficially, rather than being understood to affect the work profoundly. This is evident in the seminars in two ways: firstly, through the persistent use of unifying definitions of "we women"; and secondly, in the project work through the reluctance to discuss the power imbalances between the various groups of workers, even if power relations between specific individuals in specific situations are discussed.

This unifying vision of womanhood can be understood as political claims to “sisterhood”. On the one hand, this claim can impede and hinder discussions of racism, and how racism appears within the women’s movement or within multicultural projects. On the other hand, the claim can be made consciously, in a way that demonstrates an awareness of power differentials, and that lays claim to the “we” in a strategic way. I understand racism not only as direct discrimination, but in a broad way to include bolstering Finnishness as a norm. To understand racism as power relations that reinforce existing hegemonies could, perhaps, make space for anti-racist politics in the Finnish context. In Finnish multicultural politics there has been such a strong emphasis on promoting tolerance and multiculturalism that racism is hardly mentioned (see, for example, Suurpää 2005). This is also visible in the presentations of the Equal-funded projects; they use mainly “positive” terms: to *promote* tolerance and ethnic equality, to *add* to cultural competence and to *promote* good ethnic relations rather than to decrease or combat racism and discrimination (www.equal.fi, accessed 15.11.2008). Research on ethnic relations and migration has also avoided the word “racism”, even if discrimination is discussed (Rastas 2007a).

If racism is not talked about (as part of multicultural politics) it is impossible to deconstruct racist structures (de los Reyes et al. 2003b, 12–13, 21). Anna Rastas’ (2004, 53–55; 2007a) research on children’s experiences of racism has shown how racism easily “disappears” if it cannot be raised, and there are no words to describe it. Multicultural women’s politics is, or could be, a space in which such a language could evolve. However, to (merely) talk about “sisterhood” or “we women” can make the processes which lead to power imbalances between different women invisible (Trinh 1987; hooks 1989). To take power relations into consideration could, on the one hand, mean to be aware of how racism is constitutive of Finnish culture. In postcolonial research this has been further linked to histories of colonialism and their legacies (Löytty 1997; Rantonen 1999; Kuortti et al. 2007; Keskinen et al. 2009). Different cultural figures, such as the “migrant woman”, are mobilised in everyday encounters and this impacts on the people who are considered to belong to this category (see Huttunen 2004, 154). On the other hand, it is a question of sensitivity to, and awareness of the privileges that “Finnishness” brings with it. Ien Ang (2001) rightly points out that the belief in awareness and communication (both speaking and hearing) as a means of overcoming differences is often

unfounded. She calls for “partial politics” where the different perspectives and their possible incommensurability would be a starting point. This is not an easy task and it has been under much discussion in feminism: what if politics did not need a uniform “we” with common goals? I will discuss partial politics further in the concluding chapter.

The emphasis on “we” can also be seen to create space for Finnish women’s agency in multicultural politics. There are some instances in my material when the Finnish employees of the Globe reflect upon their role in multicultural politics. In a steering group meeting (October 2003), one of the group members says (my translation):

I had for the second time in my life this [feeling], what the heck am I doing migrant work [for] as I was born in Finland, I don’t know anything about these things [laughter]. Like culpability and shame for being in the wrong place. It’s strange, but it soon comes back, that I guess I may as well [] [laughter].

I interpret the laughter as necessary in the context of the steering group: it was not really a space for open discussion and reflection on matters one would be insecure about, mainly because of the controlling function it had. Participants in the meeting go on to affirm that it is necessary that “Finns” – as “hosts” – are also doing migrant work. There was not really space in this context to reflect upon why one might feel ashamed or culpable for being in the wrong place. One could see this comment as a possible opening for a discussion about being in the right or the wrong place – a problem which is part of the dynamics of migration. The discussions about subjectivity in multicultural politics, and the different positions occupied by the different actors, are also linked to questions of “empowerment”, which is the focus of the next chapter. The notion of empowerment raises many questions about emancipatory politics and about the processes of defining politics. The distinction between knowledge and feelings emerges in a different way in relation to empowerment than it has in this chapter, in which the focus has been on *power as knowledge* and as constitutive of subjects (particularly along with expertise). Empowerment, on the other hand, raises questions about the necessary, and potentially fruitful, place of *feelings* in multicultural politics.

8. The politics of empowerment

Empowerment, as a newly introduced term in the European Union (EU) vocabulary of social policy projects, calls for special attention. In the Equal Initiative, funding was based on the requirement that empowerment would be addressed in the projects. Before it became a catchword in EU-funding, empowerment had been a common concept in development politics (see for example Kesby 2005). The roots of the concept can be traced to pedagogies of liberation and leftist movements (particularly in Latin America), to feminist movements and critical social policies in the United States (US) and United Kingdom (UK), as well as to the work of (African) women activists within the United Nations (UN) and that of human rights advocates. Despite the fact that its genealogy can be traced back some decades, the concept is so new in Finland that it is not found even in the newest dictionaries (it is not present, for example, in the MOT New Dictionary of Modern Finnish). Even though the word is not yet found in dictionaries, the term is commonly used in the fields of Social Policy, Pedagogy, Theology (Kuronen 2004), health research (Stein 1997), and organisation studies (Hales, 2000). Empowerment has also been an important term in Black feminist thought in which it has been understood not only as a process that shapes individual women's consciousness, but one that "requires transforming unjust social institutions that African Americans encounter from one generation to the next" (Hill Collins 2000, 273).

In this chapter I analyse different meanings of empowerment and how it emerges as an expression of a certain kind of *politics* in my ethnographic material. First of all I will present and discuss the different definitions of empowerment in dictionaries and in the Globe's policy papers in order to better make sense of what the concept is about and how it is used. Thereafter I will analyse empowerment in the ethnographic material. In the context of EU-funding, empowerment is often understood to imply participatory

working methods. In this chapter empowerment is closely linked to concepts such as agency, affect, knowledge, power and politics. Empowerment could be described as potentially transformative in that it has a particular relationship to all these concepts.

Empowerment has been considered problematic in research (Kesby 2005; Oinas and Collander 2007). One question is whether empowerment works in practice, as it has been shown to have weak long-term impact in short-term projects (Kesby 2005). Moreover, only a few of the projects that claim to empower, using participatory approaches, have succeeded (Lähteenmaa 2006). The theoretical critique of the concept concerns its emphasis on the individual and the voluntary, such as the focus on an individual person's feelings of power and strength (e.g. Cooke and Kothari 2001b; Holli 2002, 18–19; Kesby 2005; Tuori 2007b). Such a focus on individuals and their feelings implies, according to the critics, that structural power relations and material conditions are not taken into account, or even, that “an emphasis on micro-level intervention can obscure, and indeed sustain, broader macro-level inequalities and injustice” (Cooke and Kothari 2001b, 14). Another critique relates to the way in which these empowerment practices promote neoliberal individualistic subjectivity (e.g. Oinas and Collander 2007). The development contexts have emphasised the importance of “local” knowledge in empowerment. In my research context, the same could be said to apply to “migrant knowledge”. If “local knowledge” is understood as coherent, authentic and free of friction then such an emphasis can obscure the terms of knowledge production – that is, the question of whose knowledge is considered to be the local knowledge – and can promote an often mistaken understanding of a community as homogeneous and coherent (Cooke and Kothari 2001).

Empowerment lends itself easily to a critical deconstructive analysis. The critiques of the essentialisms found in standpoint feminism, of enlightenment projects, of autonomous masculine subjectivities, and of simplistic concepts of power (when understood as a “possession”) may all combine to produce a powerful critique of the concept of empowerment. This critique is well rehearsed in poststructuralist and feminist thinking, and it could lead to the conclusion that empowerment is a hopelessly apolitical, romantic and essentialist concept. From this perspective, empowerment is acceptable only if it is understood as a collective process of resistance that takes

unequal power relations into consideration at all stages. Instead of simply applying this critique, I find it to be one reason to look closely at empowerment as a practice in multicultural settings. Poststructuralist and postcolonial approaches are useful for deconstructive work. The kind of subjectivity envisioned, the way in which power is understood, and the ways in which race/ethnicity are produced in empowerment can be analysed. But how can one understand or analyse utterances such as “I feel stronger”, “I am more able to deal with my issues”, or “I am more confident” in a deconstructive framework, without merely dismissing them as fantasies of inhabiting an autonomous subjectivity? And what about when these utterances are made by someone else: “She has become braver and more confident.” A critical analysis of the discourse of empowerment enables us to think about power relations, the representations of a range of figures (such as the figures of migrant women and Finnish women) and subjectivities within empowerment practices.

One of the (feminist) critiques of empowerment has been of the kinds of practices in which one person “empowers” another. The critique refers to the impossibility of empowering somebody else; such a practice implies a power relation over another, and therefore contradicts the whole idea of empowerment. In my material, empowerment is used in both senses of the word: to empower oneself and to empower somebody else: the purpose of the project was to “empower migrant women”. One can of course ask whether empowering another person (in a programme) necessarily means that there is someone with the power to empower. Furthermore, if empowerment is considered a pedagogical process, new questions arise. What would the assumption that learning should always start from needs of those who learn mean in practise? Who would define the needs and how? What kind of change would this bring to the learning experience? Challenging existing views (whether those of the migrant women or of others) can be said to be part of a pedagogical process. If you were to participate on a course, would you want new input? Yes. Would you want your existing knowledge and experience to be acknowledged and taken seriously? Yes. For the pedagogical process to be empowering, practices of listening and attentiveness to the knowledge of the participants is required (see also Yang 2009). In the context of pedagogy, the mere fact that someone else organ-

ises activities, courses and workshops, or challenges worldviews, should not be a problem.

I suggest that feminist poststructuralist analysis misses a crucial point that relates to the complicated web of power, knowledge and feelings that makes up the politics of empowerment. Here I continue the themes of the previous chapter, which focused on knowledge and feelings, but from another angle. A deconstructive analysis is not enough to address the politics of empowerment. I analyse empowerment both with a deconstructive lens *and* regard it as an affective (and effective) political practice. In doing so, I also argue that a standpoint perspective and a poststructuralist perspective are not necessarily in contradiction to each other (see also de los Reyes and Mulinari 2005; Bracke and Puig de la Bellacasa 2004). Thus, I understand empowerment as an exercise of power, and use notions of differentiated power in analysing it. Lastly I will discuss how empowerment can complicate feminist thinking. Empowerment combines power, affect and transformation in fascinating and complex, ways. To analyse it as an affective political practise may lead us to think *beside* (Sedgwick 2003) dualistic understandings of empowerment, such as one that foregrounds only either the effects on individuals or the structural aspects of the practise.

Empowerment as a travelling concept

There are (at least) two different translations of the English word “empowerment” into Finnish, and often the English word itself is used in Finnish texts. The translations are *valtaistua* or *voimaantua*. The translations carry different connotations of “power”. The former is derived from *valta*, which primarily refers to power as authority or domination⁶⁷. The latter, *voimaantua* is derived from *voima*, which primarily refers to power as force or strength⁶⁸. “Power” in English refers to both “strength” and “authority”, and the difference between these two meanings is not completely clear-cut in Finnish either. Despite this ambiguity, the difference in meaning can be distinguished in the two translations. Translations of the concept of empowerment are part of the negotiations of the meaning of empowerment in the politics of multiculturalism in Finland. The different translations hint at different understandings of the process of empowerment: whether it is understood as an individual process

67 **valta** n, 1. power , reign , grasp , teeth, dominion

68 **voima** n, 1. force, power, strength, potency, teeth, might

or whether it is seen to engage with structural relations. Furthermore, to empower can mean both to empower somebody else and to empower oneself, while in Finnish this difference is embedded in the translation (*valtaistua: to empower oneself*– *valtaistaa: to empower somebody else*, *voimaantua: to empower oneself*– *voimaannuttaa: to empower somebody else*).

In the Equal programme declaration, the form used meant “to empower somebody else” and the projects funded within the programme used both of the Finnish forms. In the Globe, empowerment was translated as *valtaistaa-valtaistua*, suggesting power as (structural) domination. The Globe used the concept of empowerment to mean both to empower oneself and to empower somebody else. One Equal-funded project made use of the term “voimaantua” (power as strength and force) and asked whether empowerment is about “using power”. The conclusion was that it is “not about increasing one’s own power in relation to others, but the aim is to increase the autonomy of the individual and community through enhancing their capacities”. In this view, power (and consequently empowerment as in *valtaistuminen*) is understood, even if indirectly, as implying domination over someone else. Therefore empowerment as “gaining strength” was considered to be a more “positive” option. In Finnish Social Work discourses, empowerment has usually been understood through the notion of power as strength, rather than power as unequal power relations or political influence (Kuronen 2004).

As the genealogies and meanings of empowerment have seemed manifold, vague and contested, I have also looked at dictionary definitions of the word. In the Oxford English Dictionary “empowerment” refers to *investing with power or authority*. This resembles the way in which empowerment was used in the UN by African women activists – to gain more political influence.

Empowerment: The action of empowering; the state of being empowered.

Empower: **1.** To invest legally or formally with power or authority; to authorize, license.

2. To impart or bestow power to an end or for a purpose; to enable, permit.

b. To bestow power upon, make powerful.

3. To gain or assume power *over*.

Hence **empowering** (Oxford English Dictionary)

The translations of the word into Finnish and Swedish suggest enhanced agency, making a person autonomous and increasing their power in decision-making⁶⁹. The concept of empowerment in the Globe stems interestingly both from the women's movement *and* from the funding bodies. On the one hand, empowerment was considered the most important contribution of the project. All of the employees, said, though not in the same words, that "empowerment" was the most important contribution of the project. It was also officially defined as "the mission" of the Globe and it was discussed in reports, leaflets and other material. On the other hand, as a criterion for the funding of projects in the Equal programme, empowerment is put to *work* in grassroots politics. Therefore, it was part of the tricky funding practices. The project put considerable effort in figuring out ways in which to "measure" empowerment, as it was necessary to quantify results to meet funding requirements. Thus, empowerment was important as a practice, but hard to measure. I will now look at some of the ways in which empowerment was put into practise in the texts produced in the Globe.

In the Globe model the first "recipe"⁷⁰ was about empowerment. The recipe starts with the title "power and the position of power" (English original):

Empowerment as a part of training immigrants

Power and the position of power

Power and positions of power are sources of discrimination. The dominant ways of structuring reality are presented as objective reality by those holding power. It is not easy to include other realities in the use of law. The foundation for different forms of oppression and discrimination are the structures of society that cause inequality. To recognize and oppose these structures are the best of all best practices!

69 In Finnish: **empowerment** mahdollisuuksien antaminen jollekulle, täysivaltaiseksi tekeminen. In Swedish: (MOT Nordstedts stora engelska ordbok) självbestämmande makt. In the Swedish documents of the Equal programme the word empowerment is translated as "delaktighet", i.e. participation, sharing, complicity. Another Swedish translation is "bemäktigande", which is a new word and fairly literal translation from English.

70 In chapter 5 I discuss the Globe model more thoroughly and place this text in the context of EU-funding practices.

In the model, empowerment is framed as part of “training immigrants”. However, the general description establishes empowerment within the realm of power relations and the structures of society. Power is defined as domination and possession, i.e. as a hierarchical principle of organisation in society. Those “holding power” are able to present reality as objective from their perspective, suggesting that power is repressive towards those with a different reality. The text also refers to representations and battles over which realities are recognised. “The best of all best practices” is to recognise and oppose oppression and discrimination. The definition of the concept of empowerment itself is (English original):

Empowerment

Empowerment means increasing the decision making power of a community or an individual. The empowerment process increases power in matters to do with one’s own life. This is important when working with women, because our goal is to achieve equality between women and men, i.e. to increase the power and resources available to the sex in the weaker position – women.

In this definition, the understanding of empowerment corresponds to the dictionary definitions of empowerment: “an increase in decision making power”. Further, the object of empowerment can be both a community and an individual. Empowerment is interestingly defined as a question of *gender equality* and not as a question of ethnic or race relations. This could relate to the commitment to gender equality in the project, and particularly to the Finnish version of it, in which differences other than gender are seldom taken into account. As the discussion in chapter 7 shows, it is common in multicultural women’s politics to refer to a generic category of “women”, who are seen to be similar, or at least to share the same problems *as women*.

The recipe for empowerment continues in the following way (English original):

Sectors of empowerment process

- increasing awareness and information
- finding out and changing attitudes

- taking control of one's own life, empowerment. Developing own skills, resources and goals in practise in different areas of life

In the process of empowerment a very important concept is participation, which means taking [into account] everybody's knowledge, skills and dreams in the activities and decision making, so that all learn to work together equally. Participation can be used as a tool, but it can also work as a strengthening process.

Why do you need empowerment?

Through empowerment women have greater potential to influence their own lives and the structures affecting their lives. Empowerment of immigrant women benefits both the women and Finnish society. The increase of power in an individual also increases the power of the subordinate group (women, ethnic group).

In this description empowerment could be said to consist of knowledge practices: it includes increasing awareness and access to information, changing attitudes, and taking everybody's knowledge and skills into account in the activities and decision making. Empowerment also refers to a process that aims to affect the subjectivity of the person, (here a migrant woman), to be empowered, as she will take "control of" her "own life" and transfer her newfound "skills, resources and goals" into daily life. Furthermore, the emphasis on participation as a "strengthening process" could be described as an emphasis on the agency of migrant women. The idea that migrant women's awareness, information and attitudes should be affected by the process of empowerment, reflects the way in which migrant women often are represented as the agents of change in multicultural politics (see also chapters 5 and 6). The focus on change in migrant women is also a sign of the centrality of the integration framework in multicultural politics. Empowerment has most commonly been translated into the Finnish world of projects (Lähteenmaa 2006) and the Globe's formulations of the concept fit well into this understanding. Empowerment in the Globe could further be understood as a learning process, which focuses on individual women, whose communities are empowered through them. In the end the Globe presents the foreseen results of its empowerment model (English original):

Results of the increase in empowerment

[T]he empowered woman feels strong power inside and feels she has the capacity to influence her own life. She is brave, future orientated and believes in her social skills.

Results of empowerment process in the Globe:

- the immigrant woman is supported when she needs help, but no decisions are made for her
- the woman is seen as the best expert on her own issues
- the woman is seen as active, capable and skilful
- even if the woman didn't trust her own knowledge and skills, the project workers see her potential
- the goal is to get women active in working life, in personal issues and in society as a whole

Empowerment in the above definition could be understood as a *practice of power* with bodily, social and psychic effects. In other words, the purpose of the empowerment process is to produce a new kind of – empowered – subjectivity. For the person to be empowered means becoming “brave, future oriented and believing in her social skills”. From the perspective of power, this aspect of empowerment can be understood as power productive of subjects. The “results of the empowerment process in the Globe” refer to practices in the project work. These draw on power as knowledge: the knowledge of the “empowered woman” enables her to make her decisions; she is the expert on her own issues, and she has become capable and skilful. Furthermore, empowerment is understood as agency: the purpose is to get women active. The last result of empowerment, “to get women active in working life, personal issues and the whole society”, could also be understood as a way to produce citizenship. The goal for empowerment in the Globe would be then to produce active citizens both in the public and private spheres.

Empowerment as it is described above could be understood as a form of (liberatory) pedagogy (see for example Freire 1990/1972). It is a process of learning that focuses primarily on the participant. However, as the “results of empowerment in the Globe” concern the practices of the Globe, it could also mean a learning process for the employees. The employees

need to learn not to make decisions for the participants and to respect the participants' expertise.

The pedagogies of the Globe have been inspired by feminist consciousness-raising and radical therapy, the feminist movement against violence against women and Freirean pedagogies of liberation. The recipe for empowerment as a whole hints at a complicated relationship between thinking structurally and individually in NGO work. The abstract definition of empowerment stresses power relations as an organisational principle in society. The relationship between the individual and society seems to be both formed by structures and power relations, as well as by individuals who influence the existing structures (through empowerment). In the abstract definitions of empowerment, it is said to be both an individual and a collective process. When the description moves to the practice of empowerment in project work, it is more focused on individual women and the change produced in them. In that sense it could perhaps be understood more as a consciousness-raising process than a liberation pedagogy in the Freirean sense, which usually involves group processes (Freire 1990/1972). Both consciousness-raising approaches and pedagogies of liberation are about understanding collective and structural processes in individual lives. This is also a common point of interest for feminist postcolonial theorising and multicultural politics. For instance the affective effects of racism have been analysed and theorised by many writers, such as Audre Lorde (1998/1984) and Frantz Fanon (1986).

To merely criticise empowerment for its individualising tendencies easily misses the point of empowerment as an effective practice precisely because of the focus on feelings and women's sense of power. The concept of empowerment could also be understood as a challenge for feminist, sociological and postcolonial theorising in the way that it poses the relationship between the individual and the structural. Multicultural politics and empowerment approaches have both been criticised for their lack of interest in the effects of social structures. In the recipe proposed by the Globe there is clearly an attempt to take into account the effects of the structural, the individual and also the representational or symbolic (which is evident in the statement "[t]he dominant ways of structuring reality are presented as the objective reality by those holding power"). However, what the recipe lacks is an account of the relationship between these different levels and

how they affect each other. What kinds of politics can change structures? And what might be “individuals’ potential to act as subjects within the structures of society, institutional practices and current ideologies” (de los Reyes and Mulinari 2005, 16, my translation)? This is not only a question relevant to the Globe, but more broadly to situations where empowerment is seen to consist of participatory practices.

The critique of empowerment (presented on page 168–170) could be applied to the way in which the concept is understood in multicultural women’s politics. Empowerment has (although very recently and perhaps only rhetorically, see Lähteenmaa 2006) become a dominant ideology as part of funding programmes, and is often associated with an uncritical emphasis on so-called “authentic” knowledge. This means that migrant women are not only considered to be a group with uniform needs and knowledges, but they are also seen to be individuals who are regarded as representatives of a group in a simplistic way. Mike Kesby (2005), writing in the context of development, suggests that we might acknowledge the critique, and use it to rework the concept of empowerment rather than discarding it. Empowerment would be understood as a practice infiltrated with power that produces certain kinds of subjects. It would then be important to pay attention to the processes and negotiations involved in producing knowledge about multiculturalism and the position of migrant women. It is important also to consider what will be understood as knowledge (which I have analysed in the chapter 7).

Empowerment in project work

In the following section I focus on how empowerment is articulated in the meetings of the Globe. Empowerment is seen to produce a certain kind of subjectivity (one which is strong, independent, self-confident or autonomous), as well as capacities and skills. It is also considered to be a particular method of working – as shown in the definitions provided by the Globe. Some of the discussions that I analyse are explicitly about empowerment, while in other discussions the concept itself is not used. The term was often used in situations where the employees of the Globe presented the results of the Globe programme for the participants or the (migrant) employees themselves. Due to funding practices, the Globe needed to show results in terms of numbers: employment placements, education or traineeships (see

also chapter 2). Therefore the Globe needed to find ways of measuring empowerment, which is not easily quantified. While empowerment was a requirement for funding, it was not rewarded unless it was seen as part of the “path to employment”. The tension between the requirements of reporting and the practices of empowerment are analysed in this section.

Measuring personal growth

The Globe’s policy was to welcome all migrant women to the project regardless of their labour market position (whether they were seeking work in the near future, or whether they belonged to the labour force or not). In fact, it was also policy not to choose the participants, but to offer help or support to anybody making contact with the Globe and willing to join the programme. The Employment and Economic Development Centre (T&E Centre) which controlled the funding would have liked to see all women who were not directly employable, or were looking for support for other than employment-related issues, to be directed “elsewhere”. What elsewhere would be was often not identified. Another schism between the Globe and the T&E Centre was about which measures were considered to “enhance employment”. The Globe worked “holistically” with the women, which meant that the Globe supported women in all kinds of situations in life. This work was not necessarily considered as part of “enhancing employment” by the T&E Centre. In a discussion about an evaluation report I had written, I asked if the principle of not rejecting anybody put employees under a lot of pressure and added to their work load. Amanda and Rhona explain how they draw limits and how their working methods have developed to become less burdensome for them as the project proceeded. This has even had an effect on the empowerment of the participants. In a meeting at the Globe, Amanda, an employee of the Globe with a migrant background, speaks of not being able to attend a meeting with a participant, Maria, at the social services office. Rhona, also an employee from a migrant background, describes how a participant, Nadia, worked as an interpreter (my translations).

Amanda: We had booked an appointment at the social services office; it was quite a complicated issue. I had promised to go as a support person and interpreter. Then, I fell ill the day before and called [Maria] in the evening [saying] that I can’t go, you have to go on

your own. I was thinking about it, I could hear from [Maria's] voice that she was worried, I thought [about] if I should go anyway, but thought that no, I won't. [...] When she called the next morning [she was] so happy. She had been there, the matters were cleared up and she was surprised at herself: "That I made it, that I could, in the end I told [the social worker] everything and s/he understood everything I said". [...] I was so content that I couldn't go there, that a human relationship developed between them. If I'd translated all the time, explaining that she has this and that difficult situation, it wouldn't have been as helpful.

[...]

Rhona: Then I've noticed that Nadia, in the beginning she didn't speak any Finnish, but now there came this other Arabic speaking woman and she was sitting there as an interpreter. I was, oh my! (laughter) And I hadn't even noticed first, and then Nadia said: I'm an interpreter! (a big burst of laughter in the room). I was more listening to what this other woman was saying, and suddenly [Nadia] noticed, "I am interpreter". (Evaluation report meeting October 2003)

Amanda speaks of a situation where she could not attend the meeting at the social services office with Maria, who then was able to work out the situation by herself. Stories of women who in different ways have gained confidence, courage and got a better hold on their lives through attending the project are frequently told in the Globe. I would describe this as the main way in which empowerment is understood in the Globe. These kinds of stories are told particularly in meetings with an audience of people who do not work in the Globe, such as the steering group, meetings with politicians, the T&E Centre, authorities and me. These stories are also written in leaflets and other material produced in the project. In the quote above, Amanda brings up the way in which approaches have changed in the Globe in such a way as to encourage participants to work more independently.

In the following quotes, the ways in which empowerment can be measured is discussed. The first quote is from a steering group meeting (January 2004). Yasmin is an employee from a migrant background, Johanna, an employee of Finnish background, and Laila is the representative of the municipality.

Yasmin: Exactly this, what the skilled women themselves experience as a result, how can it be measured? Empowerment, independence, how is this measured? The person's own sense of pride, the significant growth that has happened in her life? How do you show to the T&E Centre that this is a significant experience?

Laila: Indicators are difficult

Johanna: The aim of the project is empowerment, but as an individual, I wouldn't know how to answer whether I am empowered or not.

Yasmin reflects upon how difficult it is to translate the positive experiences of the participants themselves into the language of the T&E Centre. Johanna implies in her turn that one cannot simply ask people whether they are "empowered". She also shows uncertainty as to whether empowerment can be a personal goal of the women. However, if empowerment is the goal of the project without it being articulated (in one way or another) to and discussed with the participants, it becomes a form of hidden pedagogy. The next quote is from a staff meeting, where measurement of empowerment is further discussed. Kerttu is an employee from a Finnish background and Natalia an employee from a migrant background.

(Staff meeting September 2003, my translation)

Natalia: Nuria [a participant] was so grateful, [saying] that you have encouraged me and I have gained courage and everything from the project, even if she independently went to all this.

Kerttu: Good that she went independently, it would be quite bad if we decided... (ironically)

Natalia: No, but like this, she got courage to go there (to a job interview) and she got the place [...]

Kerttu: We should get all this information in the form of numbers, because that is the language the bureaucrats understand. They compare it with other [projects], they have these statistics, that show that this and that much has been done and a percentage. The language, if you tell this story, [to their ears] that one [participant] has [employment], like, great, you've had sixty-seven women and one has got [employment].

Natalia: But there is...

Kerttu: Don't tell me Natalia about it, I believe in this work and I believe that things change, I see how things change, but how would we tell it to them in terms of numbers? Because now when they see our numbers, they do not even expect from this kind of little fussing about anything other than that women would come here. And [the bureaucrats think that] they can't even achieve that, and now they've already been doing the work for one and a half years.

Natalia refers to the common understanding of empowerment as personal growth, marked by an increase in independence, confidence and in the ability to take care of one's own issues. At the same time the funding context, in which employment or training placements were considered to be the only significant results, make the work frustrating and complicated. Thus, the funding agents require empowerment as part of the project designs, but do not take it seriously as a result. In fact, frequently the T&E Centre did not accept expenses relating to activities that were planned in order to increase empowerment. Thus, from the point of view of the project, empowerment was a contradictory requirement: it was built into the EU programme and yet, at the same time, the project was penalized for putting it into practice. The employees often felt, like does Natalia here, that their work was not appreciated due to the mechanical way of measuring results. Personal transformations are represented as numbers on a chart, as Kerttu puts it. Discussions such as the one above were quite frequent in the Globe. The coordinator tried often to reformulate the demands from the T&E Centre in ways that would be useful for the project, as it meant that the projects had to be increasingly aware of the methods, aims and purpose of the work. However, these discussions and the efforts to measure all the results of the project, took up a considerable amount of time and energy. The discussions about measuring empowerment are even slightly absurd at times, showing how the demand to present empowerment in statistical ways contradicts the whole idea of empowerment.

The organisation of the projects and their funding resemble development work: to gain funding requires a certain vocabulary and emphasis on the work, and the funding implies constant evaluations and control. Through these requirements, the projects are subject to the same kinds of control mechanisms as for instance the development aid projects. In a way

the countries that see themselves as “donors” in the global order have become subjected to the same funding logic. They would accept that funding moulds the work, by adopting a certain vocabulary (Vuorela 2009, chapters 2 and 5).

The tension between the T&E Centre and the project is clear here: the funding programmes expect certain kinds of results, which the project fails to deliver. The definitions of productive work put pressure on the project. In the case of employment projects, it is doubtful whether they could ever have produced results that seemed satisfactory to funders. The employment projects in general have not been very successful in affecting employment. The majority of those who gained employment via the Globe gained a place of study, a traineeship or employment in cleaning, care work or other services. Also, as the time frame of the projects is very short (three years), many of the “results” are seen only after the project has ended. The employees of the Globe have kept in contact with many of the participants, and have stated (three years after the project ended) that all of these women have now either gained employment or solved a problematic situation in their lives. These developments were never reflected in the “results” of the project because of its short time frame. The emphasis on productivity has recently become prevalent in Finnish welfare policies and it is tightly interwoven with the reorganisation of public services (see Rantala and Sulkunen 2006).

Empowerment as a type of agency

Empowerment was sometimes seen to be expressed in acts of resistance from participants towards the programme, by the workshop leaders, for instance. As I will show in the following discussion, when resistance is taken as a mark of empowerment, this becomes a kind of hidden agenda or unspoken pedagogy in the practices of the projects. The following excerpt is taken from a staff meeting about workshops that were organised by one of the development partners (DPs) of the Globe. This cultural cooperative organised workshops that focused on consolidating women’s cultural identity through discussions on culture and handicrafts. There had been different problems with the workshops that were dealt with in this meeting. Some of the participants had not been motivated to participate in the workshop, as discussed below. The organiser perceived that the women who participated had not understood the idea of the workshop (i.e. that it was a workshop

focusing on culture and identity and not merely handicrafts). The employees of the Globe considered that the idea behind the workshops was badly explained. This discussion is between Saija, who organises the workshop, and Ljudmila and Rocio who are employees from migrant backgrounds. Saija emphasises the role of the mentors and suggests that they should act like researchers doing “participant observation” in the workshop, in order to be more attentive to the needs and wishes of the participants (Staff meeting March 2003, my translation).

Rocio: I think the workshop should create a good atmosphere and be fun. If we would in addition observe what they are doing, I won't. Of course the skilled women are the number one [...] but I find the workshop heavy [...] and I think the skilled women need joy and fun, and if you think of felt, they will not get work through it, it is not an employment [measure], so it has to be the culture [...] and it has to be something they like, doing something which is fun. This is my opinion.

Saija: Can I respond to that. I agree that there can be a jolly and good atmosphere and that cultural stuff usually is fun. But the reason for me being gloomy is only because I think the purpose is to employ these women and find any other workplace [...] One can always go to the hospital to clean the floors, you won't need your culture there, or anything else for that matter. But if there was even one person who can knit or work with felt or do something else, that we would find even for this one person a place other than changing diapers in a home for the aged (talk in the background) [...]

Rocio: We try to invest in what they can do, what they are interested in and bring up, but to put it directly, all my [participants] have said that they are not interested in doing this.

(a lot of talk in the background)

Saija: No they are not, I have noticed it, and I have also noticed that they don't say it.

Rocio: Yes, but they have said it directly to me and I'm saying it because I want to know what you think. [...]

Saija: I have known it, but I have waited until someone says it to me. This is what happened last Tuesday. People came to say that they don't want to work on clay, it is childish, not interesting. I said you don't need to. [...] When the leader came to the door, he was irritated because the clay work was left unfinished [...]. But that's his problem if he thinks they need to be finished. I said you don't need to work on clay if you don't want to. But then it started, everybody started to act submissively, [saying] that it does not mean that we would not do things, even if we don't want to, of course we do. I wondered about this; I think this shows exactly that no empowerment has happened. If you can say that we don't want to do something, and yet you will do it, it's not using power.

Two issues emerge in this quote: first, the tension in the workshop agendas. The workshop was to be, at the same time, a way of increasing the employment-potential of the participants, but also a cultural identity workshop for everybody. This latter aim was considered rather abstract and vague by the participants and the mentors, and some of the participants explicitly also expressed their disinterest in working on culture. The leader, Saija, was equally of the opinion that the focus on identity had not worked as planned. The mentors, like Rocio here, suggested that the workshops could rather serve as a way of relaxing and “having fun”, because it is unrealistic to expect that they would generate employment for any of the participants⁷¹. Another issue that the quote raises is the question of how to understand empowerment. Saija says that she has expected the women to show resistance towards the workshop leader. Thus, here, acts of resistance are seen to express empowerment. Empowerment is addressed again later in the discussion (my translation):

Saija: My biggest [problem] is with this empowerment, what it means. What does it mean that people are supported, given power, empowered, supported so that they would become maximally self-willed? This is exactly what I have been waiting for, that there would be some kind of protest. And I'm really glad, Rocio, that I now finally heard it, that people don't want to make puppets. I'm really glad, it's the first step, that there would be some kind of [...]

71 On pages 51–54, I discuss handicrafts as a means for creating employment for migrant women.

Ljudmila: Well, it is not a general situation that [participants] do not want to make puppets, it's not true. Because part of the group likes to do them. For instance, Nuha makes her own, even if she exceptionally makes a male figure, but she likes to do it. She planned it and Josephine did as well, even if she did not have this high thought that she will be empowered by this. But she is doing it, because she has children and she is thinking that it would be good. [...] So, it doesn't mean that nobody wants to.

The organiser, Saija, says that she has been waiting for resistance and some kind of protest. Resistance and protest become the signs of empowerment that the Finnish organiser of the workshops expects from the participants. Resistance becomes defined as part of the pedagogy. This part of the pedagogical process could be described as the hidden agenda of the classes. It also relates to the idea that women should express a certain kind of agency in the form of resistance. Another kind of resistance in the quote above comes from the migrant employees' side: they discuss how the participants have different reasons for attending the workshops and have created different ways to make the workshops meaningful for them. In this sense, one might conclude that they resist the patronising tone of the workshop leader in her desire for resistance.

This episode raises questions about subjectivity. The purpose of the pedagogical process of empowerment is that women would become "maximally self-willed". This kind of self-willed (in other words autonomous) subjectivity has been discussed, for instance in studies of girlhood (e.g. Oinas 2001; Aaltonen 2006, 50). This notion has been criticised for putting the responsibility for well-being entirely onto the girls themselves, and therefore relying on a concept of voluntary subjectivity. One could also consider whether the Finnish workshop organiser's expectation that participants would evolve into self-willed subjects, ready to stand up for themselves, mobilises the image of the "strong Finnish woman". The figure of the strong woman – cherished in feminist politics, though also criticised in public debates – seems to be easily mobilised in multicultural politics (see Markkola 2002; Koivunen 2003).

In poststructural, postcolonial and Foucault-inspired scholarship, agency is often understood as resistance. Foucault's famous dictum (1990/1978, 95): "where there is power there is resistance", is often cited. Kesby (2005)

criticises poststructural scholarship for equating agency with resistance and argues that while resistance is highly prioritised, it is at the same time left untheorised. In the discussions above, resistance is given different meanings. On the one hand, the migrant women are expected to oppose the Finnish leaders of the workshops (and one could ask why it is necessary to employ leaders that need to be opposed in the first place). On the other hand, the employees of migrant backgrounds show resistance to the expectation of resistance placed on participants. Assmuth and Tapaninen (1994, 176–179) argue that it is fruitful to examine women's resistance because this shows how agency operates within structural power relations, without either romanticising agency, or producing a static image of overarching hegemonies. This is in line with my understanding of the relationship between agency and power.

Gloria is a terribly empowered person

Empowerment is often also talked about as a personal quality or capacity, taking the form of somebody being *empowered*. The first quote below is from the steering group discussion about five potential participants for the project (November 2003). The discussion concerns whether the Globe could include these women as participants on different terms to the others. All of the potential participants were artists in visual or performing arts, and therefore they would focus only on cultural production, but would not necessarily participate in other activities. Tuuli represents the cultural cooperative that has organised workshops for the Globe, Hannele and Liisa are employees (of Finnish backgrounds) of the Globe, and Sari is the representative of the employment office.

Tuuli: What do you think, five immigrant women, who have worked together, been in Finland for a while already, with the basic experiences and skills of immigrant women. These are chosen according to their interest; they are very motivated and we could check how teaching this kind of group would work. The idea would be to make traditional products, puppets, collect stories and edit a children's book. [...]

Hannele: Are these *our women*?

Tuuli: No, *they haven't thought that they need*, but how would it be if these five would come? Then in the spring they could lead the workshops.

(Discussion on whether it would be a good idea to include these women and how they would participate in the Globe)

Sari: I was just thinking whether these people need the kind of help...

Liisa: Well, do they get jobs otherwise?

Sari: But in the process of looking for work, *they won't really need...*

Liisa: No no no no [...] *These [women] are empowered in that sense*, that they have already built this thing, so that's great.

The five women whose participation is being discussed are educated in visual and performing arts. One question that emerges in the discussion is whether these women *need* something from the project. There seems to be a consensus about what the need is, so that it does not have to be named until Liisa says at the end: “no no no, these are in that sense empowered”. This is a slightly different use of the notion of empowerment than in the previous sections, where it related to something that could be described as human growth and personal agency; indeed, it suggested a new kind of subjectivity. In this discussion, empowerment relates to capacities such as education and work experience, particularly within Finland. The discussion also reveals the double agenda of the Globe. On the one hand, the intention that participants should find employment, as with any employment project, is expressed here (“well, do they get a job otherwise”). On the other hand, the desire that empowerment should take place is also expressed, and this is understood as agency and self-confident subjectivity.

The next episode is from a staff meeting (Sept 2003) where the participation of two women is discussed in terms of empowerment:

Pirjo: And I was thinking about Nadine, that even if she has not participated so much, she was so motivated herself that she took only what she needed. So then, *she's of course empowered already before*

Kaisa: Before yes

Pirjo: Before she came [to the project]

[...]

Kaisa: For instance Nadine and Gloria have participated very actively, Nadine has even physically participated, but then only in special things [...]. And Gloria, she has worked very specifically, *she chooses only what she needs*. That's right, because *she is a terribly empowered person*, to the extent that she wouldn't come here even if she were ordered to attend.

Nadine and Gloria are described as *empowered persons*. This discussion can only be interpreted through the framework of funding: the reason for representing the participants as empowered persons relates to the need to present empowerment as a result to the funders. Thus, this episode shows the way in which funding requirements guide the work. The vocabulary of the funders is circulated to the projects, which rework it and put it into practice. This process becomes one way in which the projects satisfy the demand that they be innovative. In these quotes "being empowered" is represented by the person's skills or even educational background and work experience. This, in turn, leads to a better knowledge of which activities in the project are useful for an individual. Therefore, in this discussion empowerment seems to stand for *class*: the comment that Gloria "was empowered already before she came" probably meant that she had an education, and knew what she was looking for (compared to the women who have little education or work experience and thus seek opportunities more broadly). The idea of empowerment as capacities and competence could be one way of broadening the notion that it is a *feeling* of strength. The practice of empowerment based on this latter notion, has, as I have shown, been criticised (see Holli 2002, 18–19), whereas the former idea links the process of empowerment to knowledge, social structures and power relations.

On the other hand, the class position of women from Finnish backgrounds would not be described in terms of empowerment. In that sense, to speak of empowerment instead of education and work experience can reinforce the understanding of migrant women as different. *Cultural differences* also become markers of class in debates about multiculturalism, and particularly in the discussions of the labour market positions of migrated persons. Describing a person as empowered, let alone "terribly" empow-

ered, sounds somewhat absurd (and often when the migrant women use the word, they accompany it with ironic laughter). It is also a racialised concept in this context: there are no instances in my material where the women from Finnish backgrounds would describe themselves or each other as empowered. This is partly due to the project's context: the whole focus of the project is on migrant women. However, the notion of empowerment as a way of gaining confidence would most likely be familiar to the Finnish employees too. In a brochure in which the employees described their personal paths in the projects, these processes were not called empowerment, although they were described in similar terms. Empowerment has been an aim of consciousness-raising groups in the feminist movement for instance.

The relationship between knowledge and feelings is interesting in the case of empowerment. In my material, empowerment is mainly described as an individual process and a psychic process, perhaps with the exception of Saija's articulation of it as resistance. However, part of the Globe's programme was also to increase women's knowledge about welfare policies, legislation and labour market practices. These are seldom addressed in the textual material, in the meetings or discussions, and therefore the role of that part of the programme is not quite clear. As a part of the process of empowerment, knowledge can be very useful in increasing access to legal and institutional rights. When the migrant employees describe their own empowerment, it is described as a process of getting to know the job, knowing what, why and how the work is carried out, as well as a process of taking ownership of the job. These are processes that involve feelings of confidence as well as knowledge about the work. In the light of my material, empowerment emerges as a complex web of power relations, transformative politics, knowledge practices and psychic processes. In the next section, I will discuss the place of feelings in discussions of empowerment in more detail.

Empowerment as an affective practice

In this section, I consider how empowerment could be understood as an affective practice. If empowerment is criticised for focusing on feelings (and not material relations), I consider what kind of effect a focus on feelings might have. Feminist poststructural theories have been particularly concerned with practices of knowledge and power, which has left few tools for

understanding emotional and bodily practices (see also Gordon 2008)⁷². Koivunen points out (2001) that feminist critiques have dealt with emotions mainly to deconstruct⁷³ them. In the Globe, feelings were seen to be political, and they were used consciously and methodologically in the programme. This could be related to the Globe's roots in the autonomous women's movement. For instance, the purpose of the design and decoration of the office was to enhance empowerment through a non-office-like space. The space was meant to make the participants feel secure and comfortable. Furthermore, the way in which the employees describe the work in the Globe can be described as affective. One of the challenges that empowerment poses for feminist poststructural theory is that it cannot be dealt with (only) as a question of power and knowledge. This is also what makes empowerment an interesting object of analysis.

Emotionally, empowerment is often described in relation to fear, courage and confidence. Settling into a new country is described as a process of facing one's fears. Empowerment is about gaining courage and independence. One leaflet of the Globe presented a cartoon, in which a woman ponders her life in Finland. For her it means "having to go where one cannot go... Constant shyness, the past is run over by the new life [...] I'm afraid of the thoughts behind the things people say, I don't always want to understand what they say" (my translation). The cartoon character finds the Globe, sits comfortably on a sofa with another woman, and thinks "This woman hears me, the day has started beautifully". Here, the work of the Globe is represented as addressing the fears and uncertainties that an

72 Sara Ahmed (2004), who has made a cultural analysis of emotions, is one of the few postcolonial, poststructural feminist scholars who deal with emotions. She asks "[w]hat will emotions do?", and considers how they "circulate between bodies", "how they 'stick' as well as move" (ibid. 4). Ahmed examines how emotions are discursively circulated and how they are mobilised for political purposes. The specific emotions she discusses are pain, hate, fear, disgust, shame and love, the latter of which relates to how hate-groups have organised themselves around the discourses of love (to the nation). I draw on her approach in which she considers emotions both from a cultural and a political perspective.

73 I refer in this section specifically to poststructural feminist theorising, which has been concerned with the relations of power and knowledge and deconstructive work. There are other strands in feminist theory and empirical research, which have dealt with emotions. However, as my study is placed within a poststructural feminist framework, my attempt is to consider how the affective politics of multiculturalism can complicate this kind of theorising.

experience of migration might engender. Empowerment is thus understood as an affective practice, which leads to changes in feelings.

The following episode is from a meeting where we discussed conditions and ways of working. It started with the employees from migrant backgrounds discussing how their take on their work has changed. One difference to previous episodes is that here the employees describe themselves (even if ironically) as empowered. The meeting turns into a discussion about one of the participants and her transformation after joining the project. Olga and Josephine are employees from migrant backgrounds, Marja is an employee from a Finnish background and Natascha is a participant in the Globe. I appear with my name.

Olga: What is that word, we've become empowered (laughing ironically), and it is true as I said last time. In the beginning always when somebody came, [I thought] "what, who, what should I say, who will speak [to the visitors]", you, you speak because

Josephine: And on the phone

Olga: You speak, because you know what we are doing. Because these official words have been a hindrance, I don't speak now either of this empowerment, I say that women become stronger, more independent [...] or if somebody wants to speak of a matter, I don't wait for Marja, I can explain, or say now I don't know.

Marja: By the way, it is really nice that this trainee here, Natascha, she answers the phone

Salla: She's changed a lot (a big burst of laughter in the room, implying "finally you got it"). When I came for the first time, she sat in the corner and didn't even look and when I came last time, I thought that as I've been here we've been introduced [...] and now she came, "I'm Natascha", I was, oh, I'm Salla, sorry we're not introduced properly.

Josephine: Yes, she deals really well with talking.

Olga: Yes, and calmly answers and if she does not know, she asks someone

Marja: And nowadays one can agree with her if someone comes [and asks] "would you make a coffee". And sometimes she comes

and says that we've run out of this and that (in the office, such as coffee, milk, tea etc.) and goes to the shop with money.

Salla: Yes.

Olga: She also actively participates here. When I had a small group she was there [...] and she has participated in the IT-class.

First the employees talk about how they gained confidence in the work, that is, learned the work and thus do not have to ask advice from the project coordinator or other (Finnish) employees. They now recognise themselves as the right people to speak about the project. Olga also says that "these official words have been a hindrance", which shows clearly the centrality and importance of a certain kind of vocabulary in the project world. What is the difference when one's own empowerment is discussed compared to someone else's? This is one of the very embarrassing discussions in my material. The embarrassment stems from the patronising way in which Natascha is discussed, in which I actively take part. Laughter is also significant in this episode, which I interpret as a move to include me in the group: I have finally understood something relevant to the project. Some of the project employees felt I had not understood the most relevant aspects of the project as I kept talking about power, racism and the division of labour. In addition to my way of describing how Natascha had changed, Marja's comment is confusing: "empowerment" is signified by coffee making and doing the daily shopping. It resembles descriptions of children's first steps towards responsibility.

A further aspect of empowerment is the role of the Globe as a safe(r) environment in which to learn the Finnish language. Language skills can be understood as one aspect of empowerment. This was one way in which the Globe worked: women with very little knowledge of Finnish, like Natascha, were employed as trainees in the project. Through working as trainees, the women had a place in the Globe and could practice Finnish on a daily basis. This was also a way in which the project came to know the women and vice versa (for a thorough description of the employment practices of the Globe, see chapter 2). Reflecting upon the discussion afterwards, I wonder whether it would have been possible to discuss Natascha in non-patronising terms and yet address the obvious change. Perhaps the patronising tone

comes from placing the change as a change *in her*, rather than as a question of her learning how the place works and creating her space of work there.

Some of the emotions that I have recognised in myself during the fieldwork are embarrassment and confusion. The rather frequent feeling of embarrassment recurred when “migrant women” were somehow described as passive or as those in need of help (indeed, even the word “help” has caused me embarrassment; “support” would have been more correct). Is this feeling of embarrassment a response to (others’) racist patterns of thought, shown where they address migrant women as a monolithic category of those in need of help? Or might the embarrassment relate to my commitment to the image of the “strong woman” – a white middle class fantasy in which nobody ever needs anything from anyone else (least of all help)? As I have shown elsewhere (Tuori 2007a), Finnish womanhood easily becomes the norm in multicultural politics. The emphasis on the “empowered woman” mobilises the figure of the strong Finnish woman. The transformation of migrant women is often described as a process of becoming more like Finnish women (see the analysis in chapter 5). However, my emotional reaction – embarrassment – could also be read as an investment in the “strong Finnish woman”. I can also be said to feel and think through patterns of dominance.

It is important to ask what it would signify, or where would it lead to, if one acknowledged that migrant women may be in need of help and protection in some situations? Perhaps understanding the conditions of migrancy can lead to developing adequate and meaningful support. Agency has been a central concern in feminist research. In different strands of feminist research there has been a focus on agency in places that seem, at first glance, to be rather oppressive. It has been understood as important to recognise forms of agency also in oppressive situations. However, these practices have been criticised for overemphasising agency and for not acknowledging that in some situations there is little room for agency (see for instance Lynne Pearce’s (1997) discussion on “reading against the grain” in literature. Similar critiques have been made in Finnish literary criticism (Grönstrand 2005, 144–146)). The perspective that emphasises the agency of migrant women has to be read in relation to the frequent portrayals of migrant women as “passive” and “not leaving home”. However, it is also important to consider

what kind of subjectivity the chosen ideal invests in, and whether it mobilises the dualism of either “active” or “passive” forms of agency.

The following chapter offers my concluding remarks and revisits the central questions of this study. I will continue the reflections about empowerment and particularly the questions that empowerment – as part of multicultural women’s politics – poses for feminist theory. While they share many concerns, empowerment and feminist theory can be said to be in an awkward relationship to one other, as the final chapter will show in more depth.

9. Transformative politics

This book is an analysis of Finnish multiculturalism, and multicultural women's politics in particular, through an ethnographic study. I have focused on encounters in this work: what kinds of encounters take place in multicultural (women's) politics and, importantly, *under what conditions*. I also ask *what kinds of politics* result from these encounters. The main location of the study was a project, the Globe, which was established through the proliferated funding for social policy projects involving the third sector. Having completed this ethnography, I now regard the work done on "multiculturalism" in projects, NGOs, public institutions and informal groups as a form of *politics* in this study. I have found politics to be a useful concept to refer to multicultural work, as this has *gendered and racialised effects*. I have worked with a broad definition of politics, as expressing a desire for change: the projects, NGOs as well as public institutions in the field all aim at some kind of change in society in relation to multiculturalism. Politics can also imply agendas that are not articulated or even conscious; this is often the case regarding agendas that construct race, racism and gender. These are not necessarily issues that are consciously considered to be part of politics, but which I nevertheless regard as political, in that they relate to the power relations within the projects. One example (in chapter 2) would be the division of labour and office space in the Globe, which was seen to reflect different professional positions in the project, rather than different racialised ones. However, the allocation of space and work affected the way in which power relations along with ideas of race/ethnicity were produced in the project. The way in which I understand politics follows feminist theories, which view everyday life-choices as political (see for example Bergman 2002).

One purpose of my study has been to create a dialogue between feminist and postcolonial theories on the one hand, and multicultural work in Finland on the other. The key words and phrases employed in multicultural

work such as “empowerment”, “equal participation”, and “multiculturalism” itself, have been discussed and theorised in feminist and postcolonial studies. Therefore, one could say that the politics of multiculturalism and feminist scholarship have raised common questions. Despite these common questions, feminist theorising and multicultural politics could be said to have an awkward relationship to each other. Feminist and postcolonial knowledge has prioritized an analysis of power relations particularly in relation to gender, sexuality, colonialism and race. Contrary to this, however, multiculturalism in Finland (as elsewhere, see for example Hage 2000; Fortier 2008) has been little concerned with power relations. Rather, multiculturalism has often amounted to a celebration of diversity and “cultural richness”, and this celebration has been seen as a means for promoting “good ethnic relations”. From the point of view of feminist postcolonial theorising, multiculturalism appears to be apolitical, often conservative and even racist (at least) through romanticising difference, while failing to acknowledge structural racism as constitutive of culture.

This kind of postcolonial feminist critique is present in this study. I have critically examined how gender equality discourses enable racial and ethnic exclusions in the context of multicultural politics: the vision of an achieved state of gender equality in Finland makes it possible to depict “Finns” as modern and advanced and the “others” as backwards and non-modern; even in a context that explicitly promotes multiculturalism and anti-racism (chapters 6, 7). I have also analysed how the adoption of the Finnish version of gender equality becomes a criteria for belonging to the nation (chapter 5). The analysis of how expertise and experience are racially constructed (and how they in turn serve to construct racial and ethnic differences) is also part of the feminist critique focusing particularly on the relationship between knowledge and power (chapter 7). This kind of critical stance which is concerned with “detecting” and “revealing” power relations could be described as a “paranoid reading” in the words of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (2003). From the point of view of multicultural politics, feminist knowledge can seem obsessed with power relations to the extent of not seeing anything else. This is present in my material, for instance when the (Finnish) employees of the Globe challenge my Spivak-inspired idea of “speaking to” as the only ethical way to approach multicultural encounters. Instead, they argued that one needs all kinds of speaking and that it is a question of situation and context:

in some situations it might even be necessary to “speak for” somebody (chapter 7). If multiculturalism is concerned with promoting positive and harmonious understandings of multicultural encounters, feminism and postcolonialism take power relations to be the starting point for analysis.

The *Globe* worked within the specific institutional frame of European Union (EU)-funded project work. There has been a proliferation of funding for social policy projects, which are supposed to involve more “third sector” agents, primarily non-governmental organisations (NGOs), in social policies. I have defined multicultural (women’s) politics as a field where NGOs, authorities and policy makers cooperate. Through the funding, NGO based projects, too, are bound to work within the frameworks of the official policies of multiculturalism⁷⁴, such as the policy that promotes the integration of migrants. While official policies are not entirely embraced by the project I have studied, they nonetheless form a visible framework in my material. The impact of funding in the project work cannot be underestimated. On the one hand, funding implies bureaucratic control through handling expenses and carrying out evaluations. On the other hand, the projects are supposed to be innovative while simultaneously conforming to the funding requirements. This means that the projects have to apply and reformulate the discourses of the funding agents in complicated ways (chapters 2, 5 and 8). For instance in the *Globe*, integration is still one of the main goals of the project in spite of the fact that this objective is critiqued and also somewhat reformulated within the project itself.

Thus, there are aspects of this book that I would describe as “paranoid”: indeed, its purpose has been to reveal underlying power structures, or to point to more obvious ones. I show, for instance, how race and ethnicity are constitutive of the nation, and how multicultural politics itself relies on racialised structures. Therefore, I argue that paranoid readings can be useful. However, there is a risk in feminist postcolonial analyses of reducing multiculturalism to racism, as if racism was the only context through which to understand multicultural encounters. It is conceptually, analytically and politically important not to shut down the possibilities of other kinds of

74 There is no official definition of multicultural politics in Finland in the sense that Australia, Canada or the UK has defined multicultural politics (Saukkonen 2003). With this formulation I refer to how multiculturalism is perceived and put into practice in the calls for funding, integration practices etc.

encounters, even within policy-oriented mainstream multiculturalism. One argument for privileging power relations in feminist analyses has been the fact that power relations have so often been completely ignored and there has been a lack of interest in the structural issues. In this specific argument, power relations are understood mainly as domination and structural inequalities. Furthermore, research has shown how racism becomes difficult to address when it is not understood as part of culture (de los Reyes, Molina and Mulinari 2003b; Rastas 2007a). The problem with this approach can be that one ends up in positions that are always already defined. On the basis of my study, the common question for multicultural politics and feminist theorising could be how to construct ways of thinking, talking and doing within unequal structural power relations, but which are not reducible to these structural relations.

Feminist postcolonial analyses call for structural forces that relate to race, ethnicity, gender and national belongings to be taken into consideration. All of these were mobilised in different ways in my research: multiculturalism as it appears in my research context could be said to be dependent on these differences (see Fortier 2008). In this study, I have understood discussions of race and ethnicity today “as an inheritance of the imperial (and colonial) past” (Ahmed 2000a). In the Finnish (and Swedish) context in particular, eugenics is an important part of this past. An “inheritance” however does not imply a determinist, static or linear development of history (chapter 3). If multiculturalism is most often understood as politics geared towards greater inclusivity, I particularly examine the exclusionary practices involved in multicultural politics. One distinction evident in the material is between Finnish and non-Finnish people. *Finnishness* as a norm was particularly visible in the everyday practices of the Globe, such as the already mentioned distribution of work tasks. For instance, towards the end of the project only the employees who were born in Finland attended the meetings with the T&E Centre (chapter 2). The employees’ “cultural identification”, or her skin colour, was not significant here, but the distinction was based on being able to manipulate the bureaucratic language of the funders perfectly, and passing as a competent Finnish citizen. Language could of course be described as a

bodily or embodied difference⁷⁵, and in that sense this can be understood as a racialising practice.

As I have discussed in this study, “race” is a concept that is seldom used in the Finnish context (chapter 3). The lack of discussion of race in the Finnish context makes it difficult to address racism (also Rastas 2007a). Furthermore, as “race” is often understood to refer strictly to people of colour, it also means that racism is seldom labelled as such when not directed at a black person. For instance, in autobiographies written by persons who have migrated to Finland, only those who identified themselves as Africans explicitly wrote about racism (Huttunen 2002, 106). This probably reflects the fact that the kind of racism experienced by black men and women may be more violent, and more overt, but it also shows that terms like “discrimination”, “xenophobia” or “russophobia” are used instead of racism, when directed at non-black people (see also Rastas 2005, 69). During my fieldwork, I spoke to a woman who had migrated from southern Europe and was employed in one of the projects, and who was uncertain whether what she experienced was racism because she was not “black”. Also, not all Russian-Finnish NGOs for instance, like to talk about *racism* against Russians, because the word suggests links to “blackness”. Some of the NGOs preferred the term “Russophobia”, indicating specifically racist patterns of thought against Russians⁷⁶. While contextualised analyses are important and racism appears in different ways for differently positioned people, I would argue that a distinction between racism and xenophobia *per se* is more confusing than helpful. These kinds of conceptual differences can essentialise differences between people (that there “really” is a difference between black and non-black people, for instance).

My aim in this study is not to do a comparative analysis of feminist and multicultural approaches, or to verify either of them as more valid. First of all, the purposes of and conditions for academic knowledge and knowledge created in policy-oriented activism are different. The focus of my study has been on fairly mainstream versions of multiculturalism, even though the position of the Globe was somewhat ambiguous in this sense: it had roots in the autonomous women’s movement, funding through the EU, and

75 For instance, for adopted children, and perhaps also children of migrants, who know Finnish perfectly either as their native language or otherwise, language makes their racialised position more ambiguous.

76 This came up in a meeting of a network against racism and indicates the complicated relations of racism in the Finnish context.

it cooperated with several politicians and the municipality. Much feminist and postcolonial theorising is indebted to activism, and there is of course also policy-oriented research. Therefore, the relationships between different types of knowledge are awkward in many ways, while there are many points of connection between them. In this concluding chapter I consider whether this could be productive in some way. In this chapter I will further discuss positional knowledge practices, constructions of race and ethnicity, reparative readings and the transformative figures of multiculturalism. In these sections, I will draw from all of the chapters in this book in order to build an analysis on the basis of the findings of my study as a whole. Thus, the conclusions are built around the themes of my study that intersect with one another: knowledge, affects, power, gender and race.

I begin here with a discussion of the links between race, ethnicity and a sense of belonging to the nation (or the west) in the context of multiculturalism. I will discuss how the landscapes of racial and ethnic differences appear in the context of my research and how the west was constructed in the work. The following two subsections are about knowledge, and I will first discuss positioned knowledge practices. The following section concerns the kinds of knowledge that appears in multicultural politics, particularly on gender equality. These two sections deal with the more “paranoid” outcomes of my thesis, i.e. those that focus explicitly on the ways in which unequal power relations and racism affect multiculturalism. The third section is about reparative readings. In the last section I consider the possibility that transformative (mythical) figures may emerge that would offer a new kind of politics in Finnish mainstream multiculturalism, and new ways of imagining (multicultural) Finland.

Positional knowledge practices

Throughout the book I have described this as a study that is concerned with *encounters, politics and power relations*. In many ways the encounters are about relations between different kinds of knowledge. One of these relations is the often awkward relation between multicultural knowledge on the one hand, and feminist and postcolonial knowledge on the other hand. Both feminism and multiculturalism aim to contribute to a more inclusive politics and more inclusive forms of knowledge. The rhetoric and ideologies of the projects included participation, empowerment and bottom-up

practices. This means that the work in the projects should have been based on the experiences, knowledge, needs and wishes of migrants, who are the “target group” of the projects. This might sound like an obvious approach, but to implement this as a practice has many complexities. As my analysis of the ethnographic encounters (both in the Globe and in the seminars) shows, migrant women’s knowledge is not always acknowledged as such, but it is instead labelled as *feelings* or *experiences* (chapter 6). Expertise is a crucial issue in multicultural politics. One arena in which knowledge of multiculturalism is publicly negotiated is the numerous seminars that have been organised by the projects, NGOs and authorities. In the discussions that take place in these seminars, knowledge and expertise is claimed. These claims, I argue, could be understood as acts *towards* power, rather than simply acts *of* power. The seminar programmes are often already built around the expertise of some – most often the Finnish employees – and the experiences of others – usually the migrant employees or participants. For the projects as well as for NGOs it is important to emphasise that one holds relevant knowledge of the multicultural relations – this is the way to acquire funding in the area of multiculturalism.

To invoke questions of knowledge, power and subject positions also means to invoke questions of *standpoint politics*. According to the feminist standpoint theories, all knowledge is positioned, which is to say it is created from somewhere (see for example Harding 1986; Haraway 1991; Hill Collins 2000). One important political question about knowledge and expertise concerns how multicultural politics is defined, and whose versions of it are accepted. The knowledge of the Finnish and migrant employees in multicultural projects is situated in specific ways. From this perspective, the racialised positions of migrant women can result in their having different kinds of knowledge about Finnish society. This does not mean that the knowledge of “migrant women” would be more authentic; however, on the basis of my ethnography I have found that this knowledge is seldom heard in the politics of multiculturalism. I have discussed (particularly in chapter 7) how migrant women’s knowledge is often labelled as feelings, and is therefore not given the weight of *knowledge*. This was evident both in the seminars and in the work of the Globe, and thus, I would regard it as a common pattern in multicultural politics. The programmes in many seminars reproduce this pattern through inviting many “Finnish” experts to give talks about a specific aspect

strictly related to their professional position, while “migrants” are often invited to give talks about their “experiences as...”. On the basis of my study, multicultural politics would require that players listen more carefully to the situated knowledge in the field.

Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Mohanty (1997, xl) have argued that “the experience of repression can be, but is not necessarily, a catalyst for organising. It is, in fact, the *interpretation* of that experience within a *collective* context that marks the moment of transformation from perceived contradictions and material disenfranchisement to participation in women’s movements”. Feminist theory could contribute to the analysis of multiculturalism in Finland by theorising the complicated connections between knowledge and power on the one hand, and identities and individual positions on the other. This would mean developing an understanding of “ourselves” as constituted within power relations, which one cannot simply deconstruct. Yet, experiences as such do not lead to political mobilising; this comes from the collective interpretation of those experiences, as Alexander and Mohanty (*ibid.*) argue in the quotation. Even if migrant women’s knowledge is often not acknowledged as such, there are tendencies at the same time to cherish migrant women’s *experiences* as authentic and generating particular knowledge. For instance, this is visible in the way employees are employed in the projects: the experience of being a migrant gives sufficient knowledge for working in a project, and yet, this knowledge is not acknowledged in the same way as that of the “Finnish experts”.

One aspect of the positioning of the different agents in the field of multicultural politics relates to their investment in the field. Even though the projects, such as the Globe, are aimed at migrant women, they are often run *by* Finnish women. The Finnish employees of different projects that work on multiculturalism need the projects in order to be able to work, whether as activists or project employees, in the area of multiculturalism. In chapter 6 I have discussed this in relation to the way in which the “collaboration” between “us women” is emphasised in the multicultural discourses and how these modes of speaking make space for Finnish women’s agency in multiculturalism. Thus, multiculturalism is often understood to concern “others”, but one could say that many Finnish subjects too are invested in multiculturalism (myself for example, conducting research on multiculturalism).

Gender equality as a knowledge framework

One form of dominant knowledge in relation to multiculturalism is gender equality, which, in European contexts, seems to lurk in most of the discourses on multiculturalism (see de los Reyes et al. 2003; Lewis 2005; Tuori 2007b; Keskinen et al. 2009; Siim and Borchorst 2009). The familiar self-image of Finland, and other countries, includes an understanding of a particularly high level of gender equality. Although gender equality politics and the meanings of gender equality have an ambiguous position within these countries, the concept appears in surprisingly uniform ways in multicultural politics. I have explored in this study how the adoption of the Finnish way of understanding gender equality becomes a condition for belonging to the nation (chapter 4). Gender equality discourses in particular make room for the kind of expert positions that were described in the previous section: knowledge of both the politics and the everyday practices of gender equality is portrayed as Finnish women's particular expertise and contribution to multiculturalism (chapter 6). In a context that is committed to the promotion of inclusive politics, the gender equality discourses seem to make space for utterances where Finns and Finland are portrayed as advanced and other places, cultures and people as backward (chapters 5, 6).

On another level, Finnishness arises as the cultural norm in my material. For instance, a certain perception of gender equality is presented as "Finnish" and normative in the sense that everyone is expected to strive for it (see Tuori 2007a; 2007b, chapters 4, 6). Here "Finnishness" is an "ethnicity", understood as being defined by certain "cultural traits". Then, if the idea that gender equality expresses Finnishness refers to a cultural domain, it can become racialised in everyday encounters. Even if the "gender equality training" was focused on "all migrant women", some women were considered to be in greater need of gender equality training than others; and the need did not apply equally to all "non-Finns". These divisions can be traced for instance by looking at how "cultures" are described and where in the world the cultures are placed. This implies that women of a certain appearance would be considered in greater need of gender equality than women with other looks (namely, white women). Here, what would be first regarded as an "ethnic" or "cultural" marker then becomes racialised in both daily, and textual, encounters (see also chapters 4 and 6).

Gender equality is further related to questions of the reproduction of the nation through discourses on families and heteronormativity (chapter 5). The context of multicultural women's politics appeared heteronormative firstly in the sense that non-heterosexualities were absent in them. In my analysis, I relate this heteronormativity both to the general heteronormativity of Finnish society (including the women's movement), as well as to the ways in which LGBTIQ⁷⁷ cultures are constructed as white and western. I have considered the question of heteronormativity in multicultural contexts through its investment in whiteness and Finnishness. Non-heterosexuality has not been absent or invisible in Finnish society "at large" during the time I was involved in fieldwork. On the contrary, there were legislative initiatives concerning same sex couples and families that were vividly debated in the media. My argument is that in a context such as that of multicultural women's politics, which would describe itself as progressive, homophobia is a marker of "backwardness". The invisibility of non-heterosexualities may also lead to non-heterosexual migrant women choosing not to participate in the projects or to "stay in the closet".

Secondly, I have analysed the discourses on migrant families through the concept of heteronormativity (chapter 5). The "migrant family" could be understood as a cultural figure: there are general conceptions of what the category "is like" and these conceptions are transferred to the people who are understood to belong to it (Huttunen 2004; Lewis 2005). Migrant families, as they appear in the discourses on multiculturalism, fail to embody the right kind of heterosexuality, that which forms a "tacit, society-founding rightness" (Berlant and Warner 1998, 548). In the Finnish context the right kind of heterosexuality implies a specific understanding of "gender equality", for instance. The question is not so much about practices in specific families – migrant or Finnish – but about the exclusion of migrant families, as figures, from the realm of gender equality. Heteronormativity here is understood as an idealised and normative privileging of heterosexual relations, in addition to the assumption that certain people are heterosexual.

Western hegemonies

The research material, such as leaflets, brochures, newsletters, research reports and discussions, were full of assertions that Finland is modern, in-

77 Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer

dividual, democratic and secular in relation to a “somewhere else” that is backward, collective, undemocratic and religious. These discursive acts were sometimes “negative”, as when women’s position is described as more oppressed “elsewhere” or migrants are seen as not having sufficient knowledge or skills for the labour market (chapter 2). Sometimes they were “positive”, as in descriptions of how parents or grandparents “elsewhere” are still respected and taken care of, or that women are “allowed” to be feminine (chapter 5). There is nothing surprising in these utterances; one could rather say that they are too familiar. An analysis of the representations at work in these discursive acts would confirm the interpretation that these utterances are “Othering”, stereotypical and often simply racist. However, there is no need for an elaborate analysis to make this conclusion. After having been puzzled by these utterances, finding it both important to take them seriously but useless to deconstruct or scrutinize them in detail, I discuss here how these utterances were used; that is, what *work* they did in different contexts.

These discursive practices seemed to construct the “west” rather than “whiteness” or “Finnishness”, and to focus on individuals as products of their societies and cultures. One central aspect of multicultural politics in Finland is that migrants are considered to be in need of training in diverse matters, ranging from the use of electricity to gender equality⁷⁸ (see Vuori 2009, chapter 4). These ideas of the “west” seem to depend on fantasies about modernity, with the “west” as its locus. Liisa Malkki (1995) suggests that *the national order of things* is a modernist precept. She describes how organising the world in national and ethnic terms is *the way* in which the world is perceived in “modern” times (see also Huttunen 2005, 136). In focusing on the connections between modernity and the west, I am primarily trying to

78 I found a leaflet titled “Electricity guide for migrants” (Maahanmuuttajien sähköopas) produced in 2004 by The Safety Technology Authority, a state agency that is subject to the Ministry of Trade and Industry (Sähköturvallisuuden edistämiskeskus together with TUKES) with basic information about electricity in the home, how it is used and what to do in case of an emergency such as a fire. Not all “education about Finnish society” for migrants is patronising or serves to construct the west. Effective information about legislation on marriage, divorce and custody, labour market legislation as well as information about the social security system can be truly empowering. It is important to know about one’s legal position and rights in order to be able to work effectively in society. However, in addition to or even instead of this kind of relevant information, there are a lot of information packages that aim to promote Finland as a land of equality, democracy and well-being (see Tuori 2007a; Vuori 2008).

make sense of certain utterances frequent in multicultural discourses. It is of course impossible to analyse comprehensively the ways in which multiculturalism or normative ideas of Finnishness, or my own research design for that matter, rely on modernist ideas and values. For instance, if an empowering politics is understood as an enlightenment project, both the Globe and my study are heavily invested in it. Western modernity is also closely linked to colonialism: “the colonial project was not *external* to the constitution of the modernity of European nations: rather, the identity of these nations became predicated on their relationship to the colonised others” (Ahmed 2000a, 10 emphasis original).

Utterances that fantasise “somewhere else” as a place where modernism is not yet fully reached may also be read as expressing a desire for a “whole other”. Jean Wyatt (2004) argues that white women often project their own losses onto black women who are depicted as being without any ruptures, as whole and ideal. Vuorela (2009) has also analysed the desires related to colonialism and distant places. These analyses could be helpful in order to make sense of the discursive acts that – sometimes admiringly, sometimes pejoratively – cherish the idea of “others” (i.e. non-westerners), as those not belonging to the modern and thereby uphold the idea of our modernity. These kinds of portrayals have been found in the discourses of Finnish missionaries in Namibia, for example (Löytty 2006, 178–179): in addition to racist, xenophobic or stereotypical portrayals of the Namibians, the (Christian) Namibians were often portrayed as living up to “Finnish” ideals (such as being hardworking), with the only difference being that they lived out the ideals more fully than “Finns”. Löytty named this idealisation xenophilia.

To de-familiarise the seemingly natural alliance between the west and modernity one could also turn to analyses of non-western modernities or non-western democracies (terms which are not unproblematic). The feminist scholar Zillah Eisenstein (2004, 32–33), for instance, claims that “[i]t is imperialist for Westerners to think that bodily rights, or democracy, or humanity are singularised ideas, explicated the most fully by the Enlightenment, or the west. Even though there are Westernised forms of each belief, these ideas are way too polymorphous to be reduced to their Western/imperial form (ibid.53).” Aihwa Ong also argues strongly for not conceiving of the west as the nodal point of the world and the rest of the world as peripheries in her analysis of Chinese modernities. Theories about transnationalism, and ways

of understanding postcolonialism as being subject to rules resembling the colonial, are also attempts to come to a more refined understanding of the divisions and workings of power in the world. Coming across these stubborn ideas on modernity and the west over and over again in face-to-face discussions, project reports, leaflets, seminars on multiculturalism and newspaper articles, I have started to think that we might need to take seriously the challenge that Wendy Brown (2001, 5) poses:

Thus, even as the future may now appear more uncertain, less predictable, and perhaps even less promising than one figured by the terms of modernism, these same features suggest in the present a porousness and uncharted potential that can lead to futures outside the lines of modernist presumptions.

To let go of modernist precepts can be risky; it may lead to a sense of melancholia and loss particularly in relation to the enlightenment ideas of progress, and to a sense of uncertainty about our place in the world. But not to let go risks leaving us in a determinist and dichotomous world, where some embody progress and others backwardness. Yet, to make it more complicated, many of the concepts discussed in this study are ones that we *cannot not want* (to paraphrase Spivak 1999). For instance, gender equality and empowerment are heavily invested in modernity and the enlightenment, and these terms are problematic in many ways: gender equality for reproducing genders as binary, for erasing differences and for holding up a certain (here Finnish) version of itself as a norm. Empowerment relies on an understanding of autonomous subjects and often leads to individualistic politics. However, as Yeğenoğlu (2006, 258) argues, we cannot wish away the enlightenment project, because it has “given us human rights, political liberties and responsibilities”. Modernity and enlightenment belong to the kinds of politics that we need to work both for and against (also Lather 2007, 13–15).

Reparative readings and empowerment

In my study, affect (in the form of feelings and experiences) appears, on the one hand, in contrast to knowledge. On the other hand, affect is also evident as being part of politics. I have analysed *empowerment* in particular as an affective practice (chapter 8). Empowerment formed the core of the programme of the Globe: it was considered as the main and “true” goal of

the programme – in contrast to the goals formulated in terms of the number of employment placements in the funding requirements. Empowerment is an interesting concept as it can be traced to (at least) two distinct strands of influence in the Globe: it was part of the funding requirements, but it was also an integral part of the women's movement in which the Globe had its roots. This double nature of empowerment in the Globe makes it an interesting object for analysis. In this conclusion I discuss how empowerment can challenge paranoid readings of feminist and postcolonial theories.

The logic of the Globe programme was that through improved self-esteem and courage it would become easier for the women to gain employment, or do those things they aspired to do, as they could now stand up for themselves and they now have better knowledge of the labour market and the Finnish welfare system. These empowered women would then contribute to slowly changing the society as it becomes apparent how competent and professional the “migrant women” are. This logic could be deconstructed until little is left: by focusing on individual women as the agents of change, the way in which society and culture are constituted by racist structures is left unattended. This might not be the best strategy to change (a racist) society. In the Globe model (chapters 4 and 7) structural aspects of empowerment, and of migrant women's positions, were also addressed, but mainly on a very general level, as in the quote below:

The dominant ways of structuring reality are presented as objective reality by those holding power. [...] The foundation of different forms of oppression and discrimination are the structures of society that cause inequality. To recognize and oppose these efforts are the best of all best practices!

Thus, rather than being unconcerned with structural power relations, it seems that there are missing links here between the individual, structural and representational levels. As I have discussed in chapter 2, the projects work to a large extent in a framework of impossibility: the problem for which the Globe was funded – namely the unemployment of migrant women – is mainly due to factors unrelated to individual women. However, the projects work with individual migrants, which easily leads to locating the problem at the level of individual women. The Globe's focus on empowerment and support for the migrant women more broadly, rather than working strictly with

employment, could be described as one way of addressing the impossibility of the project work.

Empowerment poses questions about how to conceive of relations of dominance and subordination as well as agency and dependency. The answers given to these questions can be traced in the interaction between the empirical material and theoretical perspectives. Empowerment is understood in the Globe primarily as an individual process of growth, and gaining independence, which includes a better knowledge of the welfare system. Thus, empowerment is most often understood as increased *agency*. Feminist research (Holli 2002, 18–19) has critiqued empowerment because of its focus on individual women and their *feelings*. While the critique has raised important points, such as the importance of examining power at work in empowerment, it fails to address its key objective (as formulated in the Globe): namely to affect the feelings and subjectivities of individuals. I have chosen to regard empowerment as a practice of power, which aims to produce certain kinds of – empowered – subjects. In that sense, I acknowledge empowerment as a power practice, but in my view this is not necessarily negative.

There is tension between feminist theories that critique autonomous subjectivities and those that emphasise agency and resistance. In literary analyses, and in studies on girlhood, for instance, there have been debates about the implications of looking for resistance also in explicitly oppressive or hegemonic stories (Pearce 1997; Oinas 2001; Grönstrand 2005 144–146; Aaltonen 2006, 47–54). Empowerment in multicultural politics is based on the idea that “migrants”, and particularly “migrant women”, need “empowerment”. If empowerment is understood as gaining courage, independence and agency, it implies that migrant women need more of these. Feminist analyses have been wary of these kinds of statements where migrant women, as a group, are seen to need such things. The danger is that these statements lead to uncritical analyses where migrant women end up being the inverse mirror image of Finnish women – lacking agency and reduced to victimhood (see Mohanty 1984). However, it is also important to ask what it would mean to say that somebody needs help. Does “needing help” equate to being a lesser subject in feminist discourses? Through an analysis of the material, and of my own reactions to some of the fieldwork situations, I have suggested in chapter 8 that a commitment to “strength” indeed can cause this discomfort

about “needing help”. This might be a problem particularly evident in guilty white discourses on feminism and race.

One answer to this dilemma is to make carefully contextualised analyses, which take into consideration the complex institutional, structural, social and individual situations of particular women, instead of focusing narrowly on the women as individuals (see also Jungar and Oinas 2008, 186). On a more analytical level, I suggest that feminist (poststructural) theorising needs to pay attention to and theorise processes of empowerment, and not only to deconstruct the concept. The analysis of multicultural women’s politics shows that empowerment (along with affect) is too central an issue to be neglected. As a move towards offering this kind of analysis, I discuss the possibility of generating new and transformative symbolic figures that would represent multiculturalism.

Transformative figures for the politics of listening

In the previous section, I have discussed empowerment as an important question for feminist poststructural and postcolonial theorising. Throughout the book I have raised questions about the figures that appear in multicultural politics: the “migrant woman” (discussed in most chapters), “migrant families” (chapter 5) and the “strong Finnish woman” (chapters 4 and 7). These figures could be described as shadows that lurk in, and define, many encounters: general ideas (or stereotypes) about “migrant women” are transferred to actual people who are considered to embody the figure (Huttunen 2004). These figures can be said to essentialise differences between migrants and non-migrants and to promote a conception of coherent groups of people. These figures are mobilised in everyday encounters and in project designs on multiculturalism. I have suggested on the basis of my fieldwork that the “strong Finnish woman” figures in the ways in which the transformation of migrant women is described. This figure is intimately linked with the gender equality discourse which presents Finnish women as gender equal, hardworking and active in public life. The historian Pirjo Markkola (2002, 85) describes how “strength” appears as a cultural resource for women in Finland; it can be mobilised as a means to cope with difficult situations in life. In the same vein, there are instances in my material in which gender equality is mobilised as a resource rather than a state of affairs (chapter 7). According to Markkola (2002, 90), strength is a key aspect of the image of “Finnish wom-

anhood” and therefore it is important to examine it, rather than to conclude that this image is either “false” or “true”. The figure of the “strong woman” undoubtedly seems to have some force to it, but leaves me somewhat uncomfortable. The figure is often conflated with normative ideas of Finnishness, with Finnish women as its bearers. The assumption of “strength” can also promote an individualistic approach which puts the responsibility for change (addressing discrimination, for instance) upon women themselves. Would there be other imaginative figures that would evoke more subversive possibilities?

Feminist politics, feminist theory and ethnographic endeavours have for a long time explored different modes of effective and non-essentialising political practices, along with ways of conceptualising less rigid subject positions. New political futures have been imagined through a range of images of empowering, challenging and radical figures, as well as through the articulations of partial politics⁷⁹. The different figures include among others the cyborg (Haraway 1991), the new mestiza (Anzaldúa 1987) and the trickster (Visweswaran 1994). These are ways to imagine shifting and flexible subject positions and political futures. These have been ways to think beside essentialist, limiting and singular categories (see Sedgwick 2003 on thinking “beside”). They can also be described as empowering figures: they offer points of identification (however unstable), which would not be oppressive or tied to singular categories. Could such a figure as a point of (dis)identification make a difference in (women’s) politics of multiculturalism in the Finnish context? Could such a figure enable a discussion of differences without essentialising them, of racism without reducing multiculturalism to it? One element of the trickster figure is about speaking “as if” and resisting complete understanding (Visweswaran 1994, 100–101). This could be the way forward for multicultural politics too: to give up the desire for complete understanding or complete representation.

In speaking “as if”, the trickster figure comes close to Spivak’s (1993b, 3–5) notion of strategic essentialism and other versions of partial politics (Haraway 1991; Brah 2000; Butler 2004; Lather 2007). While all of these articulations are complicated and nuanced, the core idea is that politics would be based not on an assumption of shared identities (such as in “as

79 These different figures were particularly part of the theory of the late 1980s and 1990s, while they have been largely absent from recent feminist texts.

women, our goal is...”) or of common views and agendas. Instead, the starting point for politics would be in acknowledging the disjuncture and incommensurability of our positions and agendas. Judith Butler (2004, 3) has argued that the possibility of agency lies in the acknowledgement that one is constituted by a world one did not choose. The paradox is that the possibility of agency lies in the fact of this lack of choice. This resembles Spivak’s argument about deconstruction, which, in Visweswaran’s description (1994, 73), implies “saying an impossible no to a structure that one critiques, yet inhabits intimately”. “The structure one inhabits” and “the world one did not choose” are constituted by power relations and inequalities. In many of the chapters (4, 6, 7), I have pointed to how multicultural politics ignores the ways in which structural power relations influence people’s lives. There is some awareness of structural power relations, which however tends to disappear when the discussion turns to individual people or to the projects themselves. To acknowledge that saying no to the structure one inhabits is an impossible task could be a starting point for the politics of multiculturalism. The suggestion of feminist theorists is that power relations need to be considered as part of the relations.

In this book I have argued that the strong emphasis on harmonious relations and the promotion of the “positive sides” of multicultural encounters impedes an analysis of troubling discourses on and discussions about racism (particularly in chapter 6). The analysis of power relations would, ideally, show or open up the cemented preconceptions that are mobilised over and over again in encounters with “others” or perceived “strangers”. A partial politics implies working both with and against at the same time. The figures envisioned, along with the politics of “as if” may offer ways of thinking beside the entrenched standard positions, but without subscribing to a naïve belief in “overcoming power relations”. While democracy and enlightenment – or in this instance, multiculturalism – are problematic concepts falsely perceived as being attached to Europeanness (Balibar 2003, Yeğenoğlu 2006), they are also ideals that we do not want to be without. Even if multiculturalism might seem to be in odd company with the concepts of democracy and enlightenment, which are seen to form the basis of European civilisations (often considered as homogeneous nations rather than multicultural ones), I argue that multiculturalism needs to be placed there. My reading of multicultural politics, alongside that of many other scholars, is critical.

However, with the rise of racism and xenophobic parties across Europe (including Finland), there is a need to work with and against multiculturalism as a concept, rather than to merely critique it for it being superficial, apolitical and individualistic.

Emancipatory politics with the aim of empowerment, such as that of the *Globe*, is necessarily based on the will for and belief in change. Even if those who are expected to change are primarily the migrant women, this politics hints at the possibility of mutual change. Gayatri Spivak (1996, 9) has described her project as being one of “unlearning one’s privileges as a loss”. In order to make a difference, perhaps one needs to focus, not only on the empowerment of the “migrants”, but also on understanding the privileges of “Finnish” subjects in multicultural politics as a loss. To acknowledge the uncomfortably different and complex hierarchical positions in the *Globe*, does not mean that multiculturalism should be reduced to these, but rather suggests that its politics should pay more attention to listening than to calls for the celebration of cultural richness. One of the central questions in this book has been about the politics of listening, and I have shown how migrant women’s knowledge seems not to be heard. What partial politics could mean in practice is a complicated question. Avtar Brah (2000, 279) asks: “And, is this not one of the most difficult things to do, positioned, as each and everyone of us is, in some relation of hierarchy, authority or dominance to another? How do we construct, both individually and collectively, non-logocentric political practices – theoretical paradigms, political activism, as well as modes of relating to another person – which galvanize identification, empathy and affinity, and not only ‘solidarity’?” What if politics was more about asking shared questions than looking for common answers?

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Svensk sammanfattning

Mångkulturella möten och politik. Feministiska postkoloniala perspektiv.

Detta är en studie av "det mångkulturella" i Finland. Grunden för studien utgörs av etnografiskt fältarbete som utfördes i ett arbetsmarknadsprojekt för invandrade kvinnor, ett projekt jag kallar *Globen* (the Globe). Mitt syfte har varit att analysera hur "det mångkulturella" skapas i en mängd (olika) möten (*encounters*) genom att studera Globen, och den bredare kontext inom vilken Globen verkade. Denna kontext har jag kallat "mångkulturell kvinnopolitik" som syftar på ett fält där aktivister, myndigheter, projekt och medborgarorganisationer arbetar inom det mångkulturella, ofta i en jämställdhetskontext. Med *möten* avser jag både möten som sker "mellan människor" (ansikte mot ansikte), möten som sker i texter och möten som handlar om kunskap. Möten som sker "mellan människor" förstår jag också som möten mellan olika positioner; såsom mellan aktivister, projektpersonal, "invandrare", "finländare" och byråkrater. Att förstå det mångkulturella i termer av möten härstammar särskilt från Sara Ahmeds (2000) tänkande. Det är ett sätt att förstå förhållandet mellan det strukturella och det individuella.

Ett viktigt fokus i min undersökning har varit skapandet av kunskap och kunskapspositioner i vardagliga praktiker i projektarbetet och den vidare kontexten: seminarier och material skapat av andra aktörer inom fältet för mångkulturell politik. All kunskap är situerad och knuten till olika positioner (Haraway 1991). Jag har analyserat hur olika kunskapspositioner skapas i det mångkulturella: till exempel hur finländska kvinnor intar (oproblematiserade) expertpositioner, medan invandrade kvinnors (och mäns) kunskap ofta uppfattas som "erfarenheter" eller "känslor". Därmed är dessa positioner också kopplade till uppfattningar om ras/etnicitet. Jag uppfattar

”mångkulturell kvinnopolitik” som ett fält där olika former av kunskap möts och förhandlar, eller kämpar över betydelser. Det innebär också att positioner och kunskap varken är stabila eller oföränderliga. Många av de begrepp som jag analyserar i min studie, såsom jämställdhet, det mångkulturella och *empowerment* (som översätts på svenska som ”självbestämmande makt” eller ”deltagande”, men ingendera av översättningarna fångar dess användning i mångkulturella projekt, därför används det engelska ordet *empowerment* i texten), är också begrepp som används i forskning, olika slags rapporter, inom medborgarorganisationer och projekt. Till exempel begreppet *empowerment* används i forskningslitteratur inom bl.a. kvinnovetenskap, sociologi, pedagogik, teologi, socialpolitik och folkrätt. Samma begrepp används också inom EU-finansiering av projekt, biståndspolitik och i socialpolitik. Projekt som Globen arbetar genom konkreta handlingar för *empowerment*, och omformulerar därmed begreppet på basen av erfarenheterna i projektet. På det sättet, finns det flera begrepp som gör icke-linjära färder genom discipliner, och genom olika sorters institutionell kunskap (Bal 2002). Det viktigaste kunskapsmötet i boken sker mellan den feministiska (postkoloniala) teoretiska kunskapen och kunskapen från den mångkulturella kvinnopolitiken. I min undersökning har jag vidareutvecklat 1) hur mångkulturell kvinnopolitik kan mångfacettera och nyansera det feministiska tänkandet, och 2) hur feministiska teorier kunde öppna upp det mångkulturella i den finländska kontexten.

Intersektionella frågor om det mångkulturella

Mitt sätt att ställa frågor i avhandlingen kan beskrivas som *intersektionellt*. Detta perspektiv innebär fokus på hur olika kategorier sammanverkar och är beroende av varandra. Därmed har jag ställt frågor om ras/ethnicitet i förhållande till andra skillnader såsom (hetero)sexualitet, kön, jämställdhet, nation och *empowerment*. Bokens huvudsakliga bidrag presenteras i fyra kapitel som behandlar: 1) den ömsesidiga konstruktionen av nation och jämställdhet, 2) heteronormativitet och diskurser om ”invandrarfamiljer”, 3) könade konstruktioner av kunskap och känslor, samt 4) *empowerment*. Dessa fyra teman bildar tillsammans en intersektionell analys av det mångkulturella i en finländsk kontext. Frågorna i avhandlingen är inspirerade av teoretiska diskussioner inom fälten för postkolonial och feministisk teoribildning, samt kulturstudier (Cultural Studies). I avhandlingen anknyter jag dessa teoretiska

diskussioner till den finländska diskussionen om migration och etniska relationer. Den teoretiska ansatsen innebär fokus på hur könade och rasifierade *skillnader* förstås och konstrueras i mitt material.

Etnografi kan beskrivas som forskarens teoretiskt influerade deltagande på "fältet". Temat för varje kapitel har uppkommit i växelverkan mellan teori och material. Vissa teman, såsom jämställdhet, upprepades ofta i materialet liksom i mångkulturell politik i sådana kontexter som inte var explicit feministiska eller fokuserade på kvinnor. Många forskare har poängterat att jämställdhet samt nation och nationalism är intimt bundna till varandra (t.ex. Lempiäinen 2002, Markkola 2002, Bredström 2003, de los Reyes et al. 2003a, Holli 2003, Koivunen 2003). Jämställdhet fungerar som en diskurs som definierar nationens gränser och dess uteslutanden. I två av kapitlen granskas jämställdhet mera explicit, men utgör samtidigt en allmän ram för mångkulturell politik. Kunskapspositioner är ofta knutna till jämställdhet i mitt material: jämställdheten kan sägas skapa en arena för uttalanden där ett finländskt "vi" framställs som mera avancerat än icke-finländska "andra", även i mångkulturella kontexter där sådana uttalanden i andra fall kritiseraras.

Inom kvinnovetenskapen har jämställdhetsdiskurser kritiserats för heteronormativitet: för att själva definitionen av jämställdhet utgår från, och antar, två kön som är skilda från varandra (Honkanen 2008). På ett annat plan har man kritiserat jämställdhetsarbete för att det nästan uteslutande har fokuserat på förhållandet mellan "män" och "kvinnor" (t.ex. Juvonen 2002b). Den mångkulturella politiken (så som definieras i denna studie), kom heteronormativt till uttryck i den bemärkelsen att "invandrare" så gott som alltid antogs "vara" heterosexuella. Jag har även analyserat diskurser om familjer, och "invandrarfamiljer". Såväl i Globen som på olika seminarier kring det mångkulturella, representeras dessa imaginära familjer huvudsakligen som problematiska. Jag har analyserat dessa diskurser genom begreppet heteronormativitet: "invandrarfamiljer" anses inte kunna förkroppsliga de normativa ideal som förknippas med familj. I en finländsk kontext innebär det till exempel ett specifikt ideal om jämställdhet som definieras som något som tillhör "det finländska" till skillnad från "de andra". Den centrala frågan handlar om vem som anses kunna reproducera nationen och vad dessa diskussioner berättar om finländska uppfattningar om ras, etnicitet och kön.

Empowerment kan sägas utgöra kärnan i den diskussionen jag för i min avhandling gällande politik och pedagogik. *Empowerment* är ett begrepp som blivit utbrett i socialpolitiska projekt och därmed också i mångkulturella projekt. Begreppet är nytt i en finländsk kontext, även om dess genealogi går några decennier tillbaka till kvinnorörelsen och frihetspedagogiken på 1970-talet, Förenta Nationerna och biståndsarbete. Att Globen fokuserade på *empowerment* i sitt arbete har två huvudsakliga källor. Å ena sidan var detta ett krav från finansörerna och *empowerment* var inkluderat i programmet som Globen fick sin finansiering från. Å andra sidan härstammar *empowerment* från kvinnorörelsen som Globen har sin bakgrund i. I den mångkulturella kvinnopolitiken syftade *empowerment* särskilt till individuella processer som självsäkerhet, självständighet men också ökad kunskap om den finländska välfärdsstaten och dess service. *Empowerment* har kritiserats uttryckligen för sin fokus på individen och hennes känslor, medan jag föreslår att just detta kan vara styrkan i *empowerment*. Jag har betraktat *empowerment* i mitt arbete som en maktpraktik: dess syfte är att producera subjekt, och närmare bestämt subjekt som har uppnått *empowerment*. *Empowerment* kan också ses som en maktpraktik ur finansieringens synvinkel: som något som förutsätts höra till projekten. Därmed är *empowerment* ett spännande analysobjekt, eftersom fenomenet ställer utmanande frågor för feministisk kunskapsproduktion.

Kontexten för min studie är specifik. Den handlar om en ny form av arbete: projekt som blivit allt mer utbredda inom socialpolitiken. Även om den offentliga sektorn är en viktig aktör i det som uppfattas som det mångkulturella – till exempel integrationsplaner för enskilda invandrare och integrationsprogram för kommuner – utförs en stor del av det s.k. mångkulturella arbetet i och genom ”projekt”, som ofta är knutna till medborgarorganisationer. Projektet som är i fokus för den här studien, *Globen*, var baserat i en kvinnoförening och hade fått EU-finansiering. Finansieringen är en ytterst viktig kontext: den innebär en direkt kontroll av verksamheten (genom att godkänna räkningar och ansvara för den allmänna övervakningen), men den innebär också styrning genom programdeklarationer och målsättningar inskrivna i projektansökningar. Projekten skall till exempel omfatta vissa diskurser och särskilda målsättningar som är inbakade i finansieringsprogrammet.

Etnografi som kunskapsproduktion

Mitt fältarbete i Globen pågick under 2002–2004. Globen var ett projekt som vände sig till ”alla invandrarkvinnor” i staden den verkade i. Deltagarna i Globen hade olika bakgrund och representerade invandringen till Finland, förutom att deltagare från de nordiska eller EU-länderna var få till antalet. Globen var alltså ett sysselsättningsprojekt, men arbetade inom ett mycket bredare område än sysselsättning. Möten har en viktig dimension i mitt arbete, dvs. en stor del av mitt empiriska material härstammar från arbetsplatsmöten: personalmöten och möten med styrgruppen för projektet. Vissa möten var interna, såsom personalmöten. På styrgruppsmötena fanns däremot representanter för staden, *T&E-centralen* (Arbetskrafts- och näringscentralen som administrerar finansieringen av EU projekt) och samarbetspartners till Globen. Förutom deltagande på möten, har jag deltagit på seminarier och andra tillställningar organiserade kring ”det mångkulturella”, några resor, utfört intervjuer med anställda i *Globen* och vistats på projektets utrymmen. Seminarier är ett intressant material med tanke på kunskapsproduktion: själva avsikten med seminarierna är att producera relevant kunskap om temat som behandlas. Dessa seminarier har också varit ett sätt att placera *Globen* i en kontext: olika projekt, medborgarorganisationer samt byråkrater inom området träffas och förhandlar om vad som är relevant kring ”det mångkulturella”. Personalen från *Globen* deltog också aktivt i seminarier, och därmed är seminarierna en viktig del av min etnografi av projektet.

Etnografi är mera än ”deltagande”, det är ett sätt att producera kunskap. Förutom fältanteckningar och transkriberade band, består mitt material också av skriftligt material producerat i Globen och andra projekt. Jag läser dessa texter som en del av, och i förhållande till, det etnografiska fältarbetet. Texterna är producerade i en social kontext och de har effekter på den sociala kontexten. Etnografiskt arbete har beskrivits som improvisatoriskt, vilket innebär att många val, såväl teoretiska som etiska, görs i stunden, mitt i fältarbetet (Cerwonka and Malkki 2007). Jag har noggrant diskuterat de etiska och politiska frågorna som har uppstått i ett etnografiskt projektet. Den mångkulturella kontexten präglas till exempel av ett relativt litet antal människor som invandrat och ett relativt stort intresse (bland studeranden, journalister, forskare och konstnärer) för deras liv. Det här intresset, oberoende av relevansen i de enskilda projekten, bekräftar en uppställning där vissa (oftast s.k. finländare) har en självklar rätt att ställa frågor, medan andra (s.k.

invandrare) är skyldiga att svara på dessa frågor. Som vit, finländsk forskare tillhör jag mängden som ställer frågor och ber om historier, oberoende om jag ville det eller inte. Att jag har valt att fokusera på *politik* och *agenda* för mångkulturellt arbete härstammar delvis från denna uppställning.

Möten i det postkoloniala

Kunskapsmöten är viktiga i denna bok också genom undersökningens tvärvetenskapliga karaktär. Avhandlingen hör hemma både i kvinnovetenskap och i sociologi. Jag deltar i (postkoloniala) feministiska forskningsdebatter i en internationell och i synnerhet i en nordisk kontext å ena sidan, samt i finländska forskningsdebatter om internationell migration och etniska relationer å andra sidan. Därmed finns det många "resande begrepp" (Bal 2002) i den här boken: både begrepp som reser genom discipliner, men också genom olika geografiska positioner. Teoretiskt anknyter studien till det postkoloniala, till dess möjligheter och nytta i en finländsk kontext av det mångkulturella. Detta är ett nytt perspektiv inom den finländska forskningen om det mångkulturella.

Det postkoloniala i avhandlingen omfattar framför allt två aspekter: för det första hur uppfattningar om "ras" och "de andra" i en finländsk kontext kan förstås som ett arv av det koloniala, och för det andra, hur en förståelse om Finland, som en del av den koloniala världen, kunde förändra uppfattningen om nationen. Finland har "traditionellt" uppfattats ha ringa anknytning till det koloniala: Finland existerade inte som självständig stat under den historiska tiden av europeisk kolonialism. Det har dock gjorts flera studier om hur Finland har deltagit i det koloniala genom missionsarbete, resor (till exempel till det koloniala Kongo), genom finländska anställda i kolonialstyren och inte minst genom handeln (Kivinen 2003, Löytty 2006, Vuorela 2009, Palmberg 2009). Dessa konkreta trådar visar att Finland, även om själva staten inte ännu fanns, har varit en del av Europa som var starkt koloniserande. Sara Ahmed (2000) argumenterar att den europeiska moderniteten har konstruerats genom, och som en del av, kolonialismen. Att förstå Finland som medskyldigt (*complicit*) i det koloniala, innebär att också Finland är *kulturellt* bundet till de koloniala tankesätten. "Vi fortsätter att konsumera tankesätt och sätt att representera som fötts under den koloniala tiden. Vi äter, tittar och lyssnar på sådant som har formats i de koloniala relationerna. Ett bra exempel är hur kaffet, som växer i tropiken, blivit natio-

naldryck här i Norden” (Lehtonen och Löytty 2007, 105, översättning ST). Det koloniala blir synligt i sätten att beskriva ”de andra” i skolböcker, sånger, vardagstalesätt, medier, litteratur och konst. Att överhuvudtaget tänka i termer av ”raser” är intimt bundet till det koloniala.

Hur hör det koloniala samman med mångkulturell politik under 2000-talet? ”Det mångkulturella” uppfattas ofta som någonting som har kommit ”utifrån” till Finland. Vidare förknippas det mångkulturella uttryckligen med invandringen som ökat och ändrat karaktär efter 1990-talets början. Om det mångkulturella förknippas med ”invandrare”, uppfattas också rasism som en negativ, men oundviklig, baksida av det mångkulturella. Ur ett postkolonialt perspektiv fokuserar man på hur uppfattningar om ”de andra” *konstituerar* det finländska, det är alltså en inneboende del av nationen. Därmed förstås inte det mångkulturella som någonting som har uppstått ”genom invandrare”. Med andra ord innebär det att Finland inte är någon ”tabula rasa” gentemot de som flyttat in, utan det finns tidigare möten – textuella, visuella och mellan människor – som aktualiseras i möten idag, men också formas av dagens möten. Dessa tidigare möten kan handla om det kulturella koloniala arvet som jag beskrev ovan. Mitt sätt att förstå möten handlar därmed om hur det strukturella, representationer och individuella historier (klasspositioner, personliga historier) samverkar i ett möte. Detta sätt att förstå och begreppsliggöra möten inom mångkulturellt projektarbete har gett verktyg för att förstå hur det vardagliga projektarbetet har att göra med aspekter som går utöver mötetets ögonblick och de individer som finns inblandade.

Transformativ politik?

Jag har uttryckt förhållandet mellan den mångkulturella politiken och det feministiska postkoloniala tänkandet som ”konstigt” (awkward). Medan det mångkulturella ofta betonar ”det positiva”, liksom ”kulturell rikedom”, står makt och ojämlikhet i den feministiska och postkoloniala politikens kärna. I avhandlingen diskuterar jag huruvida detta konstiga förhållande kunde vara fruktbart och huruvida det kunde ske en ömsesidig inlärningsprocess. Jag har urskiljt olika ”figurer” i den mångkulturella politiken: ”invandrarkvinnor”, ”den starka finländska kvinnan” och ”invandrarfamiljer”. Figurerna kan sägas vara abstraherade kategorier som tillskrivs innebörd, som sedan knyts till verkliga människor som anses tillhöra kategorin. Dessa figurer har jag närmast analyserat som någonting restriktivt: de figurerar i möten i det

mångkulturella och kunde förstås som "störande" element. Till sist ställer jag frågan om det kunde finnas "figurer" som är "empowering", och som kunde bidra till att formulera politik som varken reducerar det mångkulturella till rasism (m.a.o. risken med feministisk postkolonial forskning) eller förbigår ojämlikheter (m.a.o. risken med det mångkulturella).

Det finns också många uttryck för partiell politik (Haraway 1991), vilket innebär att man utgår ifrån att våra positioner kan vara i inkongruenta förhållanden till varandra, och att de inte är någonting att "komma över". Att arbeta med dessa inkongruenser *är* redan politik. Ett resultat av min analys är att invandrade kvinnors kunskap sällan hörs (åtminstone inte som kunskap) i det mångkulturella. Jag har visat hur invandrade kvinnors kunskap förbigås i diskussioner såväl i Globen som i seminarier. Därmed påstår jag att ett centralt element i politiken är att *lyssna*: att lyssna till den positionerade kunskapen, till exempel till olika uppfattningar om "det mångkulturella" eller "jämsliddhet". Dessa uppfattningar går kanske inte att harmonisera. Tänk om politiken strävade efter att ställa gemensamma frågor snarare än att söka gemensamma svar?

Multicultural politics goes to the heart of questions of belonging to the nation, as well as questions of race and gender relations in Europe today. The analysis is based on an ethnographic study of a labour market project targeted at migrant women. Using one project as its starting point, the study explores the myriad encounters, both between people, and between different kinds of knowledge, that take place in multicultural politics.

The study is at the crossroads of feminist theory, postcolonial studies and sociology. The book is relevant for those interested in questions of multiculturalism, race and nation in feminist theory, postcolonial studies and qualitative sociology, as well as those interested in the impact of EU (and other) funding on welfare state practices.

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