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NATAŠA MOJŠKERC

Racialisation in Domestic Violence Shelter Work

Autoethnographic Action Research

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ACADEMIC DISSERTATION
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"To the oppressed,

and those who suffer with them

and fight at their side" (Paulo Freire)

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The idea for this doctoral research arose from the suffering and inequalities I observed in the everyday of the domestic violence shelter work. Therefore, I would like to dedicate my doctoral dissertation to domestic violence victims and survivors, and all the shelter workers who keep providing for safety and compassion.

ABSTRACT

Domestic violence and abuse are human rights violations of pandemic proportions. As a gender-based violence intersecting with ethnicity, race and/or immigration status, domestic violence causes enormous suffering and trauma. Therefore, this widespread social problem requires an effective public response, part of which involves supporting domestic violence refugees. Domestic violence shelters are residential institutions that provide immediate safety, protection and empowerment to domestic violence victims.

In Finland such shelters aim to provide low-threshold services to ensure immediate safety and empowerment for all domestic violence and abuse victims. In a barely recognized trend, racially minoritized survivors constitute a significant part of the people seeking protection. For example, a report from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (Laine, 2010) indicated that approximately 30% of the residents of Finnish domestic violence shelters are people with immigrant backgrounds, such as refugees, asylum seekers and those whose mother tongue is other than Finnish or Swedish. The percentage is even higher in larger cities and in the south of Finland, where, at times, all residents of a shelter are immigrants. When also considering victims of ethnic minorities. such as the Finnish Roma, the share of racially minoritised shelter residents is even higher. Racially minoritised domestic violence victims significantly challenge shelter workers' competences.

International academic research suggests that racially minoritised victims face discrimination when seeking protection. Exclusionary and disempowering shelter practices, together with racial stereotyping, negative identity constructions, and white, middle-class normativity, shape an inhospitable environment for many minoritised survivors (Bent-Goodley, 2005; Burman et al. 2004; Donnelly et al., 2005, Kulkarni, 2018; Nnawulezi and Sullivan, 2014). Moreover, research indicates that across countries, immigrant women face considerable obstacles when reporting

violence and seeking help, while professionals state that working with immigrant victim is difficult and raise the question whether workers should treat immigrant victims the same or differently from the racially majoritised victims (Hagemann-White et al., 2019). Scholars have called for adequate conceptualisations of intersectional vulnerabilities and a better understanding of the superimposition of immigrant status onto other forms of oppression in relation to victims of domestic violence (Burman et al. 2004; Kulkarni, 2018; Menjivar and Salcido, 2002).

Similarly, Finnish academic research indicates the need to develop successful domestic violence intervention practices (Husso et al., 2020, 2021; Piippo et al., 2021) and address problematic working practices related to cultural sensitivity and differences. For example, multicultural violence work lacks an intersectional approach when it comes to understanding of differences and thus reproduces the racialised understanding of victims through culturalisation of domestic violence and abuse (Keskinen, 2011; Keskinen et al., 2012; Honkatukia and Keskinen, 2018; Niemi et al., 2017). A lack of understanding regarding the vulnerabilities of certain intersectional subject positions can result in the exclusion of racialised victims from the needed shelter service provision. For example, Törmä (2017) indicated that Roma domestic violence survivors face disbelief and exclusion when seeking help from officials or shelters. Finnish scholars have called for cultural sensitivity in encounters with racialised victims to recognise relevant differences without reproducing racist perceptions of victims (Lidman, 2015). However, this remains a challenge in the everyday practices of shelters.

Against this backdrop and building on the extant debates on racialisation in shelter work, my research addresses the Finnish domestic violence shelter work and its effects on racially minoritised victims' access to safety and empowerment. This research is important for societal reasons because exclusion from shelter provision and disempowering shelter practices are a question of life and death when fleeing domestic violence and abuse. Moreover, it is important to generate knowledge on the racialised everyday perceptions and practices of shelters to better understand intersectional power dynamics and their effects on shelter work and to indicate mechanisms for improving access to safety and empowerment for diverse survivors. Therefore, my research provides new perspective on the current developments of domestic violence work in Finland.

Aiming to explain effects of Finnish shelter work on racially minoritized survivors, my research focused on the issues of shelter work conditions, perceptions of shelter work agents and shelter work practices. To address these conditions, perceptions and practices, I posed the following three research questions; How do shelter work conditions affect the work with racially minoritised victims? How do shelter workers perceive intersectional differences, and how does this affect racially minoritised victims' positions? How do shelter work practices affect access to shelter services, the empowerment of racially minoritised victims and the safety of racially minoritised shelter work subjects?

I collected my research data during eight months of autoethnographic fieldwork in a domestic violence shelter where I worked as a full-time counsellor. The data included field notes, tape recordings, and documents produced during action research workshops. To collect the data, I used methods of autoethnographic observation and action research. As a part of action research approach, I organised five monthly research workshops with my shelter co-workers to discuss their own and the victims' intersectional positions and power relations in encounters with racialised survivors.

My research approach is grounded in feminist literature on intersectionality and social constructionism while considering the specifics of racialisation in the social context of Finland. Although extant research on intersectional inequalities in domestic violence work has revealed adverse effects of intersectional subject positions on victims, my research widens the usual focus on disempowerment (e.g. decreased agency) by analysing the empowering effects of intersectional positions (e.g. enabling agency). Moreover, in contrast with previous research on racialisation and domestic violence, my research focuses not only on the subject positions of victims but also those of workers. In addition, my study approaches working conditions in shelters as decisive contextual factors for the limitations and possibilities of sensitive shelter work.

My analytical approach was aimed at explicating the intersectional effects of racialising shelter practices in order to contribute to their recognition and thus highlight possibilities for countering their harmful effects. A relational understanding of subject position construction (Bourdieu, 2018) is central to the concept of

racialisation, which involves constructing privileged (white) and oppressed (non-white) subject positions (Keskinen et al., 2021). Everyday racism embedded in structures, institutions and practices can be addressed when different agents in institutions notice discriminatory institutional practices (Seikkula and Hortelano, 2021). Noticing is related to acts of recognition and misrecognition, or *meconaissance* (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990), which means recognising something adequately or as something else (Husso et al., 2016) or neither noticing nor recognising it at all (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990).

The analysis indicated shelter workers' classification struggles around perceived cultural differences, which structure workers' understanding of immigrant and Roma minority victims and their shelter service need, the extent of harm caused by violence and the recognition of the violence as such. Moreover, findings indicate that the under-resourcing and a lack of essential shelter support services negatively affect the quality of shelter work in general and especially for victims in vulnerable positions, such as non-Finnish speaking persons. Racialised perceptions and practices related to immigrant and Roma victims and the structural constraints of shelter work conditions, shape the preconditions for (in)sensitive shelter work, negatively affecting racialised minority survivors' access to safety and empowerment and safety and security in domestic violence shelter work.

TIIVISTELMÄ

Lähisuhdeväkivalta ja lähisuhteissa tapahtuva hyväksikäyttö ovat mittasuhteiltaan laajoja ihmisoikeusrikkomuksia, jotka traumatisoivat ja aiheuttavat mittavaa kärsimystä kokijoilleen. Sukupuolistuneena ilmiönä lähisuhdeväkivalta risteää etnisyyden, rodun ja maahanmuuttostatuksen kanssa. Tämä laajalle levinnyt sosiaalinen ongelma edellyttää tehokasta puuttumista sekä lähisuhdeväkivaltaa kohdanneiden tukemista.

Suomessa turvakodit tarjoavat matalan kynnyksen palveluita, joiden tavoitteena on antaa välitöntä suojaa ja turvaa lähisuhdeväkivallan uhreille sekä voimaannuttaa heitä. Merkittävällä osuudella turvaa etsivistä ihmisistä on maahanmuutto- tai muu rodullistettu asema suomalaisessa yhteiskunnassa, mikä on heikosti tunnistettu ilmiö. Esimerkiksi Sosiaali- ja terveysministeriön raportti (Laine, 2010) osoittaa, että noin 30 % turvakotien asukkaista Suomessa on maahanmuuttotaustaisia, kuten pakolaisia, turvapaikanhakijoita tai äidinkieleltään muita kuin suomen- tai ruotsinkielisiä. Osuus on tätä korkeampi suurissa kaupungeissa ja Etelä-Suomessa; näillä alueilla paikoin kaikki turvakotien asukkaat ovat maahanmuuttotaustaisia. Lisäksi turvakodeissa on paljon etnisiin vähemmistöihin, kuten Suomen romaneihin, kuuluvia asiakkaita. Tässä tutkimuksessa tarkastellaan näiden, rodullistettujen lähisuhdeväkivallan uhrien tilanteita ja asemaa turvakodeissa ja sitä, millaisia haasteita he tuovat turvakotityöntekijöiden ammattitaidolle.

Tutkimusten mukaan rodullistetut uhrit kohtaavat syrjintää hakiessaan turvaa. Ulossulkevat ja toimijuutta heikentävät turvakotikäytännöt, etniseen taustaan liitetyt stereotypiat, kielteiset identiteettikonstruktiot ja keskiluokkaisen valkoisuuden normatiivisuus muokkaavat ympäristöstä torjuvan monille rodullistetuille uhreille (Bent-Goodley, 2005; Burmen et al. 2004; Donnelly et al., 2005; Kulkami, 2018; Nnawulezi and Sullivan, 2014). Lisäksi tutkimus osoittaa, että rodullistetut uhrit kohtaavat monissa maissa huomattavia esteitä ilmoittaessaan väkivallasta ja

hakiessaan apua. Ammattilaiset puolestaan kokevat työskentelyn rodullistettujen uhrien kanssa vaikeaksi ja pohtivat usein, pitäisikö työntekijöiden kohdella maahanmuuttotaustaisia uhreja samoin vai eri tavoin kuin rodullisesti enemmistössä olevia uhreja (Hagemann-White et al., 2019). Tutkimuksen piirissä on peräänkuulutettu lähisuhdeväkivallan uhrien intersektionaalisten haavoittuvuuksien asianmukaista käsitteellistämistä ja ymmärrystä; tämä tarkoittaa esimerkiksi sen tunnistamista, miten maahanmuuttajastatus kietoutuu yhteen muiden alistuksen muotojen kanssa (Burman et al., 2004; Kulkami, 2018; Menjivar and Salcido, 2002).

Myös Suomessa on tunnistettu tarve kehittää onnistuneita käytäntöjä lähisuhdeväkivaltaan puutumiseksi (Husso et al., 2020, 2021; Piippo et al., 2021) ja kiinnittää huomion ongelmallisiin työskentelyn käytäntöihin liittyen kulttuurisensitiivisyyteen ja eroihin. Esimerkiksi monikulttuurisesta väkivaltatyöstä puuttuu eroja ymmärtävä intersektionaalinen lähestymistapa. Tämä ylläpitää lähisuhdeväkivallan ja hyväksikäytön kehystämistä kulttuuriseksi ilmiöksi ja näin ollen myös uusintaa rodullistavaa ymmärrystä uhreista (Keskinen, 2011; Keskinen et al., 2012; Honkatukia and Keskinen, 2018; Niemi et al., 2017). Puutteellinen ymmärrys intersektionaalisiin subjektipositioihin kiinnittyvistä haavoittuvuuksista voi johtaa rodullistettujen uhrien ulossulkemiseen turvakotien tarjoaman suojan piiristä. Esimerkiksi Törmän (2017) tutkimus osoitti, että lähisuhdeväkivaltaa kokeneet romanit kohtaavat epäilyä ja ulossulkemista hakiessaan apua viranomaisilta tai turvakodeista. Tutkijat ovat tähdentäneet kulttuurisensitiivisyyden merkitystä kohtaamisissa rodullistettujen uhrien kanssa, jotta olennaiset erot voitaisiin tunnistaa ilman, että uhreista ylläpidetään rasistisia käsityksiä (Lidman, 2015). Tämä on yhä haaste turvakotien arkisissa käytännöissä.

Tähän tutkimuskeskusteluun pohjautuen tutkimukseni käsittelee turvakotityötä Suomessa ja sen vaikutuksia rodullistettujen uhrien turvan ja voimaantumisen piiriin pääsylle. Tutkimukselle on merkittävät yhteiskunnalliset perusteet, sillä turvakotipalvelun ulkopuolelle jääminen ja toimijuutta heikentävät turvakotikäytännöt ovat elämän ja kuoleman kysymys lähisuhdeväkivaltaa ja hyväksikäyttöä paettaessa. Lisäksi tutkimukseni tarjoaa uuden näkökulman tämänhetkiseen lähisuhdeväkivaltatyöhön Suomessa; se tuottaa uutta tietoa arkisista rodullistavista tulkinnoista ja käytännöistä turvakodeissa, jotta on mahdollista ymmärtää intersektionaalista valtadynamiikkaa ja sen vaikutuksia turvakotityöhön

sekä osoittaa mekanismeja, joilla moninaisten rodullistettujen uhrien pääsyä turvan ja voimaantumisen piiriin voidaan parantaa.

Tarkastellessani turvakotityön olosuhteita ja rodullistavia tulkintoja ja käytäntöjä turvakodin arjessa, esitin seuraavat kolme tutkimuskysymystä: Kuinka turvakodeissa tehtävän työn olosuhteet vaikuttavat rodullistettujen uhrien kanssa työskentelyyn? Kuinka turvakodin työntekijät ymmärtävät intersektionaaliset erot ja kuinka tämä vaikuttaa rodullistettujen uhrien asemaan turvakotityössä? Kuinka turvakotityön käytännöt vaikuttavat turvakotipalvelujen piiriin pääsyyn sekä rodullistettujen uhrien voimaantumiseen ja turvallisuuteen?

Keräsin tutkimusaineistoni kahdeksan kuukauden autoetnografisen kenttätyön aikana turvakodissa, jossa työskentelin kokopäiväisenä ohjaajana. Tutkimusaineisto koostui kenttämuistiinpanoista, autoetnografisista ääninauhoituksista sekä toimintatutkimuksen työpajoissa tuotetuista dokumenteista. Aineiston keräämisessä käytin autoetnografian ja toimintatutkimuksen menetelmiä. Osana toimintatutkimusta järjestin viisi kuukausittaista tutkimustyöpajaa turvakodin työntekijöiden kanssa. Niissä keskustelimme työntekijöiden ja uhrien intersektionaalisista asemoista sekä valtasuhteista rodullistettujen selviytyjien kanssa tapahtuvissa kohtaamisissa.

Tutkimukseni lähestymistapa sijoittuu feministisen intersektionaalisuutta koskevan tutkimuskeskustelun ja sosiaalisen konstruktionismin alueille ottaen huomioon rodullistamisen erityispiirteet Suomen sosiaalisessa kontekstissa. Tämä tutkimus laajentaa aikaisemman tutkimuksen havaintoja intersektionaalisista eriarvoisuuksista ja niiden haitallisista vaikutuksista uhreihin lähisuhdeväkivaltatyössä (esimerkiksi heikentyneestä toimijuudesta) analysoimalla myös intersektionaalisten asemojen voimaannuttavia vaikutuksia (esimerkiksi mahdollistava toimijuus). Lisäksi, toisin kuin aikaisempi tutkimus rodullistamisesta ja lähisuhdeväkivallasta, tutkimukseni keskittyy uhrien subjektipositioiden lisäksi työntekijöiden subjektipositioihin. Tutkimukseni tarkastelee myös väkivaltatyön tekemisen olosuhteita turvakodissa ratkaisevina kontekstuaalisina tekijöinä, jotka vaikuttavat sensitiivisen turvakotityön mahdollisuuksiin ja rajoituksiin.

Erittelen tutkimuksessa rodullistavien turvakotikäytäntöjen intersektionaalisia vaikutuksia rodullistettujen uhrien kanssa tehtävään työhön tuoden esiin niiden vahingollisia vaikutuksia. Ymmärrän rodullistamisen prosessin relationaalisena subjektipositioiden rakentumisena (Bourdieu, 2018), joka sisältää sekä etuoikeutettujen (valkoiset) että alisteisten (ei-valkoiset) subjektipositioiden rakentumisen (Keskinen et al., 2021). Rakenteisiin, instituutioihin ja käytäntöihin sisältyvä arkipäivän rasismi tulee näkyväksi ja käsittelyyn silloin, kun instituutioiden eri toimijat havaitsevat syrjivät institutionaaliset käytännöt (Seikkula and Hortelano, 2021). Havaitseminen on yhteydessä tunnistamisen ja väärin tunnistamisen tekoihin (*meconaissance*; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990), mikä tarkoittaa tunnistamista riittävästi, tunnistamista joksikin muuksi (Husso et al., 2016) tai sitä, että havaitsemista tai tunnistamista ei tapahdu lainkaan (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990). Esimerkiksi, vaikka rodullistaminen vaikuttaa merkittävästi turvakotityöhön, työntekijät yleensä eivät tunnistaa sen vaikutuksia turvakodin arjessa.

Tutkimus osoittaa turvakodin työntekijöiden ponnistelevan paljon havaittujen kulttuuristen erojen luokittelun äärellä. Tämä muovaa työntekijöiden ymmärrystä maahanmuuttaja- ja romanivähemmistöistä sekä heidän turvakotitarpeistaan ja väkivallan aiheuttaman haitan laajuudesta. Lisäksi kulttuuristen erojen arviointi on yhteydessä väkivallan tunnistamiseen; työntekijät voivat epäillä uhrin tarinaa tai väärin tunnistaa lähisuhdeväkivallan joksikin muuksi, kuten tavalliseksi eroprosessiksi. Tutkimuksen mukaan turvakotityön aliresursointi ja välttämättömien turvakodin tukipalvelujen puute heikentävät turvakotityön laatua yleisesti sekä erityisesti suomen kieltä puutteellisesti osaavien tai muuten rodullistetun aseman vuoksi haavoittuvassa asemassa olevien uhrien kohtaamista. Maahanmuuttotaustaisiin tai romaniuhreihin liittyvät rodullistavat näkemykset ja käytännöt sekä turvakotityön rakenteelliset rajoitukset heikentävät rodullistettujen vähemmistöjen parissa tehtävän työn laatua. Tämä vaikuttaa kielteisesti näihin ryhmiin luokiteltujen uhrien turvallisuuteen ja voimaantumiseen turvakotityössä.

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence and abuse are human rights violations of pandemic proportions. As a form of gender-based violence that intersects with ethnicity, race and/or immigration status, domestic violence causes enormous suffering and trauma. Therefore, this widespread social problem requires an effective public response, part of which involves supporting domestic violence survivors. Domestic violence shelters are residential institutions that provide immediate safety, protection and empowerment to domestic violence victims.

In Finland, such shelters aim to provide low-threshold services to ensure immediate safety and empowerment for all domestic violence and abuse victims. In a barely recognised trend, racially minoritised survivors constitute a significant part of the people seeking protection. The first Finnish survey on immigrant victims in Finnish shelters (Haarakangas et al., 2000) revealed the existence of an ethnocentric help ideology that resulted in secondary victimisation of racialised victims in shelters. The survey pointed out the need to shift from a multicultural towards an ethnic/gender approach in which violence is perceived as being about gender and power rather than culture. Since the publication of the survey the need to develop shelter work with racialised minority survivors has grown. For example, a report from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (Laine, 2010) indicated that approximately 30 percent of the residents of Finnish domestic violence shelters are people with immigrant backgrounds, such as refugees, asylum seekers and those whose mother tongue is other than Finnish or Swedish. The percentage is even higher in larger cities and in the south of Finland, where, at times, all residents of a shelter are immigrants. When also considering victims of ethnic minorities, such as the Finnish Roma, the share of racially minoritised shelter residents is even higher. Racially minoritised domestic violence victims significantly challenge shelter workers' competences.

International academic research suggests that racially minoritised victims face discrimination when seeking protection. Exclusionary and disempowering shelter practices, together with racial stereotyping, negative identity constructions and White, middle-class normativity, create an inhospitable environment for many minoritised survivors (Bent-Goodley, 2005; Burman et al., 2004; Donnelly et al., 2005; Kulkarni, 2018; Nnawulezi and Sullivan, 2014). Moreover, research indicates that across countries, immigrant women face considerable obstacles when reporting violence and seeking help, while professionals state that working with immigrant victims is difficult and raise the question whether workers should treat immigrant victims the same as or differently from racially majoritised victims (Hagemann-White et al., 2019). Scholars have called for adequate conceptualisations of intersectional vulnerabilities and a better understanding of the superimposition of immigrant status onto other forms of oppression in relation to victims of domestic violence (Burman et al., 2004; Kulkarni, 2018; Menjivar and Salcido, 2002).

Similarly, Finnish academic research indicates the need to develop successful violence intervention practices (Husso et al., 2016, 2021a, 2021b; Piippo et al., 2021) and to address problematic working practices related to cultural sensitivity and differences. For example, research on multicultural violence lacks an intersectional approach when it comes to understanding differences and thus reproduces the racialised understanding of victims through the culturalisation of domestic violence and abuse (Keskinen, 2011; Keskinen et al., 2012; Honkatukia and Keskinen, 2018, Niemi et al., 2017). A lack of understanding regarding the vulnerabilities of certain intersectional subject positions can result in the exclusion of racialised victims from the needed shelter service provision. For example, Törmä (2017) indicated that Roma domestic violence survivors face disbelief and exclusion when seeking help from officials or shelters. Finnish scholars have called for cultural sensitivity in encounters with racialised victims to recognise relevant differences without reproducing racist perceptions of victims (Lidman, 2015). However, this remains a challenge in the everyday practices of shelters.

Against this backdrop and building on the extant debates on racialisation in shelter work, my research addresses Finnish domestic violence shelter work and its effects on racially minoritised victims' access to safety and empowerment. This research is important for societal reasons because exclusion from shelter provision

and disempowering shelter practices are a question of life and death when fleeing domestic violence and abuse. Moreover, it is important to generate knowledge on the racialised everyday perceptions and practices of shelters to better understand intersectional power dynamics and their effects on shelter work and to indicate mechanisms for improving access to safety and empowerment for diverse survivors. Therefore, my research provides a new perspective on the current developments of domestic violence work in Finland.[1]

My research approach is grounded in feminist literature on intersectionality (Bilge, 2013; Crenshaw, 1991; Hill Collins and Bilge, 2016; Nash, 2008, Keskinen et al., 2021; Essed, 1994; Choo and Ferree, 2010; McKinzie and Richards, 2019) and social constructionism (Bourdieu, 2002; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; Bourdieu, 1999; Foucault, 1978, 1980) while considering the specifics of racialisation in the social context of Finland. In Finnish debates, the concept of race is unlikely to be referenced and is often replaced by ethnicity and/or culture (Keskinen et al., 2021). Consequently, culture becomes a tool for racializing others (Seikkula and Hortelano, 2021; Keskinen, 2011; Eliassi, 2015). Although extant research on intersectional inequalities in domestic violence work has revealed that that victims who occupy intersectional subject positions suffer increased adverse effects, my research widens the usual focus on disempowerment (e.g. decreased agency) by analysing the empowering effects of intersectional positions (e.g. enabling agency). Moreover, in contrast with previous research on racialisation and domestic violence, my research focuses not only on the subject positions of victims but also

[1] Although domestic violence and abuse are the most common forms of violence experienced by women globally, the first European-wide survey on the subject demonstrated that Finland has comparatively high domestic violence rates (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2014). The ratification of the Istanbul Convention in 2015 (Council of Europe, 2011) and the legislation of The Act on Reimbursement out of State Funds for Providers of Shelters for Victims of Domestic Violence (Finlex, 2014) contributed to the rapid development of domestic violence shelters in Finland, which significantly improved access to immediate safety and empowerment for many victims. The Finnish National Institute for Health and Welfare has been developing the shelter network, with significant progress being made in shelter services provision over the past decade. However, the latest GREVIO Report on Finland (Council of Europe, 2019) called for improvements in shelter responses to the victims from vulnerable groups facing multiple forms of discrimination.

those of workers. In addition, my study approaches working conditions in shelters as decisive contextual factors for the limitations and possibilities of sensitive shelter work.

I approach shelter work and its subjects relationally and contextually (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990; Bourdieu, 2018; Wacquant, 1992). I consider shelter work to be affected by its working conditions, which can, together with the intersectional effects of shelter counselling, result in empowering or disempowering practices towards racialised survivors. Using Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990) theory of symbolic violence, I explore shelter counselling as a special relation of communication that is structured as a hierarchical power relation. My study contributes to the literature on power and hierarchies in shelter work, adding to Blitz and Illidge's (2006) suggestion that workers need to "cultivate an understanding of the dynamics of difference" (ibid., 118). However, I address not only the differences but also the similarities between workers' and victims' subject positions and their effects.[2] Instead of using intersectional analysis to theorise identities and forms of oppression (Nash, 2008), I focus on the intersectional power dynamics in the relationship between workers and victims in the Finnish social space (with its gendered and racialised power relations) in which shelters operate. To combine concrete intersectional relations and social space dimensions, I rely on McKinzie and Richards's (2019) concept of context-driven intersectionality and Choo and Ferree's (2010) interactive, historically co-determining and complex intersectional analysis.

More specifically, my research focused on the issues of (i) shelter work conditions, (ii) perceptions of shelter work agents and (iii) shelter work practices. To address these conditions, perceptions and practices, I posed the following three research questions:

[2] For example, whereas the effects of difference in subject positions are often easier to recognise (e.g. age differences), the effects of similarity in subject positions, especially when the worker and the victim share the privileged position (majoritised shelter worker and majoritised domestic violence victim), often remain invisible.

1. How do shelter work conditions affect the work with racially minoritised victims?

2. How do shelter workers perceive intersectional differences, and how does this affect racially minoritised victims' positions?

3. How do shelter work practices affect access to shelter services, the empowerment of racially minoritised victims and the safety of racially minoritised shelter work subjects?

I collected my research data during eight months of autoethnographic fieldwork in a domestic violence shelter where I worked as a full-time counsellor. The data included field notes, tape recordings and documents produced during action research workshops. To collect the data, I used the methods of autoethnography, participatory observation and action research. As part of the action research approach, I organised five monthly research workshops with my shelter co-workers to discuss their own and the victims' intersectional positions and power relations in encounters with racialised survivors. Although my research was strongly grounded in this specific fieldwork setting, the findings on how shelter work conditions affect the work with racially minoritised victims, including workers' perceptions of intersectional differences and their racialised practices, have broad significance for our understanding of race and intersectionality in shelter work in Finland and beyond.

My analytical approach was aimed at explicating the intersectional effects of racialising shelter practices in order to contribute to their recognition and thus highlight possibilities for countering their harmful effects. A relational understanding of subject position construction (Bourdieu, 2018) is central to the concept of racialisation, which involves constructing privileged (White) and oppressed (non-White) subject positions (Keskinen et al., 2021). Everyday racism embedded in structures, institutions and practices can be addressed when different agents in institutions notice discriminatory institutional practices (Seikkula and Hortelano, 2021). Noticing is related to acts of recognition and misrecognition, or *meconaissance* (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990), which means recognising something adequately or

as something else (Husso et al., 2016) or neither noticing nor recognising it at all (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990).

In my dissertation, I use the term *racially minoritised* to emphasise the process of constructing racialised subject positions. In the literature review and theory chapter, as well as in the analysis, I sometimes use different terms, such as immigrants, people of colour, women of colour and Black survivors, because these terms are used by the authors whom I discuss. Although the immigrant position does not necessarily have to be a racially minoritised one, I nevertheless use the term immigrant as referring to the racially minoritised position because in the context of the Finnish social space, the term immigrant evokes perceptions of othered subjects, such as Muslims from the Middle East and/or people occupying oppressed subject positions marked by global power relations and hierarchies.

In addition, I generally use the term *victim* to refer to women experiencing domestic violence. I do this to establish distance with the inadequate term *client*, which is widely used in Finnish social work and the domestic violence shelter field and which distorts the crucial difference between the perpetrator and the victim and their genders. However, when I present my research data, the citations include the term client because shelter workers use this expression when referring to the victims with whom they are working.

I use pronouns *she/her* to refer to victims of domestic violence and abuse and shelter workers because most of them are women. Sometimes, I use the term *survivor* instead of victim to emphasise agency in cases in which women experiencing violence tend to be perceived merely as weak victims of their presumably patriarchal cultures. When I want to emphasise their institutional position as shelter service users, I refer to the victims as *shelter residents*. Finally, I decided to use the term *domestic violence and abuse* to emphasise the closeness of the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim and to address a wide range of abusive behaviours grounded in power and control relations. The downside of this expression is that it obscures the gendered nature of such violence and abuse. However, I understand

domestic violence and abuse as a phenomenon in which gender must be considered intersectionally with ethnicity, race and immigration status.[3]

To the best of my knowledge, this research is the first autoethnographic action research on domestic violence shelter work in Finland and one of only a few international studies. Internationally, the research that uses autoethnography and action research approaches to study domestic violence shelter work is rare. Ethnography has been used in several studies (Kim and Yang, 2016; Shuler, 2007; Della Rocca, 2021), with some of these studies coming closer to autoethnographic reflection, as in the case of Shuler's (2007) study of emotional labour in a domestic violence shelter while volunteering in the shelter. Closest to my autoethnographic research approach is the feminist ethnographic research of shelter work by Della Rocca (2021), which included self-reflexivity and could be called an autoethnography, though the author does not use this term. Closest to my action

[3] D*omestic violence* is a contested concept and a site of struggle over meanings. Despite some of its analytical shortcomings, such as "not all "domestic" violence occurs in the home or between those sharing a home", and while the concept has been criticized for its gender-neutrality and therefore inadequacy to address the problem (Krizsan and Roggeband, 2019: 4), the term *domestic violence* is nowadays widely used and accepted, and is the central issue within tackling the violence against women, which has been placed as a human rights agenda globally (Krizsan and Roggeband, 2019). *Domestic violence* has been integrated into CEDAW (adopted in 1979, instituted in 1981) through Recommendation 19, and the recent Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention), which entered into force in 2014, and was ratified in Finland in 2015. Because of wide recognition and usage of the term domestic violence in influential international policy documents, I adopt the term in this research, and upgrade the term to *domestic violence and abuse* arguing for the intersectional approach in understanding the phenomenon.

In Finland the term *violence in close relationship* (lähisudeväkivalta) is widely accepted and the term used in legislation; The act on reimbursement out of State funds for providers of shelters for victims of domestic violence (1354/2014). Similarly, as the term domestic violence, the term violence in close relations could be criticized for its misleading gender neutrality. However, as Bacchi (2005) argues, the meaning of different terms/language when trying to define the policy problem depends on the context, on their situated usage: "Same terms can be used to propose different solutions. Therefore, we should, instead of focusing on the terms themselves, rather focus on how they function "as a part of problem representations", what effects these presentations produce, which subjects of policy are constituted and what silences they create (Bacchi, 2005:165). Different discursive constructions of the phenomenon of domestic violence have influenced the way how domestic violence shelters have been organized, whom they were provided for and how has the shelter work been performed.

research approach is the study by Blitz and Illidge (2006), which addressed antiracist team building in a New York shelter, though the authors did not describe their study as either action research or autoethnography. Beyond these examples, the limited existing research on shelters has used more traditional research approaches and methods, such as surveys (Baker et al., 2007; Brown and O'Brien, 1998) and qualitative interviews with shelter staff (Donnelly et al., 2005), interviews with residents (Nnawulezi and Sullivan, 2014) or both (Nnawulezi et al., 2018; Hughes, 2020; Merchant and Whiting, 2015; Theobald et al., 2021).

Therefore, my study reveals some previously undocumented accounts of everyday shelter practices from the perspective of shelter workers. Working full-time as a shelter counsellor before and during data collection allowed me to produce unique knowledge on grassroots-level racialisation processes and shelter working conditions. The insight into shelter workers' racialised perceptions and practices is particularly significant: the habitual reproduction of these perceptions and practices and the reflexive changes indicate the limitations and possibilities of intersectionally sensitive shelter work affected by its working conditions. My analysis of shelters' work conditions, racialised perceptions of the employees and the victims and shelter work practices provides an important contribution to contemporary conceptualisations and practices of shelter work in Finland and internationally.

The dissertation is comprised of eight chapters. Chapter 2 presents the extant research on which I built my study. The chapter begins with a brief overview of the domestic violence shelter movement and discusses issues regarding the exclusion and disempowerment of racially minoritised victims. In addition, the chapter considers the controversial issue of cultural sensitivity in shelter work and surveys arguments for intersectional and trauma-informed shelters, before concluding with a discussion of the impact that shelter work conditions have on workers and their practices. Chapter 3 builds on the theories of social constructionism, feminist intersectionality and critical race and whiteness studies. First, this chapter conceptualises shelter work as a field of power relations in which counselling work can be interpreted as a form of symbolic violence with both empowering and disempowering effects. Second, the chapter conceptualises intersectional differences as relational and contextual and explores their effects on the perceived authority and legitimacy of shelter participants in the counselling relationship. Finally, the chapter

discusses the racialising perceptions and practices grounded in racial hierarchies in Finnish society, focusing on the constructions of the subject positions of racialised others, such as Finnish Roma and immigrants.

Chapter 4 presents the methodological approach and data collection methods of my research. First, it addresses the process of constructing the research problem. Second, the chapter presents feminist intersectional autoethnography as my main methodological approach to data collection, followed by a presentation of my action research workshops as the collaborative knowledge production part of my study. Third, the chapter presents my arguments and decisions regarding the ethical concerns encountered during data collection, such as tensions between the principle of informed consent in voluntary participation and the moral obligation to avoid causing harm by additionally burdening victims in vulnerable situations. Finally, the chapter presents the research data, the codification and analysis process and the choice of result presentation methods in the final chapters of the dissertation.

I structured my research findings into three chapters, each of which addresses a particular research question. In Chapter 5, I consider shelter working conditions because they shape the possibilities and limits of reflexive agency. This chapter analyses the social structures present in shelter working conditions and scrutinises their effects on racialised minority victims. The chapter demonstrates the effects of under-resourcing and a lack of essential shelter support services on the quality of shelter work in general and especially for victims in vulnerable positions, such as non-Finnish-speaking persons.

In Chapter 6, I address shelter workers' perceptions in relation to habitual reproduction and reflexive changes in the construction of relational subject positions in shelter work. This chapter analyses the social structures present in shelter workers' perceptions of intersectional power hierarchies and strategies, as well as workers' perceptions of racially minoritised victims, such as immigrants and the Finnish Roma. The chapter demonstrates shelter workers' classification struggles around perceived cultural differences, which structure the workers' understanding of immigrant and Roma minority victims and their shelter service needs, the extent of the harm caused by violence and the recognition of the violence as such.

Chapter 7 deals with the effects of racialised shelter practices as they evolve in shelters' everyday work. This chapter analyses the effects of the combination of working conditions, racialised perceptions and the tensions between habitual reproduction and reflexive changes in relation to the following three central dimensions of shelter work: (i) accessibility of shelter services, (ii) empowerment of domestic violence survivors and (iii) safety. The chapter demonstrates how racialised perceptions of immigrant and Roma victims, together with the structural constraints of shelter work conditions, shape the preconditions for (in)sensitive shelter work. Finally, the chapter shows the effects of the combination of working conditions, racialised perceptions and racialised practices on racialised minority survivors' access to safety and empowerment and on safety and security in domestic violence shelter work.

The concluding Chapter 8 summarises the research findings to answer my three main research questions regarding shelter work conditions, workers' perceptions of intersectional differences and racialised practices in shelter work. The chapter discusses the scientific and societal contributions of my research, considering the strengths and weaknesses of the research design, suggests further research directions and highlights emerging issues in the development of the Finnish domestic violence shelter field.

2 INTERSECTIONAL SENSITIVITY IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHELTER WORK

This chapter shows that the arguments for cultural sensitivity often result in the construction of essentialist differences and reproduce racial and/or ethnic hierarchies instead of deconstructing them. This results in arguments for either so-called general shelter services or, on the contrary, specialist, culturally competent shelter services. To address this somewhat problematic opposition, I consider the recent domestic violence work debates, which show that both the general and the culturally specific shelter services may be inadequate in addressing the diverse needs of victims in various intersectional subject positions. In these debates, scholars argue for intersectional and trauma-informed approaches to shelter work.

However, these debates rarely address the preconditions of such intersectional and trauma-informed shelter work. By preconditions, I refer to adequate staffing, the provision of resources related to time and space, and the availability of essential support services. Thus, I present the debates on the traumatising effects of domestic violence counselling and shelter work on the workers themselves, debates that often expose how inadequately resourced shelter work is. Although the studies on shelter practices reflect the US context, many problematic issues, such as understaffing and lack of support services, resonate with the Finnish shelter work context. As the debates suggest, better working conditions could help counter the disturbing effects of violence-related work and provide a professionally reflexive working environment.

2.1 Domestic violence shelter movement

The first domestic violence shelters on the European continent emerged with the shelter movement during the 1970s, when women's experiences of partner violence

and abuse achieved the status of a problem in concert with the claims of the second-wave feminist movement that private issues, such as domestic violence, require public solutions. The first emergency shelters were established in the UK (Dobash and Dobash, 1980) and soon afterwards in continental Europe, Australia and North America. The emergence of a social problem called wife battering during this period marked the beginning of various discursive constructions of domestic violence and abuse (Bacchi, 2005). The battered women's movement in the US provided grassroots shelters and victim advocacy (Nichols, 2014), with early shelters being organised in the homes of feminists and often being run by women survivors themselves (Schecther, 1982; Nichols, 2014).

Domestic violence became a policy problem due to feminist activism (Wendt and Zannetino, 2014, 19), as feminists pointed out that domestic violence is a widespread consequence of patriarchal domination (Walby, 1990). Patriarchy, which, according to radical feminists, causes domestic violence, is defined as a "system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress, and exploit women" (Walby, 1990, 20). Men's power and privilege together with the ideology of patriarchy cause domestic violence, which is men's violence towards women (Dobash and Dobash, 1980) and is considered fundamental to the social control of women (Hammer et al., 2000). These explanations focus on the heterosexual relationship within the institution of marriage or the family, which are described as promoting, maintaining and supporting men's violence at home (Bograd, 1988).

By arguing that domestic violence is widespread, that it is part of patriarchal domination and that women must modify their own behaviours to survive (Walby, 1990), feminist explanations avoid blaming the victim (Wendt and Zannetino, 2014, 20) and show that, instead of minimising women's perceptions of the severity of violence, there is a need for advocacy and validation (Hester et al., 1997; Bograd, 1988; Nichols, 2014). Consequently, it is important to give survivors a voice and to listen to their accounts of violence and their coping strategies (Bograd, 1988; Hester et al., 1997). Therefore, feminist advocacy is based on ideas of collaboration and empowerment and has developed practices such as social change activism, survivor-defined practices and collaborative shelter structures (Nichols, 2014, 1).

Empowerment, as a key component of early grassroots feminist advocacy, assumed that decision-making is in the hands of women survivors taking control of their lives (Goodman et al., 2015; Goodman et al., 2016; Nichols, 2014, 3). The agency of women survivors was central in establishing shelter work that would be relevant to survivors' needs and choices. The shelters resisted any form of hierarchical structure; instead, they emphasised mutual respect and equal power in group consensus regarding shelter rules, roles and goals (Nichols, 2011a, 2014). Early grassroots feminist advocates understood the hierarchical client–professional relationship between workers and victims as detrimental to the aims of empowerment (Nichols, 2014, 2).

Since the early shelters, structural changes in their organisation, such as professionalisation and bureaucratisation, have not been perceived as neutral. For example, in the US, the professionalisation of shelter work expanded shelter provision, improved access to safety and enabled coordinated support in the network of services. However, shelters became mainstream and shifted from a feminist, survivor-defined orientation to a more gender-neutral service provision (Nichols, 2014, 10), with victims no longer being referred to as women victims or survivors but clients. The construction of the alienated administrative category of client corresponds with the presupposition of gender neutrality in hierarchically structured social work with clients (Garcia, 1999, 340). Moreover, the loss of focus on the structural causes of domestic violence has caused a shift towards victim blaming instead of validation and support and the construction of a "hierarchical relationship between advocates and victims that grassroot feminists worked hard to avoid" (Nichols, 2014, 11).

Compared to the feminist shelter movement described above, the Finnish shelter field has developed differently. The first domestic violence shelters in Finland opened in 1978. Finnish shelters have mostly not been developed by the feminist shelter movement but rather within the so-called ungendered framework (Krizsan and Roggeband, 2019), which lacks power analysis and blurs the structural causes of domestic violence and abuse. Family violence discourse became hegemonic in the '70s, while the discourse on violence against women was introduced and gradually became influential later, in the '90s and the 2000s (Keskinen, 2005, 21). When structural causes of violence, such as gender inequality, are ignored, domestic

violence and abuse become interpreted as matters of substance abuse, poverty, mental health or even cultural specifics of racially othered groups. For example, the focus can shift towards individualised personal problems, such as alcohol abuse (Kantola, 2006).

Along with the framing of problems, the terminology and interventions also change (Bacchi, 2005). For example, Finnish shelter work has mostly been framed as a child-protection problem (Kantola, 2006; Haarakangas et al., 2000, 16), and the family violence model of intervention in domestic violence cases has been prevalent (Kantola, 2006; Keskinen, 2005; Nyqvist, 2001). The hegemonic family violence discourse emphasises family relations, addresses abuse as a communication problem, often as a problem typical of certain social groups, presupposes a symmetry of power in abusive relationships and often refers to conflict instead of abuse (Keskinen, 2005).

Thus, shelter workers often work with the whole family, describing perpetrators and victims in neutral terms, such as family members as persons who need help instead of blame (Kantola, 2006). This therapeutic approach in social work and family counselling programmes has been criticised (Nyqvist, 2001, 161; Nousiainen, 1998) for problematic gender neutrality and insufficient interventions against violence as such, which would require making perpetrators accountable. Moreover, shelter work has involved practices such as organising joint sessions between perpetrators and victims (Kantola, 2006).

Organising joint sessions can be understood as part of the tendency to perceive partner violence as a communication issue between partners equally responsible for so-called family violence, a position upon which the mediation movement in Finland has been based (Honkatukia, 2017, 111). Mediation in cases of intimate partner violence has been a contested issue in Finland and is situated between perceptions of violence as a manifestation of a conflict and violence as a form of gendered power and control (ibid.). However, research has revealed a much more complex reality regarding the meaning of mediation from a victim's perspective. For example, although victims of reciprocal partner violence were satisfied with mediation, victims of intimate terrorism described negative experiences (ibid., 121).

Shelter work, which adopts the perception of violence as a communication problem in families while neglecting the human rights and feminist approaches that highlight unequal power relations and coercive control along with different types of violence (Dobash, et al., 1992; Johnson, 2008), fits well into the family protection discourse (Krizsan and Roggeband, 2019), whose main idea is that violence threatens families, which need help to stay together. Finally, this perception contributes to the shelter practice of contacting perpetrators and establishing father–child contact, which can be understood as part of the perpetrator's rights discourse (Krizsan and Roggeband, 2019) and which often provides the means for fathers-perpetrators to continue exerting their coercive control by accusing the mothers of child alienation (Lapierre, 2021, 471). In other words, "child contact provides coercive control-perpetrating fathers with opportunities to continue their abuse of children and ex-partners" (Katz et al., 2020). These are only a few examples of shelter practices whereby the presumably gender-neutral stance ends up being anything but neutral.

Although the professionalisation and bureaucratisation of shelters in the US contributed to the shift towards problematic gender neutrality, Finnish shelter work, which had already been professionalised, can be seen as shifting towards gender sensitivity precisely because of considerable institutional changes after the ratification of the Istanbul Convention. For example, before the ratification of the Istanbul Convention, shelter work was already professionalised and funded by the municipalities, even though shelters were mostly run by non-governmental organisations, many of which were part of the Finnish Mother and Child Homes and Shelters organisation (Haarakangas et al., 2000; Ojuri and Laitinen, 2015). Municipal social workers (often child-protection officers) decided whether shelter accommodation should be offered to victims and for how long. It was often difficult for female victims without children to get shelter accommodation for adequate periods. Despite Finland having one of the highest domestic violence and abuse rates amongst EU countries, there are too few shelter spaces available for victims, most of which are preferentially offered to victims with children.

However, the institutional changes that followed the ratification of the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (from now on the Istanbul Convention) in 2015 (Council of Europe, 2011) and the Act on Reimbursement Out of State Funds for the Providers of Shelter

Services (Finlex, 2014) (from now on the Shelter Law) have improved victims' access to immediate safety. Consequently, there has been decisive progress in domestic violence victim protection nationwide, but it is important to note that this development occurred only due to international pressure (Nousiainen and Pentikäinen, 2017).

Despite improvements in the accessibility of shelters (shelter service is free of charge for victims, the number of shelters has increased and accessibility for victims without children has increased), shelter work still operates in the gender-neutral framework. This issue has caught international attention. For example, in their report on Finland (Council of Europe, 2019), the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence as criticised the fact that Finland still does not comply with the minimum standard of one family place per 10,000 heads of population and that shelters lack a gendered perspective, which raises "questions of the safety as well as the empowerment of women victims of violence" (ibid., 34–36).

The importance of understanding domestic violence and abuse as gender-based violence has been acknowledged by important international conventions, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (UN General Assembly, 1979) and the Istanbul Convention (Council of Europe, 2011). Nowadays, considerable international agreement exists on this issue. Nonetheless, domestic violence in Finland continues to be addressed predominately in gender-neutral terms (Virkki, 2017). Indeed, the National quality guidelines for shelter services provided by the Finnish Institute of Health and Welfare consistently use the gender-neutral language of "violence in close relationships" and shelter "clients," without referring to the fact that most domestic violence victims forced to seek shelter are women (Ewalds et al., 2019, 8). Finnish discursive and practical responses to domestic violence remain largely embedded in discourses that can be described as gender blind. Not only shelters but also courts reproduce such perceptions. For example, Hiitola (2015) showed that discourses on domestic violence in court documents regarding the out-of-home placement of minors represent domestic violence (when not bypassing it altogether) as a problem without a gender dimension meaning that the documents do not specify who the perpetrator and the victim are.

However, Finnish domestic violence research has increasingly emphasised the role of gender and intersectional differences, such as ethnicity and/or race, in understanding the domestic violence and abuse phenomenon, its consequences and institutional interventions (Hiitola, 2015; Lidman, 2015; Keskinen, 2005, 2011; Niemi et al., 2017; Husso, 2003; Husso et al., 2017, 2021a, 2021b).

The development of the Finnish shelter field suggests that the professionalisation and institutionalisation of shelter work cannot be seen as exclusively endangering the feminist achievements of early shelter work, as in the case of the US (Nichols, 2014). The structural pressure of internationally binding agreements, such as the Istanbul Convention, and the legislation of the Shelter law at the national level have, in fact, put pressure on the shelter field to include a gender perspective. Moreover, Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Council of Europe, 2019) has directed the Finnish shelter field away from problematic gender neutrality towards a more intersectional perspective in domestic violence shelter practices.

Although the international and Finnish shelter fields differ in their considerations of gender in shelter work, they both avoid thematising other differences, such as differently racialised subject positions. This lack of gender and/or race perspectives in domestic violence shelter work should not be understood as proof of presumably neutral shelter practices. Just as describing domestic violence and abuse in gender-neutral terms is inadequate (Lombard and Whiting, 2017, 32), it is also problematic to defend the neutrality of shelter practices while disregarding race. Thus, for my research, it was crucial to recognise that a lack of gender and/or race perspectives in domestic violence shelter work does not mean that such shelter work is gender neutral or race neutral; rather, it means that the gender and racial inequalities of shelter services remain unrecognised.

2.2 Exclusion and disempowerment of racially minoritised victims

Even when acknowledging the centrality of gender in shaping effective policy responses to end domestic violence (Lombard and Whiting, 2017; Walby and Towers, 2018; Stanley and Devaney, 2017), international scholars researching domestic violence shelters have been critical of exclusively gender-based analysis. Internationally, most battered women's shelters were started as grassroots movements by White middle-class women (Schechter, 1982). Critics of the whiteness of the shelter movement have shown that domestic violence and abuse have different effects on Black survivors (Blitz and Illidge, 2006; Donnelly et al., 2005; Nnawulezi and Sullivan, 2014; Sokoloff and Dupont, 2005) and have emphasised the importance of the intersections of race, class and gender in addressing domestic violence and abuse (Crenshaw, 1991).

For example, in the US context, Blitz and Illidge (2006, 117) warned against the dominance of exclusively gender-based analysis of domestic violence and abuse: "African-American and other women of color, suspicious of a gender analysis applied to their families, may view the violence in their home as being a result of racial oppression of men of color, not gender oppression working in their lives." They suggested that in addition to gender analysis, power analysis is of crucial importance when trying to understand how domestic violence survivors are marginalised due to their gender, victim status, race, ethnicity and/or economic status (Blitz and Illidge, 2006). Moreover, as Sokoloff and Dupont (2005) claimed, it is necessary to address the structures of oppression – that is, the existing systems of power and privilege – instead of simply identifying the multiple interlocking oppressions in individuals.

Although the emergence of domestic violence shelters has contributed to the safety of many women, an increasing number of shelter scholars have suggested that the shelter movement did, in fact, exclude diversity (Blitz and Illidge, 2006; Donnelly et al., 2005; Sokoloff and Dupont, 2005). Mainstream domestic violence shelters have been embedded in White middle-class norms and have reflected White privilege (Blitz and Illidge, 2006; Donnelly, 2005; Bent-Goodley, 2005). For example, in the context of the US, White middle-class normative practices in shelters, such as rules

concerning visits, food preparation and child rearing, can exclude and disempower many survivors (Nnawulezi and Sullivan, 2014). Similarly, employing only White staff to perform the task of gatekeeping can be problematic (Donnelly et al., 2005). White privilege is an invisible norm that shapes the everyday practices of shelters organised to meet the needs of White, non-immigrant, English-speaking women while ignoring the diversity of needs (Donnelly et al., 2005, 11). Moreover, research has shown that in shelters, there are racial and ethnic tensions not only between the survivors but also between the survivors and the staff (Nnawulezi and Sullivan, 2014). Racial microaggressions take place in shelters in various forms; in fact, claiming neutrality is already a form of racial microaggression (Nnawulezi and Sullivan, 2014).

Indeed, US studies from 2000 onwards have challenged the common perception of mainstream domestic violence shelters being neutral. Donnelly et al. (2005) showed that shelter staff believe their services to be neutral because they are the same for everyone: shelter executive directors believed that violence affects all women equally, and so the services should be the same for everyone, regardless of skin colour. However, this "one size fits all" perspective ignores cultural diversity, while the treatment of "domestic violence as an equalizer of women's experiences can obscure the racism women of color face" (ibid., 21). The foundation of this approach is the belief that domestic violence has the same impact on all women, but international research suggests that women in intersectionally vulnerable positions suffer intensified negative effects of domestic violence (Crenshaw, 1991; Menjivar and Salcido, 2002; Sokoloff and Dupont, 2005; Hagemann-White, 2017).

In addition, international research has suggested that mainstream shelter services, however neutral they claim to be, do not meet the needs of diverse survivors, such as survivors from marginalised communities or minority survivors. Despite aiming to offer a haven from domestic violence to all victims, the shelter field responds selectively to the needs of diverse victims, leaving some without shelter (Bent-Goodley, 2005; Donnelly, 2005), offering others assistance that is not relevant and disempowering some through various forms of subtle, if indirect, racial microaggressions (Nnawulezi and Sullivan, 2014). The effects of these insensitive shelter services are devastating: institutionalised discrimination (Bent-Goodley, 2005), culturally unresponsive practices and negative identity constructions

(Donnelly, 2005), a lack of cultural competence (Nnawulezi and Sullivan, 2014), racial microaggressions (Nnawulezi and Sullivan, 2014) and inequity, while powerful systemic interests remain intact (Bent-Goodley, 2005).

Exclusion is, perhaps, one of the most devastating effects, as minoritised survivors are not recognised by shelter staff as survivors in need of shelter service and are thus left without shelter (Burman et al., 2004; Bent-Goodley, 2005; Donnelly, 2005). The construction of the minoritised Other (Burman et al., 2004) has a crucial impact on the exclusion of survivors. Immigrant survivors of domestic violence and abuse are racially stereotyped as being, for example, family oriented, strong and violent or passive and submissive, or simply being used to domestic violence and abuse (Burman et al., 2004). Donnelly et al. (2005) showed that shelter staff stereotype women of colour as being accustomed to using social services, often causing trouble in shelters and being aggressive, drug-using manipulators trying to milk the system.

All racially minoritised survivors are perceived as being similar (within their ethnic and racial groups) and even as accepting domestic violence as a way of life (Donnelly et al., 2005, 26). Similarly, other studies show that diverse survivors are stereotyped and discriminated against (Bent-Goodley, 2005) by being constructed as if they accept domestic violence to remain in their communities (Menjivar and Salcido, 2002; Keskinen, 2011), and they must constantly prove their survivor status (Nnawulezi and Sullivan, 2014). Comparative research in four European countries has shown that providers of services against violence against women, such as shelters, often approach minoritised survivors with disbelief (Jalušič, 2019).

Mainstream shelter services, with their White middle-class normative practices and rules, continue to be inhospitable environments for many survivors, who consequently leave shelters early (Donnelly, 2005; Nnawulezi and Sullivan, 2014) or might even not want to seek help to avoid the negative consequences produced by officials for their communities (Menjivar and Salcido, 2002; Sokoloff and Dupont, 2005). Thus, self-exclusion of victims can occur due to insensitive shelter work. The insensitivity of shelters to the needs of survivors may occur with shelter services excluding survivors who do not, for example, want to press charges; such survivors have few options in mainstream services (Kulkarni, 2018).

Nnawulezi and Sullivan (2014) showed that racism is a barrier in domestic violence shelters: although client satisfaction with shelter services is generally high, there have been concerns about the inclusiveness of shelters for Black survivors, especially due to a lack of cultural competence on behalf of the staff and exclusionary organisational practices (Few, 2005; Gillum, 2009; Nnawulezi and Sullivan, 2014). Scholars have reported an overall lack of cultural competence[4] in organisational structures and service delivery (Gillum, 2008). In addition to a lack of Black staff and the unavailability of culturally specific services, the general lack of sensitivity towards Black survivors has been reported, as the latter have to continuously prove their survivor status (Nnawulezi and Sullivan, 2014).

Self-exclusion is a problem not only for minoritised survivors but also for some majoritised survivors as well. Studies have shown that the mainstream representation of a domestic violence victim is that of a vulnerable and weak person (Berg, 2014; Keskinen, 2011; Sokoloff and Dupont, 2005). The so-called "battered wife syndrome," or the construction of a weak victim, has been useful to White middle-class women who have taken their cases to court. However, as Black women are depicted as strong and fighting back, they are not seen as proper victims, which has negative effects in court cases (Sokoloff and Dupont, 2005). The construction of the domestic violence subject as a vulnerable, powerless victim can also have negative effects on White middle-class victims who are supposed to be strong. For example, Berg (2014) showed that such women, especially if they are wealthy, may choose going to a hotel rather than a shelter, thus further isolating themselves from support services.

Furthermore, in addition to specific victim perceptions, studies have shown that mainstream shelter services with their institutionalised whiteness produce an effect of disempowerment, which is particularly disturbing given that a central idea of domestic violence shelters is victim empowerment. Disempowerment can, for example, be enacted by means of racial microaggressions which are a specific form

[4] Cultural competence is the capability of taking perceived, constructed cultural differences of survivors into account to provide a sensitive, high-quality service.

of racial discrimination. Such microaggressions do not always play out in the same manner; rather, they are different depending on where a group is located within a social structure, as persons are questioned about their nationality, ability to speak English or criminality. Experiencing racial microaggression can be devastating because victims end up questioning their own perceptions and reactions, while perpetrators can easily claim that no discrimination was intended (Nnawulezi and Sullivan, 2014, 567). For example, Magalhaes et al. (2019, 183) showed that the silencing of survivors took place by failing to acknowledge them as knowers, as the professionals "were elevated to positions as exclusive knowers of what is best and right, often synonymous with dominant cultural norms and values" (ibid.). Their research revealed that one recurring tendency of disempowerment in interventions was related to women's voices and their possibility of expressing themselves without language barriers (ibid., 169). The institutional blocking of victims' agency can manifest itself in processes that undermine victims' capacity for self-determination (Magalhaes et al., 2019, 165). Although such microaggressions occur in various settings, it is "especially important to examine them in settings that have specifically been designed to assist people through serious life crises. In many communities the domestic violence shelter may be the only safe refuge for a woman being severely abused by a partner or ex-partner, so it is critical that such organizations provide the safety and assistance survivors need" (Nnawulezi and Sullivan, 2014, 568).

The disempowering effect that shelters have on immigrant survivors can also be related to the visibility of an immigrant survivor of domestic violence (Burman et al., 2004). Berg (2014) argued that multicultural violence work has almost exclusively targeted already marginalised people with immigrant, ethnic or other minority backgrounds, which are often pathologised, and "culture is too often faulted for patterns of discrimination that are rooted in social inequities" (Berg, 2014, 143). Consequently, immigrant survivors are especially vulnerable when workers are judging survivors' parenting abilities, as Kiamanesh and Hauge (2019) showed. Moreover, help often becomes a burden for many immigrant survivors, who have reported experiencing a feeling of disempowerment while in shelters because other services, such as child protection, were involved, which contributed to feelings of overwhelming stress (ibid., 304). Particularly for immigrant parents, the evaluation of their parenting skills can become a process of intensified reproduction of ethicised hierarchies. As Hiitola (2015) showed in an analysis of court documents regarding

the out-of-home placement of children, migrant parents presented themselves in comparison with the majoritarian Finnish culture in order to become respectable.

Although gender and race in Finnish domestic violence shelter practices have received scarce scholarly attention, rich international research on the effects of domestic violence shelter practices on racialised survivors invites more studies on this issue. This is particularly true when considering that already more than 20 years ago, the first survey on Finnish shelters' immigrant clients (Haarakangas et al., 2000) indicated secondary victimisation of immigrant survivors due to the ethnocentric helping ideology of shelters (ibid., 53). Moreover, Finnish research on violence work from the perspective of intersectional differences (Keskinen, 2011, 2012) showed that the violent experiences of racialised victims are often othered and are explained away by supposed cultural differences. Honkatukia and Keskinen (2018) argued against racialised and culturalist knowledge production in understanding violence and suggested the need for a perspective of difference that would allow us to "analyze the multifaceted dynamics of gendered, racialized and age-related social control, including practices which can be discussed as honor-related violence" (ibid., 158).

Exclusionary and disempowering effects of domestic violence shelter practices on racialised survivors are related to racialised constructions of victims, such as the Roma or immigrants. For example, Törmä (2017) showed that perceptions of Finnish Roma victims negatively affect their possibilities of seeking help, as shelter workers express suspicions about Roma victims' intentions when the latter seek shelter accommodation.

2.3 Cultural sensitivity

When it became clear that mainstream shelter work does not meet the needs of diverse domestic violence and abuse survivors, both international and Finnish scholars suggested improving the cultural competence of shelter staff. The concept of cultural competence emerged as a topic in psychological counselling and therapy in the US context in the 1980s.[5] However, as Bent-Goodley (2005) argued, even in 1995, culture as a significant factor in domestic violence work was not considered worthy of research in the field of domestic violence scholarship – the domestic violence movement developed without knowledge of the effects of cultural differences in domestic violence experiences and service provision. The so-called culture issue entered the domestic violence field only in the '90s and the 2000s with the call for developing culturally competent services for battered women of colour (ibid.).

The call for cultural competence in domestic violence services is connected to the negative effects of not meeting the needs of domestic violence survivors, particularly the needs of non-majority survivors, or, to use Burman et al.'s (2004) term, minoritised survivors.[6] The research showed that such survivors' needs are, on the one hand, the same as those of majority survivors (money, housing, transportation, child care and the like) while also, on the other hand, being different because of the structural inequalities that minoritised survivors face in their situation-

[5] The classic text on culturally competent counselling by Sue and Sue (1981/2016) showed that every successful form of counselling is a multicultural one. They discussed the superordinate nature of multicultural counselling and argued that a culturally competent counsellor must never neglect considerations of cultural diversity. This is important for many reasons, one of which is the fact that "the concepts of counselling and psychotherapy are uniquely EuroAmerican in origin, as they are based on certain philosophical assumptions and values that are strongly endorsed by Western civilizations" (Sue and Sue, 2016, 47), and "many of the standards of professional competence are derived primarily from the values, belief systems, cultural assumptions, and traditions of the larger (Eurocentric) society" (ibid., 46). Blindly applying supposedly neutral counselling practices in shelter work consequently means working in an ethnocentric way, which is effective and appropriate for only a limited number of clients.

[6] Instead of using the word minority survivors, they refer to minoritised survivors to emphasise the social-historical process of this position.

specific positions (ibid.). For example, the conditions that are specific to immigrant status are superimposed onto other systems of oppression, such as class, race and ethnicity, and further increase vulnerability to domestic violence and abuse (Menjivar and Salcido, 2002, 902), particularly in cases when survivors with insecure immigration status[7] are excluded from services and support (ibid., 350) due to limited or no entitlement to public services or benefits (Burman et al., 2004). Menjivar and Salcido (2002) suggested that even when immigrants do have local access to domestic violence and abuse services, they encounter communication barriers, which occur not only due to language issues but also because their oppression might not be recognised as domestic violence (Burman et al., 2004).

Menjivar and Salcido (2002) argued that many immigrant-specific factors make immigrant survivors' experiences unique compared to the rest of the population. A comparative study of these factors in different countries such as the US, Australia, Canada and Western Europe countries, showed that immigrant-specific factors prevent early intervention in domestic violence and reinforce perpetrators' strategies of domestic violence and abuse, thus exacerbating the effects of violence on survivors (ibid., 901). These factors are a lack of language skills (particularly significant when combined with isolation, unemployment and uncertain legal status), isolation from family and community (from one's own cultural community and from the new country's services and networks), immigration-induced changes in economic status (women's salaries are often provocative for patriarchal traditions), legal status (fear of deportation, residence permit dependant on the husband's, no police records of domestic violence and abuse because of having no trust to call them) and a cross-national comparative frame of reference (home country as a frame of reference in dealing with domestic violence and abuse and specific government and local responses to immigrants) (Menjivar and Salcido, 2002).

[7] For example, asylum seekers, victims with temporary residence permits or victims whose residency is dependent on the spouse and so on.

Kiamanesh and Hauge (2019) claimed that to better support immigrant survivors, their specific needs should be recognised (ibid., 307). They showed that survivors with immigrant backgrounds want to be acknowledged as women with resources and capable of changing their lives if they receive support tailored to their needs (ibid., 306). Women survivors feel that the most urgent need is to be safe and have support in a place that is efficient and sensitive to their backgrounds (ibid.). They need concrete help with procedures for seeking help from service providers (due to language barriers and a lack of knowledge about the community) and require concrete assistance in making practical changes. Domestic violence and abuse survivors with immigrant backgrounds have a strong need for economic, housing and practical support, and studies have shown that these issues must not be overshadowed by the need for safety, emotional support and further follow-ups (Kiamanesh and Hauge, 2019; Ekström, 2017). At the same time, addressing practical needs must not be a substitute for interventions ensuring safety (Burman and Chantler, 2005).

Studies have underlined the need for specialised and mainstream shelters and the need to integrate cultural competence in both (Burman et al., 2014). Research suggested that mainstream as well as specialised shelters may provide irrelevant services, showing that survivors with immigrant backgrounds were ambivalent towards specialised shelter services for them (ibid.). This ambivalence was related to the survivors' heightened presence in their own communities, which made it easy for them to be recognised, traced, disciplined or rejected. Half of the minoritised survivors in the study expressed no preference for culturally specific services because they were afraid that they would be recognised, followed, caught and rejected by their communities (Burman et al., 2004, 342).

The perception of minoritised survivors as people with the same or different needs, and the respective culturally mainstream or specialised service provision, has contributed to the exclusion of minoritised survivors from services (Burman et al., 2004). Although mainstream services that do not recognise differences often tend to be exclusive, irresponsive and irrelevant to minoritised survivors, culturally specific services can also be irrelevant for different reasons (e.g. fear of being recognised and tracked down).

Culturally specific and mainstream shelter services can both operate in a universalist manner using a one-size-fits-all approach – for example, specialised services may provide mediation in response to domestic violence and abuse (i.e. due to a presupposed cultural family orientation), while mainstream services mostly provide support in leaving the violent partner and fail to support the victims who do not see divorce as an option (Burman et al., 2004). Therefore, we must move beyond the perceptions of "different" or "same" survivor needs. Burman et al. (2004) called for a "both and" approach: we need both culturally specific and mainstream services, as well as issue-specific and general services at the same time (ibid., 351).

However, in the call for cultural competency in addressing the specific needs of minoritised domestic violence and abuse survivors, the role of culture is often overemphasised at the expense of intersectional analysis. As Burman et al. (2004) showed, service providers construct cultural differences as fixed and peculiar to minoritised communities. Culturalisation becomes a barrier to domestic violence and abuse services, as experiences of domestic violence are bypassed (Keskinen, 2011) and overlooked (Burman et al., 2004), while institutions do not intervene in domestic violence and abuse. The mainstream community pathologises the minoritised community as a "culture of violence" and domestic violence as "a cultural thing" (Burman et al., 2004, 345); moreover, the minoritised community itself may pathologise the survivor because she is breaking with tradition and is seeking support against domestic violence. Sokoloff and Dupont (2005) warned against using culture to justify violence against women or, as is often the case when domestic violence and abuse occurs in immigrant communities, stereotyping entire groups.

Discussions on culturally sensitive domestic violence services in Finland mostly occurred within the debates on multicultural violence work, in which the focus has been on victims as representatives of other cultures, such as immigrants and ethnic and other minorities (Andrew and Hartikainen, 1999; Haarakangas et al., 2000; Kyllönen-Saarnio and Nurmi, 2005; Keskinen, 2011). The report based on the first wide survey of Finnish shelters' immigrant clients (Haarakangas et al., 2000) showed that shelter workers experienced normal shelter work as insufficient when working with immigrants (ibid., 40) and needed special, expert know-how, such as speaking various languages, knowing different cultures and women's positions in them and knowing more about legislation concerning immigrants. The workers stated that

cultural differences were causing problems in shelters and that they wished there would be immigrants among shelter workers. The report revealed that shelter workers struggled to explain to their immigrant clients what the shelter rules were and how the Finnish social and healthcare system worked and had difficulty informing the victims about women's equality in Finland. Indeed, observations grounded in the experiences of the Mixeri project[8] showed that ethnic assistants working alongside project workers were crucial to the project and working with clients because of their familiarity with the clients' languages and cultures as well as with Finnish society (Ojuri, 1999, 9).

Although providing information on available social services is important (e.g. filing a report, seeking a restraining order and receiving victim support services, Legal Aid and so on), informing immigrant domestic violence and abuse survivors about gender equality and women's rights in Finland may entail the fallacy of what Eliassi (2015) called *culturalising others*, who as non-Europeans are seen as lacking in enlightenment or modernity and in relation to whom workers perform a so-called *civilising mission*. Haarakangas et al. (2000) warned that when violence is interpreted through a cultural lens, it becomes difficult to respect the culture that we believe is violent.[9] They argued that the shift from a multicultural towards an ethnical/gender approach is needed, as we should understand that violence is about gender and power rather than culture (ibid., 53). The authors finished the report by saying that for now, their ideas were only theoretical and that they found it difficult to convert these ideas into practice.[10]

The tendency to understand violence as related to the culture of others while not seeing the connection to Finnish society or its violent traditions has also been

[8] The Mixeri project (1996–1998) which aimed at increasing the knowledge about working with immigrant victims (Ojuri, 1999).

[9] I argue that we can act in a culturally sensitive manner while still condemning violence and holding perpetrators and states responsible.

[10] Although the report showed the difficulties encountered by immigrant women who are double-victimised (first by their husbands and then by society) and face an ethnocentric helping ideology, the shift towards a focus on the interplay of power between ethnicity and gender in the counsellor–victim relationship remains only a recommendation (Haarakangas, 2000, 53).

indicated by Keskinen's (2012) study of Finnish violence workers' perspectives. Culturising speech depicted Finnish perpetrators as impulsive and their violent acts as less serious than those of migrants. Keskinen (ibid.) showed that in Finland, the expression *immigrant* is usually used to racialise non-Western migrants, mainly from the Middle East and Africa. Finnish women victims were perceived as strong, while migrant women victims were seen as accepting of violence, weak and traditional. Similar perceptions of immigrant victims were indicated by Kiamanesh and Hauge (2018) and Burman et al. (2004); thus, "othering violence" is a common phenomenon across countries. For example, Wemrell et al.'s (2019) study in Sweden revealed that violence tends to be othered via assumptions that violence is perpetrated by foreign rather than Swedish men. Violence is often attributed to non-EuroAmerican cultures that are presumed to lack progressive and modern attitudes (Eliassi, 2015).

However, Finnish research has suggested that frontline workers attempted to counter culturalisation by using universal speech (Keskinen, 2011), as they believed that clients should be treated the same regardless of background. This had a double effect, which Keskinen (ibid., 162) called the paradox of universalism: although universal speech serves as a counterforce to the culturalisation of others, it also restricts discussion of relevant differences related to, for example, language skills, knowledge of the Finnish welfare system and experiences of racism. Those who strongly believe in universalism and the similar treatment of all victims have been critical of the need to employ people with diasporic life experiences in the field of violence work. However, as Keskinen (2011) showed, it is "problematic to disregard totally the meaning of different positions, life histories, and identification processes" (163). She continued by arguing that "the reluctance to discuss the ethnic homogeneity (Finnishness) and its implications for the violence work is a sign of how uncomfortable it is to abandon the idea of (participating in) the unquestioned norm and the (privileged) position it provides for professionals" (ibid.). This reluctance is difficult to overcome, as Sue and Sue (2016, 56) have suggested, given that the question of "what responsibility do you hold for the racist, oppressive, and discriminatory manner by which you personally and professionally deal with a person of color?" is threatening for many people. Finnish violence workers have also used individualising speech, whereby individual differences between people in a diaspora group and the specifics of a client's life situation are emphasised. Using this form of

speech, certain binary divisions, such as Finnishness/migrancy and Western/non-Western, were deconstructed and with that also the civilising mission of educating migrants towards gender equality. However, Keskinen (2011) warned that individualising speech also contains shortcomings in leaving the communal and societal aspects untouched.

In addition to culturalising, universalising and individualising speech, Keskinen (2011) showed that some workers had developed a kind of practical multicultural approach in which they used culture speech in a non-hierarchical, lateral manner to make sense of the differences that matter for violence work. Such differences might be related to education, processes within diasporic communities or experienced racism. When differences are understood in this way, there is space to consider the individual, social and collective aspects of violence. Thus, the multiple differences that inform some practitioners' approaches to violence work destabilise the self-evident position of the universalist discourse and its ethnocentrism (ibid.). Furthermore, Keskinen (2011) advocated an intersectional approach that would acknowledge internal differences within diasporic groups, consider the power relations present in these differences and acknowledge that culture does matter – that is, culture as change, with the encounters between different cultural influences producing different outcomes.

Sokoloff and Dupont (2005) showed that intersectional and structural approaches have challenged the mainstream domestic violence literature on culturally specific forms of abuse. They claimed that the intersectional approach must be combined with the structural one for us to be able to understand the structural causes of domestic violence and abuse (ibid., 40). This means that in addition to the power relations related to gender, we must consider the power relations associated with race, class and other intersectional positions. Therefore, along with the call for culturally specific domestic violence programmes and specialised services, studies have advocated culturally sensitive feminist activism in shelters (Donnelly, 2005), an anti-oppressive working approach (Blitz and Illidge, 2006; Kulkarni 2018; Nnawulezi and Sullivan 2014) and the application of the so-called cultural approach to all survivors, both minoritised and mainstream (Berg, 2014). In an intersectional working approach, not only differences but also similarities that matter should be taken into consideration.

Debates on culture and shelter work are the foundation upon which I build my research. These debates have shown that neither mainstream nor culturally specific shelters are responsive enough to the diversity of survivors' needs when institutional agents use culturalisation to make sense of gender, racial and/or ethnic differences related to the subject positions of domestic violence survivors. In sum, addressing intersectional differences when responding to domestic violence survivors is key. Consequently, my research focused on the dynamics of such differences in the practices of domestic violence shelter work, particularly in the relationship between victims and shelter counsellors.

2.4 Intersectional and trauma-informed shelters

The intersectional work approach focuses not only on individual counsellors but also on their institutional and social contexts. As Bent-Goodley (2005) showed, to transform the institutions themselves, we need to develop intersectional knowledge about domestic violence and abuse. This change was addressed in a study by Blitz and Illidge (2006), who discussed the need to introduce a curriculum for raising critical consciousness into the training and policies of shelter staff. The authors claimed that only the kind of training that considers domestic violence as both gender-based violence and an intersectional issue can, together with an understanding of how power operates intersectionally at the levels of individuals (victims, perpetrators and staff) and institutions, help improve the abilities of shelters and their staff to engage in intersectionally sensitive work.

Blitz and Illidge (2006) examined the process of antiracist multicultural team building in a domestic violence shelter in New York, showing that shelters and other social services (e.g. child welfare) may unintentionally enact various "forms of power and privilege associated with race, class, and formal education (...) regardless of the race of the staff" (ibid., 118) and so reproduce "misuses of power in a racist and patriarchal society" (ibid.). It is important to note that the fact that a shelter counsellor is a person of colour does not automatically mean that she cannot

reproduce racism. Intersectional competence means that staff must "explore the forces of power and privilege in juxtaposition to marginalization and oppression within their organization and in individual relationships" and that an employee must "have a well-articulated analysis of power that informs her thinking about stratifications based on race, socioeconomics, and gender, and then cultivate an understanding of the dynamics of difference" (ibid., 118).

Power analysis is at the core of the intersectionally sensitive approach to shelter work (Nnawulezi and Sullivan, 2014; Blitz and Illidge, 2005). Nnawulezi and Sullivan (2014) argued that it is important to consider power relations between staff and residents, as staff possesses authority, controls access to resources and provides free services to victims. As Nnawulezi and Sullivan (2014) showed, it may be difficult for Black survivors who experience racial microaggressions in shelters to identify events as racist at the same time as needing shelter services (ibid., 585).

Regarding the modalities of intersectional shelter services that contribute to a cultivated understanding of the dynamics of difference, Kulkarni (2018) presented three frameworks for responding to the intersectional needs of survivors: survivor-centred advocacy (as opposed to safety-focused advocacy), whereby "practices are guided by survivor's knowledge, expertise, and preferences[11] rather than service-defined advocacy practices" (ibid., 57); the full-frame model, whereby safety is understood in connection with other sources of well-being[12] (Cattaneo and Goodman, 2015); and culturally specific programmes in which the intersectional framework addresses survivors' needs holistically. Therefore, it is the intersectional approach that makes culturally specific programmes (not only mainstream ones) responsive to the diversity of people and their life situations.

[11] For example, a domestic violence and abuse survivor who is an asylum seeker waiting for the asylum decision may not regard safety from DVA to be as important as the residence permit decision.

[12] For example, even when a survivor separates from a perpetrator, her safety may still be undermined because she may be cut off from her own community without yet being integrated into the mainstream community. A lack the resources to support one's own safety makes one vulnerable.

In addition to the intersectional approach to domestic violence services, research has demonstrated the importance of the integration of trauma-informed practices (Blitz and Illidge, 2006; Kulkarni, 2018). Kulkarni (2018) suggested that intersectional and trauma-informed approaches share several features, such as power sharing within service delivery (survivor autonomy and workers' reflections on their own power and privileges), an authentic survivor–advocate relationship, individualised service plans and systems advocacy (improving survivor choices in communities and social action to overcome structural and resource barriers) (ibid., 58). Kulkarni (2018) claimed that staff should work within the intersectional trauma-informed framework and that survivor feedback should be used to evaluate whether a service is intersectional and trauma informed.

Examining the counsellor–victim power relations at broader intersectional junctures in society means shifting from cultural sensitivity or competence when working with certain clients towards the intersectional counselling competencies needed for all counselling work with survivors. The intersectional approach to counselling work acknowledges the centrality of power and privilege in counselling relationships (Rattz et al., 2016). The central dimensions to be considered in counselling practice are intersections, oppressions and the socioecological context (Rattz et al., 2016, 34). Intersectional and trauma-informed shelter work thus means considering the intersections between different subject positions (e.g. race, class and gender), their defining structures (i.e. power and privilege), practical multiculturalism that is grounded in the theory of lateral differences (Keskinen, 2011) and the social context (Blitz and Illidge, 2006). In addition, a trauma-informed approach used together with the intersectional framework creates possibilities to recover from the trauma of violence in a non-violent therapeutic community in a shelter (Blitz and Illidge, 2006).

Shelter work does not become intersectional by coincidence. Patriarchal policies, with their supposed neutrality, systematically revictimise women via standardised working methods, unwanted mandatory classes, curfews, expulsions due to confidentiality rules and inattention to barriers faced by disabled or immigrant survivors (Nichols, 2014, 167–168). Research on the gendered nature of shelters has shown that feminist shelter policies that are intersectionally informed enable flexible, collaborative and survivor-defined shelter work (Blitz and Illidge, 2006; Kulkarni

2018). Nichols (2013) revealed that the training of shelter workers regarding power and control was crucial for intersectionally sensitive shelter work. For example, Nichols (2013) reported that in a shelter setting, power and control are difficult topics to talk about, but some shelters received power and control training, which was experienced as highly useful, especially because burnout can cause cynicism and judgmental attitudes; thus, power and control training contributed to a focus on respect, time and attention in survivor-defined advocacy (ibid., 157).

The first step in addressing power is recognising bias, namely White privilege and its effects (together with the fact that shelter staff easily buy into stereotypes and an othering mentality), and then acting "through culturally sensitive feminist activism" to stop the systematic disenfranchising of women of colour when negotiating their safety and the safety of their children (Donnelly et al., 2005, 32). In addition, Berg (2014) suggested that "all social work scholars and clinicians, but especially White European-Americans, must take the same lens currently used to study marginalized cultures and inversely apply this same framework to dominant culture" (143) while keeping in mind the importance of a critical analysis of privilege.

Achieving a well-articulated analysis of power is a demanding task that presupposes learning about intersectional power dissymmetry in the worker–victim counselling relationship (Sue and Sue, 2016; Rattz et al., 2016; Blitz and Illidge, 2006). This task can also be a psychologically exhausting process because it inevitably produces insights into one's own role in the oppression of others (Sue and Sue, 2016), something for which shelter staff are not always ready (Blitz and Illidge, 2006). Moreover, shelter work conditions must be considered when performing the demanding task of reflecting on intersectional power relations. Therefore, I will now address the extant research on shelter work conditions and its effects on everyday shelter practices. More specifically, it goes against their background for shelter workers to perform intersectionally sensitive domestic violence work with racialised minority victims.

2.5 Working conditions in shelters

The scarce international research on how domestic violence shelter workers experience their day-to-day shelter work (Baker et al., 2007; Brown and O'Brien, 1998; Hughes, 2020; Merchant and Whiting, 2015; Slattery and Goodman, 2009) has revealed the various challenges faced by shelter workers, such as having too much work and an inadequate amount of time to successfully complete their tasks (Brown and O'Brien, 1998), which contribute to stress and burnout. Shelter workers demonstrate high levels of emotional exhaustion coupled with a high level of depersonalisation[13] (Baker et al., 2007). The challenges of shelter work combined with an unsupportive shelter culture result in high staff turnover and negatively affect shelter work outcomes in terms of meeting victims' needs (Merchant and Whiting, 2015).

Despite the growing body of research on the effectiveness of shelter services, "there is little to no description of the interventions that resulted in the reported outcomes" (Hughes, 2020, 3035). Moreover, Hughes (2020) and Merchant and Whiting (2015) highlighted the lack of research on shelter practices from the perspectives of shelter workers and residents. The same is true for research in the Finnish context: everyday shelter work practices and their relations to intersectional effects are under-examined. Although research on how shelter work impacts shelter workers is relatively rare, it is even less common in the context of the Finnish domestic violence shelter work field. Therefore, I aim to fill this research gap by focusing on the challenges related to shelter work and how they affect the workers themselves, which, in turn, can help us understand how working conditions contribute to (or prevent) intersectionally sensitive shelter work.

Murray et al. (2010) argued that there is research–practice gap in domestic violence research, namely a lack of practical implications of domestic violence

[13] Depersonalisation refers to feelings of detachment from the self or one's environment.

research for practitioners' work. Although nowadays the importance of trauma-informed practice in domestic violence work with victims is widely acknowledged (Blitz and Illidge, 2006; Kulkarni, 2018), a trauma-informed understanding of the effects produced by domestic violence work on workers has been scarcely developed. Merchant and Whiting (2015) showed that the shelter is a communal crisis centre, which is often a chaotic, crisis-laden environment.

Studies based on trauma-theoretical insights have revealed the disturbing effects of domestic violence counselling on the counsellors, such as secondary traumatisation and vicarious trauma (Cummings et al., 2018; Iliffe and Steed, 2000; Rothschild, 2006; Slattery and Goodman, 2009). Thus, domestic violence counselling has well-known traumatising effects on shelter workers (Baker et al., 2007; Iliffe and Steed, 2016; Merchant and Whiting, 2015). These effects are commonly defined in terms of secondary traumatic stress due to hearing first-hand experiences of violence and vicarious trauma, which results in profound shifts in workers' worldviews due to repeated exposure to traumatic material (Cummings, 2018; Iliffe and Steed, 2016). Repeated secondary traumatic stress accumulates and can develop into vicarious traumatisation, which affects workers' worldviews and belief systems (Cummings, 2018; Iliffe and Steed, 2000; Nikischer, 2018).

Merchant and Whiting (2015) showed that shelter workers were often shocked by the severity of the violence and by having to witness victims' concrete injuries, such as broken noses and faces covered in bruises (ibid., 471). In addition, workers reported that "the hardships of hearing these stories never fully abated" (ibid.). Physical proximity to victims during domestic violence counselling makes it even more difficult for workers to protect themselves from survivors' traumatic stress (Rothschild, 2006).

Typical symptoms of secondary traumatic stress include over-arousal resulting in sleeplessness, intrusive images of survivors' cases, various somatic aches typical of secondary traumatic stress and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (Cummings et al., 2018; Iliffe and Steed, 2000; Slattery and Goodman, 2009). Stressful work events and a lack of support can lead to work-related burnout, whose common signs are illness and headache, tiredness, feelings of depression and irritation (Illiffe and Steed, 2000, 406). Exposure to clients' traumas and lack of

support also increases the likelihood of burnout (Cummings et al., 2018), which can be experienced as exhaustion and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment (ibid., 4).

Overburdened and traumatised, workers may engage in self-protective distancing from clients, which, in turn, has negative effects in terms of disempowering encounters. As Cummings et al. (2018) showed, counsellors' self-protective distancing affects their relationships with survivors. For example, a survivor may not feel heard and understood and may be left without a validation of her experience. Cummings et al. (2018, 396) described such distancing as workers' natural avoidance response. Therefore, when counsellors do not receive enough support to handle secondary traumatisation, as well as potentially vicarious trauma, the results may entail secondary victimisation of clients because workers distance themselves too much and victims' experiences are not heard and validated (Cummings et al., 2018, 401).

Traumatised and overburdened counsellors tend to be less able to facilitate empowering encounters (Iliffe and Steed, 2000) and are likelier to leave the domestic violence field (Merchant and Whiting, 2015). At the same time, a study by Merchant and Whiting (2015) showed that shelters that succeed in managing the challenges of domestic violence work are likelier to have higher employee retention rates. In other words, whether a shelter culture is supportive or demoralising affects whether workers continue their employment or are likely to leave the domestic violence field (ibid). A supportive shelter culture enables workers to turn to each other when they are "shocked by the inhumanity of violence or overwhelmed by the chaos of shelter life" (ibid., 478).

Descriptions of what occurs in shelters from the perspectives of victims and workers are rare in extant scholarship (Hughes, 2020; Merchant and Whiting, 2015). Hughes (2020) claimed that there are few studies that provide descriptions of what occurs in shelters and that it is difficult to address the "ambivalent or negative experiences described by some women in the qualitative studies" (ibid., 3037). Nichols (2011) suggested that the organisational context presents "challenges to victim advocates within domestic violence organizations as a result of gendered

structures and processes" (ibid., 112) and can "perpetuate inequality and revictimization in domestic violence stakeholder organizations" (ibid.).

Merchant and Whiting (2015) demonstrated that one part of a supportive shelter climate is the involvement of management and executive staff in everyday shelter work including tasks such as "scrubbing toilets, fielding the crisis line, or transporting clients." (ibid., 474). Although this finding by Merchant and Whiting (2015) is significant and suggests the type of shelter management that can successfully balance the challenges of shelter work in general, the working conditions themselves remain unproblematised, and the responsibility for managing the everyday chaos of shelters is seen as the task of shelter workers, their supervisors and executive directors. Thus, though it is important to acknowledge that supervisors and executive directors have a considerable impact on shelters' work climate, the overwhelming workload of shelter workers, together with other issues related to working conditions, remains unaddressed. For example, Merchant and Whiting (2015) showed that shelter workers "often found themselves snaking toilets, cleaning up vomit, mediating residents' quarrels, calming fussy babies, and otherwise ensuring the smooth operation of the communal living facility. This was in addition to their duties as a crisis responder: providing a compassioned response to victims with stories of horrific abuse" (ibid., 471).

A lack of essential support services (e.g. cleaning or childcare) in crisis residential environments together with under-resourcing (insufficient workforce) drastically affects shelter work practices. The organisational context of domestic violence shelter work in the Finnish social welfare state can be interpreted as a consequence of gendered power relations and austerity politics (Elomäki, 2019; Hirvonen et al., 2020; Karsio et al., 2020), which have considerably affected the fields of social work and care work. Austerity measures increased the pressure to maximise efficiency in the use of staff resources, connecting this idea with that of improvements to clients' service experiences. However, instead of improving services, this approach has often created poor-quality services and even institutional violence via organisationally constituted conditions that set the context for violence (Gil, 2021), with exacerbated effects for victims in intersectionally vulnerable positions. Finally, understaffing combined with increased workloads reduces the agency of welfare professionals (Hirvonen et al., 2020).

2.6 Conclusion

Domestic violence shelter work in Finland has mainly developed in the context of a gender-neutral understanding of domestic violence and abuse. Shelters were professionalised and funded by the municipalities until the ratification of the Istanbul Convention, after which shelters became state funded. Extant research indicates that supposedly neutral shelters generate exclusion and disempower racially minoritised survivors. Cultural competence, or cultural sensitivity, has been perceived as the solution to the problem of shelter work not meeting the needs of racialised survivors. However, the downside of the cultural competence/sensitivity approach has been the culturalisation of racially minoritised survivors, the othering of domestic violence and abuse and the essentialising of differences. Culturalisation has led to debates on whether racialised victims need mainstream shelter services that provide the same support for everyone or specialised services that provide minority-specific support.

As both mainstream and specialised services may result in inadequate support for racially minoritised survivors, extant research advocates intersectional and trauma-informed domestic violence shelter work in all settings that provide victim support. This kind of shelter work takes into consideration race, gender and other intersectional differences as part of a sensitive attempt to meet the universal, individual and group-specific needs of diverse domestic violence survivors. Although such a complex and demanding work approach requires enabling organisational conditions, actual working conditions in shelters are often detrimental to the quality of shelter work. Poor working conditions and inadequate levels of support negatively affect shelter workers' agency, endangering the quality of shelter work in general and the support for victims in intersectionally vulnerable positions in particular.

3 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND – HIERARCHIES, MISRECOGNITION AND RACIALISATION IN SHELTER WORK

To analyse the effects of Finnish shelter work on racialised minority subjects, I developed a theoretical approach that enabled me to conduct a critical examination of the worker–victim relationship as the site of intersectional dynamics in subject position negotiations. To effectively examine this relationship, I considered different dimensions with a decisive effect on its formation via social constructionist and feminist intersectional approaches, with an emphasis on the processes of racialisation. First, I considered the shelter as an institutional environment with enabling and sometimes disabling effects on the formation of the counselling relationship, drawing particularly on the concept of "field" (Bourdieu, 2002, 2003, 2018, 2020; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990; Wacquant, 1992, 2006), which allowed me to address the power relations and normativity inherent to the shelter field. I used Foucault's (1978, 1980) conception of power as productive to consider the effects of these power relations.

Second, I considered the characteristics of the relations between domestic violence shelter workers and domestic violence victims using Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990) theory of symbolic violence to emphasise the hierarchy within the shelter counselling relationship. Third, I used the concept of feminist intersectionality to address the worker–victim power relations that produce privileged and deprivileged subject positions and thus interfere with the possibility of empowering the counselling relationship. Finally, I used the concept of racialisation to examine the racialised perceptions and practices of shelter subjects as grounded in hierarchical power relations between racialised groups in Finnish society, which contribute to the reproduction of racialised perceptions and practices in shelters' everyday functioning. I considered this reproduction and the possibility of change in relation to the phenomenon of misrecognition at the level of embodied

racialised habituality and institutionalised practices and discourses. The concept of misrecognition (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990) allowed me to address the problematic invisibility of racialisation (misrecognising racialisation itself) and the ambiguity of racialised classifications (misrecognising one racialised subject for another).

Using the conceptualisation of a shelter as a field of power relations, symbolic violence, intersectional differences, racialisation and misrecognition, I developed a theoretical approach for analysing the effects of domestic violence shelter work on racially minoritised shelter subjects. My approach enabled me to address racialised shelter work as being simultaneously grounded in the embodied habitualities of shelter workers, shelters' institutionalised practices and the racialised structures of Finnish society while considering all these levels as structured structures that, in turn, also structure. This means that in addition to the probability of reproducing the existing racialised power relations, there is also the possibility of reflexive agency and change.

3.1 Shelter work as a field of power relations

Addressing domestic violence shelter work by using Bourdieu's theory of practice and the concept of field (Bourdieu 1980/2002; 2003; 2006; 2020) is particularly productive because of this concepts' radical relationality, which enables identifying the effects of the power dynamics between shelter subject positions and not just interactions between subjects. For example, Bourdieu (2018, 235) argued that to understand a field, the primacy of relations must be taken seriously: the properties of agents in a field must be understood relationally because it is the structure of these

relations that constitutes the field and the interactions within it.[14] To understand what happens in a field, one needs to theorise the invisible structures that "nobody sees but which act powerfully and independently of the individual consciousness and will" (ibid., 248). Moreover, what agents in a field do to one another is related to their positions and the differences between them, which are potentially hierarchical. Thus, a field is not reducible to the space of interactions; rather, it is a structured space with positions and relations between them (ibid., 250). Theorising the invisible structures of a field by highlighting relational power dynamics between different subject positions constitutes an effective means for examining intersectional differences because difference is the essence of a position (Bourdieu, 2020, 251). Therefore, Bourdieu's theory of practice and the concept of field are relevant to a feminist intersectional analysis of the shelter field, even though these theoretical tools seem to contradict the non-hierarchical supportive relationship between survivors, which was the ideal of first shelters organised by survivors themselves (Nichols, 2014).[15]

Although a field and its subject positions cannot be directly observed, a field can be traced through its manifestations. A field reproduces a system of differences, which is a system of relations between subject positions (Bourdieu, 2020, 257). The power that is enacted in and constitutive of co-relations is always intertwined with discourses (Foucault, 1990, 93–98). Subjects govern themselves and act in coordination due to power strategies rather than subordination to a certain rule. However, even if the power relations are intentional, they are also non-subjective; power produces an orderly system with a clear logic and aim, but there is no one who could be claimed to have constructed this system (Foucault, 1978, 1990). This orderly system owes its regularity to the structures and power relations of the social

[14] A field has its own rules of practice, its struggles between different field actors, investments of different forms of capital and the struggle around it, and concerns about the exclusivity of the field, which helps protect positional advantages (Wacquant, 1992, 2006).

[15] More information on intersectional differences and classifications will be provided later in this chapter. Here, I first discuss the concept of field.

context in which the shelter field operates and reproduces itself through discourses, institutional practices and habitual embodiments of the agents in the field.[16]

Understanding shelter work as a field of power relations that are both structured and structuring (Bourdieu 1980/2002, 2003, 2006) enables one to analyse the tension between the probability of a habitual reproduction of shelter practices and the possibility of reflexive change. However, a field cannot be analysed on its own but must always be situated within the social context of a social space (Bourdieu, 2020, 234) in relation to which the field has its relative autonomy (ibid.; Wacquant, 1992). Thus, change is possible because of the relative autonomy of the shelter field and its agents. Agents in this field act relatively autonomously within its structures and power relations, which structure the perceptions and practices of agents in the shelter field. The power relations of a field are mediated by the habitus, which acts between the field of forces, such as positions determining behaviours, and the field of struggles, such as negotiations between subject positions, which enables the transformation or preservation of the field (ibid., 259). In sum, shelter workers enact their own agency in relation to the field's forces, which potentially limit their agency, and struggles, which potentially enable their agency.

Although some power relations embedded in structures and discourses can have an empowering effect on agents in the shelter field (e.g. the Istanbul Convention and the Shelter Law[17]), others may have a disempowering effect (e.g. neoliberal austerity measures or gendered and racialised power relations in Finnish society). An effective intervention into the habitual reproduction of the negative effects of social structures and power relations in everyday shelter work requires reflexive insights into the dynamics of these power relations. Such insights are difficult to achieve because of

[16] Notwithstanding the debate on the similarities and differences between Foucault's and Bourdieu's theories of structures, power and agency, I aim to emphasise the productivity of using their conceptual tools for addressing the effects of shelter work. For example, Foucault's concept of productive power is useful for approaching the power relations between shelter subjects as enabling and not only restricting interactions. Similarly, Bourdieu's concept of legitimate symbolic violence allows me to address the productive and empowering effects of hierarchy in the counselling relationships.

[17] Please see Chapter 1, p. 19.

the invisibility of successfully imposed power relations in a field. As Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) suggested, it is not only that a successful imposition of power presupposes consensus regarding its legitimacy and thus reinforces existing power relations; rather, a successful imposition of power also presupposes a concealment of the power relations themselves (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990).

3.2 Symbolic violence of shelter work

Perhaps the most effective concealment of power relations in shelter work occurs by means of an uncritical adoption of the widely popularised concept of "encountering" (*kohtaaminen* in Finnish). Emphasising *good encountering* is a commonly accepted idea that is easy to like. In its widespread use, this idea simply means that people should be encountered with respect and dignity, not as representatives of certain categories but as human beings. In Finland, the discourse of encountering beyond social categorisations dominates the fields of social work, education, health care and nursing (Nivala and Ryynänen, 2019, 191).[18]

[18] At a seminar on counselling refugee and asylum-seeking victims of gender-based violence organised by the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control affiliated with the United Nations in 2019, this widespread discourse of encountering beyond categorisations manifested itself in a particularly powerful manner. One of the suggestions presented for sensitive work with the aforementioned population groups was informing them of gender equality and rights, which is part of the culturalising discourse prevalent the debates on violence work with racialised victims (see Chapter 2). At the same time, the presenters emphasised the importance of good encountering as an approach to meeting victims without prejudice. A racially minoritised critical listener contributed the following insightful comment: "Everyone is speaking about encountering, encountering, encountering! At the same time, you're speaking how they must be taught about violence and equality. Have you been thinking how this influences the encountering with them? It would be good if someone would once explain what this notorious encountering is. And why are you able to encounter the majoritised Finns?" (Voice tape recording, D1).

Explicit discussions of power hierarchies and social categories are uncommon in the Finnish domestic violence shelter field. Moreover, the field remains largely dominated by the so-called gender-neutral discourse (Chapter 2), and it also lacks reflections on other social categorisations. However, shelter workers perform their work in relation to other human beings, who are already assigned certain categories and subject positions. Domestic violence victims who become shelter residents (the victim and the resident are examples of subject positions) are widely referred to as "clients," an alienated administrative category that creates an illusion of neutrality and is devoid of power analysis (Garcia, 1999).

I argue that the popularised concept of encountering operates as an empty signifier that conceals the hierarchical power dynamics in violence work counselling and facilitates their effective reproduction. To address these dynamics, domestic violence shelter counselling must be understood as hierarchical by default while intersecting with other hierarchies grounded in power relations between social groups. However, the worker–victim hierarchical relation, which entails dominance and subordination, must be distinguished from qualitatively and effectively different forms of hierarchies that entail privilege and oppression. To address the distinction between the various modalities of power hierarchies, their ambiguous effects and forms of legitimacy, I will build on the theory of symbolic violence (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990).[19]

Based on their analysis of reproduction of power relations in the education system, Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) developed the theory of symbolic violence to examine the pedagogical function as not being limited to schools or education but

[19] I interpret the epistemological approach of this theory as social constructionism, while Bourdieu (2003, 77) himself defined his theoretical epistemology as follows: "If I had to characterize my work in two words, that is, as is the fashion these days, to label it, I would speak of constructivist structuralism or structuralist constructivism (…) I mean that there exist, within the social world itself and not only within symbolic systems (language, myths, etc.), objective structures independent of the consciousness and will of agents, which are capable of guiding and constraining their practices or their representations. By constructivism, I mean that there is a twofold social genesis, on the one hand of the schemes of perception, thought, and action which are constitutive of what I call habitus, and particularly of what I call fields and of groups, notably those we ordinarily call social classes" (Bourdieu, 1989, 14).

as applicable to "any social formation, understood as a system of power relations and sense relations between groups and classes" (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, 4), in which this function is exercised by means of a "system of agents explicitly mandated for this purpose by an institution directly or indirectly, exclusively or partially educative in function" (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, 4). The pedagogical function of shelter work is, perhaps, most visible when shelter workers apply the so-called psychoeducation[20] methods with the aim of "breaking the cycle of violence," as defined by the Finnish National Institute for Health and Welfare (Ewalds et al., 2019, 8). Shelter workers are agents who are explicitly mandated for this purpose. Thus, the shelter counselling relationship has important analogies with the pedagogical relationship. Moreover, shelter counselling is intentional, systematic and structured, with defined roles and co-defined aims, with workers responsibly using institutionally delegated power to support victims.

The power relation between workers and victims is thus hierarchical by default. It is a form of symbolic violence because it entails the imposition of pre-chosen meanings and methods via the institutionalised power position of a shelter worker (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, 4).[21] This statement should not be read as a moral

[20] Trauma theory emphasises the importance of the stabilisation phase in the treatment of trauma, in which psychoeducation plays an important role by teaching/learning different skills, such as mindfulness, being in the present moment, minimising fear and normalising everyday life. It is important to establish a feeling of safety and try to develop empathy towards the self and one's own feelings (Ogden et al., 2009; van der Hart et al., 2009).

[21] Bourdieu and Passeron (1990, 6) showed that all pedagogic action is "symbolic violence insofar as it is the imposition of cultural arbitrary by an arbitrary power." Bourdieu and Passeron's axiom of power indicates that symbolic violence is a process of imposition of chosen meanings from the position of power: the imposition of cultural arbitrariness (*the mode* of imposing and *the content* of imposing) by an arbitrary power while concealing the power relations from which this imposition gets its force (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, 4). They explained that the selection of meaning is arbitrary "insofar as the structure and functions (...) cannot be deduced from any universal principle, whether physical, biological or spiritual, not being linked by any sort of internal relation to 'the nature of things' or any 'human nature" (ibid., 8). The degree of the arbitrary power of the imposed meanings "rises with the degree of arbitrariness (…) of the culture imposed" (ibid., 9). For example, the more the imposed content of counselling is arbitrary (e.g. teaching immigrant survivors about women's equality), more force is needed for its imposition because the counselling action "has the more need to resort to direct means of constraint the less the meanings it imposes impose themselves by their own force, i.e. the force of biological nature or logical reason" (ibid., 10).

condemnation of the fact that the shelter counselling relationship is hierarchical; rather, it should invite us to evaluate the effects of this hierarchy.

Considering domestic violence shelter work as being embedded in hierarchical relations by default contrasts with how shelter work was imagined in early grassroots feminist shelters, which approached any form of hierarchy in relation to survivors of domestic violence as oppressive and as control of victims that is too similar to that exerted by abusers (Nichols, 2014). Nowadays, a feminist approach to domestic violence work recognises victims' agency and argues for survivor-defined advocacy, exhibiting better outcomes for victims compared to gender-neutral and patriarchal work models, which deny victims' agency and result in victim blaming (Nichols, 2011b, 115). However, I argue that it is not productive to claim that survivor-defined shelter work does not involve a hierarchical relationship between workers and victims. Even when shelter workers recognise and support the agency of victims, it is the workers who have access to resources that the victims need, and it is the workers who explain the different options, choices and support available to victims for the latter to make their own informed decisions (Goodman and Epstein, 2008). Thus, workers are in a hierarchical position, but this need not exclude sensitive cooperation with victims, whose agency workers aim to support.

However, some scholars have argued that symbolic violence is a form of oppression that deprives victims of their agency and voice (Morgan and Thapar-Björkert, 2006; Malpass et al., 2016) or is similar to psychological violence (Thapar-Björkert et al., 2016). I agree with Yateman (1997, 45), who claimed that it is insufficient to criticise every form of domination as oppression: "Domination can be used to control others in order to serve the interests of the powerful, or, domination can work democratically to extend or even constitute the powers of subjects." Moreover, I do not consider symbolic violence to be psychological violence; rather, I believe it to be "concepts and processes with which indirect mechanisms of culture produce social limitations" (Gaber and Tašner, 2021, 202).

I use symbolic violence theory to address the issue of the legitimacy of shelter workers, victims and shelter work. In shelter work, empowering encountering presupposes that workers and victims recognise one another as legitimate subjects for the task, which involves misrecognition. Bourdieu and Passeron (1990, xxii) emphasised that misrecognition is a process "whereby power relations are perceived not for what they objectively are but in a form which renders them legitimate in the eyes of the beholder." Applied to the shelter counselling relationship, this means that victims must misrecognise the power hierarchy behind the counselling authority of shelter workers if victims are to experience counsellors and counselling actions as legitimate.[22]

The legitimacy of shelter workers and the symbolic violence of shelter work are institutionally supported. According to Bourdieu and Passeron (1990, 20), their legitimacy is "entirely dispensed from the necessity of producing the conditions for its own establishment and perpetuation" (ibid.) because workers are "from the outset designated as fit to transmit that which they transmit, hence entitled to impose" (ibid.). The value of counselling action is ensured "regardless of the 'intrinsic' values of the agency exerting it" (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, 21) – for example, as happens in the case of "technical competence or personal authority" (ibid.), which is automatically given to workers by their institutionally guaranteed positions.

Nevertheless, racially minoritised shelter workers may encounter difficulties in occupying the position of legitimate subject for carrying out domestic violence counselling due to the interference of intersectional power dynamics within the counselling hierarchy. The failure of the perceived legitimacy of a pedagogic action is, according to Bourdieu and Passeron (1990, 16), a consequence of the revelation of power relations, which is related to the cultural distance of the receiver of the imposed meanings (e.g. victims in the counselling relationship with shelter workers).[23] However, Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) do not problematise the fact

[22] As Bourdieu and Passeron (1990, 19) suggested, "recognition of legitimacy of the act (…) conditions the reception of the information."

[23] Bourdieu and Passeron (1990,16) suggested that the "likelihood of (…) imposing a cultural arbitrary[23] being at least partially revealed as such, rises with the degree to which (…) the cultural

that the perceived cultural distance of the transmitter (e.g. a shelter counsellor) may have a decisive effect on the perceived legitimacy of their institutional position in the eyes of victims. For example, this can occur when a young racially minoritised shelter worker encounters middle-aged racially majoritised domestic violence victims.

One feminist criticism of Bourdieu, especially regarding his concepts of habitus and symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 2001), is that these concepts are overly deterministic (Witz, 2004; Mottier, 2002, McNay, 1999) and thus prevent the possibility of addressing agency, resistance and change. Indeed, at first sight, the misrecognition of the counselling hierarchy and the participation of the victim in the reproduction of existing power relations can seem deterministic. For example, despite the potentially empowering effects of successfully imposed counselling content and methods in shelter work, the theory of symbolic violence suggests that such misrecognition reinforces existing power relations in society (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, 4).[24] However, a close reading of the theory of symbolic violence indicates that such accusations of determinism are unjustified (Antić Gaber and Tašner, 2010). The imposition of symbolic violence implies the relative autonomy of the agents commissioned to exercise it (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, 4). Such autonomous agents can be inventive in their practices – that is, they not only reproduce existing power relations but can act reflexively, adapting the working methods and content to meet the diverse needs of different domestic violence victims. Thus, shelter workers have the possibility to engage in reflexive shelter practices and adapt work-related content and methods to better suit the needs of victims.

However, this autonomy is relational, not only when it comes to the victim but also in relation to the shelter as a social service institution. As a "delegated holder of

arbitrary of the group or class undergoing that PA (*pedagogic action*, N.M.)[23] is remote from the cultural arbitrary which the PA inculcates" (ibid., 16). The authors claimed that cultural distance affects the recognition of the arbitrariness of pedagogic action: "Their distance from the culture inculcated tends to make them feel the arbitrariness of the inculcation as inevitable" (ibid., 16).

[24] "Every power (...) which manages to impose meanings and to impose them as legitimate by concealing the power relations which are the basis of its force, adds its own specifically symbolic force to those power relations" (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, 4).

the right to exercise symbolic violence" (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, 24), a shelter worker is endowed with authority only for the chosen content and methods of counselling work, which are normatively constructed by the institutional delegation of authority. This suggests possibilities and limitations for shelter workers' agency, which is always both autonomous and limited and "entails the impossibility (...) of freely defining the mode of imposition, the content imposed and the public on which it imposes it" (ibid., 27).

3.3 Intersectional power dynamics

To address the differences and interconnections between the default hierarchy of the worker–victim relationship and the qualitatively and effectively different hierarchies based on privilege and oppression, I turn to feminist intersectionality,[25] which allows for an examination of multiple simultaneous interconnections between various socially constructed power hierarchies and the hierarchy of the counselling relationship. I argue that the worker–victim relationship is the site of intersectional power dynamics in subject position negotiations. Intersectionality enables us to understand the subject positions of agents (e.g. workers and victims) in the field of shelter work as relationally and contextually produced and to address the processes of social classifications along with their inevitability and ambivalent effects on subjects' agency.

[25] In relation to domestic violence, the concept of "intersectionality" was introduced by Crenshaw (1991), who distinguished between structural, political and representative forms of intersectionality. Crenshaw (1991, 1296) presented intersectionality as a way of framing the various interactions of race and gender in the context of violence against women of colour. Crenshaw addressed the experiences of women of colour as a by-product of intersecting patterns of racism and sexism, showing that due to their intersectional identities "within discourses that are shaped to respond to one *or* another," women of colour are marginalised by both (ibid., 1241).

I use intersectionality as an analytic approach not for theorising intersectional identities and oppressions (Nash, 2008) but for investigating the power dynamics in the relational and contextual subject position construction of shelter workers and victims. By relational subject construction, I refer to co-constitutive processes (Wacquant, 1992) between shelter workers and victims. By contextual subject construction, I mean "distinctive and historically specific technologies of categorization" (ibid.), the meanings of which are constituted in relation to the specific social space in which shelter work is situated. With these definitions, the focus of my intersectional analysis, rather than falling on the essentialist subject, is on processual and dynamically constructed subject positions.

Although intersectionality is often attentive to differences (Nash, 2008), my analysis is aimed at rigorously applying the principle of relationality (Bourdieu, 2020; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992) to examine the categorisation of differences *and* similarities in the counselling relationship between the subject positions of workers and victims. The similarities of subject positions, especially when sharing privileges, are often misrecognised as affecting the counselling relationship.[26] However, as Keskinen et al. (2021, 60) suggested, privileged positions are usually obscure and only differences are highlighted; thus, privilege often remains invisible because it operates as an implicit norm (Keskinen et al., 2021, 60).

I approach shelter subject positions as unintentionally and habitually constructed through numerous acts of classification. Power is inherent in these classification processes (Bourdieu, 2018; 2020), which result in numerous combinations of power relations and hierarchies in the constructed subject positions. Counselling theorists have conceptualised these combinations into the following four types of hierarchical relationships in the counselling dyad: privileged worker – oppressed victim, privileged worker – privileged victim, oppressed worker – privileged victim, and oppressed worker – oppressed victim (Rattz et al., 2015). Feminist intersectionality

[26] Shared privileged positions are often an enabling factor in counselling. However, they can also result in overidentification of the worker with the victim (Sue and Sue, 2016), which can have disempowering effects.

enables multiple intersections of subject positions to be examined *simultaneously*. For example, a racially minoritised victim can occupy a deprivileged position in relation to a racially majoritised worker (privileged worker – oppressed victim), but this same victim, if she is middle-aged, can occupy a privileged position in relation to a very young counsellor (oppressed worker – privileged victim).

Thus, instead of presuming that counselling without categorisations is possible, I agree with Bourdieu's (2018, 6) claim that the question "What does classification imply?" is the key. Bourdieu (2018) stated that "in everyday life, social individuals classify. You have to classify to live" (ibid., 11) and that "social life is only possible because we constantly classify, that is to say, we constantly make assumptions about the class (and not only in the sense of social class) into which we have classified the person we have to deal with" (ibid., 11). Moreover, it is not only shelter workers who classify victims; in fact, victims also classify workers. Both groups participate in the process that "classifies subjects who classify in their turn; it classifies objects that have the property of being classifying subjects (Bourdieu, 2018, 6). Therefore, the classifications that result in intersectional inequalities are not "the sole responsibility of the speaker" (Bourdieu, 2018, 14) because workers and victims encounter one another as social agents who are already classified (ibid., 10); in other words, what they both encounter "comes in already classified from" (Bourdieu, 2018, 11). Therefore, it is crucial to consider socially conditioned classifications as the basic condition of the shelter counselling relationship and address this relationship for what it is: an encounter within a hierarchical power relation in which both participants occupy subject positions constructed by various acts and processes of social categorisations and classifications.

In my research, I focus on the classification effects related to the social categories of gender and race. Although social categories may be "too simplistic to capture the complexity of lived experience" (McCall, 2005, 1776), they nevertheless represent the "classifications that social agents put into practice in their everyday lives" (Bourdieu, 2018, 2), shaping modes of thinking that are often assimilated without individuals being consciously aware of them. Social categories can be strategically used as analytical categories to document relationships of inequality among already constituted social groups (McCall, 2005, 1784) or among social agents who are already instituted and classified (Bourdieu, 2018, 18). The emphasis on the already

constituted social categories reflects the focus on the context of the social space within which the construction of subject positions takes place. However, this approach must also include considerations of the relational construction of positions in the concrete worker–victim relationship.

By combining concrete intersectional relations and dimensions of social space, I follow McKinzie and Richards's (2019) call for context-driven intersectionality as well as Choo and Ferree's (2010) call for interactive, historically co-determining and complex intersectional analysis. Therefore, I avoid the dispute about whether intersectionality is about multiply marginalised subjects or all subject positions (Nash, 2008, 9); instead, I address the different outcomes of intersectional differences and similarities (marked and unmarked categories; see Choo and Ferree, 2010, 147) in terms of their power hierarchies. I analyse their effects using neither a theory of marginalised subjectivity (ibid., 10) nor a generalised theory of identity (ibid.) but by means of an approach that sees dynamically constituted subject positions as marked by positioning, repositioning and negotiation.

To grasp the "dynamic interplay between societal in/exclusion, majoritization/minoritization and mechanisms of dominance/subordination" (Lykke, 2010, 55), my research both focuses on the oppressed, excluded and minoritised positions and aims "to critically analyze the dominant/ included/majoritized position and the intersections on which it is build" (ibid., 56). This is relevant to shelter counselling work because focusing on the privileged *and* marginalised social positions of shelter workers and survivors, together with their overall context, enables theorising the interplay of power dynamics and the negotiation of subject positions in the process of their mutual co-creation.

My intersectional analysis tries to capture moments of intersectional power dynamics in the relationship between shelter workers and victims. By intersectional power dynamics, I mean the interconnections of intersectional power relations between workers and victims and the counselling relationship. This interconnection can be enabling – for example, by empowering the agency of a worker and a victim – or constraining, as in the case of diminishing the counselling authority or the legitimacy of a worker or a victim and thus limiting the agency of both. Whether these dynamics have empowering or disempowering effects on subjects' agency

depends on the social context and the intersectional positions and agency of both subjects participating in the counselling relationship.

Intersectional differences, inequalities and negotiations in the counselling relationship function simultaneously, producing effects of experiencing entitlement, shame, disbelief, mistrust, recognition or misrecognition. They construct different legitimate and illegitimate subject positions for both participants in the counselling relationship. For example, a worker and a victim trusting and believing each other constitute the manifestation of the constructed legitimacy of their shelter subject positions. Similarly, I approach disbelief towards victims or workers as a manifestation of the undermined legitimacy of shelter work subject positions. In case of undermined legitimacy, the counsellor must work on the establishment, perpetuation and restoration of her counselling authority to recover her credibility (Sue and Sue, 2016).[27]

Victims can experience problems being recognised as legitimate subjects of shelter work. Minoritised victims may end up in a situation in which they are forced to recognise the devaluation of their own cultural belonging, or they may not recognise the prevailing counselling work and its methods as suitable for them or even possible to make use of (Nichols, 2014). Such victims may leave shelter early. This "exclusion, which perhaps has the most symbolic force when it assumes the guise of self-exclusion" (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, 42) can be misunderstood as a victim's non-cooperation with a shelter. However, such victims can also be excluded by the counsellors themselves. For example, research has revealed the existence of a high threshold of domestic violence shelters for minoritised victims

[27] Sue and Sue (1981/2016) claimed that counselling effectiveness depends on client perceptions of a counsellor's "expertness, trustworthiness, and attractiveness" and that "counselor attributes traditionally associated with credibility and attractiveness may not be perceived so by culturally diverse clients" (ibid., 159). Furthermore, barriers are likely to arise between majoritised counsellors and minoritised clients, as well as between minoritised counsellors and majoritised clients or minoritised counsellors and minoritised clients, as Sue and Sue (2016, 71) suggested. In sum, there are major obstacles that prevent honest dialog due to stereotypes and attitudes grounded in historical relationships.

(Nichols, 2014), thus "failing to accomplish the basic purpose of the shelter movement – to get the woman out of danger" (Crenshaw, 1991, 1263).

Supposing that the disempowering and exclusionary effects of everyday shelter practices on racialised victims are often unintentional and even reproduced without awareness, the issue of sensitivity to recognise the racialised power dynamics in shelter work becomes of central importance. Understanding intersectional power dynamics in shelter work contributes to the awareness of their empowering and disempowering effects on victims' and workers' agency, thus equipping workers with the tools needed to apply the necessary power strategies to counter disempowerment instead of habitually reproducing it.

To theorise the possibility of change versus the probability of the habitual reproduction of the existing inequalities in domestic violence shelter work, intersectional differences must be thought at the discursive, institutional and structural levels; in other words, "as a theoretical and methodological tool to analyze how historically specific kinds of power differentials and/or constraining normativity, based on discursively, institutionally and/or structurally constructed sociocultural categorizations such as gender, ethnicity, race, class, sexuality, age/generation, dis/ability, nationality, mother tongue and so on, interact, and in doing so produce different kinds of societal inequalities and unjust social relations" (Lykke, 2010, 50). This entails the acknowledgement that "privilege and oppression can be co-constituted on the subjective level" (Nash, 2008) and can "intersect, informing each subject's experiences" (ibid.). Therefore, it is important to focus on racialised power hierarchies that inform the counselling relationship, their (in)visibility, the struggles and strategies to negotiate constructed hierarchical positions, and their effects on domestic violence shelter work.

3.4 Racialised perceptions and practices

To address the racialised perceptions and practices of shelter work, the structural racism of this particular social space must be considered. For example, the context of Finnish domestic violence shelters is strongly marked by discrimination against racially minoritised subjects. The results of the report of the Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2019) suggested that compared to other EU countries, racism is widespread in Finland and that Finnish residents with African backgrounds experience the most racism. The European Values Study (2017) revealed the concerning scale of negative attitudes towards the Roma ethnic minority and immigrants in Finland. Approximately half of the residents in Finland do not want Roma or Somali persons for their neighbours (Nenonen et al., 2021). Moreover, Russian speakers in Finland face racism, with attitudes towards them being some of the worst (Krivonos, 2018): they are positioned as Others, and the Russian-speaking minority, which is the largest foreign-language-speaking minority in Finland (Statistics Finland, 2020), is highly visible and racialised (Krivonos, 2018, 1147).[28]

The racially minoritised position often entails disturbing visibility, expressed as the curiosity of majoritised subjects by the question "Where are you from?" which can be interpreted as a racist and othering gesture (Seikkula and Hortelano, 2021, 151). The racialised others are seen as non-local, outsiders and exceptions to the rule and must continuously respond to questions about their origin. As Essed (1994) and Rastas (2005) showed, these questions may be just a form of polite small talk for those who ask them, while the racialised other is confronted with them many times a day on an everyday basis. The same can occur with audible visibility due to having an accent. Accents and ways of speaking communicate power hierarchies (Ennser-

[28] This has to do with the "historical legacies between Finland and Russia/the Soviet Union, and Finland being part of the Russian Empire" (Krivonos, 2018, 1145).

Kananen et al., 2021; Krivonos, 2020). Russian speakers in Finland come from many different countries, but they are all categorised as Russians due to their native language (Krivonos, 2018, 2020). They are aware of their racialised audible visibility (Toivanen, 2014), which limits their possibility of passing as Finns instead of contagious Others (Krivonos, 2020, 388). Although they can only partly capitalise on phenotypical capital (Bonnilla-Silva, 2018; Krivonos, 2020), these Russian speakers use strategies such as changing their names, language and clothing to try to occupy the White position.

Structural racism is the modality of the social space in which Finnish shelters operate, manifesting itself in everyday racism. I consider structural racism as a regime that produces unequal positions and hierarchical power relations between racially majoritised and racially minoritised shelter subject positions and that facilitates the habitual misrecognition of such hierarchies with the effect of the discrimination and exclusion of racially minoritised victims. The structural racism can manifest itself at the level of shelter practices as a form of institutionalised violence, reproducing the secondary victimisation of victims. This kind of secondary victimisation can occur when shelter workers disbelieve a victim and/or do not recognise her experience of domestic violence and abuse. Misrecognition of violence not only "affects how individuals deal with violence in personal relationships, but it also affects institutional arrangements and practices concerning violence interventions" (Husso et al., 2016, 230), which, in turn, results in the victim who does not meet the domestic violence shelter criteria. Misrecognition can thus be embedded in practices as institutional violence (Gill, 2021; Piippo et al., 2021, Husso et al., 2016).

I interpret habitual disbelief directed at racially minoritised domestic violence victims as an institutionalised perception and practice that has been constructed due to structural racism (Keskinen et al., 2021). Therefore, the habitual disbelief of domestic violence shelter workers must be understood as more than just a matter of individual responsibility. Piippo et al. (2021, 128) indicated that professional response is "neither responsibility of individual professionals nor even a profession, but requires changing wider social attitudes, which produce institutional practices as blind spots." The racialising work of dividing people based on racial categories is not a question of individual shortcomings but a structural dilemma produced by the racial welfare state (Mulinari and Keskinen, 2022). The vulnerability of shelter

subjects occupying racially minoritised positions can be further intensified by contextual circumstances, such as a hostile social space and the extremely precarious situation of potential deportation (Horsti and Pirkkalainen, 2021), which exacerbate the negative effects experienced by the oppressed subject position of asylum seekers.

Paradoxically, the effects of structural racism often include the invisibility of the social category of race. Compared to other social categories, race is unlike any other: "In fact, no social categories are like any others: they have different genealogies, different effects, and they differ in terms of how they intersect with other categories. In other words, like other categories, race demands methodologies that are suitable for considering its own specific nature "(Hvenegård-Lassen and Staunaes, 2020, 225). I approach race as a socially constructed categorisation system that is based on physical and cultural characteristics, such as clothing or language (Keskinen et al., 2021). Race is a social construct that affects peoples' lives "whether individual members of the races want it or not" (Bonilla-Silva, 1997, 473; 2018) and produces stereotypes and prejudices against groups of people evoked by visible differences (Osanami Törngren, 2019a).

In Nordic countries, racial categorisation results in the discrimination and exclusion of visibly different minorities, such as immigrants and people with ethnic minority backgrounds (Hervik, 2019, 4). However, avoidance of race as a category is common (Hervik, 2019; Osanami Törngren, 2019a; Keskinen et al., 2021). Racialised stereotypes play an important role in the discrimination and exclusion of racially minoritised subjects. Seikkula and Rantalaiho (2012) showed that racism towards the Finnish Roma minority affects the possibilities for equality in the encountering process, as power, agency and the possibility of participation are relationally constituted during encountering, which is shaped by historical and material circumstances (ibid., 45). These circumstances and the social context are often marked by discrimination and racism (ibid., 41), which affects the perception of the credibility of the racialised minority Roma (e.g. as an expert or a good worker) (ibid., 45), as well as the credibility of the White Finnish majority (e.g. for researchers of Roma culture and educators of Roma children in day care) (ibid., 47, 58). Race is especially difficult to address in a social context that is marked by colour-blind ideology (Bonilla-Silva, 2014; Osanami Törngren, 2018, 2019a, 2019b) and in which race is often replaced with words such as origin, ethnic group, immigrant or

immigrant background (ibid., 137). The logic behind such colour-blindness is that "if people or institutions do not even notice race, then they cannot act in a racially biased manner, and therefore the practice reduces prejudice and discrimination" (Osanami Törngren, 2019a, 141).

Race is thus *misrecognised* in the construction of perceptions and practices, while ethnicity and culture are often used as categories for making sense of racialised others: "The terms ethnicity and culture therefore are actually used as a means of referring to people who are nonwhite, in other words, racial minorities, without referring to racial and visible differences" (Osanami Törngren, 2019a, 139). Culture is used as an explanatory factor in group differences, while racism and discrimination are neglected. Ethnicity and culture are used to make sense of racialised others when referring to visibly different individuals (e.g. according to their skin or hair colour) and are never applied to White majority residents (Osanami Törngren, 2019, 138). Moreover, in a social context marked by anti-Muslim sentiments, clothing becomes a part of a distinct form of racialisation: "Muslim women (...) were being racialized via practices of social exclusion and deploying of stereotypes that created outcomes that made them feel (...) that they did not belong" (Karaman and Christian, 2020, 518). To avoid hostility, such women either take off their hijabs or silence themselves (ibid., 529).

Although race is still being widely avoided, the word *racialisation* has been better received. Racialisation "was officially recognized as a new Swedish word to refer to a person who is categorized as belonging to a certain racial group because of the visible differences" (Osanami Törngren, 2019, 142). I use racialisation to focus on the processes of categorisation and classification that result in the construction of racially privileged and deprivileged shelter subject positions that are relationally and contextually constituted. Practices based on perceptions of race (i.e. racialised practices) produce hierarchical positions and constituent institutions, policies and everyday encounters (Keskinen et al., 2021, 51).

I approach racialisation as an epistemic habit (Aldrin Salskov, 2020) related to structural racism that works tacitly and precisely in the sense of being a habitual, routinised response. The language of habit is useful when addressing racialised perceptions and practices because it accounts for "how we are unreflexively

conditioned by our social environments," which are part of the construction of "a racialized modality by which we live as embodied beings" (Wekker, 2016, 168–173). Considering racism using Bourdieu's concept of habitus, Bahler et al. (2021) argued that race is a praxis that produces embodied habits and racialised perceptions, which "have become sedimented into our ways of being-in-the-world, instilling within us racialized (and racist) dispositions, postures, and bodily comportments that inform how we interact with others" (ibid., xviii).

The habitual reproduction of racist perceptions and practices is apparent not only in the extremism of racist subjects; rather, it is a practice in which we all participate. The systemic racism of "regular White folks rather than the racists" should, therefore, be addressed (Bonilla-Silva, 2021, 514). Instead of detecting racist perceptions and practices as aspects of others in the process of othering racism (Keskinen et al., 2021, Seikkula, 2019) or seeing it as limited to directly violent expressions of openly racist groups and individuals, it is important to acknowledge that systemic racism is embodied in our habitual ways of being. The habitual reproduction of racialisation is further enforced when the "common white folks" (Bonilla-Silva, 2021) believe that they do not have racist attitudes.

The more a shelter worker believes that race and gender do not matter in shelter work, the more smoothly the habitual reproduction of racialised practices proceeds. For example, as research on Finnish violence work has shown (Keskinen, 2011), workers inform their racialised immigrant victims of gender equality. This kind of counselling can be interpreted as a manifestation of structural racism – a habitual reproduction of the perceptions of racialised victims as victimised by their cultures – and a racialised practice of enacting a civilising mission (Mulinari et al., 2009). Eradicating racism thus demands unlearning the racialised habitus and cultivating new anti-racist habits (Bahler et al. 2021), as well as unlearning or modifying racialised seeing (Tullmann, 2021, 116). Thus, claiming to not be a racist is insufficient; what is needed is becoming antiracist, which is a process rather than an achieved identity. Being antiracist means that one constantly learns about one's own racist beliefs and actions and commits to their deconstruction as well as the construction of antiracist ideas and actions (Kendi, 2019).

Therefore, misrecognition is profoundly related to habitual reproduction and the possibility of reflexive change in the constitution of racialised perceptions and practices in domestic violence shelter work. The everyday racism embedded in structures, institutions and practices can be addressed when different agents in the institutions *notice* discriminating institutional practices; consequently, they can do something about such practices (Seikkula and Hortelano, 2021:159). The important task of antiracism is to raise awareness of the privileges related to whiteness and how White people reproduce racist concepts, practices and structures (Nelson, 2015).

Constantly learning and unlearning racial beliefs requires reflexivity. An intersectional approach to racialisation enables this kind of reflexive enquiry into racialised perceptions and practices. For example, Aldrin Salskov (2020) argued that intersectionality enables self-reflexivity, positionality and critique when acknowledging the effects of epistemic habits and epistemic whiteness to re-centre whiteness as a methodological concern (ibid., 251). The reflexive change of racialised perceptions and practices instead of their habitual reproduction is possible through the reflexive agency of shelter workers. For example, when shelter workers perceive gender and race as relevant to their work, they have the possibility of recognising the effects of power dissymmetry in the counselling relationship and of applying power strategies to facilitate empowering effects. However, if workers do not recognise gender and race as relevant, they are likely to habitually reproduce racist content (stereotypes) and the resulting power relations (oppression).

3.5 Conclusion

I have examined the worker–victim relationship in shelters as the site of intersectional power dynamics in subject position negotiations. The theory of symbolic violence enables the understanding of shelter counselling as hierarchical by default and of shelter workers as delegated holders of institutionalised authority enacting counselling work with predefined aims and objectives. However, the relative autonomy of shelter workers also means that they can engage in a reflexive

adaptation of counselling content and methods to meet the specific needs of a diversity of victims.

Although the counselling relationship is hierarchical by default and involves dominance and subordination, it is a potentially empowering relation aimed at supporting victims. Effective counselling presupposes the recognition of the legitimacy of the participating subjects' positions (i.e. workers and victims), which contributes to the establishment of trust and belief in the counselling relationship.

However, intersectional power dynamics interconnect with the counselling relationship and often result in additional power relations and hierarchies. The latter are effectively different from the empowering counselling hierarchy and result in privileged and deprivileged subject positions involving oppression. The presence of intersectional power dynamics in the counselling relationship affects the legitimacy of shelter work subjects. This effect can be either enabling or constraining, depending on the intersectional power dynamics that occur in the relationship between differently positioned shelter workers and victims.

To not recognise the counselling relationship for what it objectively is (a hierarchy) does not have negative effects on successful counselling, but a lack of recognition of intersectionally constructed subject positions for what they objectively are (hierarchical relations between privileged and oppressed positions) does have detrimental effects on shelter work. Such negative effects include the diminished agency of shelter workers and victims. More specifically, the lack of recognition of oppressive hierarchies enables their habitual reproduction.

As long as race as a socially constructed categorisation system is unrecognised as a relevant dimension for domestic violence shelter work, racialisation as the process of constructing racially privileged and oppressed positions remains firmly situated in the realm of the habitual reproduction of racialised perceptions and practices, thus stifling the possibility of reflexive change. Recognising the decisive role of race and racialisation along with their effects on shelter work is a crucial step towards increasing the agency of shelter subjects. However, this agency must be supported by enabling shelter work conditions that facilitate the intersectionally informed reflexivity of domestic violence shelter workers.

4 METHODOLOGY – AUTOETHNOGRAPHY AND ACTION RESEARCH IN SHELTER WORK

To address domestic violence shelter work and its effects on racially minoritised victims' access to safety and empowerment, I based my analysis of shelter working conditions, perceptions and practices on the following three research questions:

1. How do shelter working conditions affect the work with racially minoritised victims?

2. How do shelter workers perceive intersectional differences and with what effects on the racially minoritised victims' positions?

3. How do shelter work practices affect access to shelter services, the empowerment of racially minoritised victims and the safety of racially minoritised shelter work subjects?

I conducted my data collection in one of domestic violence shelters Finland, during eight months of autoethnographic fieldwork from the beginning of October 2018 to the end of May 2019 while also working there as a full-time counsellor. Thus, I was both a researcher and a shelter worker involved in shelter work for an average of 37.5 hours per week. Thus, during the eight months of data gathering, I completed approximately 1,200 hours of fieldwork. Prior to the research, I had been working in the shelter full time for over four and a half years, meaning I had first-hand practice-based knowledge of the studied field.

The shelter where I collected my research data had eight shelter places – eight rooms, each equipped with its own shower and toilet and multiple beds. The residents shared a kitchen and a living room. One shelter place could accommodate

an individual victims or victims with children. When the shelter was full (which it mostly was), there were minimum eight shelter residents if they were all individuals without children, which was very rare. Usually, the resident number was much higher. If all the shelter places were full and each adult had only one child, there were 16 shelter residents present. If each family had two children, then there were 24 residents in the shelter. As shelters are 24/7 crisis units, the residential situation can change quickly, which demands high stress resilience from workers, who perform their work in shifts and face an ever-changing working environment.

Despite the demanding characteristics of the shelter crisis unit and the need to accommodate numerous victims of all ages and with all the diversity of their intersectional subject positions, the shelter was relatively poorly staffed. For example, during weekdays, there were usually only two workers during the morning shift (mostly from 7 AM to 2 PM or 3 PM) and two during the evening shift (mostly from 1 PM to 8.30 PM or 1 PM to 9 PM).[29] The night shift worker worked alone from 9 PM to 7 AM and was responsible for the whole shelter, as well as the unit of the mother and child home, which was located on the same floor as the shelter. During the weekends and holidays, these staffing resources were further diminished – for example, the day shift worker did not always have a working pair and worked part of shift alone.[30]

Data collection in the demanding environment of a 24/7 residential institution providing safety for victims of domestic violence demanded careful ethical considerations, which affected my decisions regarding the scope and means of data gathering. The collected data included voice tape recordings, workshop notes and workshops documents. I approached the field through feminist intersectional autoethnography. To collect the data, I used methods of feminist autoethnography and action research. In the action research approach, I organised five research

[29] Sometimes, there was an additional worker during the co-called middle shift (10 AM to 7 PM) to enable the possibility of peer-group support work.

[30] During day shifts on holidays and weekends, the whole daywork was covered by only three workers, meaning that the shelter counsellor would work alone for at least 2.5 hours in the morning and 2.5 hours in the evening shift. The night shift worker, again, always worked alone.

workshops, which took place monthly from January to May 2019 for the core shelter team of eight workers.[31] In these workshops, shelter workers debated shelter work and their own and victims' intersectional positions and power relations in encounters with racialised victims.

My research position in the field was unique: I was situated at the intersection of the subject positions of researcher, shelter worker and immigrant. As a researcher, I approached data gathering systematically and using theoretical concepts, which enabled me to analyse workers' perceptions of intersectional differences in shelter work. As a shelter worker, I had unique access to the shelter's everyday practices. First-hand experiences of the urgency of crisis work provided me with important insights into the effects of shelter work conditions. Finally, my immigrant subject position – a native Slovene and an immigrant in Finland[32] – constituted the third important subject position, which contributed to my deconstruction of the essentialised immigrant victim as the object of enquiry.

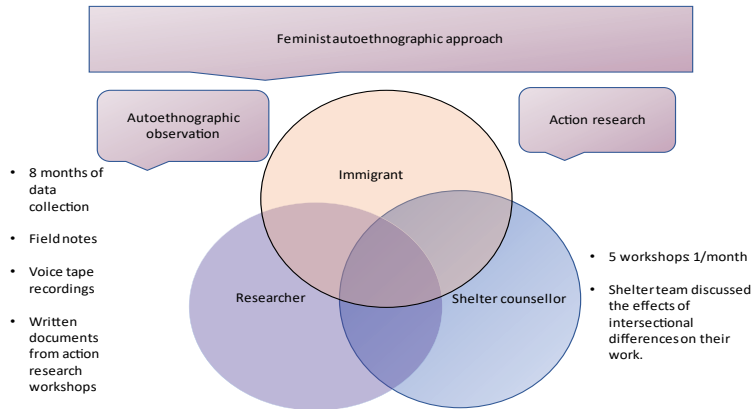


Figure 1. My intersectional position in the research field, data collection methods and the types of data collected.

[31] The core shelter team consisted of seven shelter counsellors and one shelter worker who was a team leader. I was a member of the team (thus the eighth participant).

[32] I moved to Finland in my adulthood, thus learning Finnish as a foreign language.

This complex research position (researcher, worker and immigrant) gave me privileged access to the shelter field along with its practices and prevailing perceptions and provided me with an excellent setting for collecting unique and complex data on racialisation in domestic violence shelter work. Figure 1 demonstrates my intersectional position in the shelter field, data collection methods and the types of data collected.

This chapter presents the central dimensions of my research approach, my methods of data collection and analysis, the types of data collected and the ethical considerations. First, I present feminist intersectional autoethnography as my methodological approach and the effect it had on the construction of my research problem. Then, I discuss my research methods, the types of data collected and the analytic procedures. Finally, I address the ethical considerations and practical solutions related to my research.

4.1 Feminist intersectional autoethnography as a research approach

To research domestic violence shelter work, I chose feminist intersectional autoethnography as my methodological approach, whose purpose was to provide critical reflections on my own, my co-workers' and the victims' intersectional subject positions in the shelter field. In addition to the autoethnographic approach, my positionality as a researcher, a shelter worker and an immigrant affected the development and transformation of the research problem discussed in this study.

Being a shelter worker was decisive for my initial perceptions, which were strongly affected by the discourses on cultural sensitivity in domestic violence work. Initially, I believed that we need cultural sensitivity when working with immigrant victims. However, although I shared with my Finnish colleagues the experience of how challenging shelter work with immigrant victims can be, I did not share with

them the experience of how challenging shelter work with a Finnish victim is if one is an immigrant counsellor. This insight contributed to a shift in my research focus from immigrant victims to the worker–victim relationship. Therefore, my specific positionality as an immigrant shelter worker enabled me to recognise the relational aspect of what my colleagues and I called *cultural sensitivity* at the beginning of my research.

Second, my immigrant position significantly affected the way in which I perceived and experienced shelter work. Personal experiences of social exclusion due to my foreign educational certificates, Russian-sounding name and Slavic accent when speaking the Finnish language forced me to realise that my ethnicity and immigration background decisively affected my subject position not only in relation to employment, hobbies or the use of public spaces – even long after I became a Finnish citizen – but also in my everyday shelter work.[33] I interpreted these experiences as political: a personally experienced social problem. Thus, I recognised the importance of focusing on the relational aspect of racialisation in shelter work.

I could politicise my immigrant shelter worker position because I evaluated my work experiences through informed sensitivity. The most influential kind of sensitivity that I brought with me into the shelter field was cultural capital in form of three university-level degrees: (i) social pedagogy, (ii) gender studies and (iii) social services. For example, my social pedagogical awareness of marginalisation and social exclusion processes was deepened by a social constructivist understanding of social and cultural reproduction and further sharpened by my sensitivity to gender as an intersectional social category and process. During my undergraduate degree work in social services, I widened my existing knowledge and skills with trauma theory and a trauma-informed counselling approach. All of these competences affected my

[33] For example, after experiencing a physical attack in the central bus station due to speaking my native language (which was probably misrecognised as Russian) and after witnessing several occasions of racist harassments of immigrant families on the bus, I became aware of and careful about my racialised visibility.

perceptions of domestic violence shelter work and thus the construction of my research problem.

Third, my doctoral researcher position, informed by my practice-led shelter experiences as an immigrant worker, committed me to rigorous scientific research and a systematic application of research procedures. In this case, my most important choice was to approach the research field by means of feminist intersectional autoethnography, which not only helped me deconstruct the artificial opposition between the subject–object position in research and enabled me to focus on relations instead of essentialist subjects but also contributed to the part of my data collection dealing with collaborative knowledge production in action research. The choice of feminist intersectional methodology had a transformative effect on my research focus, shifting it from immigrant victims to racialisation in shelter work, with an emphasis on the significant effects of shelter work conditions on the shelter counselling relationship. Autoethnography "creates a space for a turn, a change, a reconsideration of how we think, how we do research and relationships, and how we live" (Jones et al., 2013, 21) and thus facilitates reflection on the construction of the research problem. My description of this process is an attempt "to make explicit the intentions and the procedural principles that we put into practice in the research project whose findings we present" (Bourdieu, 1999, 607) while providing a rigorous scientific account of the research process.[34]

Feminist intersectional autoethnography can be described as a methodology and an applied method. As a methodological approach, autoethnography is highly useful for overcoming the divide between the research object and the research subject because autoethnography reformulates the traditional binary of the observer and the

[34] My research procedures were guided by ethical reconsiderations, my intersectional position and educational background and the methodology of autoethnography informed by feminist intersectionality and social constructivism. All these factors affected and shifted my research according to the "practical and theoretical problems that emerged from the particular interaction" (Bourdieu, 1999, 607) in shelter work as my research field.

observed – that is, an autoethnographer occupies the in-between space (Ettore, 2017, 4) by being both the researcher and the object of research. Therefore, an autoethnographer is not only a traditional observer but also the studied object (Hughes and Pennington, 2017, 5). As feminist autoethnography pays special attention "to the subtleties of inequalities (in race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ability, age, etc.), including the ways in which I live out sexist programming" (Kleinman, 2003, 230), I scrutinised both my colleagues' work and subject positions and my own. This enabled me to engage in a "double socioanalysis, one that catches and puts the analyst to the test as much as the person being questioned" (Bourdieu, 1999, 611).

In other words, I applied the same attention to the shelter work perceptions and practices of myself as those of my colleagues. For example, while part of my autoethnographic observations in the shelter field involved the shelter work done by my colleagues, the majority were self-observations, or systematised self-reflections of my own shelter work. Moreover, in the action research phase of the study, I engaged in the feminist intersectional autoethnographic method with my shelter colleagues and had the opportunity to observe my colleagues' autoethnographic self-observations.

Autoethnography highlights and politicises insider knowledge. For example, when I describe my experiences as an immigrant, a shelter worker and a researcher in an autoethnographic manner, I am not speaking of the personal as much as of the political dimensions of my research subject position. Insider knowledge and personal experiences contribute to a thick description of cultural experience, which enables insightful understanding (Ettore, 2017, 33). Moreover, "centering the work inside personal experience, autoethnographers not only have an investment in the experience they study but can also articulate aspects of cultural life traditional research methods leave out or could not articulate" (ibid., 34). Autoethnography enabled me to document "silenced experiences, voices, and stories to be told, mapped, and shared and hence, contribute to the ways in which we make knowledge about the world and our senses of place in it" (Metta, 2013, 491).

Autoethnography is political and has transformative power because it involves "transforming personal stories into political realities by revealing power inequalities

inherent in human relationships and the complex cultures or emotions embedded in these unequal relationships" (Ettore, 2017, 2). Therefore, autoethnography is highly different from autobiography. Whereas autobiography places the self in a personal context, autoethnography "is all about placing the 'I' firmly within a cultural context and all that it implies" (ibid.). Autoethnography presents "a person's experience in the context of relationships, social categories, and cultural practices," which means that the method "revels in sharing insider knowledge about a phenomenon" (ibid., 34).

As a methodology, autoethnography produces transformative effects. Being a methodological approach with transformative potential, autoethnography is a hybrid genre that involves "critical reflexive action research, in which the researcher takes an active, scientific, and systematic view of personal experience in relation to cultural groups identified by the researcher as similar to the self (i.e., us) or as others who differ from the self (i.e., them). It is precisely the hybridity of the genre that allows it to be applied as a stand-alone methodology as well as complementary method for assembling data" (Hughes and Pennington, 2017, 14). Jones et al. (2013) demonstrated that autoethnography is more than a method: it can be a practice for changing the world (ibid., 41) and a tool for examining and theorising experiences. Moreover, autoethnography as critical reflexive action research (Hughes and Pennington, 2017, 145–167) is "not merely about promoting change, problem solving, empowerment, or transformation" (ibid., 166); rather, it is an approach that facilitates participants' agency in building competences and practice in collaborative knowledge development (Homanen, 2013).

Autoethnography can be interpreted as the inclusion of marginalised, individual perspectives and experience-based knowledge that are often excluded from, for example, institutional ethnography (Homanen, 2013, 213). Although the starting point is in "the experience of the people doing the institutional work, and it is the experience and experience-based knowledge of work practices that form the basis for the ethnographer's analysis of wider institutional orders" (ibid., 213), my approach differed in that my starting point was autoethnography in the institutional work of a shelter. Through the action research dimension, my research became a cooperative knowledge engagement.

Using this feminist intersectional autoethnographic research strategy, I had the opportunity to participate in multidimensional collaborative knowledge production, in the communicative sense (together with my colleagues) and in the sense of dialogue between practice and theory. In dialogue with my shelter colleagues, I subjected my practice-based knowledge production to the scrutiny of conceptualised reflection, but I also asked my colleagues to engage in such reflections. This resulted in two positionally different (position of a researcher or a worker) but critically reflexive bodies of expert-based knowledge that informed each other and constructed the space for "participation for all partners and productive dialogues in which new knowledge is produced collaboratively in the meeting between the different knowledge forms that the participants bring to the dialogue" (Vehviläinen, 2013, 85).

My autoethnographic methodology involved me being a researcher at the same time as an agent performing practical everyday work in a shelter. The autoethnographic perspective includes both experience-based and scientific knowledge – in my case, these types of knowledge were related to shelter work and the effects of intersectional subject positions in and outside the shelter field. I started the action research workshops by bringing my own research design; thus, my researcher position entailed an asymmetrical power relation with my colleagues who attended the workshops and whose content they did not plan. However, my double role as researcher and shelter worker helped me to organise the workshops around central issues of shelter work; consequently, the debates were deeply grounded in experience-based knowledge to which my colleagues could relate.

Both my colleagues and I had professional practice-based knowledge. However, the use of intersectional autoethnographic reflection during the action research phase contributed to the collaborative production of critically reflected practice-based knowledge. This kind of knowledge involves conceptualisations of different social categories and their meanings for shelter work. My introduction of the intersectional autoethnographic method in the action research workshops with my colleagues facilitated "dialogue between research-based knowledge and experience-based everyday knowledge" (Vehviläinen, 2013, 93) and together, we constructed a "new kind of everyday expert knowledge" (ibid.). This research approach deconstructs the opposition between theoretical and practical problems. As

Bourdieu (1999) claimed, "There is no more real or more realistic way of exploring communication in general than by focusing on the simultaneously practical and theoretical problems that emerge from the particular interaction between the investigator and the person being questioned" (ibid., 607).

Feminist intersectional autoethnography as a methodological approach led me to the decision to use Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990) concept of symbolic violence as a central concept in my analysis of shelter work. The theory of symbolic violence (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, 1–68) was one of my observational lenses throughout the entire research process, both for data collection and the subsequent analysis. It was not only that symbolic violence theory had an impact on my observations and autoethnographic reflections; rather, my observations and reflections from the field also influenced my understanding of Bourdieu and Passeron's theory of symbolic violence. I found certain aspects of the theory particularly useful in researching the shelter work field, especially the issues of the legitimacy of a subject, institutional authority and power relations.

Despite engaging in collaborative knowledge production in dialogue with my shelter colleagues, my approach entailed a power hierarchy. As Bourdieu (1999) showed, a researcher is always arbitrarily intruding into a research field; thus, the researcher not only occupies a hierarchical power position but also participates in symbolic violence (ibid., 609). Discourses of dialogue, participation and empowerment can mask the dominance of certain forms of knowledge over others. Therefore, instead of taking the positive value of participation for granted (Phillips et al., 2013, 7), the existence of tensions and power imbalances in all forms of knowledge production should be investigated (ibid.)

However, it is possible to reduce the effects of symbolic violence in a research relationship – for example, by means of active listening within the methodological framework, proximity to and familiarity with the field and its actors and double socioanalysis (Bourdieu, 1999, 608–612). Moreover, my subject position as a shelter worker and an immigrant further contributed to reducing the unwanted effects of symbolic violence in my research design.

The social distance of the research relationship (between the worker and the researcher) was partially overcome due to my close ties with the shelter field and my colleagues, the core shelter work team, with whom I shared many ups and downs during everyday shelter work. This may have helped to reduce the fear of a patronising attitude and the fear of being turned into an object (Bourdieu, 1999, 612). My proximity to the research field also meant that I was using the discourses and frames commonly found in the shelter field, so the language of my research was accessible to my shelter co-workers. This may have enabled the participants to take ownership of the research more easily, thus resulting in high-quality responses. Bourdieu (1999, 609) suggested, participants can "only give a response worthy of the name if they can appropriate the inquiry for themselves and become its subject". As a researcher and shelter worker, I was "someone sharing virtually all the characteristics capable of operating as major explanatory factors" (ibid., 611) of shelter workers' practices and representations

Despite my very close proximity, the overlap between me and the workers was not complete: I was still an immigrant and a doctoral researcher, both of which entailed considerable social distance from my Finnish shelter colleagues. As a researcher, I defined the objectives and aim of the study without previous negotiations with other shelter workers. Moreover, there was a power asymmetry between me as a researcher and the other research participants: as a researcher, I occupied a higher place in the social hierarchy of the different types of capital (Bourdieu, 1999, 609). At the same time, my racially minoritised position, together with the fact that I spoke broken Finnish that often made my colleagues laugh, helped deconstruct some of the hierarchy related to my position of researcher with cultural capital. My linguistic vulnerability countered my authority as a researcher, which may have had an enabling effect by reducing my self-censorship during collaborative knowledge production with my co-workers. Rephrasing Ettore (2017), one could say that "I was a researcher but look what a researcher I was!"[35]

[35] "She wrote it but look what she wrote." (Ettore, 2017, 74-98).

The collaborative knowledge production process resulted in additional shifts in my research focus and in the construction of my research problem. Although I was still focusing on cultural sensitivity, power relations and immigrant position and introduced an intersectional autoethnographic reflection method to my colleagues, I became aware that we, as shelter workers, used the term culture when making sense of shelter work with immigrants and Finnish Roma.[36] The data that emerged from the collaborative knowledge production process had a decisive impact in shifting my construction of the research problematic towards questions of racialised power relations between victims and workers. Furthermore, collaborative knowledge production highlighted the importance of shelter work conditions, which I had initially overlooked in my research questions and my definition of the research problem.

In this section I have described my research approach and how it affected the construction of the research problems to demonstrate my reflexive research position(s). I have tried to make explicit the ways in which research relations in the field affected my work. As Bourdieu (1999, 608) claimed, research relations are social relations that can affect the results, which is true for any research, both quantitative and qualitative; thus, the crucial distinction is "not between the science that effects a construction and one that does not, but between a science that does this without knowing it and one that, being aware of work of construction, strives to discover and master as completely as possible the nature of its inevitable acts of construction and the equally inevitable effects those acts produce" (ibid., 608).

Using a feminist intersectional autoethnographic methodological approach to data collection in the domestic violence shelter field, I applied the research methods of autoethnographic observation and action research. In the first three months of

[36] The fact that the shelter workers discussed the Finnish Roma and the immigrants through the category culture, caught my attention. Whereas I listed race and ethnicity as the social categories for reflections on shelter work, the workers added the category culture which they used to discuss immigrant and Roma victims. In addition, both immigrants and Roma were mentioned when reflecting on ethnicity and race, even if only to negate the importance of race and ethnicity in shelter work.

data collection (from the beginning of October to the end of December 2018), I applied only the autoethnographic observation method. In the following five months (from the beginning of January to the end of May 2019), I also included the action research method.

4.2 Autoethnographic observation

In addition to being a methodological approach, autoethnography can also be used as a qualitative data collection method via techniques such as reflective journaling, videotaping, interviewing and fieldwork (Hughes and Pennington, 2017, 15). Using autoethnography as a method of data collection, I documented the numerous episodes of how power inequalities in human relationships occurred in violence work counselling and what effects such episodes produced. This meant exposing my own privileges and vulnerabilities; this process, while sometimes painful, usually indicated a struggle to negotiate the power dynamics involved in performing shelter work. The technique of documenting my own mistakes in shelter work or my own painful experiences of being verbally abused because of my way of speaking is not meant to function as a practice of confession; rather, my aim is "to call attention to the vulnerabilities that other human beings may endure in silence and in shame" (Jones et al., 2013, 22). Moreover, I use personal experiences to highlight the social processes of discrimination, which is a central part of autoethnography: "One characteristic that binds all autoethnographers is the use of personal experience to examine and/or critique cultural experience" (Jones et al., 2013, 22). By using autoethnography, I structured my experiences not only as personal but also as political: my conceptualisation brought them from the personal to the conceptual level in the process of reflecting on their socio-contextual meaning. This is one way in which autoethnography differs from autobiography; as Ettore (2017, 2) wrote, "Autobiographical research is mainly concerned with placing the 'I' within a personal context and developing insights from that perspective. It may be

political, or it may not. On the other hand, autoethnography (...) is all about placing the 'I' firmly within a cultural context and all that that implies" (Ettore, 2017, 2).

For example, as a shelter worker with an immigrant background who spoke broken Finnish and wrote Finnish with spelling mistakes, I experienced situations, emotions and bodily sensations that I would not have experienced (or I would have experienced them differently) if I were a native Finn. My broken Finnish became, besides my name, the most immediately visible sign of Otherness and, at times, meant that I was not recognised as a probable expert or a legitimate counsellor. When misrecognised as a Russian (due to my Slavic accent or my name), I also became an appropriate object for verbal assault. I documented these episodes using my voice tape recorder and sometimes took notes. Saying them out loud, writing them down and reflecting on them that I was documenting the effects of my intersectional subject position, which was decisively affected by racialisation.

I was recording my autoethnographic reflections usually right after my work shift, when driving back home or while preparing my dinner. Sometimes, reflexive insights came to my mind when grocery shopping. I would take a moment, write them down and later record them. These tape recordings were done in three different languages using my personal tape recorder. As my mother tongue is Slovene, my counselling language is Finnish and the language of doctoral research is English, I combined all three languages when taping my reflections. I tried to do recordings in English, as that would have made my transcription work much easier later on but given that I was recording my reflections right after a work shift (i.e. after using Finnish), in a context of strong emotions and often tiredness, it was natural to use words from a language that first came to my mind. When expressing emotions, I often used Slovene language. When using professional jargon, I often used Finnish until I learned the appropriate English expressions. Such data, collected using a mixture of three languages, represent the complex reality in which I was positioned in my everyday life. Having an immigrant background myself, doing counselling work in a Finnish environment and researching in English constantly positioned me at the intersection of at least three languages. This confirms the argument that the autoethnographic method produces messy texts (Metta, 2013, 495) as well as messy and rich data.

My autoethnographic documentation of and reflections on the shelter work revealed some of the complex power dynamics in the field of domestic violence work. For example, I encountered certain invisible effects – not just my own vulnerabilities when placed in a deprivileged position but also the disempowering actions that I sometimes inflicted on others (victims and perhaps workers too) because of my sometimes-privileged social position. As a White European middle-class counsellor, even when speaking broken Finnish, I could misuse my power to disempower Finnish Roma victims. Reflections on these unwanted effects produced feelings of guilt and shame, as well as a defensive feeling of annoyance – as the object of research was not easily accessible – and forced me to start shifting away from the positivist attitude of studying "cultural sensitivity in shelter work with immigrants" towards a social constructionist approach of studying relationally and contextually constructed subject positions and their effects, particularly in terms of racialisation in shelter work.

After the initial three months of data gathering using the autoethnographic method, I gained better insight into the issues of intersectional power relations in the shelter field. Building on that background, I started to develop a data collection strategy for the next five months, when in addition to autoethnographic observation, I also introduced action research methods and organised five monthly research workshops for my shelter colleagues.

4.3 Action research workshops

The action research phase of my study began after three months of autoethnographic observation in January 2019. Until then, I practiced feminist intersectional autoethnographic reflection on my own shelter work and the observed shelter practices. In the action research phase, I asked my shelter colleagues to engage in the same kinds of reflections. I organised five research workshops (one each month) for the core shelter team of eight workers, me included. The workshops

dealt with the definition of shelter work and privileged and deprivileged subject positions (Workshop 1), intersectional differences and power hierarchies in the counselling relationship (Workshop 2), typical shelter work with immigrant victims (Workshop 3), good-enough shelter work with immigrant victims and the preconditions for such work (Workshop 4) and reflections and evaluations of the whole action research process (Workshop 5). Each action research workshop lasted for three full hours, and the structure of the workshops was always the same. First, breakfast was available at the start of the workshop. Then, I presented the aim of the workshop, the background ideas and the tasks for the team. At the end, I asked for feedback.

In Workshop 1, shelter workers reflected on the core dimensions of shelter work and collaboratively constructed a temporary working definition of shelter work. In addition, I organised a privilege-walk exercise (Ojala, 2018, 208–215)[37] to sensitise the workers for reflection on the following two issues: shelter work with victims in different privileged and deprivileged positions.

The aim of Workshop 2 was to discuss the power relation between workers and victims in shelter violence work while considering social categories such as gender, religion, ethnicity, race, class, disability, sexuality, citizenship and the like. After a joint discussion on power, powerlessness and helplessness in violence work,[38] I

[37] To perform the exercise as suggested, we would have needed a lot of space to move around. As we had only one small room, we performed the exercise by using little wooden puppets that we usually use in individual counselling sessions with children. I asked my colleagues to choose a puppet and ascribe to it an imagined identity according to the categories of gender, ethnicity, class, race, disability, sexuality, citizenship and so on. The imagined identities were written on a piece of paper, and the puppet was taped to this paper. All the puppets with their imagined intersectionalities were put in the same starting line on the ground. Then, I started to read different questions, and the colleagues had to move their puppets forward if the answer was yes and backward if the answer was no. I asked questions such as the following: "Do I have to change the way I speak or behave to be worthy in others' eyes?"; "Can I go inside the store and continue shopping without the guard following me?"; and "Can I be a client of a domestic violence shelter without anyone ever saying that I am misusing the Finnish social care system?"

[38] I asked questions such as the following: What is the meaning of the mentioned categories in our work? What is power? Where is power? When do we notice power? Can power go unnoticed? Examples? Why do we think this way? Where do these ideas come from?

asked my colleagues to think of three victims with whom they were working and to reflect on their counselling relationships from the perspectives of the aforementioned intersectionalities.[39] I presented the workers with a table sheet with three columns (one for each client) that were divided into different social categories (Attachment 1). I asked the workers to think about and write down for each case how the social category affected both the worker and the victim in their counselling relationship. My colleagues, the majority of whom were Finnish, performed the task, from which I excluded myself to not impose my interpretations. At the end of my research, I named the working approach used in this workshop as an *intersectional intervention* (see methodological contributions in Chapter 8).

The aim of Workshop 3 was to discuss the contents and methods of shelter work involving immigrant victims. I provided the team with violence work diagrams showing the usual process of violence work in the shelter for the colleagues to reflect on and compare the working reality with this representation of what we were aiming for.[40] After a joint discussion, I asked my colleagues to draw their own mind maps to visually present the different phases of shelter work, the turning points and examples of encounters with immigrant victims. Each of them presented their own mind map, which we discussed together.

As Workshop 3 exposed the difficulties and even the frustrations of working with immigrant victims, I decided to build the next workshop in a more empowering way, fostering a space and the possibility of wishful imagination. I did this to also avoid causing harm by imposing feelings of work-related guilt or insufficiency, as this would have been unfair because all the workers were committed professionals aiming to do good and empower victims while often multitasking in the chaotic environment of the understaffed shelter lacking essential support services. Therefore, the aim of Workshop 4 was to discuss the conditions that would help

[39] Have they influenced counselling interaction in any way? In which cases? What was difficult? What was easy, effortless? How did you see/understand the client?

[40] I asked questions such as when and how did you conduct risk assessment? What about a safety plan? How did you apply psychoeducation? What about a motivating interview? To what degree did the client's safety improve? Do we need to change anything?

workers feel successful in counselling immigrant victims. I asked my colleagues to imagine the ideal immigrant counselling case[41] and describe its conditions and elements.[42]

At the end of my five-month action research phase, I organised Workshop 5, the last research workshop. The aim was to reflect on our action research process and evaluate its meaning for individual workers and the shelter team. I asked the workers to describe the effects of the workshops on their own work and what they would say the message of each workshop was. The workers reflected on the shelter work definition and the privilege walk exercise (Workshop 1), the intersectional differences and power hierarchies in the counselling relationship (Workshop 2), typical shelter work with immigrant victims (Workshop 3) and the imagining of the good-enough shelter work with immigrant victims and its preconditions (Workshop 4).

The action research workshops provided my colleagues with the possibility of distancing from the urgencies and necessities of crisis work in the shelter, providing them with a retreat to consider shelter work in a relaxed but goal-directed manner. The workshops placed the workers in an "exceptional situation for communication, freed from the usual constraints (particularly of time)" (Bourdieu, 1999, 614). In these workshops, I tried to "help create the conditions for an extra-ordinary discourse, which might never have been spoken" (ibid.). For example, the shelter workers reflected on the outcomes of their work with immigrants within the existing working conditions, exposing the understaffing issues and the lack of essential services. This was the moment when my construction of the research problem

[41] As readers will notice, at the time of the data collection, I was still focusing on the counselling relationship with immigrant victims instead of racialised victims.

[42] I asked my colleagues to draw an evaluation line (from 1 to 10) and asked them to evaluate the current shelter work with victims with immigrant backgrounds. Then, I asked them to think about what is or would be a good-enough practice. I asked them to write down the criteria of good-enough case handling, as well as the thoughts and feelings connected to it. Shelter workers presented their own papers, followed by a joint discussion. I took field notes and after obtaining permission from my colleagues, collected their papers as data.

shifted to include a focus on working conditions as the basis of good-enough shelter work.

The action research workshops enabled the shelter workers to play a more active role in my study; as experts in the field who were co-producing knowledge with me, they became agents in the research process. Despite my hierarchical position as a researcher, I did not approach the workshops with the intent of teaching. Perhaps because I was also one of them, a shelter worker, and knew the extent of the professional expertise and skills possessed by my colleagues, I approached the workshops with the intention of establishing a forum for guided reflexive discussion on our work.

While facilitating the workshops, I did not take a stand on what the workers said. Although I introduced the frame, the tasks and the questions, I guided the conversation by active listening instead of participating in the discussion to express my own opinions or positions. As a researcher in a privileged position, I did not want to make my colleagues feel that they had somehow given the wrong answers. At the same time, I did not pretend to occupy the same position as them; rather, I stayed in the position of researcher and colleague. In addition, not participating in the discussion had the effect of silencing my racialised shelter worker experience. I felt uncomfortable exposing my experience-based knowledge derived from the subject position of the racially minoritised. I felt embarrassed to reveal my vulnerability related to a racially minoritised position in front of those who occupied privileged positions. Thus, my constructed silence was also a result of our relational positions. As Phillips (2013, 9) suggested, it becomes "relevant to engage in reflexive analysis of how those practices co-construct research subjects and objects in particular ways that exclude alternatives."

4.4 Data and analysis

During the data collection process, I gathered four types of data. First, I collected my own voice tape recordings, in which I recorded my autoethnographic and field observations of shelter work. In the results chapters, when referring to this type of data, I use expressions such as "Voice tape recording." In total, I collected 78 voice tape recordings (transcribed into 54,091 words). Second, I collected my action research notes. I use "Workshop notes" to refer to the notes that I took during the action research workshops. In total, I collected five research workshop notes (4,975 words). Third, my data collection process involved written documents, such as tables with workers' reflections on intersectional positions in the counselling relationship, mind maps of shelter work with immigrant victims, evaluations of shelter work with immigrants and shelter workers' reflections on the action research workshops. I use expressions such as "Workshop documents" to refer to this kind of data produced by my colleagues during the action research workshops. In total, the action research workshops resulted in four research workshop documents (23 pages).

As my voice recordings were in three languages, switching from one to another irregularly, I could not use automated transcription. Thus, I transcribed the recordings manually. I used Express Scribe Transcription Software to slow down the recording and make the transcription process smoother. The transcription of the 78 voice tape recordings took 10 working days (eight hours per day). The transcribed voice tape recordings (54,091 words) consisted of approximately 92 A4 pages of voice recording data. As the workshops took place in a Finnish shelter with Finnish-speaking personnel and as the discussion was in Finnish, my research workshop notes were in the Finnish language as well. After each workshop, I collected these workshop notes in a Word document. Thus, I had a total of five research workshop notes comprised of 4,975 words. Workshop documents, such as tables, mind maps and evaluations and reflections of shelter workers, were also in Finnish. I collected seven tables, six mind maps, six evaluations and one group reflection. The written workshop documents produced by my shelter colleagues consisted of 23 pages. For the purpose of documenting, I photographed each document and grouped the pictures into four folders, one for each research workshop.

I began analysing my data by listening to my autoethnographic voice recordings, transcribing them and finally saving this material into documents ready for coding. This process provided the first insights into the emerging themes of my study. I continued with the action research data analysis (workshop notes and workshop documents) by transcribing my workshop notes and photographing the written documents that my colleagues produced to save them for coding.

I approached my multilanguage data with the aim of performing open coding in English. I used the Atlas.ti software to organise, code and categorise my data. The first aim of my open coding process was to group the data into categories (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Chamaz, 2006). The objective was to find substantial material in the data by grouping the coded sentences and paragraphs centred around the same issues into substantive codes (Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Corbin and Strauss, 2015). I used open coding as a strategy to organise the messy data around the central ideas of the text (Richards and Morse, 2013). At the beginning of the coding process, I followed the expressions used by the participants. However, the more I coded, the more I felt the need to move from the participants' expressions towards more abstract naming of the coded data.

My open coding process was informed by my theoretical framework based on feminist intersectionality and the concepts of field, symbolic violence, and domestic violence and abuse as a gender-based phenomenon with a traumatising effect. At first, I produced 92 codes, which started to cohere into common themes. Then, I evaluated these codes for content repetition and merged the codes with similar meanings. Finally, I structured the codes into the following five categories: access to shelter services, empowerment, perceptions of culturalise others, risk management and working conditions.

The category of "access to shelter services" included the following nine codes: abusing the system, believing and disbelieving, difficult work with immigrants, difficult to get help, disbelieving and re-traumatisation, (mis)recognising violence, Roma speaking the truth, service need evaluation and transnational shelters. The category of "empowerment" included the following 19 codes: baby-sitting while on crisis phone, believing and disbelieving, calling the perpetrator, client-centred work, client's self-determination, client does not know what was agreed, worker-

centeredness, costly interpretation, disbelief and re-traumatisation, empowerment, encountering, interpreter or no interpreter, language, legitimate client, power strategies, power struggles, recognising power, soft approach, and violence work or everything else? The category of "perceptions of culturalised others" included the following 14 codes: preoccupation with the asylum process, triggering asylum decisions, costly interpretation, culturalisation, culture, culture as not bad, difference between immigrant and majority victims, diversity of immigrants, immigrant client construction, immigrant worker, language, legitimate client, work is different with immigrants, and Roma speaking the truth? The category of "risk management" included the following six codes: clients' violence, racial tensions, racial profiling, safety of workers, safety planning and security of shelter premises. Finally, the category of "working conditions" included the following 16 codes: complex work, emotions, workers' needs, encountering and working conditions, hurry, institutional environment, interruptions and reflection, the Istanbul Convention, limited advocacy, multitasking, work organisation, pre-conditions for encountering, pressure from network, traumatisation, using space and vicarious trauma.

The data types affected the analysis and the representation of the results. Open coding and the development of the aforementioned categories helped me structure my research results chapters. As my autoethnographic data included many longer reflections on shelter work with victims, the stories included aspects that were useful for the analysis from different viewpoints. For example, disbelieving the culturalised victim can be related to reduced access to shelter services and disempowerment through shelter counselling. Hurry and multitasking can be related to working conditions as well as disempowering effects for encountering the victim and managing risks. Analysing the data according to all these aspects would have meant breaking the autoethnographic stories and episodes into fragments. However, the ensuing lack of context might have rendered the meaning of these fragments unrecognisable. Therefore, I decided to follow the logic of the data and include whole stories or episodes under a single category to which these data contributed the most (e.g. under "access to shelter services"), even when parts of the data could have been used to analyse another category (e.g. "perceptions of culturalised others").

Compared to autoethnographic data, action research data produced more fragmented insights into shelter work. However, these insights were crucial when

comparing and improving my own observations. In the presentation of the results, I use these fragments as additional explanations of the context. Autoethnographic voice tape recordings needed fewer contextual descriptions because they often documented the context as well.

4.5 Ethical issues in domestic violence shelter work research

The characteristics of my research field and my research approach and methods constituted the background against which I evaluated the possibility of complying with the ethical principles of scientific research[43] and adequately addressing ethical concerns.[44] The vulnerability of the agents participating in the everyday life of the shelter called for careful ethical reflection and research preparation. Although most domestic violence victims come to the shelter voluntarily,[45] some may be obliged to stay in the shelter by the child protection office.[46] During shelter residence, victims' privacy is affected and can be violated more easily. In addition, domestic violence shelter work involves certain risks of violence and abuse. Finally, shelter workers are involved full time in demanding crisis work and are vulnerable to potential harm caused by the research, such as additional working tasks in an already chaotic environment.

[43] The ethical principles that I considered were respect for human dignity and autonomy, privacy, non-maleficence, beneficence and justice (Resnik, 2015).

[44] The central areas of ethical concern are respecting the autonomy of research subjects, avoiding harm and protecting the data and privacy of participants (Finnish National Board on Research Integrity, 2009).

[45] By voluntariness, I mean that the victims did not have an obligation to the child protection office. However, shelter residency can never be considered completely voluntary because victims are there to flee domestic violence and abuse, and many would prefer to be at home if it were safe.

[46] For example, the municipal social worker can tell the mother that she and her children must go to the shelter or the children will be urgently placed at an out-of-home care.

Ethical issues in autoethnography concern relationality (Hughes and Pennington, 2017, 24). Intensive presence in a research field and autoethnographic data collection demand rigorous reflection on possible harmful effects. Autoethnographic stories, or case studies in my research, are co-owned with those who share them. This borderline space demands the "need to represent those people in my stories in the most compassionate ways possible — with care, humility and honesty and most importantly, with political and ethical sensitivity" (Ettore, 2017, 17). One's autoethnographic embeddedness in a research field entails the responsibility to "show the way ahead, to make passage to understanding available and to allow stories to unfold with scrupulousness and honor" (Ettore, 2017, 6).

Autoethnography can help avoid pinning blame on research subjects. For example, the autoethnographic approach made me more empathetic and provided me with an understanding of the habitual reproduction of inequalities while struggling to do the best possible work in sometimes impossible working conditions. Autoethnography helps avoid blaming subjects because it contributes to a better understanding of the relational and contextual dimensions of privileged and deprivileged positions (Nicholas and Cleveland, 2013). Moreover, the intersectional autoethnographic approach involves the principles of ethics and care as its central components (Ellis, 2007; Ettore, 2017), which "demands kindness to others as well as myself" (Ettore, 2017, 17).

In the process of conducting an ethical evaluation of my research proposal, data collection and analysis and issues concerning the publishing of research results, I followed the ethical principles of research in the humanities and the social and behavioural sciences from 2009 as set by the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity (TENK) (2009). My research required an ethical review for two main reasons. First, there were, to a limited extent, some exceptions to the principle of informed consent (the victims were asked for consent after providing relatively basic information on the research). Second, studying the field of domestic violence demands special attention to ensure the safety of all participants, whether victims, workers or the researcher. I applied for an Ethical Review by the Tampere Ethics Committee before applying for research permission from the Finnish Institute of Health and Welfare. My research and data-gathering plan received a positive ethical review from the Tampere Region Ethics Committee in spring 2018. The Finnish

Institute for Health and Welfare granted me research permission in autumn 2018. The domestic violence shelter in which I collected data also granted me research permission. After receiving the positive ethical review and the research permissions and having prepared the consent forms and information documents about my research, I informed my colleagues about the start of the research using a written document.

During the whole research process, I followed ethical principles such as respect for human dignity and autonomy, privacy, non-maleficence, beneficence and justice (Resnik, 2015). To ensure that my research practices contributed to these ethical principles, I constantly deliberated them in relation to the concrete context and situations encountered in the research field. As such, the ethical considerations and reconsiderations performed during the research process formed a continuum – an ongoing process of ethical evaluation of my research practices to ensure compliance with important ethical principles. Therefore, the ethical considerations in my research process could be reduced to following certain rules to justify my research approach.

I reflected on each of the central areas of ethical concern – respecting the autonomy of research subjects, avoiding harm and protecting the data and privacy of participants (TENK, 2009) – from the perspective of my research and tried to negotiate between the demands of the ethical principles, the trauma-informed counselling practice in shelter and the freedom of scientific research. TENK's (2009) ethical research principles in the humanities and the social and behavioural sciences emphasise the issue of research participant autonomy, suggesting that participation in research should be voluntary and based on informed consent.

When adjusting the content of the informed consent forms (Attachments 2 and 3) for research participants (victims and workers), I considered the definition of informed consent found in EU Article 29 Data Protection Working Party (2017): "For consent to be informed, it is necessary to inform the data subject of certain elements that are crucial to make a choice (...) at least the following information is required for obtaining valid consent: (i) the controller's identity, (ii) the purpose of each of the processing operations for which consent is sought (iii) what (type of) data will be collected and used, (iv) the existence of the right to withdraw consent,

(v) information about the use of the data for decisions based solely on automated processing, including profiling, in accordance with Article 22 (2) and (vi) if the consent relates to transfers, about the possible risks of data transfers to third countries in the absence of an adequacy decision and appropriate safeguards (Article 49 (1a))."

Although the above definition was useful for planning the consent form for shelter workers as participants in my research, the content of the consent form for victims required additional deliberation because of the specifics of the crisis work unit, to which victims arrive in urgent need of safety and protection. In these situations, victims are in shock or at least in a state of over-arousal, whereby one's thoughts, bodily senses and emotions are not integrated (Van der Hart et al., 2009; Levine, 1997), and thus individuals have difficulty processing the information from the environment and making a reasoned decision. As victims often say, they feel as if they cannot believe what is happening, or they feel they are unable to think.

Victims who arrive at the shelter are already faced with two relatively lengthy shelter documents: the contract of complying with shelter rules and the consent to cooperate with other health and social services. As a trauma-informed counsellor and researcher, I struggled with the question of whether it was too heavy a burden to ask a victim undergoing an acute crisis to decide about participation in my research.

From the perspective of avoiding harm (TENK, 2009), I found it questionable to impose an abundance of arbitrary research information at the moment when a victim is extremely vulnerable, traumatised and needs the stabilisation and sensitiveness of the first encounter. Moreover, offering detailed information about the research would not necessarily result in a victim being more informed. Even if the research details were explained to them, as the EU Article 20 Data Protection Working Party (2017) suggests, victims would not necessarily be better informed than in the case of only receiving basic information. As a researcher who had the power to select my research procedures, I could have simply complied with the demands of the consent form and claimed that the research subjects had made an informed decision. However, this practice could have been detrimental to the aim of avoiding harm.

Therefore, the challenge was how to inform victims adequately so that they could make an informed decision of whether to participate in the research without aggravating their crisis situations. After negotiating the need to adequately inform clients about my research (to ensure their voluntary participation and my compliance with the principle of participant autonomy) and the need to burden victims in acute crises as little as possible with additional information, I decided to develop the research consent form so that it provided reduced information about the research along with a reference on how to receive additional information. I believe that having to consider less information when deciding on participation does not mean that the victims necessarily make less informed decisions.

The victims were informed about the research in the Consent Form paper (Attachment 2) with basic information on the following points: research theme, researcher, data collection methods, data protection and confidentiality, anonymity, a reference to where a participant could get more information, voluntariness of participation, and the fact that participants could withdraw their consent at any time. To provide more detailed information on the research, I printed the research proposal and other research information and placed the map with the research information in the shelter living room, where it was freely available for victims to read if they wanted to and when they felt ready. In addition, if a research participant indirectly expressed annoyance, embarrassment, fearfulness or fatigue (e.g. non-verbally), I did not include them as a participant in my research to avoid unnecessary mental strain. Finally, the participants could ask me for more information at any moment, as I was present full time in the field.

By reflecting on the balance between avoiding harm and respecting the autonomy of research subjects, I followed the practices suggested by TENK (2009) and the EU Article 29 Data Protection Working Party (2017) in a modified form. As it was especially important to make sure that consent was given voluntarily by each subject in institutional settings, I planned to ask (or have my colleagues ask) every adult victim during my data collection period for consent to participate in the research. However, during the research, I realised that compliance with the ethical norms of conduct and the principle of human subject protection (Resnik, 2015, 4) demanded that to avoid causing additional harm, we should not ask victims in extremely vulnerable situations to fill in the consent form. Instead, in these situations, I decided

to exclude such victims from my data collection process. In total, during my research, I excluded three victims from the data gathering.

I agreed with my shelter co-workers that victims arriving at the shelter will be given a consent form and a short verbal explanation of the research. The signed consent forms were scanned and placed in the victims' folders in the shelter's information system; then, the consent forms were destroyed using the shelter's shredder.[47] Only adult victims were research participants, provided they gave consent; minors were not subjected to data collection in any way.[48]

Balancing the issues of avoiding harm and the autonomy of research participants took a different turn in relation to my shelter co-workers. In autumn 2017, I presented my research at the shelter team's development day. I informed the team of my research objectives and methods along with the ethical considerations. In addition to the core team of shelter workers, in the everyday life of the shelter, numerous short-term workers are also present. Thus, I added information about my research to the so-called introductory list that shelter workers use when introducing shelter work to a new worker. As the workers in the shelter may have felt pressured to participate in the study (due to fear of potential consequences for their precarious employment positions or a negative reaction on behalf of the employer), I strictly protected the information on who did and did not provide consent to participate in the study or who had possibly decided to withdraw. In the case of a person not wanting to be part of this research, I excluded them from my field notes.

Throughout the research, I attempted to reflect on my own position as a shelter worker, a colleague, an immigrant, a researcher, a White person, a woman, a middle-class person and a heterosexual person; I problematised these positions in light of

[47] I thank the night shift workers for undertaking this additional task with commitment.

[48] It would have been extremely difficult to research minors due to the need for consent from both custodians. In case of domestic violence, reaching out to the other custodian, the perpetrator of abuse, may have problematic effects for shelter work (e.g. in terms of victims' trust), as well as negative effects on safety. Finally, as I narrowed down my research focus, I decided to only collect data regarding shelter work with adult victims.

power relations and domination. By analysing the possible unwanted effects associated with my own privileged positions, I tried to avoid inflicting potential harm on the victims and my work colleagues. One form such harm could take was to burden workers with additional tasks and responsibilities in an already understaffed and chaotic everyday shelter environment. Although I had to ask my colleagues to present the consent form to incoming victims, I nevertheless tried to make their task easier by preparing two separate information leaflets (one in English and the other in Finnish) so they could more easily explain to the victims what this consent form was about.

Even though my self-identification as a researcher may have had an impact on the behaviour of the research participants, I decided to identify myself as a researcher for reasons of transparency. A significant part of this study concerned the research of power dynamics in the institutional setting of residential violence work, whereby my participatory observation intervened in vulnerable spheres of people's lives. As a researcher, I introduced the research problems and framework into this institutional setting, thus exercising power over victims and my co-workers. I wanted to make myself as a researcher visible to help address the power imbalance; therefore, the victims and workers not only had the possibility of refusing to participate, they could also influence the research by knowing who the researcher was.

I assumed that my data could be reasonably analysed without direct identifiers, such as names, birth dates, addresses and so on; thus, such data were not collected at any stage of the research. Certain indirect identifiers were important from the perspective of my research questions, such as whether a participant was a member of the racialised minority or majority, what their immigration status was and what their native language was. During the analysis, I masked these identifiers to protect the identities of the participants by deliberately changing or omitting certain categories to ensure that nobody could be identified. This could not be done in advance and had to be considered separately for each case.

When tape-recording my own reflections, l excluded from my speech the direct identifiers of research participants and the indirect identifiers that were not significant to my research. These tape recordings were done using my personal tape recorder without a connection to the internet. The data collected at the action

research workshops (e.g. tables, mind maps, evaluations and reflections written by shelter workers) included some direct identifiers of victims, which I immediately removed before saving the data. Mostly, the workshop documents included indirect identifiers that were general enough to prevent the identification of specific persons.

My research is not completely repeatable because my autoethnographic position, which combined being a researcher and a counsellor, was unique. However, the secondary research data stored for future research could be meaningful because it could help reduce research pressure on shelter subjects (TENK, 2009), such as shelter workers and domestic violence victims. Furthermore, the meaning of intersections can change over time, so the data could have cultural and historical scientific value. At the same time, the autoethnography data collected as part of domestic violence shelter work were sensitive and personal. Moreover, at the time of data collection, there was a particular team of workers employed at the workplace, which means that complete anonymisation of the shelter workers could not be guaranteed. The field of residential violence work in Finland is relatively small, and well-informed participants may recognise some workers, especially due to their expert role in the team. Against this background, I decided that my research data would not be stored for secondary research.

4.6 Conclusion

Approaching the domestic violence shelter field through feminist intersectional autoethnography, I used the methods of autoethnographic observation and action research during an eight-month data collection process in the shelter where I worked as a full-time shelter counsellor. My unique positionality in the research field, which combined the positions of researcher, immigrant and shelter worker, enabled me to collect rich data on the everyday practices of shelter work and contributed to the reconsiderations and transformations of my initial research design. For example, although I began my research by focusing on the cultural sensitivity of shelter work with immigrant victims, I later shifted my focus to racialisation in shelter work.

Action research as an approach to collaborative knowledge production resulted in expanding my research questions to include the issue of working conditions in shelters.

The research data consisted of voice tape recordings, research workshop notes and research workshop documents and were categorised into central emergent themes, namely working conditions, racialised perceptions and racialised practices related to accessibility, empowerment and safety. These themes frame my analytical chapters.

5 NEGLECT BY DESIGN – SHELTER WORKING CONDITIONS

This first empirical analysis chapter highlights the working conditions in domestic violence shelters, which are rarely considered in domestic violence shelter research. Although shelter workers' cultural sensitivity and an intersectional understanding of domestic violence victims' positions can be crucial for improving the quality of shelter services for all (Kulkarni 2018), the working conditions in which shelter workers perform their work and so (re)produce or resist exclusionary and disempowering effects on racially minoritised victims remain largely unaddressed. Therefore, considering these working conditions is a necessary step in improving our understanding of the structural preconditions for sensitive domestic violence shelter work with racially minoritised victims. This chapter focuses on the everyday conditions of shelter work and how they affect shelter workers and victims, with a special focus on the effects on racially minoritised victims. The chapter tackles the first of the three research questions of this dissertation: How do shelter working conditions affect the work with racially minoritised victims?

Certain characteristics of domestic violence shelter work constitute an integral part of the work itself. For example, just as working in construction poses certain risks for construction workers, working in a domestic violence shelter carries the risk of psychological traumatisation for shelter workers. Such risks and their possible negative effects can be managed by proper health and safety precautions at work. Therefore, working conditions are a political decision. For example, whether safety precautions that minimise the risks of psychological traumatisation at work are implemented is one such decision. In my analysis of the characteristics of shelter work, I lean on and contribute to the currently scarce research on shelters as institutions, their everyday conditions and the effects of these conditions on shelter

workers and their work (as discussed in Chapter 2). My autoethnographic observation data reveal the typical characteristics of domestic violence shelter work, including its effects on shelter workers. In addition, my action research data emphasise the voices of my shelter colleagues as an important contribution to collaborative knowledge production on the effects of shelter work conditions.

Working conditions in shelters constitute a specific set of contextual opportunities and limitations for shelter work. Stating that these conditions affect shelter work means saying that they affect both victims and workers because shelter work involves a relationship between them; thus, I focus on the primacy of relations in the shelter field (Bourdieu, 2020). To explain the effects of domestic violence shelter work on shelter workers, I lean on trauma-theoretical insights into the effects of domestic violence counselling on counsellors, such as secondary traumatisation and vicarious trauma (Cummings et al., 2018; Iliffe and Steed, 2000; Rothschild, 2006; Slattery and Goodman, 2009). These effects can be exacerbated by working conditions characterised by a lack of essential services and understaffing, which I interpret using the concepts of gendered work and the gendered austerity measures of the Finnish welfare state (Elomäki, 2019; Hirvonen et al., 2020; Karsio et al., 2020), which have considerably affected the fields of social work and care work.

To systematise the presentation of working conditions in domestic violence shelters, I first address the characteristics of domestic violence shelter work and their effects on shelter workers. The analysis is centred on the emergent themes of everyday shelter work, such as horrifying survivors' experiences, workers' feelings of emergency, over-arousal and exhaustion, and the tension between being emotional and being professional. Second, I address shelter working conditions, such as understaffing and the insufficiency of essential services. My analysis highlights working conditions and their effects, such as busy phonelines, the rush and the extensive workload while also having to clean and baby-sit, contact the abuser, neglect risk evaluation and safety planning, participate in lengthy interpreter-assisted discussions and measure work quality – and the impossibility of truly meeting victims' needs – against the available resources. The analysis reveals shelter working conditions and their effects on workers and racially minoritised domestic violence survivors.

5.1 Constant exposure to violence and abuse

The characteristics of domestic violence shelter work that are difficult to change but can be managed and/or balanced are related to several central dimensions of shelter work. First, a shelter is a 24/7 low-threshold crisis residential unit for victims of domestic violence, where workers – who work in a high-stress and trauma-exposed field – are constantly on alert to respond to victims' needs and emergencies. Second, domestic violence counselling has well-known traumatising effects on shelter workers (Baker et al., 2007; Iliffe and Steed, 2016; Merchant and Whiting, 2015). These effects are commonly defined in terms of secondary traumatic stress (due to hearing first-hand experiences of violence) and vicarious trauma, which result in profound shifts in workers' worldviews due to repeated exposure to traumatic material (Cummings, 2018; Iliffe and Steed, 2016). Third, in the context of highly stressful crisis work, which exposes workers to traumatic material, workers perform planned and intentional domestic violence counselling with survivors of domestic violence and abuse, including individuals and groups, as well as adults and children.

Considering the aforementioned characteristics separately, one could claim that they are typical not only in shelter work. For example, some social services offer 24/7 crisis residential accommodation to address acute situations such as homelessness or the emergency placement of children. Other open-care services offer individual and/or group counselling for adults and/or children who are victims of domestic violence. However, although exposure to survivors' accounts of domestic violence has traumatising effects on many workers in the field of social services, not all social service professionals have a 100% domestic violence caseload.[49] The uniqueness of domestic violence shelter work is precisely that all of the above-mentioned aspects are present simultaneously.

[49] A 100% domestic violence and abuse case load means that all clients of a worker/counsellor are victims/survivors of domestic violence and abuse.

For example, as a shelter is a 24/7 crisis unit providing immediate safety and protection for domestic violence victims, workers must be alert and ready to provide an immediate response when needed. This means that shelter workers are on duty and must always respond to phone calls. Often, a shelter worker is the first responder to a victim calling directly after, or even in the middle of, a violent event. Victims can also arrive directly at the shelter doors asking for help and must be immediately interviewed, and the shelter accommodation must be organised for them. When victims are referred to the shelter by the police or social workers, the shelter is often informed on very short notice that new victims are arriving. Such crisis work thus poses specific demands for shelter workers: with the element of surprise, peaks in demand and quick situational shifts, workers have limited possibilities of planning their counselling schedule. As Merchant and Whiting (2015) showed, very few shelter workers' duties are predictable, and workers must deal with the chaos, stress and frustration of the crisis-laden shelter environment (ibid., 471).

In addition, the residential aspect of domestic violence shelter work presents a considerable risk of workers experiencing secondary traumatisation[50] because of continuous exposure to victims' accounts of violence. Moreover, domestic violence survivors temporarily live in the shelter, which intensifies the effects of exposure to survivors' trauma, as workers witness the violent material repeatedly and continuously. Above all, domestic violence shelter workers are also exposed to direct traumatisation due to various forms of internal and external violence and abuse risks and/or threats. For example, perpetrators may threaten the shelter and its workers or even come to the shelter attempting to gain entry. The shelter residents themselves may become verbally abusive towards the workers, especially when the shelter fails to meet their needs and expectations.

[50] Secondary traumatisation is different from secondary victimisation. Whereas the first refers to repeated or extreme exposure to the details of traumatic situations and is often described as victims' symptoms being transferred to workers, the second refers to the harmful individual and institutional practices of dealing with victims (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2021).

It is important to address the effects of workers' full-time exposure to victims' accounts of domestic violence and abuse and how these effects become intensified by shelter work conditions. For example, traumatised and overburdened counsellors tend to be less capable of facilitating empowering encountering (Iliffe and Steed, 2000) and are likelier to leave the domestic violence field (Merchant and Whiting, 2015). Although the importance of trauma-informed practice in domestic violence work with victims is nowadays widely acknowledged (Blitz and Illidge, 2006; Kulkarni, 2018), a trauma-informed understanding of domestic violence work effects on workers is lacking. However, a trauma-informed approach must be applied to the workers, as Rothschild (2006) famously suggested. Therefore, a trauma-informed approach contributes to a better understanding of both the effects that domestic violence has on victims and the effects that domestic violence shelter work has on shelter workers.

The action research data that I collected during the research workshops with shelter workers revealed that the shelter workers emphasised the intensity of shelter work, which affected both the workers and their clients:

> Compared to other services, the shelter is a 24/7 institution where the clients are like at home, and their stories are coming to our skin, literally. It's more difficult for workers to protect themselves (...). We must recognise the clients' and our vulnerability. (Workshop notes, D1)[51]

Shelter workers listen to victims' experiences of physical, sexual, economic, psychological and other kinds of violence and abuse every working day, write reports on the conversations they have with victims, perform risk evaluations, report to other workers on domestic violence cases and write child welfare notifications and reports to the police. Workers are fully immersed in the themes of violence, a lack of safety and security and survival. The full-time presence, availability and proximity of workers and victims in the shelter intensify the traumatisation, as workers are directly exposed to and closely witness the personal crises and pain of the survivors.

[51] I wrote these notes in the Finnish language during the research workshops in which shelter workers discussed their work. Thus, although my data from the workshops were originally in Finnish, I translated them in English for this text.

My analysis of everyday shelter life suggests the reality of the worrying effects of full-time exposure to accounts of violence.

5.1.1 Dreadful stories

Shelter workers' working environment is where survivors temporarily live their lives. Repeated exposure to traumatic material affects shelter workers' well-being. For example, repeated stress accumulates and can develop into vicarious traumatisation, affecting workers' worldviews and belief systems (Cummings, 2018; Iliffe and Steed, 2000; Nikischer, 2018). My autoethnographic observation data demonstrate the cumulative effects of repeated exposure to traumatic material. After returning from a short holiday, my shift began with a team meeting during which workers reported on victims' cases. Being rested myself, I noticed the tiredness of my colleagues. After listening to their reports and realising that a victim who had suffered significant violence was still in the shelter (meaning that she was there before I had left for the holiday) and that I would be working with her next, my emotional and bodily state turned into overwhelming anxiety:

> I just came back from holiday and noticed that my colleagues were tired. I was not, I actually was feeling well (...). But then, when I was listening to the report, I was surprised by my emotional reaction. So, we have this client (...) the victim of an extremely serious violence… She could have died because of it (...). When I realised which case we were talking about and that I'll be working with her, supporting her and encountering her pain and over-arousal (...). I started to have quite a strong reaction (...). I was getting anxious thinking that I will be so closely dealing with such a difficult case. Those stories are just truly dreadful (...) and we listen, non-stop, to these brutal violence stories, and the whole ugly and evil side of human existence (...). And my reaction was really physical, an aversion. (Voice tape recordings, D16)

This example demonstrates the considerable traumatising effects that trauma exposure has on workers, a finding that is in line with previous research showing that shelter workers are often shocked by the severity of the violence and by witnessing the concrete injuries of victims, such as broken noses and faces covered in bruises. For some workers, "the hardships of hearing these stories never fully abated" (Merchant and Whiting, 2015, 471).

5.1.2 Feelings of emergency

In addition to the traumatising effects of continuous exposure to traumatic violence material, my study suggests that these effects often become intensified in interpreter–assisted work, which is often central in shelter work with racially minoritised victims. For example, in the case of interpreter–assisted counselling over the phone (when the interpreter is not physically present), the victim and the worker must sit closely to each other and the phone so that the interpreter hears them. They sit much closer than they would usually sit if the interpreter were physically present, which intensifies the stressful reaction of the worker:

> The way in which the client was speaking, completely over-aroused, basically shouting, being very stressed, worried and telling shocking things, it affected me very much (...) I felt that my cheeks flush, I knew that I am over-aroused (...) and in such a demanding situation, using the interpreter on the telephone (...) lacking the non-verbal communication with the interpreter while the client is completely out of control (...). During the conversation, I realised that I am starting to react physically .to this stress, as if my body were taking hits from the client's stress (...). My cheeks are hot, heart pounding, and I have a feeling of emergency, a feeling that (...) I need to do something now, immediately. (Voice tape recordings, D25)

Physical proximity to victims during domestic violence counselling makes it even more difficult for workers to protect themselves from survivors' traumatic stress (Rothschild, 2006). The autoethnographic observation above describes my stressful bodily reactions to the victim's traumatic stress and crisis, the effects of which were intensified by the fact that I was counselling with the assistance of an interpreter over the phone and thus sitting close to the victim.

5.1.3 Mind trapped in the shelter

When such a counselling meeting occurs in the evening and the worker has a morning shift the next day, the worker may have difficulties lowering the stress levels quickly enough to recover before the next shift. The data below show my reflections while I was driving to the morning shift after a busy and hectic evening shift that

resulted in a sleepless night. I realised that besides sleeplessness, I was experiencing various aches:

> I am starting the morning shift at seven after yesterday's evening shift, which was until nine (...) and I could not sleep because the working situations from yesterday, the people, their problems, their emotions, everything was going on and on all over again in my head (...) I tried to think about other things, but my mind was still in the shelter, solving the problems of the clients. I felt annoyed and frustrated, I also felt very much awake (...) and now I am back again, feeling anxious… I have had a headache from yesterday and also stomach ache. (Voice tape recordings, D26)

The above quotation describes typical symptoms of secondary traumatic stress. Over-arousal resulting in sleeplessness and intrusive images of survivors' cases, together with different somatic aches, are typical symptoms of secondary traumatic stress and are similar to post-traumatic stress disorder (Cummings et al., 2018; Iliffe and Steed, 2000; Slattery and Goodman, 2009).

5.1.4 Exhaustion

Stressful working events and a lack of support can lead to work-related burnout, whose common signs are illness and headache, tiredness, feelings of depression and irritation (Illiffe and Steed, 2000, 406). Exposure to victims' trauma and a lack of support increases the likelihood of burnout (Cummings et al., 2018), which can be experienced as exhaustion and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment (ibid., 4). My study confirms some of these long-term effects of domestic violence shelter work. The data excerpt below suggests a loss of confidence in professional skills and such an extent of tiredness that the days off work are used for recovery only:

> My days off (...) I was very tired, I only slept, ate (...) and was otherwise tired very much all the time right, and also like, nervous (...). I have difficulties concentrating at work (...) and I began doubting myself: Am I really capable of doing my work well? (...) I feel such tiredness, like my brain doesn't function anymore, as if I am in some kind of fog and I feel like I would need one month of vacation. (Voice tape recording, D74)

The above quotation demonstrates the traumatising effects of domestic violence shelter work on workers. These effects are important from the perspective of

sensitive encountering of abuse victims. Overburdened and traumatised workers may engage in self-protective distancing from victims, which, in turn, has negative effects on empowering encountering. As Cummings et al. (2018) showed, a counsellor's self-protecting distancing affects the counselling relationship, as the survivor may not feel heard and understood and may be left without a validation of her experience. Cummings et al. (2018, 396) described this as workers' natural avoidance response. Thus, when counsellors do not get enough support for secondary traumatisation, this may result in the secondary victimisation of victims because the workers distance themselves to cope, and the victims are left without having their victimisation heard and validated (Cummings et al., 2018, 401).

Although all shelter residents are at least theoretically at risk of secondary victimisation, worker exhaustion seems to have particularly disturbing effects on survivors in the most vulnerable positions. Particularly when working with refugee survivors of domestic violence, workers may be exposed to extensively traumatic material linked not only to domestic violence but intertwined with the trauma of war, prosecution and torture. Such a shelter case further strains the counselling relationship, as a worker may distance herself in an automatic act of self-protection while the victim may experience the encounter with the distant worker as just another example in a series of institutional disempowerments. Therefore, the appropriate management of the traumatising effects of domestic violence shelter work on shelter workers is crucial to providing high-quality shelter services for domestic violence survivors.

As the study by Merchant and Whiting (2015) showed, shelters that are successful in managing the challenges of domestic violence work are likely to have higher employee retention. In other words, whether a shelter culture was supportive or demoralising affected workers' decisions to either continue their employment or leave the domestic violence field. One aspect of a shelter supportive culture was that workers could turn to their co-workers and supervisors for emotional support (ibid.). My research suggests that the employer of the shelter in which I conducted my research did take traumatisation into account, though it seems that the actions taken were insufficient. For example, shelter workers were offered group supervision once a month to counter the traumatising effects of shelter work on the workers. Another action was the introduction of psychological defusing into the shelter's everyday

practices. However, my data indicates that the extent of these efforts to manage the traumatising effects of domestic violence shelter work on workers might have been insufficient.

5.1.5 Expertise and feelings

The emotional burden of domestic violence shelter work was evident not only in my autoethnographic observations but also in my action research data, as the shelter workers had the possibility of making their voices heard. Although the shelter workers expressed the need for mutual emotional support, they also argued that defusing does not fit well with everyday shelter work. Despite being trained in defusing, which they found necessary, they did not apply defusing in their work:

> It's important to discuss our feelings, own feelings that arise, so one could learn to reflect on them… (Workshop notes, D4)

> Defusing would be good, but it does not fit the shelter's everyday practices. (Workshop notes, D4)

Indeed, during my eight months of data collection in the shelter field, not a single defusing meeting was organised, which is stunning considering the traumatising characteristics of shelter work. The worker quoted above suggested that while the idea of psychological defusing is good, its practical realisation is impossible due to shelter work conditions. This statement comes as no surprise. For example, given that workers can hardly arrange for an uninterrupted counselling meeting with clients (as this chapter will show), it is difficult to imagine that shelter workers could perform uninterrupted defusing for one another. In addition, one worker suggested that in the field of social work, there is still a strong culture of having to deal with your feelings on your own, and emotions should preferably not be shown to maintain an image of professionality:

> The working culture in the field of social work is like, "You have to get along with your own feelings," as if having feelings would make you less of an expert. (Workshop notes, D4)

The worker quoted above reflected on the expectations of dealing with emotional reactions privately and in isolation, which is one aspect of a demoralising shelter

culture identified by Merchant and Whiting (2015). In contrast, a supporting shelter culture enables workers to turn to each other when they are "shocked by the inhumanity of violence or overwhelmed by the chaos of shelter life" (ibid., 478). Although, in my study, the shelter workers did offer emotional support to each other informally, the institutional structure for systematically addressing traumatic burden was insufficient. My study suggests that workers' experiences of mutual emotional support are important and contribute to a better understanding of shelter residents' cases. As one worker suggested, reflections in the shelter team enabled the realisation of new things:

> In certain client cases, it would be good to have a case discussion with the team because only afterwards one realises some things… (Workshop notes, D4)

In general, my study indicates that shelter workers have an unmet need to slow down and reflect on the different aspects of shelter work together. Moreover, my autoethnographic data underlined the difficulty of deliberate planning and professional reflection in counselling work:

> Everyone can interrupt you at any time, the clients and the colleagues, and the ringing of the phone. You have to go open the doors, you're on call all the time, and then you are supposed to do some deeper reflection on own work and planning (...). It really would be very important for the quality of the work. Whether you offer the client appropriate support in the right moment (...) it depends a lot on how you reflect on things, and for this you need time (...) you must sometimes also read previous counselling reports, you must find materials (...). (Voice tape recordings, D79)

In exploring the effects of domestic violence shelter work on the workers, I considered the field to be relational (Bourdieu, 2020), with relations producing effects that contribute to both short-term (e.g. avoiding behaviour) and long-term cognitive changes (e.g. vicarious traumatisation) (Cummings, 2018). Such long-term changes in workers' cognition can be understood as shifts in habitus (Bourdieu, 1990). Furthermore, short-term and long-term changes affect workers' abilities to be flexible and think clearly, which are needed for coping in the chaotic, crisis-laden environment of a domestic violence shelter (Merchant and Whiting, 2015). While reacting automatically to the overwhelming demands of their working environment, shelter workers thus have a reduced capacity for reflexive shelter work, especially when it comes to sensitive shelter work with racialised minorities, as I will show later.

Thus, effective management of the traumatising effects of shelter work is of central importance. By institutionally balancing the effects of the relational conditions of the domestic violence shelter field, workers can be provided with adequate conditions for their work, which would, at least at the institutional level, enable reflexivity. Thus, I argue that the possibility of sensitive shelter work is also institutionally produced instead of simply depending on the professional competence of an individual worker. Not balancing the traumatising effects of domestic violence counselling on the worker means reducing the worker's agency by increasing habitual, non-reflexive reactions instead of deliberate, reflected actions. When the traumatising effects of shelter work are properly balanced, workers have more agency and thus a greater capability for flexible, inventive, reflected and deliberate counselling. However, my research suggests that the conditions of domestic violence shelter work intensify rather than balance the traumatising effects of shelter work.

What are these working conditions that pose such strenuous demands on shelter workers that the latter have little possibility of reflecting and deliberately planning their work, performing psychological defusing to emotionally support each other and feeling good about the important work they do in domestic violence shelters? I offer some answers to these questions by shifting the focus to the conditions of state-funded shelter work in the Finnish welfare-state system. Research on shelter practices from the perspective of shelter workers or residents is rare in the Western social space (Hughes, 2020; Merchant and Whiting, 2015), and the same is true in the Finnish context: studies on everyday shelter work practices and their connections with intersectional effects are absent. My thesis thus provides new insights into everyday domestic violence shelter work and reveals the detrimental effects of shelter working conditions on workers, victims and the shelter work itself.

5.2 Understaffing and insufficient essential services

The working conditions that profoundly and negatively affect the possibility of performing sensitive domestic violence shelter work with racially minoritised survivors are understaffing and the insufficiency of essential services. There are several detrimental effects of the unfortunate combination of demanding domestic violence shelter work and these shortcomings in working conditions. First, individual counselling meetings are interrupted, which affects the worker–victim encounter, further intensifying these effects for racially minoritised victims. For example, the needs of non-Finnish speakers are neglected because interpreter-assisted counselling cannot be done later (an interpreter is present for a specific time slot). Second, shelter workers feel frustrated, experience their work as insufficient and inadequate and lack possibilities for professional reflection. Finally, the combination of understaffing, a lack of essential support services and the intersectional dynamics of racialisation (to be addressed in Chapters 5 and 6) all affect risk evaluation and, consequently, the safety and security of both shelter workers and domestic violence victims (see Chapter 7).

When presenting the concrete working conditions in which shelter workers are embedded in everyday shelter work, I analyse the problem of understaffing not only in relation to the number of shelter residents but also in relation to the diversity of victims and their needs as well as the characteristics of crisis work. Moreover, understaffing is related to the diversity of work tasks and duties that shelter workers are expected to perform in addition to the domestic violence work itself. To understand the working demands on individual shelter workers, familiarisation with the context is important. Therefore, I will now describe the general everyday shelter working conditions.

At the time of data collection in the shelter where my research was done, the shelter workers performed their work in shifts. There were usually two workers during the day shift and one worker only during the night shift. During weekends and holidays, these human resources were further minimised, and the day-shift worker did not always have a working pair, thus having to perform a part of the

working shift alone. The shelter's low entry threshold means that anyone who is a victim of domestic violence and abuse is offered a place, so there is a wide diversity of people seeking help from the shelter: from those who are fully able and independent to those who need more assistance, support and help with their everyday activities. Shelter residents can be majority Finns or ethnic minorities, foreigners and asylum seekers, babies and the elderly, people with different disabilities and individuals with other issues, such as active substance abuse or serious mental-health problems.

Working tasks were a mixture of duties, some directly related to domestic violence shelter work and others less so. The counsellors always kept the shelter phones with them, responding to calls from victims, officials (police or emergency social workers) and other network partners. Shelter doors were locked, and shelter entrances and the surroundings were monitored by security cameras, which counsellors checked when someone was using the doorbell. The doorbell of the shelter was also connected to the counsellors' phones. As the shelter was located within a larger building with different institutions and given that this building had no reception or entrance information, the shelter counsellors often responded to the doorbell in cases not connected with shelter work. Because reception work was also delegated to shelter workers who were always on duty, different visitors. such as construction workers, IT support, renovation workers and clients of the mother and child home or their visitors, often called to the shelter phone to ask the doors to be opened for them. This made the already-busy counsellors' phone lines even busier. If a phone line was taken, the doorbell was redirected to the second phone line. The same was true for regular phone calls: if phone line number one was busy because the counsellor was responding to the doorbell, the phone call was redirected to the second phone line. For safety reasons, the shelter had a security system that enabled the counsellors to call for additional help or to trigger a general security alarm to receive assistance from security. This alarm was also connected to the counsellors' phones; thus, it was crucial for the counsellors to always keep their phones with them.

To analyse the problem of understaffing in the crisis work environment of domestic violence shelter work from the perspective of everyday shelter work, I will continue with the presentation of my autoethnographic research data. This material

provides examples of concrete situations in which understaffing plays a decisive role in producing disempowering effects on victims and workers while exacerbating these effects for victims in vulnerable positions.

5.2.1 All lines are busy

Understaffing in shelter work causes continuous interruptions. My study shows that unanticipated interruptions affected the way in which the workers used the shelter space. As victims' rooms were all on one floor, while the room for counselling and network meetings was upstairs, one counsellor and the victim would be at the counselling meeting upstairs, while the other counsellor would be left alone downstairs. If the victim at the counselling meeting had children, they were left downstairs with the other counsellor, who was expected to babysit while simultaneously being on alert, responding to crisis calls, the doorbell, unexpected visits, sudden arrivals of new victims and the needs of those who were already shelter residents. In such work circumstances, the counsellors often decided that the counselling meeting would not be held in the room upstairs but in the victim's own room downstairs. The benefit of both workers being on the same floor was that in the case of urgent situational demands (e.g. the counsellor who is babysitting has a crisis call or a visit), the other worker would be close by and could interrupt the counselling meeting to assist with the situation at hand.

Interruptions of individual counselling meetings were, in fact, more common than one would expect. The following autoethnographic observation indicates that understaffing in the shelter was a major structural obstacle to performing adequate individual counselling work with victims of domestic violence, especially in the case of interpreter-assisted work with immigrant victims:

> I was at the counselling meeting with my immigrant client and the interpreter on the phone, and this woman, she was very sad, and she was crying (...). Well, we are only two workers in the shift, so while I was in this counselling meeting, my co-worker had Phone Number 1 and was also taking care of the client's two children (...). So, the client was crying, and the moment was really sensitive, when my Phone Number 2 started ringing; there was a plumber in the backyard who had come for some maintenance work. I had to interrupt the crying woman in this interpreter counselling

> meeting (...) and I was wondering why my Phone Number 2 is ringing when my colleague is supposed to answer the calls (...).
>
> I looked out the room and saw my colleague having a crisis call on Phone 1, and at the same time she was babysitting. Because her line was busy, all the other calls were directed to Phone Number 2, which I had, I interrupted my meeting with the client. After this plumber, my phone rings again, it's the shelter doorbell, and of course I needed to react (...). And after the doorbell, our director is calling, telling me that she has just noticed that if one calls the doorbell of the shelter, there is no one responding, and there is an automatic reply saying all the lines are busy (...) asking, why is this so?
>
> Well, I said to her, because all the lines are busy. On Phone Number 1 there is a crisis call, and Phone Number 2, we are now speaking and before there was a plumber and the doorbell (...) and if there are many calls at the same time, then all the lines are busy (...) I went back to my immigrant client (...) and I said to her that I am very sorry that I had to interrupt the counselling. And the interpreter, instead of interpreting that, responds in Finnish directly to me, "Oh, that's all right!" So, I mean, everything went completely wrong to the point of being absurd. (Voice tape recordings, D19)

This unfortunate episode shows how working conditions shaped the (im)possibility of sensitive counselling work. The interpreter on the phone became an additional challenge in an already difficult situation, and the interrupted counselling meeting could not be delayed because later, there was no interpretation available. This situation is an example of the intensified intersectional effects of shelter working conditions: when the working conditions result in interrupted counselling work, this affects all victims, but the effects are not the same for everyone. Instead, the negative effects of repeated interruptions become intensified for those victims who need interpreter-assisted counselling. As the interpreter is booked for a particular time slot, workers cannot catch up on the lost counselling later.

The data suggest that understaffing and a lack of essential services, such as babysitting, negatively affect the possibility of respectful encountering between shelter workers and victims. Moreover, the working circumstances produce situations in which victims' needs are put aside to respond to the overwhelming fluctuations of other situational demands, such as victims calling the shelter crisis line, a plumber who needs instructions, a director who wants the doorbell to work properly and the children who need minding while their carers (both workers and mother) are busy. The result of such circumstances is that, in practice, individual

counselling with victims is often interrupted and paused right in the middle of a sensitive moment when a client is crying. Such interruptions produce chaotic counselling meetings in which victims are neglected and silenced, and planned violence work counselling remains undone. This finding is important because it presents a vivid description of what occurs within shelters from the perspective of victims and their workers, something that is rarely documented in extant research (Hughes, 2020; Merchant and Whiting, 2015).

Such interruptions have negative effects on victims and their workers. For example, my autoethnographic data show that after this situation, I reflected on the demoralising effect on both myself and the client:

> The client really had to feel like shit (...) this is also very frustrating The whole encounter was really chaotic because of the working conditions, so I felt and still feel like crap. (Voice tape recording, D19)

When victims are met with insensitivity towards their needs and the planned violence work is not done, the workers are well aware of the discrepancy between the ideal of empowering encountering that they are supposed to follow and the reality marked by improvisation and expectations of flexibility within unreasonable working demands that are doomed to result in disempowering encountering. The fact that a shelter worker cannot protect counselling time from other interruptions generates feelings of insufficiency and guilt for the worker.

5.2.2 Everyone in a hurry

Particularly in the sensitive moments of new victims' arrival, shelter workers are expected to handle an unreasonable amount of situational demands, which often results in victims' disempowerment and workers' frustration. My autoethnographic data below exemplify such a moment when a new victim arrived with her children, and I, as a shelter worker, could not provide a proper counselling meeting:

> This mother just arrived (...) she did this really big decision to go to shelter, (...) and she started to cry, and in this moment my phone started to ring, and I needed to open the doors of the shelter, with another new client just arriving. It made me feel bad (...)

> these are the things that one remembers. When you come to a shelter, you'll always remember what happened next (...) were you treated nicely or was there a hurry and nobody had the time for you. I felt guilty for not being able to offer good enough encountering to her. (Voice tape recordings, D38)

Moreover, workers' feelings of insufficiency and personal guilt are unproductive because they imply individual responsibility for proper encountering instead of recognising that it is the working conditions that shape possibilities. This finding suggests that the effects of understaffing are intensified when new victims arrive – that is, when the understaffing and the lack of essential services (e.g. childcare and room-cleaning services) combine with the central aspect of shelter work, which is unpredictability in a crisis work environment.

5.2.3 Spending time on the abuser

Another challenge that intensifies the negative effects of understaffing is the context of the Finnish tradition of supposed gender neutrality in approaching domestic violence, whereby the emphasis is on working with all family members – that is, not blaming perpetrators and, instead, trying to understand them (Kantola, 2006). This tradition is still present in shelter practices – for example, in the shelter worker's task of calling the fathers (i.e. often the perpetrators) of the children who have arrived at shelter. Usually, the shelter's social worker, who is also the team leader, instructs the shelter worker to perform this task. There are gendered and intersectional aspects related to this task. For example, victims of domestic violence (i.e. gender-based violence) are often female. Such victims are left waiting while perpetrators (often male) are given shelter workers' (often female) attention:

> We had two families leaving, two rooms to be cleaned, two starting interviews with arriving families at the same time, one individual counselling meeting with the child and another with an adult (...) and then calling the father (...). So above all, there is this brilliant idea that we have to immediately inform the father (...) that their children arrived at the shelter, and of course this means that we are probably the first who are contacting him (...) and of course his reactions are very strong (...) and the violence that was earlier directed at this woman is now focused on us. So, I have a shelter full of traumatised people in crisis, but I must spend time on the abuser. (Voice tape recording, D38)

It is telling that although the resources for domestic violence shelter work are insufficient to provide uninterrupted counselling for victims in crisis, one task of shelter workers is calling the perpetrators, who remain at home. Thus, at the moment when an arriving victim needs sensitive attention in the middle of crisis and trauma, the shelter worker is not only unable to provide an uninterrupted encounter but is supposed to spend work time calling the perpetrator. This is an example of how victims' individual experiences are shaped by the organisational context, as Nichols (2011) suggested. This organisational context presents "challenges to victim advocates within domestic violence organizations as a result of gendered structures and processes" (ibid., 112) and can "perpetuate inequality and revictimization in domestic violence stakeholder organizations" (ibid.). In the autoethnographic observation above, the supposedly gender-neutral shelter practice resulted in an institutional structure that perpetuated gender inequality and revictimisation.

This finding suggests that the gender-neutral approach to working practices in a field that is far from gender neutral – as domestic violence is a gendered and gender-based phenomenon, while shelters are gendered organisations – is itself anything but neutral; rather, it constitutes an unreflexive gender-biased approach to work. Indeed, Nichols (2014) referred to gender-neutral organisations as masculine organisations (ibid., 171).

In addition to the overwhelming workload, the task of calling the perpetrator also contributes to the emotional burden of the worker, who is under the influence of the survivor's account of the experienced domestic violence and abuse and dealing with "the emotional distress of survivors and coping with their own feelings of anger at the perpetrator" (Illife and Stead, 2000, 395). Illife and Stead (2000, 403) showed that domestic violence counsellors identified the process of handling abusive men as the most challenging aspect of their work. Thus, perhaps unsurprisingly, my data indicated irritation with the task of calling the father of the children who had just arrived at the shelter with their mother.

These episodes from everyday shelter work shed light on the poor working conditions in shelters, which affect the feelings as well as the physical and mental health of the workers and thus shelter residents and the work itself. The aforementioned episodes constitute concrete examples of what exactly happens in

shelter work, something that, according to Hughes (2020), is missing from extant shelter work research. I argue that in domestic violence shelter work, understaffing negatively affects shelter work, victims and workers. Continuous interruptions affect the encountering of victims and even prevent domestic violence work from being done. Overwhelming situational demands overburden shelter workers, who are not in a position to struggle against the power relations embedded in the structures of the field but rather in a position of habitual coping responses to the field's forces (Bourdieu, 2020). Examples of this include the changes that workers have to do because of anticipated interruptions (e.g. holding a counselling meeting in a victim's room) and workers' responses to overwhelming situational demands when a victim's counselling is interrupted because of having to respond to doorbells and phone calls. Understaffing in the crisis environment of the domestic violence field turns workers into reacting marionettes, thus profoundly affecting the workers' agency.

5.2.4 Door keeping, cleaning and babysitting

The lack of essential services in domestic violence shelter work refers to the absence of services that would drastically improve the quality of shelter work. For example, in addition to offering safety, empowerment and risk management to victims, shelter workers are supposed to babysit, clean rooms, handle the shelter's laundry, clean the shelter's common areas, support victims with various degrees of ability for independent life in coping with basic everyday tasks and so on. Sadly, shelters have a shortage of organised childcare, room-cleaning and laundry services, as well as inadequate practical support services for those who need more assistance.

As care work is the cornerstone of social reproduction and enables people to do their other work, care work is essential and should be placed at the centre of political decisions to counter the neoliberal carelessness (Chatzidakis et al., 2020). Therefore, instead of addressing these services as support services, I would use the term essential service.

The lack of essential services in shelter becomes most visible when observing a shelter worker's tasks that, in the context of a crisis-laden residential environment, are not directly connected to any of the three aims of domestic violence shelter work

as defined by the Finnish national quality recommendations for shelter work (Ewalds et al., 2019), namely immediate safety, empowerment and breaking the cycle of violence. For example, my data from everyday shelter work shows that shelter workers themselves do a lot of cleaning, washing and childcare, not because informal everyday activities in a shelter are an "important aspect of the interventions that occur in shelters" and that are important to create a "homey" atmosphere in the shelters, as Hughes (2020, 3043) argued, but rather due to the gendered structure of shelter organisations that presents challenges to advocates and can revictimise victims (Nichols, 2011b, 112). I argue that creating a homey shelter atmosphere free of conflict and violence, in which workers informally chat with the women over the dishes or while cooking (Hughes, 2020, 3044), requires enough staffing.

Similar to Merchant and Whiting's (2015) study, which showed that shelter workers had to clean, wash and babysit while simultaneously being expected to perform individual counselling meetings, accept new victims and respond to crisis calls, my autoethnographic examples from shelter work vividly expose the scope of the cleaning, washing and childcare tasks within the crisis environment:

> Unpacking the charity gifts, responding to different needs of the clients, picking up the phone and opening doors (...) I had to clean the office, and this is obviously not violence work (...). I needed to write the police report about the maltreatment of one child, but then the client comes if I can look after her daughter for a moment (...). And then I was cleaning the kitchen and taking the trash out (...). Because we are so few, and do not have separately someone for cleaning, taking care of children or the working environment, I have completed just one task that is directly connected to violence work (...). I was a doorkeeper, a receptionist, a cleaning lady and a babysitter. (Voice tape recording, D17)

Cleaning and babysitting take up a large amount of shelter workers' time and energy, which comes at the cost of what should have been the central focus of shelter work, namely the safety of victims, the empowerment of domestic violence survivors and breaking the cycle of violence. This situation cannot be understood as creating a homey atmosphere of empowerment (Hughes, 2020); rather, it perpetuates institutional violence (Gil, 2020).

5.2.5 Crazy workload

When the understaffing and the lack of cleaning and childcare services are combined with the central element of shelter work, the crisis environment full of unpredictability and peaks in service demands, shelter workers face excessive workload and harsh working conditions. My data show how busy the moments when victims are arriving or leaving the shelter can be:

> The workload is really crazy (...) I had to teach the new worker how to do shelter work, and then one family left the shelter, so we had to help with packing and do the normal things and procedures needed before they leave, like feedback questionnaire, safety plan, request for the documents for the lawyer (...) and then clean the rooms for the next client. And then another client with her child decided to leave, and with them we needed to do the same feedback questionnaires, safety plan (...). And then two new clients arrived (...) and one of them had children, and they just came from an acute situation (...) so I went to talk to her, but I needed to have the crisis phone with me while the student was babysitting (...). While the client was crying, my phone started to ring, and there was yet another client at the shelter doors… [Voice tape recording, D38).

When victims arrive, shelter workers must fill out multiple forms, clean the rooms, consider safety issues, make phone calls and, in the middle of it all, encounter the survivors with empathy and support. On departures, shelter workers must clean the residents' rooms and prepare them for incoming arrivals: wash and disinfect the floors, the bathroom and the toilet and change the bedsheets, the shower curtains, the rugs and the towels. Shelter workers (although this falls mostly on the night shift worker) do the shelter laundry, too. This is in addition to preparing the final safety plans with departing adults and children and making sure they fill out the feedback questionnaires that the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare demands. Moreover, the situations of the already accommodated shelter residents can change rapidly, calling for immediate attention, assistance and support.

Residential, crisis and domestic violence work contexts mean that rapidly changing situations are typical and that moments of tranquillity are often abruptly interrupted by many different urgencies occurring at the same time. It is not unusual that established appointments (especially those agreed upon a week or more in advance) must be rescheduled, cancelled or continuously interrupted because there are other tasks that demand shelter workers' immediate attention. As Merchant and

Whiting (2015) showed, the shelter is a communal crisis centre, which is often a chaotic, crisis-laden environment. Detrimental working conditions in such environments interfere negatively with the quality of shelter work practices and constitute structural and institutional violence, similar to what Gill's (2020) analysis indicated in the case of nursing homes.

My research findings suggest that understaffing and the lack of essential services, such as cleaning and childcare, in addition to not being aligned with shelter work aims, actually prevent shelter workers from achieving these aims. Moreover, instead of the working conditions being adapted to balance and neutralise the traumatising effects of domestic violence shelter work on workers (as described at the beginning of this chapter), understaffing and the lack of essential services intensifies these effects. I argue that such working conditions contribute to what Merchant and Whiting (2015) called a demoralising shelter culture, which affects workers' well-being, their work and the victims.

Shelter culture affects the management of the challenges of shelter work and their effects on workers. A supportive organisational climate contributes to workers' well-being (Merchant and Whiting, 2015), and one part of a supportive shelter climate is the involvement of management and executive staff in everyday shelter work (ibid.). However, the involvement of supervisors in daily shelter work should include doing tasks such as "scrubbing toilets, fielding the crisis line, or transporting clients." Although the research results by Merchant and Whiting (2015) are significant in suggesting the type of shelter management that can most successfully balance the challenges of shelter work in general, the working conditions themselves remain unproblematised. When the responsibility for managing the chaos of everyday shelter work is individualised, managing impossible working conditions becomes the shared task of shelter workers, supervisors and executive directors.

Even then, the overwhelming workload of shelter work, together with other detrimental working conditions, remains unaddressed. For example, Merchant and Whiting (2015) showed that shelter workers "often found themselves snaking toilets, cleaning up vomit, mediating residents' quarrels, calming fussy babies, and otherwise ensuring the smooth operation of the communal living facility. This was in addition to their duties as a crisis responder: providing a compassioned response to victims

with stories of horrific abuse" (ibid., 471). I claim that such working tasks and working conditions must be problematised instead of being taken for granted.

Whether domestic violence shelters are provided with enough staff and essential services, such as cleaning and childcare, so that shelter workers can focus on domestic violence work is a political decision. Although Finnish domestic violence shelters are state funded, the scope of the funding is insufficient if shelter workers must spend considerable amounts of time in tasks that are not related to domestic violence, such as cleaning, babysitting, reception and responding to all kinds of calls, usually at the expense of the central tasks of shelter work.

It is telling that not all essential tasks are delegated to shelter workers. For example, the shelter bought sufficient IT-support services from an independent provider. In addition, the shelter financial report form provided by the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare has a separate column for expenses related to IT-support services, which means that these expenses are presupposed. Whenever needed, workers call the IT-support company to handle the task at hand. The same does not apply to the urgent needs of cleaning and childcare. Although peaks in service demands are part of domestic violence crisis work, it is relevant to ask why the needs for room cleaning and babysitting are not addressed in a similar manner to the need for IT support, with the ability to order them when needed. I argue that the answer to this question has to do not only with the gendered nature of care work, which has traditionally been undervalued as women's work (Chatzidakis et al., 2021), but also with the gendered nature of the shelter work field itself, which reflects the gendered power relations of the wider social space. This wider social space is the Finnish welfare state, with its gendered austerity measures.

5.2.6 Disputes regarding interpreter-assisted work

The implementation of state funding for domestic violence shelter services in Finland from 2015 onwards coincides with the peak in austerity measures implemented by the conservative-right government at the time, which introduced significant cuts in public services and social benefits (Elomäki, 2019), thus

contributing to the shift of the Nordic welfare state towards a neoliberal state (Kantola and Kananen, 2013). Gendered austerity measures, such as cuts in public services, have impacted the fields of childcare and elder care, affecting who receives care and who does not and how the responsibility for care is organised (Karsio et al., 2020). In the supposedly women-friendly Nordic state, it is mostly women who bear the responsibility for care, not only privately but also as welfare professionals committed to their work and its welfare professional ethics and trained to be obedient, flexible and adaptive and thus vulnerable to the neoliberal managerial pressure to increase efficiency (Hirvonen et al., 2020).

Austerity measures increase the pressure for maximum efficiency in the use of staff resources, connecting this idea with the improvement of clients' service experiences. However, this approach did not improve service quality. Moreover, understaffing together with increased workloads have reduced the agency of welfare professionals (Hirvonen et al., 2020). My research findings confirm this: flexible and adaptive shelter workers' agency is seriously constrained in the circumstances of excessive workload and efficiency pressure. My research material expands this general picture of the effects of austerity measures by providing perspectives on domestic violence shelter work.

As shelter work is not a product but rather a social service process that takes place in the shelter institution and is enacted as part of the relationship between a domestic violence survivor and a counsellor, this work cannot be completely standardised. For this process to work in accordance with the changing needs of the diverse spectrum of domestic violence survivors, shelter work must be adapted accordingly. In some cases, this adaptation means increased use of resources, such as time and money. As my action research data from the shelter show, this often occurs when working with non-Finnish-speaking victims:

> We need the interpreter with the immigrant client, and we need more time. Interpreter-assisted discussions are damn lengthy. (Workshop notes, D6)

However, my data also suggest that the need for the increased use of resources clashes with the cost-related pressure. Despite the common acknowledgement of the need for sufficient use of interpreter-assisted work, the shelter workers discussed the high interpreter expenses and tried to navigate between the provision of empowering

counselling and the high cost of interpretation. A discussion during one of the research workshops developed on how our shelter was using interpreters a lot more and that the expenses were high:

> We use interpreters really a lot more than compared to other shelters. Last year, interpreter expenses were enormous. (Workshop notes, D6)

The cost-related pressures provoked a debate on whether shelter workers should reduce the use of interpreter-assisted work. As far as the comparison with other shelters is concerned, the workers wondered whether other shelters had fewer immigrant clients:

> But in all the shelters, they don't have as many immigrants. (Workshop notes, D6)

One worker pointed out that if they wanted to work in a more empowering way, they would need even more interpretation-assisted work time:

> We need more time to work in an empowering way. (Workshop notes, D6)

Nevertheless, this idea was shut down by a comment that interpretation time should not be increased:

> We are using interpreters a lot already now. Funding would have to be taken from somewhere else. (Workshop notes, D6)

In the end, the shelter's social worker directed shelter counsellors to use their own professional evaluation on how much interpreter-assisted work they organise and to try to make the work more efficient by giving the clients domestic violence-related reading material in their own languages in advance, after which it would take less time to discuss the material in a conversation with an interpreter:

> Use them according to the need and your judgement. Use the materials she prepared. We can give those for them to read, and then we refer to them in the conversation. (Workshop notes, D6)

The autoethnographic observations and the action research data above demonstrate that although the shelter workers did, indeed, act as obedient, flexible and adaptive subjects and were thus vulnerable to the neoliberal managerial pressures to increase efficiency (Hirvonen et al., 2020), they nevertheless had the capacity to

act as relatively autonomous agents (Bourdieu, 1990, 2020). The workers resisted the cost-related pressures by inventing new forms of flexible struggle against these neoliberal forces in the shelter field by agreeing on the use of diverse language materials prepared by one of the workers. Therefore, they adapted to the demand to lower the costs and improve efficiency. At the same time, they invented a way of resisting the lowering of the quality of shelter work for non-Finnish-speaking victims.

This inventive action remains firmly within the demands of the austerity forces active in the field, particularly because the violence work materials in many different languages are not something that is widely available and ready to use. It was one of the shelter workers, committed to culturally sensitive domestic violence work with immigrant victims, who had developed and collected these materials. More specifically, she had prepared a comprehensive document providing violence work materials in many different languages. The worker introduced these materials to the team as follows:

> The file is named "Immigrants and violence work in shelters." It contains violence work materials in various languages, you are free to use it. (Workshop notes, D6)

This example suggests that under the pressure of austerity forces, an individual shelter worker's commitment to high-quality work with victims in vulnerable positions, together with the worker's relative autonomy, can act as a counterforce against the negative effects of austerity pressures on immigrant victims. However, when the quality of shelter work with immigrant victims depends on the individual worker, the quality of shelter work remains extremely vulnerable.

During the action research workshops, when the shelter workers were given the time and space for reflexive thinking (a scarce resource in the chaos of everyday shelter work), the shelter workers suggested that the shelter's working conditions often created situations that considerably reduced the workers' agency (e.g. the interruptions and overwhelming demands discussed earlier. The shelter workers' reduced agency in chaotic everyday work, together with the cost-related pressures regarding interpreter-assisted work, is a predictor of shelter work with immigrant victims that is not good enough.

When I asked the shelter workers what they would need to perform their work at a good-enough level with immigrant survivors, they took a clear stance regarding interpreter-assisted work: they believed that there should be no limitations on the use of the interpreter. Moreover, my research material reveals another problematic effect produced by the combinations of understaffing, the lack of essential services and the pressures of efficiency: sometimes, the interpreters are also used for babysitting. For example, one worker suggested that to do good-enough shelter work with immigrant victims, workers would need appropriate working conditions in which the interpreter would not be simultaneously babysitting:

> Interpreter-assisted work should be protected from other interruptions; sometimes, interpreters are also used for babysitting while interpreting. (Workshop notes, D6)

The above is a testimony to the absurdity of cost-efficiency demands in the context of human resources in shelter work, which are already stretched to the maximum. Gendered austerity imposes itself successfully on shelter workers and interpreters because they are coupled with gendered expectations of the responsibility for childcare. This "perfect match" (Hirvonen et al., 2020) results in shelter workers and interpreters, many of whom are women committed to their work and its professional ethics, providing childcare while doing their actual work, such as counselling and interpreting. My research data demonstrate the overwhelming challenges of everyday situations in shelter work, which are the effects of structural working conditions, such as understaffing and insufficient essential services.

The everyday perspective provided by my research material shows that shelter work with non-Finnish-speaking victims requires longer counselling meetings and additional spending on interpreter-assisted work. Similarly, shelter work with domestic violence survivors who have children entails spending on childcare support services in the shelter. By comparison, when shelter work is performed with non-disabled, healthy, middle-aged, majoritised Finnish survivors without children, relatively fewer resources are needed.

I argue that staff resourcing in domestic violence shelters according to the minimum that is needed to serve the least demanding cases and situations means that shelter services are constantly and repeatedly under-resourced. Instead of approaching this as a problem that needs to be urgently addressed, the gendered

dynamics of neoliberal austerity measures lean on the supposed flexibility of mostly female welfare professionals, who are constructed as flexible when it comes to the overwhelming demands of social service work (Hirvonen et al., 2020). Moreover, these detrimental working conditions intensify the negative effects on victims in vulnerable positions. One of my research findings is that detrimental working conditions in shelters contribute to the neglect of victims' needs and further exacerbate this effect on racially minoritised victims.

5.2.7 Neglected risk evaluation and safety plan

The lack of practical support and essential services in shelter work negatively affects shelter work with immigrant victims. My data suggest that shelter workers do much less domestic violence counselling with immigrant shelter residents compared to majoritised shelter residents. One worker described this situation as follows:

> I have done much less of the violence work than with the majority Finn. (Workshop notes, D6)

This inequality in access to high-quality domestic violence services between immigrant victims and majoritised Finnish victims can be seen as an intersectional effect of the inadequate working conditions (understaffing) that force workers to focus on other tasks instead of those related to domestic violence. For example, immigrant victims' need for practical assistance with urgent issues related to the employment office, the social insurance office, bank passwords and the search for rental apartments prevented shelter workers from focusing on domestic violence work:

> I was spending a lot of time with the employment office issue (...) to explain that the client cannot come to the appointment because she is in the shelter (...), and I needed to send the written explanation of the client's reasons why she wouldn't show up and also an explanation when the client is able to start with education or language course (...). And then I needed to apply her for her housing (...) and this was a bit tricky because (...) she didn't know what her income was. She didn't know about the child home care allowance, child benefit, housing benefit (...). So we had to check her Kela (Social Insurance Institution of Finland) pages to apply for the benefits she was entitled to (...) And this took so long! And then the client needed to go to the bank to arrange for her bank passwords, but she didn't know how to go by bus. So I was explaining her the directions, but of course it is difficult to understand when she

> doesn't know her ways around. So I have not done any risk evaluation or security plan with the client yet. (Voice tape recordings, D14)

Previous research has shown that minoritised survivors' partly different shelter service needs arise from their situation-specific positions (Burman et al., 2004), whereby the specifics of the immigrant status are superimposed on other systems of oppression, such as class, race and ethnicity, further increasing their vulnerability to domestic violence and abuse (Menjivar and Salcido, 2002, 902). Kiamanesh and Hauge (2019) reported that immigrant survivors most urgently needed safety and support with practical issues when seeking help from other service providers. My research material confirms this while also exposing the problematic effect of only meeting the need for practical assistance while neglecting the need for violence interventions, which is a by-product of under-resourcing. Burman and Chantler (2005) argued that addressing the practical needs of immigrant survivors should not be a substitute for interventions that ensure safety.

My research findings based on autoethnographic observation data are strongly echoed by my action research data, according to which the shelter workers repeatedly emphasised the problem of inadequate resources in their shelter work with immigrant survivors, particularly the decisive impact of the lack of organised childcare and the lack of support for practical issues. As one of the workers expressed:

> We need the possibility of doing violence work while other agents take care of practical things. If supported in this way, we would be able to do more of the trauma and violence work itself. (Workshop notes, D11)

5.2.8 Resources as a criterion for work quality

Scarce resources were the criterion against which the workers reflected on the quality of the work. My data suggest that the shelter workers considered their work with immigrant victims to be generally not good enough, believing that it needed to be improved while directly relating this fact to shelter work conditions. The action research data show that in the evaluation ranging from 0 to 10, the workers evaluated their shelter work with immigrant clients as good enough (7). Five workers stated that the work performed was not good enough, evaluating it between 4.5 and 7. One

worker considered shelter work with immigrants to already be at the good-enough level (8). However, she claimed this in relation to the available resources:

> Our work is good enough considering the limits of our resources… We are doing the maximum we can within our resources (...) I'm proud of this team. (Research workshops notes, D4)

This evaluation criterion is problematic because it considers the existing working conditions as a self-evident determinant of the quality of the work. Nevertheless, this worker's response can also be understood as an act of resistance through which she rejected the individualisation of the responsibility for the quality of shelter work with immigrant victims. Moreover, the worker's response can also be understood as an act of coping with the negative effects of the working conditions, such as feelings of inadequacy, helplessness and frustration.

5.2.9 Impossibility of meeting victims' needs

Shelter work conditions and their effect contributing to the inadequate (i.e. not good enough) work with immigrant survivors increase the emotional burden of shelter workers, who are well aware of the discrepancy between the ideal of shelter work and its reality. Many shelter workers described feelings of inadequacy, helplessness, insufficiency and frustration:

> Feeling helpless (...) we just can't do it. (Research workshop notes, D4)

> They need an awful lot, and we can't help them as much as we should. (Research workshop notes, D4)

The workers' feelings of inadequacy were related to their working conditions, which, in turn, were shaped by a combination of different social inequalities and were affected by understaffing in shelter work. These findings confirm previous research results (Iliffe and Steed, 2000) on the secondary traumatisation of counsellors, who felt "powerless in facilitating both micro and macro change," especially when "clients were not supported by social and justice systems" (Illiffe and Steed, 2000, 406). Both counsellors and their clients can be traumatised by these systems, as Schauben and Frazier (1995) showed in the case of female counsellors working with sexual violence survivors who were both frustrated with inefficient

legal and mental health systems. When asking the shelter workers to imagine how they would feel if they could perform good-enough shelter work with immigrant survivors, the workers responded by saying that they would feel work satisfaction and increased trust regarding victims' safety, the shelter and other services. In addition, improving work with immigrant domestic violence survivors would make them feel better and more hopeful.

5.3 Conclusion

This chapter has addressed the effects of working conditions in domestic violence shelters on domestic violence work subjects, focusing particularly on racialised minority victims. Analysing working conditions and their effects is important for understanding the structural preconditions of intersectionally sensitive shelter work. The analysis of everyday experiences in domestic violence shelter work reveals serious traumatising effects suffered by shelter workers due to full-time exposure victims' accounts of violence and abuse. The data suggest a considerable impact of secondary trauma on shelter workers, which causes disturbing emotional and bodily reactions – such as feelings of anxiety, tiredness, bodily over-arousal, sleeplessness caused by mental pressure and intrusive images and thoughts related to victims' cases – that negatively affect workers' well-being. Although the risk of secondary traumatisation in domestic violence work is well recognised, the measures taken to counter its devastating effects on workers are insufficient. This implicitly indicates that workers are considered to bear individual responsibility for coping with unwanted side effects of domestic violence shelter work.

Moreover, shelter working conditions, such as understaffing and the insufficiency of essential services, intensify the negative effects of secondary trauma on workers and result in domestic violence victims' needs being neglected. The analysis of the autoethnographic and action research data on everyday shelter work suggests that understaffing and the lack of essential services caused repeated interruptions of

individual counselling, which was especially harmful during interpreter-assisted work, as counselling could not be done later. The understaffed shelter could not provide a sensitive or decent reception of newly arrived families. Moreover, because of being understaffed and operating within a supposedly gender-neutral framework, the conditions in the shelter meant that victims' needs were being neglected while having to attend to those of perpetrators. Insufficient essential services in a 24/7 crisis residential unit meant that the shelter workers also had to engage in door keeping, cleaning, washing, and babysitting while answering crisis calls and performing other central shelter work tasks.

Although the gendered regime of the shelter provided sufficient on-demand IT-support services, caring and cleaning were supposed to be done by the shelter workers themselves. Combined with severe understaffing, this situation often resulted in interruptions of individual counselling meetings or cancellations of already-agreed individual appointments. The situation also meant adjusting counselling work to the understaffed reality, with its anticipated interruptions and performing individual counselling meetings in inappropriate settings, such as victims' rooms. My data and examples show that in a crisis environment with typical peaks in demand, shelter staffing was inadequate for meeting the needs of victims. The detrimental working conditions thus considerably affected the quality of shelter work.

Due to a lack of practical support in more demanding cases of shelter work with immigrants, the shelter worker failed to perform risk evaluation and prepare safety plans, which are central tasks in domestic violence work. Moreover, expensive interpreter-assisted work was used for practical support instead of violence work counselling. At the same time, the cost-related pressures regarding the use of interpreters forced workers to negotiate their professional commitments to sensitive work with immigrant victims. The gendered austerity pressure negatively affected the agency of the shelter workers, who had to balance between helping counter the negative effects experienced by victims and engaging in automatic reactions provoked by neoliberal working conditions. Gendered power relations were clearly present in the gendered practices of shelter work, as the shelter workers (who were mostly women) had to do cleaning and childcare and exhibit maximum flexibility; consequently, victims were left more vulnerable to secondary victimisation.

This chapter suggests that as a consequence of these inadequate working conditions, the quality of shelter work with immigrant victims is not good enough. The discrepancy between the professional commitment to dignified encountering and the reality of hastily done shelter work in the often-chaotic shelter environment triggered the workers' feelings of inadequacy and frustration. However, the workers refused to carry the burden of individualised responsibility and began to compare the level of work with the resources available rather than the victims' needs. The working conditions in the shelter field can thus be interpreted as neglectful by design, resulting in the suffering of workers and the revictimisation of victims and contributing to the reproduction of intersectional inequalities.

These findings constitute an important contribution to domestic violence shelter research by unveiling the working experiences from the perspectives of those who are working directly with victims (Hughes, 2020; Merchant and Whiting, 2015). Although researchers have shown that racial stereotyping (Burman et al., 2014) and negative identity constructions (Donnelly, 2005; Kulkarni, 2018; Nnawulezi and Sullivan, 2014) create an inhospitable environment for minoritised survivors, this chapter has argued that this inhospitable environment can also be created by inadequate working conditions, particularly understaffing and insufficient essential services.

To summarise, shelter work is situated within structured and structuring working conditions, which are decisive in shaping a shelter's everyday practices. Detrimental working conditions result in intersectional inequalities. Based on these findings, I argue that working conditions in the shelter field must be understood as constituting the preconditions for sensitive work with domestic violence survivors. The acknowledgement of the effects of shelter work conditions together with the awareness of the processes of racialisation in shelter work are key to understanding the possibilities of sensitive domestic violence shelter work with racially minoritised survivors.

6 RACIALISED PERCEPTIONS IN SHELTER WORK

This second empirical analysis chapter highlights shelter workers' perceptions of intersectional differences and racially minoritised domestic violence victims. More specifically, this chapter addresses the intersectional dynamics of classifications in the construction of subject positions in domestic violence shelter work, with a special emphasis on the process of racialisation. My analysis focuses on the relationship between victims and shelter workers as a special relationship of professional communication that entails a power dissymmetry: shelter workers in Finland are professionals with delegated shelter institutional power to perform shelter work and provide safety and empowerment. Focusing on this relationship allowed me to provide an analysis of the intersectional dynamics of classifications as relational and contextual phenomena. This chapter tackles the second of the three research questions underpinning this dissertation: How do shelter workers perceive intersectional differences and with what effects on the racially minoritised victims' positions?

The chapter is structured into four sections, each addressing one dimension of the worker–victim relationship. First, I analyse the shelter counselling relationship as a hierarchical power relation whose aim is victim empowerment and safety. Second, I investigate shelter workers' perceptions of intersectional differences and workers' uses of power strategies to deconstruct harmful hierarchies when workers recognise their effects – for example, in the case of age or language. I analyse the lack of recognition of race and ethnicity as relevant social categories for the counselling relationship and the subsequently reduced sensitivity of shelter workers to racial and ethnic hierarchies in said counselling relationship. Moreover, I explore the relation between the lack of recognition of racialisation and the different visibility levels of gender as a relevant social category in terms of its effects on the worker–victim relationship. To analyse such perceptions of intersectional differences, I used

my action research data produced at the second action research workshop, in which I asked the shelter workers how intersectionally different positions affect their work and how they understand the power relation between themselves and the victims when it comes to these intersectional positions. The material indicates the social categories that the shelter workers find relevant to their work and how they perceive and react to the different power dynamics and hierarchies related to intersectional subject positions.

Third, this chapter addresses shelter workers' perceptions of racially minoritised victims of domestic violence. I analyse workers' limited agency in habitual culturalisation and habitual disbelief, highlighting reflections on shelter work from the action research workshops and episodes from everyday shelter work with Roma and immigrant victims. Moreover, I analyse the limited but nevertheless present deconstruction of culturalisation and disbelief towards racially minoritised victims. The analysis is grounded in my action research data from the third and fourth action research workshops, during which workers discussed intersectional differences and shelter counselling work with immigrant victims.

Fourth, this chapter addresses the depiction of immigrant victims and shelter workers as difficult subjects and thematises these positions as contextually produced by a mixture of detrimental working conditions (see Chapter 5), misrecognitions of race and gender, and the racialised hierarchies of the shelter's social context. Considering this complex setting, I argue for an alternative understanding of shelter subject positions, not as difficult but rather as vulnerable and characterised by extremely difficult effects of intersections. The chapter focuses firmly on the worker–victim relationship because, in the domestic violence shelter field, the intersectional power dynamics that occur within this relationship have an extensive impact on victims' access to safety and empowerment.

Finally, the chapter evaluates the productive effects of action research workshops on the perception of intersectional differences in shelter work and addresses deconstruction of some of the shelter workers' habitual perceptions of racially minoritised victims.

6.1 Shelter counselling relationship as a hierarchical power relation

Despite growing interest in good encountering in the fields of social work, education, health care and nursing in Finland (Nivala and Ryynänen, 2019, 191), theorising encountering as a power-free concept – for example, by calling for encountering people as humans and not as representatives of certain social categories – contributes to the concealment of the fact that the worker–victim relationship is a hierarchical power relation and that this relation is shaped by intersectional power dynamics of various acts of social classification. A shelter worker is a professional with institutionally granted authority over the use of resources (e.g. offering accommodation and asking for an interpreter). This institutionally delegated power to perform shelter work defines workers as legitimate agents of their professional role. However, my research data suggest that in everyday shelter work, this power hierarchy is rarely explicitly reflected on. Instead, the issue of power in the counselling relationship was only reflected on when the workers were explicitly asked about it during the action research workshops.

My action research data show that shelter workers recognise the hierarchical power relations associated with their professional role. For example, when I asked the workers to reflect on the power relations between shelter workers and clients regarding different social categories, one worker suggested the need to add the category of "knowledge/professional role" (Workshop documents, D5) to the provided list of categories. The worker explained that shelter workers are professionals in the field of violence work and that power is embedded in this position because of the knowledge that workers have. Furthermore, the shelter workers perceived the power of knowledge associated with their professional role as relevant for gaining victims' trust:

> The worker knows about the issue more and has power. (Workshop documents, D5)

> We have power because of the knowledge, and the client trusts us and accepts this power position. (Workshop documents, D5)

Knowledge of issues related to domestic violence, which shelter workers introduce to victims in the counselling relationship, shapes the counselling content (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990) of the counselling action. In addition, the workers defined counselling as professional, goal-oriented work meant to increase victims' safety:

> Violence work in a domestic violence shelter is professional and goal-oriented work in cooperation with a client. The aim is to increase safety. For this, we generally use client-centred and client-needs-based professional methods. This work has its background in self-determination and human rights. (Workshop notes, D1)

A shelter worker introduces counselling content (professional, goal-oriented and aimed at safety) by applying various professional methods, which can be understood as expressions of consensual power (Arendt, 1969; Squires, 2003) between the worker and the victim, visible in the worker's emphasis on the victim's self-determination through the counselling acts of cooperation, participation, victim-centeredness and work methods based on victims' needs. Such consensual use of power successfully hides the hierarchical power relation on which counselling is based and contributes to the perceived legitimacy of shelter workers.

My data show that shelter workers perceived the power of their professional role as enabling and productive. For example, the workers used the power of their professional role along with the existing mechanisms (access to resources) to empower victims – for example, by asking for an interpreter to enable better communication:

> The worker suggested the use of an interpreter and encouraged the client to tell if she didn't understand. The worker used power for the benefit of the client. (Workshop documents, D5)

The power hierarchy in the counselling relationship between workers and victims is the inevitable result of the existing institutional positions occupied by the participants in this relationship. These institutional positions of the domestic violence worker and the victim do not result in a hierarchical relation simply because counselling is a special relationship of communication or symbolic violence (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990); rather, the hierarchical relation is also defined by the circumstances caused by domestic violence and abuse, such as victims' lack of access

to basic material goods and/or safe housing. For example, victims often arrive at a shelter having suffered acute crises and without their own belongings, such as clothes, shoes or hygiene products. My data show that the shelter workers reflected on these situationally produced vulnerabilities and paid special attention to downgrading their own clothing to make victims feel better:

> The clients often arrive from acute situations and don't have other clothes than those which they're wearing. It's quite a different thing if the worker is dressed in jeans or a suit. (Workshop notes, D3)

Workers interpret their clothing as a means of communication in relation to the victim in a vulnerable position. While suits can be related to power, the workers perceive wearing jeans as communicating less distant and less hierarchical relations. The worker's reflexive adaptation of her own clothing (downgrading her clothing) can thus be understood as a power strategy:

> Workers' clothing as a use of power or a deconstruction of it. (Workshop notes, D3)

However, it is not only the professional role of the worker or the domestic violence situation of the victim that produces a hierarchical relation between them; rather, shelter working conditions also contribute to this relation. As I showed in Chapter 4, insufficient resources affect workers' use of the shelter space, with workers, for example, performing individual counselling in victims' small rooms. Intrusion into the only private space that a victim has after fleeing domestic violence and abuse exacerbates the negative effects of forced displacement. Such institutionalised intrusion into a shelter resident's private space can be difficult to recognise as a power dissymmetry especially when the national quality recommendations for shelter work (Ewalds et al., 2019) emphasise the importance of encountering victims in a way that their dignity is not hurt and their beliefs and privacy are respected (ibid., 8). This ideal of dignified encountering expected from shelter workers contrasts with the reality of the working conditions that considerably limit workers' agency in their attempts to keep up with the quality recommendations.

My action research data from the workshops with the shelter workers suggest that the shelter workers recognised the effects of working conditions on the use of shelter spaces and the consequent power hierarchies between workers and victims. Although understaffing forces shelter workers to perform counselling in victims'

own rooms (Chapter 4), victims in need of protection and support are not in a position to refuse workers going into their rooms and holding counselling meetings there. The harm of a worker's intrusion into the only private space that a victim has can be somewhat reduced by the worker's sensitivity. For example, the shelter workers consciously adapted their behaviours, situating themselves in victims' rooms in such a manner as to reduce the harm of the intrusion. The workers understood this as the deconstruction of a harmful power hierarchy. For example, one worker described how the deconstruction of this power hierarchy entailed paying attention to the use of one's body in space:

> In the first interview with the client, the worker always takes into consideration where she is sitting. If the first interview takes place in the client's own room, it can be too much if I as a stranger comes too close… But I must also not be too far away. (Workshop notes, D3)

This example not only shows that power relations are related to the use of bodies in shared spaces but also suggests that the shelter workers put effort into deconstructing unnecessary power dissymmetries that may have had disempowering effects on victims. The workers wanted to prevent victims from feeling uncomfortable by adjusting their bodily positioning in the shared space. These strategies can be called embodied practices of governing the disempowering effects of shelter working conditions, which reflect inhospitable gender-neutral shelter policies that disproportionately affect women (Nichols, 2011a) by depriving shelter residents of care (via understaffing and the lack of essential services).

Thus, the shelter workers reflected on the empowering and disempowering effects of differently constituted power dissymmetries in the counselling relationship. When workers perceived that they could use their professional power to benefit victims, they did so (e.g. by asking for an interpreter and offering professional counselling and knowledge). However, when the workers perceived the hierarchical relation to contribute to victims' feelings of discomfort or a lack of dignity, the workers adjusted their behaviours and the use of space and bodily presence to deconstruct harmful power hierarchies.

In addition, different categorisations and classifications contribute to the construction of hierarchies between victims and workers. For example, a victim may

believe that a shelter worker is an official with the power to make decisions over child contact, custody and social benefits. However, neither shelter counsellors nor the shelter's social worker has such direct power. Although the state provides funding, the shelter work itself is still strongly shaped by the history of working withing non-governmental organisations with precarious positions. My action research data show that the shelter worker perceived the lack of official power as contributing to the good encountering of victims because counselling is done with victims rather than making decisions on their behalf:

> In the shelter worker's role… We are not in the role of the officials, and this helps to deconstruct the power hierarchy because we do the work together with the client, and good contact with the client is important. (Workshop notes, D3)

However, a victim can still misrecognise the worker as an official, in which case shelter workers intervene verbally to correct this misunderstanding:

> I say directly, "I feel like you think it is me who makes decisions, but it is not me." (Workshop notes, D3)

The shelter workers understood the power and hierarchy involved in a counselling relationship as potentially positive (the power of their professional role) as well as potentially harmful to good encountering (e.g. due to unnecessary hierarchies resulting from the violence context, working conditions and misrecognitions). When the workers noticed the negative effects of power hierarchies on the counselling relationship, they applied different strategies (e.g. changes in clothing, different uses of space and verbalisation) to counter these negative effects and facilitate constructive encountering.

As power hierarchies in shelter work have various outcomes (both enabling constraining) and are related to institutionally constructed roles, contextually constructed positions (e.g. due to the violence context or working conditions) and mutual classifications (e.g. victims perceiving workers as officials with decision-making power), it is important to reject a simplistic understanding of the victim–worker relationship as an egalitarian relationship without power and hierarchies. Instead, it is important to analyse the effects of power and hierarchies on the counselling relationship. Although my data suggest the shelter workers problematised the power dynamics related to the institutionalised roles of victims

and workers, it was more difficult to recognise the consequences of violence and abuse, the inadequate working conditions and even the misrecognitions involved in victims' classifications of shelter workers as officials – that is, to recognise the intersectional power dynamics of socially conditioned classifications.

6.2 Intersectional differences and dynamics

If we accept that the disempowering and excluding effects of everyday shelter work on racially minoritised victims are unwanted and unintended and even reproduced without awareness, then the issue of possessing the sensitivity to recognise the intersectional dynamics of shelter work becomes of central importance. Recognising discriminating institutional practices means noticing the role of socially constituted categories in shelter work. My study suggests that intersectional power dynamics interfere with the legitimacy and authority of the counselling relationship, which can, in turn, affect the possibility of empowering encountering.

Therefore, I will now address shelter workers' (mis)recognitions of intersectional differences relevant to their work. However, before analysing the racialising dynamics involved in shelter work, I will focus on the issue of visibility of intersectional hierarchical subject positions. I will show that shelter workers more easily recognise the hierarchical effects of age and language in contrast to race and gender. Moreover, when workers recognise hierarchical positions, they apply different strategies to counter the negative effects, such as a lack of trust, disbelief, undermined counselling authority and undermined legitimacy of the victim. The theory of symbolic violence suggests that the institutional authority of an agent in a field, such as a shelter worker in the shelter field, does not have to reproduce itself but is rather "entirely disposed from the necessity of producing the conditions for its own establishment and perpetuation" (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, 20). At the same time, my research data suggest that in the field of shelter work, workers'

institutional authority and legitimacy can be undermined by the various intersectional classifications present in the counselling relationship. Consequently, shelter workers must strive to re-establish their credibility and win victims' trust.

6.2.1 Age and language in shelter work

My action research data suggest that the shelter workers recognised the interference produced by intersectional subject positions related to age and used various strategies to counter the damaging effects of disbelief and suspicion. For example, the workers said that the young age of a shelter worker interferes with counselling authority, undermining a worker's legitimacy in the eyes of a victim. A victim's relatively older age in relation to a very young worker caused power struggles within the counselling relationship:

> The client was older than the worker, and at the beginning, it was difficult for the client to accept help from the younger worker. (Workshop documents, D5)

The institutional authority delegated to the young shelter worker in her twenties did not effectively counter her undermined legitimacy in the eyes of the victim, who was a middle-aged woman with a child. As one shelter worker described the issue, the higher the age of the victim, together with her being a parent, negatively affected the counselling authority of a much younger and childless shelter worker:

> If the worker is young and the client is older than her, and the client has a child, but the worker doesn't… When I tried to give advice on childcare, the client said, "What do you know about this, youngster without children, go away." (Workshop notes, D3)

The data suggest that when the workers noticed such negative interferences with their counselling authority, they adopted strategies of recovering the counselling authority and thus the legitimacy of counselling work. The example below demonstrates a strategy of adapting one's behaviour and verbalisation to influence a victim's attitude:

> I was younger, and I noticed that I tried to appear older and used sophisticated words. (Workshop documents, D5)

> In a situation when a client was not open to communication because I was younger than her or because I don't have my own children, I emphasised my educational

> background and working experience, but generally I did not explain an awful lot. (Workshop notes, D3)

The age of the worker, who was in her twenties, interfered negatively with her counselling authority in shelter work with middle-aged victims. Consequently, the workers tried to negotiate such tensions and reposition themselves as legitimate counsellors. My data suggest that a victim's young age when a worker is middle-aged can produce enabling effects:

> The client was younger than the worker; it felt that the client was able to talk openly about things, asked advice. (Workshop documents, D5)

The shelter workers perceived victims' young age in relation to that of relatively older workers as reinforcing counselling authority, almost to the point of creating a clear relationship of domination:

> The client was very young; I had dominance. (Workshop documents, D5)

Although the power hierarchy embedded in the professional role of the counsellor working with victims is potentially an enabling element in counselling work, the power hierarchy resulting from age differences between workers and victims may have different effects on the counselling relationship. My data suggest that when the victim is relatively younger than the worker, the age difference does not decrease counselling authority, as the relatively young(er) victim recognises the counsellor as a legitimate subject for shelter work.

The examples presented above suggest that when it comes to age differences, shelter workers can notice (recognise) hierarchical positions in the counselling dyad and their effects on perceived legitimacy. Workers employ strategies of repositioning in acts of strategic negotiations, which is an example of the relationality of age-related subject position construction. Thus, the young age of a worker cannot be a priori regarded as a privileged or oppressed subject position; instead, it becomes privileged or oppressed during a co-constitutive process (Wacquant, 1992) embedded in a particular counsellor–victim relationship. Both participants in the counselling relationship are in "already classified form" (Bourdieu, 2020, 11) as a consequence of socially conditioned classifications, and both are "classifying subjects who classify in their turn" (ibid., 6). Therefore, their age-related subject positions are not fixed

identities or oppressions (Nash, 2008) but dynamically constituted positions that are interactive, co-determining and complex (Choo and Ferree, 2010).

Most often, the shelter workers reflected on the power struggles and strategies related to differences in native language, as power dynamics related to language differences are the most visible power dynamics in individual shelter counselling work. However, my data indicate that sharing Finnish as a native language (a shared privileged position) continues to be unrecognised as a relevant enabling factor in shelter work. For example, the action research material shows that when asked how language affected their work with victims, the shelter workers said that language had "No influence" or "No meaning" (Workshop documents, D5) in the cases when both the worker and the victim spoke Finnish. This is an example of a misrecognition (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990) that operates to hide the power relations that enable smooth social interaction. The misrecognition enables the smooth imposition of meanings from a power position (symbolic violence) without noticing the power relations on which the imposition of meaning is based. Only when communication could not be done in Finnish, which was the native language of the shelter workers participating in the action research workshops, did the workers recognise language as an important factor affecting their counselling work. Again, this suggests that it is difficult to recognise the enabling effects of one's own privileged subject position.

Moreover, language is not only a mechanical tool of communication but also a means of establishing meaning. For example, the manner of speaking a language can expose an individual's class origin or immigrant background. The workers, who were Finnish native speakers, did not have to reflect on the meaning of their native language in their counselling work, which can be interpreted as an invisible, self-evident presupposition or criterion of whiteness (Keskinen et al., 2021, 60) of the shelter employees. Contrary to this White Finnish position, my autoethnographic data on everyday shelter work show that I did have to reflect on the effects of both my native language and the Finnish language when speaking Finnish with another Finnish speaker (Chapter 7). My accent and manner of speaking Finnish did not allow me to "pass as white" (Krivonos, 2020), which affected native Finnish victims' trust in my professional competence. Although I spoke Finnish, my speaking habit was a sign of not belonging, a sign of otherness, often misrecognised and racialised as Russian (more in Chapter 7). The example of native Finnish workers not

recognising the relevance of their own native Finnish language for power relations in the counselling dyad when working with other native Finnish speakers is an example of a misrecognition the invisibility of privileged subject positions. By contrast, as a not-so-White-Finnish worker, I did recognise the relevance of the native Finnish language when working with other native Finnish speakers.

Although the shelter workers recognised the effects of language differences when counselling work could not be done in their native Finnish, this did not automatically indicate the privileged position of a native Finnish speaker. The position of the Finnish native speaker is not by default higher in the hierarchical relation with non-Finnish-speaking victims. Again, the co-constitutive (Wacquant, 2006) character, or the process of subject position construction, must be taken seriously. For example, one worker expressed insecurity when speaking English with a victim whose English was better than the worker's:

> It influenced a lot. The communication in English, in which the worker is not very good. The client did not want an interpreter. (Workshop documents, D5)

However, although the workers were unaware of how empowering it was to speak native Finnish with victims who were also native Finnish speakers, the shelter workers did perceive the use of one's native language as empowering for victims. Moreover, a victim who was otherwise in a deprivileged position due to her ethnicity was perceived as deliberately using their own native language to exclude majoritised Finnish workers from the conversation:

> The use of power is also when the Roma clients start to speak their own language in front of the workers, so that the workers wouldn't understand them… (Workshop notes, D3)

The use of their native language by victims was interpreted not only as a possible source of empowerment but also as a potentially deliberate strategy of resistance against racially majoritised counsellors. However, it is not only the victims who can use their native language deliberately as a strategy of resistance; in fact, shelter workers can apply different power strategies that can be understood as attempts to deconstruct unnecessary language power hierarchies and their effects to increase the agency of victims whose native language is not Finnish. For example, a shelter

worker deliberately held a counselling meeting in the client's native language to empower her:

> The worker has an individual counselling meeting with the client in the client's own mother tongue, which is foreign to the worker; this is how the worker can form a closer relationship and give more power to the client. (Workshop documents, D5)

In addition to speaking the victims' native languages, the shelter workers used another deliberate strategy, namely changing their manner of speaking in simplified Finnish, to increase victims' agency. One shelter worker recounted how she adapted her own speech to facilitate communication with a victim during the night, when the interpreter was not available:

> The client's mother tongue was other than Finnish, so I spoke plain Finnish because I could not order an interpreter at night. (Workshop documents, D5)

Furthermore, the shelter workers employed another crucial strategy to facilitate communication with victims: asking for an interpreter. Whereas the previous two strategies were related to workers' individual knowledge and skills and their recognition of victims' vulnerabilities, this third strategy entailed the use of an institutionally provided mechanism. This mechanism is crucial for preventing negative effects, such as misunderstandings, the use of children for interpretation and neglect of victims' needs, stemming from a lack of a common language for communication:

> There are for sure a lot of misunderstandings. (Workshop documents, D5)

> When having no common language at all, the children interpreted (...) and other clients too. (Workshop documents, D5)

> The use of power is also when, for example, we don't have a common language with the client, and sometimes days go by without the client's issues being advanced at all. (Workshop notes, D3)

The shelter workers employed deliberate strategies based on individual knowledge and language skills, as well as institutionally provided mechanisms, such as interpreter-assisted counselling, to counter the negative effects of language differences, such as misunderstandings and, more importantly, the habitual neglect that results in using children for interpretation or simply ignoring non-Finnish victims for days. Exclusion from communication can occur not only due to a

deliberate strategy but also because of habitual neglect, as the above quotation showed.

The recognition of power inequalities due to intersectional differences has decisive effects on shelter work. When workers notice the negative effects of intersectional power dynamics on the counselling outcome (e.g. disempowerment and exclusion), they tend to deliberately counter these negative effects. Such countering may require strategies that increase the agency of both the worker and the victim. However, not all intersectional inequalities in shelter work are as visible as age- and language-related differences. For example, intersectional inequalities related to the social categories of gender and race tend to be less visible. Surprisingly for the field of domestic violence and abuse, which entails work with victims of gender-based violence, gender remains largely unrecognised as a relevant factor shaping harmful hierarchies in domestic violence shelter work, at least until shelter workers address their working experiences with racialised victims.

6.2.2 Misrecognising racialised hierarchies

The shelter workers believed that race as a socially constructed category was not relevant to their work. The workers believed that race as a category has "no meaning" (Workshop documents, D5) and that the effects of the social category of race were not visible in their shelter work:

> It's not a problem. (Workshop documents, D5)
>
> I think it did not influence my attitude. (Workshop documents, D5)

However, the shelter workers discussed the category of race in relation to the skin colour of non-White immigrant victims:

> She had a different skin colour, but this, in my opinion, doesn't matter. (Workshop document, D5)

However, referring to race only when addressing racially minoritised victims challenged the workers' claims that the category of race did not affect their attitudes.

More specifically, the workers did not address race or skin colour when referring to White, non-immigrant victims. In addition to race, the social category of ethnicity also remained relatively invisible, and the shelter workers did not use ethnicity to make sense of their experiences with ethnicised victims, such as Finnish ethnic minorities. When asked to do so, the shelter workers reflected on ethnicity when talking about Finnish Roma or immigrant victims but not when addressing the ethnicity or race of majoritised victims.

Despite the workers believing that race and ethnicity as social categories did not influence shelter counselling, racialised victims may nevertheless have experienced their own racialised positions as relevant to the counselling relationship. For example, the data suggest that during an individual counselling meeting, a racially minoritised victim addressed her own racialised position and the related experiences of marginalisation:

> In the conversation, the client brought up that she is Black, and so she is often in a worse position. (Workshop document, D5)

The fact that the victim addressed her racialised position with the counsellor indicates that the victim considered her racialised position as relevant to the encounter with the counsellor. Nevertheless, the worker misrecognised the victim's verbalisation of racialised marginalisation as irrelevant in the Finnish context. For example, the worker perceived the victim's experiences as something that takes place "only in their home country" (Workshop document, D5). This result is in line with research by Seikkula and Hortelano (2021, 150), who showed that racialised hierarchies are often perceived as problems appearing elsewhere. However, in Finland, surveys indicate negative attitudes towards the Roma ethnic minority and immigrants, and discrimination against racialised minorities is disturbingly common (see Chapter 3). Thus, the social context in which Finnish domestic violence shelters operate is strongly marked by racial and ethnic inequalities and discrimination against racially minoritised people.

The workers' attempts to deny the role of race and ethnicity in their work can be understood as a need to emphasise their beliefs in human dignity and worth, regardless of differences and as an attempt to avoid being labelled as racists. Keskinen et al. (2021) suggested that in Finnish debates, the term race is unlikely to

be used because it is understood as a racist way of classifying people. Therefore, there is a lack of antiracist debate on race, together with the substitution of race by the category of ethnicity (ibid., 51).

Racialised victims' experiences of racial inequalities affect the counselling relationship, even if a worker thinks that race and ethnicity are not important. Extant research, especially American research on diversity in counselling (Sue and Sue, 2016; Rattz et al., 2015), suggests that people of colour can feel disbelief towards a counsellor occupying a White position, which directly affects trust and counselling work. If a White counsellor fails to recognise this, she will fail to employ appropriate strategies to establish and/or recover her own counselling authority and credibility and thus the victim's trust, which has a direct impact on the victim's commitment to the counselling process and the possibility of empowerment. Rattz et al. (2015) argued that the dimensions of privileged and oppressed positions in the relationship between counsellors and clients must be considered because these dimensions decisively affect a counsellor's credibility and a victim's trust in the counselling relationship.

These combinations of power relations related to racialisation can be understood as both potential constraints on empowering encountering and potentially positive factors. The outcome depends on how the racialised positions interfere with counselling authority and other intersections (e.g. a victim may be privileged by race but deprivileged by age) and what effects they have on the perceived legitimacy of the worker and/or the victim.

When both counsellors and victims occupy racially majoritised positions, there is still a hierarchical relationship between them because of the counselling context. However, this hierarchy is not yet oppression but rather an action and a process aimed at the victim's empowerment. However, misrecognised racialisation potentially endangers the possibility of empowerment. When a racially majoritised counsellor is encountering a victim who is already racially classified as a racial minority and is living the consequences of racial oppression in the shared social space, this can negatively affect the counselling relationship despite the counsellor's personal egalitarian attitudes.

6.2.3 (In)visible gender

Although they misrecognised the role of racial and ethnic hierarchies in shelter work, the workers tended to use the term culture to make sense of their working experience with racially minoritised victims. Before analysing this process of culturalisation (Eliassi, 2015; Keskinen, 2011), I will address perceptions of gender as a social category in domestic violence shelter work. My data suggest that the misrecognition of race and ethnicity is related to the misrecognition of gender, which results in different levels of gender visibility.

My data indicate that the shelter workers generally did not consider gender to affect shelter work. Nevertheless, a more detailed analysis of the shelter workers' reflections suggests a different story. Workers' and victims' gender positions and their intersections with racialised positions result in different levels of gender visibility. For example, gender remains a relatively invisible factor in domestic violence shelter work when a racially majoritised female worker works with a racially majoritised female victim. In the aforementioned counselling relationship, the shelter worker believed that gender did not affect the counselling relationship:

> Gender was not important. (Workshop document, D5)

The action research data suggest that similarity in gendered positions (female worker and female victim) renders gender invisible as a factor that impacts the counselling relationship when the worker and the victim are also similarly racialised (Finnish ethnic majority worker and Finnish ethnic majority victim). However, differences in gendered positions (e.g. male worker and female victim) together with shared racialised positions (both majoritised Finns) did raise the level of gender visibility as a factor affecting the counselling relationship. For example, the shelter workers became aware of the use of space, appropriate physical distance, conversation themes and legitimate touch when the victim and the worker were differently gendered, which can be interpreted as a sign of heterosexual normativity:

> A client with a different gender… then hugging is a no-go. (Workshop notes, D3)

> Gender defines a lot, we must be alert; in what space we meet, how close, what do we talk about at the counselling meeting… (Workshop notes, D6; a man worker mostly working with women victims)

My research shows that the shelter workers believed that the similarity of gender positions did not affect their work but differences did (when the worker and the victim were both racially majoritised. However, the effects of similarity in gender positions became visible when the worker and the victim occupied differently racialised positions:

> The same gender as the immigrant client made communication easier. (Workshop document, D5; Finnish female worker considering her work with non-Finnish female victim)

Moreover, when the worker was a racially majoritised man working with a culturalised female victim, gender became visible as a somewhat constraining factor, which was interpreted not only in relation to the background of heterosexual normativity (as was the case earlier when the majoritised male worker encountered majoritised female victims) but also in relation to the racially minoritised victim's cultural belonging:

> A Muslim-background woman and a male worker: you cannot immediately impose yourself as her own worker. (Workshop notes, D6)

Similarly, when the worker was a racially majoritised woman working with a culturalised male victim, the worker experienced the disturbing effects of gender differences, which she explained by referencing culture:

> If a male client is from a different culture and the worker is female, then the situation is tricky… (Workshop notes, D3)

The effect of gender remained largely unrecognised when both participants in the counselling dyad were racially majoritised women. Gender was slightly more visible as an enabling factor when both participants in the counselling dyad were women but the victim was a racially minoritised woman. Gender became visible and perceived as a somewhat constraining factor when the worker was a racially majoritised man working with a racially majoritised woman, in which case shelter work became more complicated due to limitations on the use of space, touch and content during individual counselling conversations. The constraining effect of different gender positions intensified when the victim was positioned as a culturalised other, which resulted in tensions and the perceived trickiness of this

working relationship, as well as the perception that it is impossible to be the victim's own worker.

These findings imply that the intersection of gender and race in the subject positions of domestic violence victims and their shelter workers has diverse effects on the counselling relationship, from enabling to constraining effects, which are, in all cases, productive (Foucault, 1978). Although enabling effects often remain invisible and unaddressed, the effects of gender-related expectations, tensions and silences manifested themselves in everyday shelter practices. For example, a shelter worker described how an immigrant victim was upset at seeing the majoritised male worker doing the dishes:

> The immigrant woman forbade the male worker to clean and do the dishes. She was upset that the male worker was doing the dishes. (Workshop notes, D3)

The above citation also shows that gendered expectations and the construction of legitimate shelter work subjects is a mutually constructive, or co-constituting (Wacquant, 1992), process. The intersections of gendered and racialised positions not only affected the everyday practices in the shelter common space but also individual counselling. For example, the intersections of gender and race affected the shelter workers' perceptions of possible shelter work practices, such as addressing sexual violence. The shelter workers did not address the challenges of talking about sexual violence experiences in all counselling relations, but particularly so in relationships with culturalised others. The shelter workers strongly related the difficulty of addressing experiences of sexual violence with the cultural backgrounds of minoritized victims, such as Roma or Muslim survivors, as the following quotation shows:

> The Roma woman client did not talk about sexual violence with the male worker; they cannot speak about that with a man. But many do tell anyway, but not the Muslims or the Roma… (Workshop notes, D3)

This example indicates the worker's perception of Roma and Muslim victims as representing a homogenised group that cannot address the issue of sexual violence. This research finding is in line with Burman et al. (2004), who showed that service providers construct cultural differences as fixed and peculiar to minoritised communities. However, my research also reveals that some workers challenged the

homogenising construction of culturalised others. For example, one shelter worker recounted an example of a racially minoritised victim talking about her experience of sexual violence with the male shelter worker:

> Except that one Muslim client did speak about sexual violence also to the male worker. (Workshop notes, D3)

However, a similar deconstruction of the homogeneity related to Muslim victims did not occur for Roma ethnic minority victims until age became the topic of debate. Although age was generally considered on its own in relation to racially majoritised victims (as I showed earlier), culture was part of the debate and influenced the meaning of age when it came to racially minoritised victims. Whereas one worker believed that racially minoritised victims' young age prevented them from speaking about sexual violence, another worker believed that the older age of culturalised victims enabled addressing sexual violence:

> Young Roma don't speak about sexual violence to older workers. (Workshop notes, D3)

> Age is an important factor in the case of Roma clients: if the client is older, this helps talking about sexual violence with a female worker. (Workshop notes, D3)

The analysis of the workers' perceptions of intersectional differences and the focus on intersectional power relations of age, language, race, ethnicity and gender indicated the possibility of non-determined outcomes of these relational dynamics. Moreover, my analysis shifts the focus from an essentialised other to the relationally constructed counselling positions of workers and victims. Finally, a better understanding of these intersectional dynamics can inform the analysis of the habitual culturalisation of racially minoritised victims and the habitual disbelief directed towards them.

6.3 Perceptions of racially minoritised victims

Although the shelter workers dismissed the relevance of the categories of race and ethnicity for shelter work, they considered the category of "culture" to be relevant. The shelter workers used culture repeatedly to make sense of their working experiences with racialised others, such as immigrants and Roma victims. The shelter workers, instead of considering the racialisation processes, used an all-encompassing notion of culture to make sense of racialised immigrants and the Roma, which often resulted in stereotypical reproductions of essential cultural difference, whereby culture is seen as an "ethnic property of the Other" (Eliassi, 2013, 38). In this process of culturalisation (Eliassi, 2013; Keskinen, 2011), gender plays a significant role. Gender is subsumed under the category of culture in the process of othering domestic violence and abuse and of culturalising others (Eliassi, 2013; Keskinen, 2011). This process effectively reduces the agency of both workers and victims. Reduced agency, meanwhile, manifests itself through workers' habitual reproduction of stereotypical perceptions and practices instead of engaging in professionally reflexive perceiving and acting processes.

6.3.1 Habitual culturalisation

The essentialist perception of culturalised victims is highly prevalent in everyday shelter practices. My action research data show that the shelter workers often addressed racialised victims (e.g. immigrants and/or Roma) as homogenous representatives of what they called a different culture. This result is in line with comparative research on cultural encounters in interventions against violence across five European countries (Hageman et al., 2019), which showed that so-called cultural differences in terms of stereotypes influenced support professionals' attitudes and interventions when working with minoritised victims and that "culture was often framed as essential difference, although minorities that are given special attention in the researched countries in practical work varied considerably" (Jalušič, 2019, 42–

43) In Europe, the typical minority members who are defined through culture come from the Roma minority (ibid).

There is a strong connection between the culturalisation of racialised minority victims and the othering of domestic violence, together with the process of othering gender inequality. The shelter workers perceived culturalised victims as belonging to an inherently patriarchal culture:

> The client is from a different culture, where men have a higher position than women. (Workshop documents, D5)

Other cultures were perceived in contrasting terms to the presumably gender-equal Finland. The shelter worker explained victims' behaviours as difficulties in understanding Finnish gender equality:

> The client was from a different culture; it was difficult for her to understand the woman's position in Finland. (Workshop notes, D3)

These examples indicate an intention to explain Finnish gender equality to immigrant victims. This finding confirms the results of a Finnish survey (Haarakangas et al., 2000) that revealed shelter workers' struggled with explaining women's equality in Finland to minoritised victims. However, the workers' perceptions of racialised minority victims' positions regarding gender inequality did not suggest that the shelter workers understood domestic violence as gender-based violence but rather indicated a gender-indifferent perception of the domestic violence phenomenon. As research has shown, a gender-indifferent understanding of domestic violence results in individualising the causes of domestic violence (Krizsan and Roggeband, 2014), especially in the majority community, while culturalising them in the minority community (Burman et al., 2004), as the minoritised community is constructed as a "culture of violence" and domestic violence is seen as "a cultural thing" (ibid., 345). This is how the "othering" of violence as a problem of the members of minority groups takes place (Eliassi, 2013; Wemrell et al., 2019) by stereotyping the entire group (Sokoloff and Dupont, 2005).

The cultures of the majoritised, "dominant subjects are dissolved into invisibility" (Eliassi, 2013, 38), and a similar process occurs for the category of gender. My research indicates that when domestic violence was culturalised and othered, the

workers approached their work using gender-indifferent frames (Krizsan and Roggeband, 2019), which successfully hid gender as a meaningful difference in domestic violence shelter work. My data indicate that despite gender becoming visible in work with racial minority victims, it is not the gender but the culture of the racially minoritised victims that workers think needs to be considered in their work.

Culture is used to explain the behaviours of immigrants and is overemphasised over all other circumstances (Keskinen et al., 2021, 155). This could be seen in the shelter workers' expressed insecurities around their own lack of knowledge of the culture of racialised others. My data reveal the workers' self-doubts regarding their lack of knowledge of the supposedly inherently patriarchal culture of Roma victims and the overdetermining role of culture in the case of immigrant victims:

> I have maybe not understood enough about the rules and limitations connected to Roma culture and what power men have compared to women. (Workshop documents, D5)
>
> What else is related to the culture? (Workshop documents, D5)

Reacting to this insecurity, the workers suggested the need for more education on violence work with immigrants and more knowledge of cultural differences:

> Everyone would need the courses/education on violence and crisis work with immigrant shelter clients. (Research workshop, D11)
>
> There is a need for more knowledge about different cultures, as well as the need for awareness of culture. (Research workshop, D11)

These data excerpts suggest that the shelter workers constructed the racialised victims as victims of their inherently patriarchal cultures and expressed the need for more knowledge of different cultures. These results are in line with results from previous Finnish surveys that revealed immigrants in shelters being represented as victims of their own cultures (Andrew and Hartikainen, 1999; Haarakangas et al., 2000; Kyllönen-Saarnio and Nurmi, 2005), as accepting violence and as being weak and traditional (Keskinen, 2011). Already more than 20 years ago, a survey showed that workers who did violence work with immigrant victims believed they needed to know about different cultures and the position of women in them (Haarakangas et al., 2000: 40). Although I agree that the question of "What is it that must be

considered?" when working with victims perceived as representatives of different cultures is extremely important, this is not the same as asking the question of "What do workers need to know about other cultures?" in relation to domestic violence work. Whereas the first question has the potential to expand the scale of possible intersectionally sensitive responses to the intersectionally produced vulnerabilities of a particular victim, the second question narrows down potential responses. For example, extant research has shown that immigrant victims are often received with a patronising attitude (Seikkula and Hortelano, 2021) and seen as patriarchal victims needing education on women's rights by workers performing the so-called civilising mission (Mulinari et al., 2009). Moreover, essentialist "knowledge about their cultures" can be understood as a tool for asserting control over culturalised minorities (Ben-Ari and Strier, 2010).

Thus, the worker's culturalisation of others and their othering of violence, together with their wish for cultural knowledge to equip themselves for what is often called culturally competent work, can be interpreted as just another practice of racialised oppression. For example, Eliassi (2013, 38) warned that "the discourse of cultural competence has emerged in order to make the cultural Other intelligible for the dominant society," whose members often apply the category of culture to make sense of immigrants, while the culture of the dominant subjects remains invisible. Instead of recognising the effects of racialisation, the shelter workers used the category of "culture" to subsume racial and/or ethnic (and other) differences of racially minoritised victims. In this way, culture becomes a tool for racialising others (Seikkula and Hortelano, 2021; Keskinen, 2011; Eliassi, 2013).

The data from everyday shelter work demonstrate the effects of culturalisation on the workers' perceptions of Roma and immigrant victims. For example, the culturalised victim who is a shelter service user is expected to be humble and weak, not knowing her rights and not being aware of domestic violence and abuse. The victim who does not fit this image of the culturalised victim appears illegitimate and provokes disbelief.

Even though I was a researcher paying special attention to reflecting on my everyday shelter work practices with racially minoritised victims, I was not immune to culturalising constructions of shelter residents. Despite my reflexive working

approach, it was difficult to recognise my own embodied, habitually racialised responses. As Ferguson (2018) showed, social work professionals "often do reflect in action by elevating their minds above the interactions (...) so they can think clearly and adjust what they are doing" (ibid., 415), but at times, such reflection is limited due to the need for self-defence against emotional impact and anxiety. Below, my autoethnographic research data reveal my expectations and annoyance in encountering a Roma survivor aware of her rights:

> A Roma client I was speaking with… I could not completely believe her being afraid or really under the threat of attack. Her behaviour was arrogant, and she was demanding our services for herself, and she was aware of her rights (...) and maybe it is quite annoying for us that someone demands our services, which is quite in a contrast with the fact that we are then… with immigrants, we are trying to teach them about their rights so (...). We try to empower them in that sense. But when in that sense an empowered – an empowered Roma woman – comes to the shelter, we feel annoyed by the fact that she is empowered and knows her rights. (Voice tape recording, D24)

This autoethnographic example indicates that I compared the behaviour of the Roma domestic violence survivor with the socially constructed image of a culturalised victim as weak and not knowledgeable and thus a legitimate subject for shelter work. Culturalising shelter work consists of educating culturalised victims on women's rights and thus performing the so-called "civilizing mission" (Mulinari et al., 2009), whereby the pathologised and culturally othered victims are seen as targets of empowerment meant to save "women from their culture that is represented as deviant" (Eliassi, 2013, 41). Such a culturalising construction of racially minoritised victims resulted in me perceiving the Finnish Roma victim as illegitimate because she seemed to be too empowered and knowledgeable compared to the expected image of the weak victim. As Bent-Goodley (2005) stated, she did not sound right or "distressed enough":

> When a Roma comes to our doors, and she knows very well what her rights are, and she is not asking them humbly in tears and fear but calmly and very self-confidently demands them, and we are suddenly not fine with that (...). (Voice tape recording, D35)

My research data show that when a Roma victim does not fit the workers' expectations of a culturalised victim, disbelief arises towards that victim's accounts of violence and her need for shelter services. Pre-existing expectations of culturalised

victims' behaviours are examples of perceptions that shift shelter practices away from normative shelter counselling based on so-called client-centredness and needs-based counselling:

> We are so demanding towards them, you know. Like they would have to (...) be humble and thankful (...) when we are helping in the way that we want. (Voice tape recording, D35)

My research suggests that shelter workers do not apply the usual working approach, or the usual form of counselling, with racially minoritised victims. In contrast to the prevailing methods defined as client-centred and needs-based work, work with Roma victims is burdened with the effects of culturalised subject construction shaped by oppressive power relations between the majoritised Finns and the minoritised Roma.

The workers believed that knowing something about cultural differences could help them adjust their own reactions in counselling relationships involving immigrant victims. For example, one worker explained that knowledge of certain cultures helped her deconstruct an unpleasant feeling when working with a victim:

> It helped me that I knew something about that culture, so I didn't take things so personally (...). The situation could be unpleasant, but I understood that it is just the style of talking. (Workshop notes, D3)

The shelter workers considered themselves to be good at encountering immigrant victims and non-biased while working in a culturally sensitive way. One worker claimed that the workers generally had a good attitude towards victims. However, by using culture to make sense of encountering immigrant victims, the shelter worker reproduced the process of racialised othering:

> We have a lot of knowledge about cultures and different services, and we are good at encountering, we don't have a bias. Generally, immigrant clients get a good service here: we are taking into account their culture. (Workshop notes, D6)

Although the workers perceived their culturalised attitude as a form of politeness and sensitivity and consideration for victims' backgrounds, such curiosity can, nevertheless, be interpreted as a racist and othering gesture (Seikkula and Hortelano,

2021, 151), as racialised others, seen as non-local outsiders and exceptions to the rule, must continuously respond to questions about their origin:

> We encourage them to do their own culture food, and we order the ingredients from the kitchen. We are curious about the unfamiliar culture and the language. (Workshop notes, D6)

Even a well-intended gesture meant to express a positive attitude towards an immigrant victim in the shelter may be experienced as more racialising othering for the victim herself (Essed, 1994; Rastas, 2005) and thus as a disempowering gesture, without workers ever being aware of this. Culturalisation results in the misrecognition of racialised power relations (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990) and the failure to apply strategies to counter their negative effects on domestic violence shelter work. This kind of counselling relationship and its effects do not represent the legitimate symbolic violence of the domestic violence counselling relationship.

6.3.2 Habitual disbelief

In the shelter counselling relationship, the misrecognition of the significance of race and gender contributes to the habitual reproduction of existing stereotypes and prejudices connected to immigrants and/or Roma domestic violence victims. My research data gathered via participatory observation and autoethnography in everyday shelter work reveal the construction of the harmful – or, as Piippo et al. (2021) would say, malignant – Roma and immigrant victim position. For example, racial stereotyping and negative identity perceptions can result in shelter workers' habitual disbelief and suspicion of Roma victims, which affects the evaluation of Roma victims' shelter service needs.

Shelter workers are often the first responders to a domestic violence victim's attempt to seek safety at a shelter. A worker performs the shelter service need evaluation based on a victim's accounts of domestic violence and offers shelter placement if the shelter acceptance condition is that a person be a victim of domestic violence and abuse or live under the threat of it (Ewalds et al., 2019). After initial acceptance, the shelter service need evaluation remains in the background of shelter work as an ongoing process based on which the shelter stay is continued or

terminated. My research data show that the shelter workers disbelieved Roma victims' accounts of abuse not only in the moment of first response but also well after the victim was accommodated in the shelter.

Extant research suggests that professionals in the social field have insufficient knowledge of the dynamics of domestic violence victimisation (Piippo et al., 2021, 126) and their traumatic effects. Moreover, gender-neutral rhetoric (ibid., 128) continues to dominate responses to domestic violence in Finnish society. I argue that gender-neutral responses not only hide the role of gender inequalities in domestic violence causes, consequences and possibilities of getting help (Lombard and Whiting, 2017) but also hide the intersectional inequalities that intersect with gender, such as race, ethnicity and immigrant status. Although Piippo et al. (2021) showed that social work professionals construct malignant positions of victims in general, my research data suggest that these harmful positions are intensified for racially minoritised victims, such as the Roma, in which case, the supposed gender neutrality intersects with the supposed racial neutrality in victim encountering. The legitimacy of Roma victims is undermined by workers' disbelief in their accounts of violence:

> There has been this Roma client in the shelter for a few days already, and a worker expressed openly that she doubts if she is telling the truth because the story is changing a lot. First, the client said one thing and then suddenly the story changes and now the worker is doubting what her shelter need really is (...). Although in the background there is quite serious violence, the client was in the hospital and in the shelter before, so it can be the consequence of trauma that the story is changing (...). As such, it should not be strange, but of course this client does not please us, the shelter workers, when she, in the middle of the night, suddenly goes to visit her relative (...). So this kind of doubt arises in her case, whether she really needs the shelter service or is she speaking the truth. This – whether she is speaking the truth – arises precisely in these Roma cases, also in cases of substance abusers, and not so often, for example, in cases of clients with immigrant backgrounds. (Voice recording, D24)

The Roma victim mentioned in the autoethnographic extract above had already been accepted to the shelter. One shelter counsellor expressed doubt about the truthfulness of her account of domestic violence and abuse because her changing story was understood as an indication of lying. My autoethnographic reflections indicate my application of a trauma-informed approach to consider the possibility

that the victim's changing story might have been a consequence of domestic violence trauma:

> We know that, well… That traumatic memory is fragmentary and the story often changes, so we should not think that she is not speaking the truth. (Voice tape recording, D24)

Although extant research suggests that trauma-informed and intersectional approaches to violence work have several similarities and are crucial to sensitive violence work (Kulkarni, 2018), my data indicate that the shelter counsellors interpreted the Roma victim's changing story as proof of lying rather than trauma. This suggests that the trauma-informed approach is not effective in countering negative perceptions of racialised minority victims, such as the Finnish Roma. Disbelief of the Roma victim's account of violence was also expressed when the counsellors were having a team discussion. Below is my autoethnographic reflection on this conversation:

> And suddenly, we are, instead of discussing how to proceed with her case, discussing that… Aha, did she come for a short holiday? Having here the accommodation and food and is now visiting her relatives, right? The fact that we are discussing like this is not without effects (...). Her entitlement to our service is in question (...) there is this question whether she is anyway fooling us, needing only a free hotel service. (Voice tape recording, D35)

The shelter workers expressed suspicion, questioning this victim's shelter service needs, supporting their disbelief with an example of a victim breaking shelter rules and visiting a relative after the shelter curfew. Again, this can be interpreted as malignant positioning (Piippo et al., 2021) of the "uncooperative victim" failing to fulfil the expected appropriate behaviour as a shelter service user. Both victim positionings, as unconvincing and/or uncooperative, undermine the legitimacy of a victim's position and thus her entitlement to shelter services.

Like Roma minority victims, immigrant victims were also quickly perceived as abusing social services or, as one worker said, abusing the system, in which their community was believed to be assisting them:

> Immigrants have their own networks; they have experience and advice on how to abuse the system. (Workshop notes, D6)

> The clients from the reception centre have incredible networks, they know how to… (Workshop notes, D6)

Despite the harmful construction of immigrant victims as abusing services and having good networks assisting them with this activity, the image of the immigrant victim was not one dimensional, and the shelter workers also deconstructed such perceptions by returning to the domestic violence issue:

> There are also differences, it depends on where you come, whether you have a network. (Workshop notes, D6)

> If she has moved from Middle East to Finland 20 years ago, and all that time experienced domestic violence, she was at home isolated and she was lied to about the Finnish society, and she doesn't trust the officials, and she has difficulties believing otherwise… (Workshop notes, D6)

One worker pointed out that a victim's own community can also be controlling, posing a risk to a domestic violence victim who is trying to divorce:

> Small circles: those from the same country judge and talk… And then there is honour-related violence… (Workshop notes, D6)

Data suggest that when an immigrant victim of domestic violence is perceived as having community network relations, such relations are considered in a negative light either as a resource of support to deceive social service providers or a source of risk for the domestic violence survivor herself. This could explain why the shelter workers rarely mapped the social networks of immigrant domestic violence victims: they did not perceive that network as a potential source of empowerment.

In addition, the shelter workers said that social service network partners involved in an immigrant victims' domestic violence cases express disbelief regarding immigrant shelter residents. Shelter's network partners perceive immigrant victims as being difficult clients who are abusing services and deceiving service providers. For example, one shelter worker described how other services perceived immigrant victims:

> The organisations doing the work with immigrants, the health care… They say that the clients are fooling us; they are trying everything and present themselves as "I am in such a bad shape that I cannot get up." (Workshop notes, D6)

Although the perception described in the above citation of immigrant victims as abusive attributes this construction to other services, one shelter worker accepted this as a valid proposition, adding that it is understandable that asylum-seekers try to find benefits for their asylum-seeking process:

> Yes, they know how, they are fooling you. They try to profit from the point of view of the asylum process, which is quite human, of course. (Workshop notes, D6)

A similarly negative construction of immigrant victims involved blaming them of abusing shelter workers to look after their children. Immigrant victims were seen as taking advantage of the workers' for babysitting purposes:

> In relation to childcare, you can see how they immediately bring their children to the worker, who is babysitting the other client's child, they take advantage of it. (Workshop notes, D6)

However, the shelter workers also deconstructed this image of an immigrant victim taking advantage of babysitting services by emphasising that the same happens with majoritised Finnish victims:

> But the same happens with the Finns. (Workshop notes, D6)

> This is the same with the Finns: it is difficult for them to be in the residential institution with the child, there are all the time other workers and people around. (Workshop notes, D6)

Thus, the shelter workers pointed out the difficulty of being a resident in an institutional setting, which is challenging for all residents. Finally, the image of immigrant victims as deceiving was deconstructed by coming back to the specific position of immigrant and domestic violence victim:

> Fooling us, in what? The immigrant client can know something but not something else. Many also pretend to understand, but they don't. We must make a distinction between these things. (Workshop notes, D6)

It is important to note that the shelter workers' negative constructions of immigrant victims were largely built around the "no one's responsibility tasks" (Piippo et al., 2021) of childcare and practical support, which are the areas in which shelter work lacks institutional support (see Chapter 5). Therefore, the shelter workers' negative constructions of immigrant victims can be interpreted as a

defensive reaction when working in under-resourced working conditions with insufficient essential support services, in addition to being influenced by pressures from professional colleagues who, often from a hierarchically higher position, make judgements about their work. My data demonstrate shelter workers' vulnerability and inclination to reproduce the racialising perceptions that circulate in the Finnish social space (e.g. immigrants as abusers of social services) despite their good intentions, strong professional commitment and even a considerable amount of informed reflection.

6.3.3 Deconstructing culturalisation and disbelief

Although harmful constructions of racially minoritised survivors, such as the Roma, were common and debates related to disbelief were repeated, my autoethnographic data indicate that the shelter's discourses and practices were not one dimensional. For example, in the case of another Roma victim, when the team was expressing disbelief once again, one shelter worker warned against the repeated debates around certain victims' entitlement to shelter services, reminding the team of the low-threshold principle and the need to protect the most vulnerable:

> She said that precisely in the case of the Roma, substance abusers and immigrants, we always have some debates about whether they are entitled to our services or… Do they abuse us… And should we take them in or throw them out (...). And exactly these groups of people, they are anyway extremely marginalised and they need help the most (...) according to the fact that we are low threshold, they are the ones that we must especially look after. (Voice tape recording, D62)

In this extract, the shelter worker defended the right of the Roma victim and other racially minoritised victims to be believed and perceived as legitimate subjects, relating their vulnerable positions and workers' disbelieving attitudes to the marginalisation processes in society. However, my data suggest that even the shelter workers who are informed regarding the dynamics of domestic violence and are trauma-informed tend to habitually reproduce harmful positionings of racialised Roma. In such cases, the principle of low-threshold access has proven to have the potential to counter misrecognition and disbelief. The low-threshold principle states that victims' accounts of domestic violence suffice to access the shelter. Even in the case of uncertainty, the low-threshold idea backs the decision to accept a victim first

and deliberate more about the case later, when the victim is already safe. This "safety-first" approach is important but seems to be easily forgotten for small reasons such as "not complying with the shelter rules" (Nichols, 2013) or "not sounding distressed enough" (Bent-Goodley, 2005).

The idea of believing or disbelieving a victim in relation to the evaluation of the victim's shelter service needs is particularly disturbing because shelter workers operate exclusively based on the victim's accounts of domestic violence and abuse. The extract below contains my autoethnographic reflection on the problematic role of disbelieving at the moment of evaluating victims' shelter service needs:

> Based on her saying that she has recently been a victim of violence, that the man is still threatening and she cannot anymore be in her own apartment because she is not safe… This reasoning is enough for me to decide that yes, she can come to the shelter. (Voice tape recording, D24)

Shelter workers often disbelieve Roma victims and interpret their incoherent accounts of domestic violence and abuse as lying despite being trauma informed and aware that such inconsistency can be a result of the domestic violence trauma itself. I argue that this tendency can be interpreted in two ways. First, as an example of the habitual reproduction of racialised perceptions and attitudes towards the Roma ethnic minority in the Finnish social space. For example, Seikkula and Rantalaiho (2012) showed that racism towards the Finnish Roma minority affects the possibilities of equality in encountering; power, agency and the possibility of participation are relationally constituted during encountering, which is shaped by historical and material circumstances (ibid., 45) and a context often marked by discrimination and racism (ibid., 41).

Thus, the racialised structures of the social space affect concrete encounters between shelter workers and victims by producing mistrust between the majoritised and minoritised individuals. In shelter work practices, workers' perceptions of and habitual responses to Roma victims can be interpreted as expressions of the racialised power relations found in society. I interpret the habitual disbelief of Roma victims as an expression of perceptions affected by stereotypes of the Roma in Finnish society; thus, expressions of structural racism (Keskinen et al., 2021) are a

regime that produces unequal positions and hierarchical power relations between racially majoritised workers and racially minoritised victims.

Recognising the negative effects of structural racism on shelter work practices does not mean that every act related to shelter need evaluations that result in referring a Roma minority member elsewhere is a racist practice. Sometimes, the shelter is not the right address for the person calling, and this must be considered. However, to counter the negative effects of racialisation during the service need evaluation, workers need to recognise the relevance of race for their work to gain awareness and employ strategies to counter exclusionary effects instead of habitually reproducing them.

Despite the habitual reproduction of the culturalisation of racially minoritised victims and of the disbelieving attitudes towards them, the expressions of different perspectives within the shelter team enabled a deconstruction of some of these harmful perceptions. One of my research findings is that, during the action research intersectional intervention (second research workshop), when I explicitly asked the shelter workers to reflect on power in their work according to different social categories, the shelter counsellors constructed the subject position of Roma shelter residents as relational (Bourdieu, 2020; Wacquant, 1992, 2006). In other words, when the workers had the time and space for a guided and cooperative team reflection on the power relations between workers and victims, they arrived at a non-essentialist understanding of racially minoritised victims' subject positions. I argue that this kind of resistance to the reproduction of inequalities demands enabling working conditions that provide the space and time for professional reflection.

The shelter workers suggested that the meaning of culture can be negotiated during a concrete counselling interaction and mentioned that the position of victims in society can affect the counselling relationship. My action research data show that the shelter workers sometimes allow Roma victims themselves to define the meaning of their culture in their experiences of domestic violence and abuse. For example, one shelter worker countered the essentialist and homogenous subject construction of Roma victims by means of a relational construction of meanings:

> Roma clients usually emphasise their own culture, and as a worker I can say: I know this about your culture… Or I can ask: how do you see that? The clients are actually

> relieved that they don't have to explain everything. You can always ask about their culture, you don't have to assume… (Workshop notes, D3)

The worker did not view the Roma victim merely as a member of an ethnic group but also as an individual, giving her the possibility of defining the role of culture for herself. Moreover, the worker said that addressing the issue of culture made the victim feel relieved. Such relief can be interpreted as the effect of giving the racialised minority victim the possibility of agency. The terms used and the group identities provided can be used as part of a self-defining emancipatory action through which the terms can achieve new meanings (Keskinen et al., 2021, 14), especially when the racially discriminated start to use the terms in their own manner that empowers their agency. Through such agency, racialised power relations in counselling can be addressed and deconstructed, which opens up a space for empowering counselling beyond the choice between rejecting the significance of culture or rejecting the reality of domestic violence. As Sue and Sue (2016) showed, so-called cultural assumptions often remain in the background, unverbalised, while still shaping the counselling relationship. By verbalising such assumptions, there is a chance of renegotiating their meanings, which can indicate to victims that workers have, to some extent, reflexive attitudes towards their own racialised perceptions of Roma victims.

The extract discussed above suggests that workers do not construct culture merely as an essential difference ascribed to racialised victims; rather, they emphasise the relational dimensions of this category. Workers maintain the possibility of redefining the meaning of culture together with Roma victims, thus giving victims the power of defining; consequently, Roma victims can use this category to reinvent or reposition themselves in relation to counsellors. Moreover, they can use this as a strategy of resistance against disempowering culturalisation in relation to shelter workers who recognise such a negotiation as a legitimate action.

The social context in which Finnish domestic violence shelters operate affects the dynamics of counselling, although this fact is rarely recognised. For example, the history of the Finnish Roma minority is marked by state and municipal repressive and assimilative policies (Keskinen, 2012, 81). Moreover, despite Finns being treated as inferior in the hierarchies of White and Nordic races, the Finns constructed their own hierarchies in relation to the Sami and the Roma, who were perceived as

backward and problematic national groups in need of assimilation (ibid., 81–84). My action research data suggest that when given the time and space (at the research workshops), with intersectional reflection being imposed on them, the shelter workers deliberated the possible impact of the marginalisation of the Roma in Finnish society on the shelter counselling relationship:

> Maybe I also have not understood enough about what position they have in society. (Workshop documents, D5)

This was a moment of insight into the possible effects that an ethnic minority's position within Finnish society can have on the counselling work done in the domestic violence shelter field. My study suggests that Roma victims potentially have greater negotiating power over the definition of culture than immigrant victims. This can be interpreted in terms of the difference in intersectional positions between the Finnish Roma minority and immigrants in Finland. In many ways, Roma victims are better positioned because of possessing citizenship, residence permits, fluency in the Finnish language and access to social and health services. Meanwhile, immigrant victims have less power to negotiate or resist the culturalising treatment exhibited by shelter workers. This finding is in line with the research results by Burman and Chantler (2005), who claimed that immigrant status needs to be understood as superimposed onto other intersectional differences.

My study suggests that workers focus on the experiences of domestic violence that immigrant victims have experienced in Finland, but the victims themselves may want to speak about the violence experienced in their home countries as well. The workers believed that previous violent experiences interfered negatively with shelter work. For example, one worker explained that a victim was speaking about the violence that she had experienced before coming to Finland, which the worker found to be not as important:

> The client talks about the violence that happened in their home country; she doesn't know how to distinguish between crucial issues. (Workshop notes, D6)

In addition, the workers considered whether serious traumatisation backgrounds, such as war and refugee experiences, made the communication difficult, because clients did not find domestic violence to be serious compared to war experiences:

> Shelter violence work is difficult if a client has experienced much worse violence in the home country (for example, war trauma). After that experience, they might not experience a husband's hit as violence. (Workshop notes, D6)

Although the shelter workers could adapt their working methods to majoritised victims whom they knew were traumatised during childhood, they had difficulties adapting their approaches to meet the trauma-specific needs of immigrant victims. This tendency can be explained by the fact that the workers used culture to understand their immigrant clients. Jalušič (2019, 43) showed that in the cultural othering of minorities, there might be an assumption that such minorities tolerate violence or perceive it as normal. This perception may result in dismissing the relevance of an immigrant victim's previous violent experiences for current domestic violence work. Nevertheless, the perception of immigrant victims as victims of their violent cultures was deconstructed during the discussion on the diversity of immigrant victims' experiences. One shelter worker resisted the perception of immigrant victims as a unified category:

> There is a diversity of immigrant clients, and not all have experienced violence in their home countries. For example, the client from [name of the country] experienced violence for the first time in Finland. (Workshop notes, D6)

My research data suggest that the shelter workers' perceptions of immigrant victims were more complex and multidimensional than their perceptions of Roma victims. This difference can be partially explained as a result of my data-gathering approach. The intersectional intervention at the second workshop produced data regarding immigrants and the Roma, while during the third and fourth workshops, I asked for reflections on immigrant-related shelter work only, without introducing intersectional lenses for reflection.

6.4 Shelter workers and immigrant victims – Difficult or vulnerable?

The analysis of the action research data suggests that inadequate shelter working conditions have a decisive effect on shelter work with immigrant victims, resulting

in negative constructions of workers' perceptions of immigrant victims. Thus, the construction of racially minoritised victims is affected not only by the (mis)recognition of the relevance of intersectional differences, as well as by the stereotypes and prejudices reproduced via habitual culturalisation or habitual disbelief, but also by concrete working conditions in everyday shelter work.

Although the shelter workers attempted to apply their usual counselling approaches to immigrant victims, this strategy produced ambiguous results. The workers felt that the usual work contents and methods did not have the expected effects. For example, one worker described the difficulties of shelter work with immigrant victims:

> With immigrants' shelter service evaluation and the service plan and the different forms… That goes quite well, but it is maybe a bit difficult to set the goals (...) the discussion was so vague! In the case of a majoritised Finn, I can more easily focus on one issue. The immigrant's story is moving back and forth, and it is difficult to single out what is central. (Workshop notes, D6)
>
> And with the interpreter, it is very difficult; it is twice as vague. (Workshop notes, D6)

The workers attempted to perform the usual shelter work with immigrant victims, but they ended up doing their work differently in terms of content and methods. They experienced communication with immigrants as difficult, suggesting that to better understand immigrant victims, they did not ask additional questions:

> With majoritised Finns, I ask questions to concretise: What did you mean? I don't do that as much with immigrant clients. Is this because we are discussing with the assistance of an interpreter, or is it because the encountering is so different? (Workshop notes, D6)

The fact of not asking additional questions in interpreter-assisted work must be considered in relation to the fact that interpreter-assisted work requires considerably more time, and there is pressure to spend less on interpretation (see Chapter 4). Moreover, a shelter worker's individual interpreter-assisted counselling time means that another worker is left to handle the crisis hotline, childcare and looking after the rest of the shelter residents and accepting new ones as well. These working conditions put pressure on shelter workers to be efficient in their interpreter-assisted meetings. The data excerpt above suggests that such efficiency comes at the expense

of the quality of individual counselling – in the excerpt, the worker could not ask additional questions that would have enabled a better understanding of the victim. Moreover, the worker admitted to not mapping the victim's strengths and social network:

> I did not map enough her network and her own strengths. (Workshop notes, D6)

In addition, the shelter workers made considerable adjustments to the individual counselling content and methods when working with immigrant victims. For example, my data show that the shelter workers provided plenty of practical support and assistance at the cost of domestic violence counselling:

> The immigrant clients have a lot of questions, but they don't have the communication tools… They must wait for the interpreter. When finally there was an interpreter, we had to use interpretation time to help victim with the practical things. (Workshop notes, D6)

> With immigrants, practical things take most of the time. (Workshop notes, D6)

I argue that the shelter workers displayed professional competence and sensitivity in trying to meet immigrant victims' needs and focusing on practical support. As extant research has shown, immigrant victims often need concrete help with procedures for seeking assistance from various service providers due to language barriers and a lack of knowledge about the community (Kiamanesh and Hauge, 2019; Ekström, 2017). They have a strong need for economic, housing and practical support, and studies show that these needs must not be overshadowed by the need for safety, emotional support and further follow-up support (Kiamanesh and Hauge, 2019; Ekström, 2017). Similarly, my data show that the workers' practical support meant that they were assisting the victims in navigating the service provider network:

> Their understanding of the social service system… We explain who represents which institution. (Workshop notes, D6)

However, some scholars have warned against addressing practical needs at the cost of interventions that ensure safety (Burman and Chantler, 2005). Thus, shelter workers' sensitive responses to immigrant victims' specific needs (by providing sufficient practical support) can result in neglecting their domestic violence issues. For example, if workers perform significantly less domestic violence counselling, this

could mean that they focus less on the verbalisation of the violence experience, which has negative consequences for conducting an adequate risk evaluation and preparing a safety plan. My research data suggest that the workers performed significantly less violence work with immigrant victims compared to majoritised Finnish victims:

> I don't remember any immigrant client with whom the shelter work would be the same as in the case of a majoritised Finn. (Workshop notes, D6)

The shelter workers aimed to apply the standard domestic violence counselling approach by employing the usual methods of psychoeducation (providing information on the cycle of violence, introducing the power and control wheel, describing the traumatic effects of domestic abuse and performing stabilisation exercises). However, my data suggest that the standard methods did not result in the expected responses:

> The arousal zone and the cycle of violence… There was a feeling that she maybe doesn't understand. Was it an interpreter problem, or was it because the concept and the working method are new to many? (Workshop notes, D6)

> It is difficult to establish the violence work process. (Workshop notes, D6)

While having to cope with insufficient resources, the shelter workers relied on costly interpreter-assisted time to address the urgent practical needs of immigrant victims, thus responding in a victim-sensitive manner. However, this was often done at the expense of counselling related to domestic violence. Consequently, victims' situations could appear to be stagnating despite the workers' efforts. As a result, immigrant victims were perceived as difficult victims:

> I have feelings of insufficiency, frustration, irritation and conflict. (Workshop notes, D6)

> The immigrant client is a difficult client. (Workshop notes, D6)

Shelter workers' feelings of inadequacy and frustration in relation to victims who are perceived as difficult and who do not fulfil the workers' expectations regarding the effects of the shelter work can result in victims being positioned as malignant subjects – that is, being placed in the "uncooperative help-seeker" and "no one's client" subject positions (Piippo et al., 2021). My data show that for the workers,

work with immigrant victims was seen as inefficient compared to work with majoritised Finns:

> With majoritised Finns, I have a feeling that we have come a longer way in our work. (Workshop notes, D6)

> With them, I don't get the same results with the same support as with the majoritised Finns. (Workshop notes, D6)

Such comparisons, without reflecting on what causes these differences, can, together with feelings of inadequacy and frustration, negatively affect workers' perceptions of the legitimacy of victims' shelter stays. Consequently, the shelter workers perceived immigrant victims as stagnating in their shelter work and their shelter accommodation period as being prolonged without an end in sight:

> The shelter stay goes on and on and often the clients seem to linger here, and the work does not lead anywhere. (Workshop notes, D6)

The shelter workers' accounts of their work with immigrant victims suggest a tension between their attempts to engage in dominant counselling and the reality of failing to do so. Due to the inadequate working conditions the workers had to adjust their methods to be sensitive to immigrant victims' needs. While trying to meet the needs related to the immigrant subject position (by offering practical support), the workers had to neglect immigrants' needs related to domestic violence. This finding indicates that immigrant victims do not receive the same quality of violence work as majoritised victims. This explains the slow of their cases and the accompanying perception of immigrant victims as difficult victims.

The construction of the immigrant victim position is affected by shelter workers' attempts to meet immigrant victims' needs while navigating the harmful working conditions marked by a lack of essential support services and insufficient support from other social service institutions. My data show that the workers emphasised the urgent need for other social services to respond to the increased necessity for practical assistance when working with immigrant domestic violence survivors. If other services were to handle the practical support work, then workers could finally focus on domestic violence work. There was consensus among the shelter workers regarding the inadequacy of the support services:

> We do not have childcare services or other practical support. (Workshop documents, D6)

> We could do violence work if other institutions would take care of the practical things. (Workshop documents, D6)

Recognising the needs of victims in acute crises and realising is part of a trauma-informed working approach, which is central to domestic violence shelter work. My data show that trauma-informed shelter workers acknowledge the need for hands-on support for shelter residents undergoing acute crises. The workers offered such support to all shelter residents:

> Our central skill is recognising where the client is according to the trauma and crisis perspective. (Workshop notes, D6)

> From the point of view of the violence work process, it is important that we emotionally stabilise clients even if that means we do things for them. (Workshop notes, D6)

Although all domestic violence victims in acute crises need concrete help and support, and things must be done for them and even in their place, this need is intensified in the case of immigrant victims due to language barriers and a lack of knowledge of the service system. However, the shelter did not have anywhere to turn to achieve additional practical support for these victims' needs, which would have enabled the shelter workers to focus on domestic violence counselling. While trying to arrange for the required services and cooperate with the service network, the shelter workers often found themselves in challenging positions. The intersection between the shelter work field and other social services dealing with immigrant victims' cases results in tensions that demand negotiations and harmfully affect the worker's perceptions of immigrant victims. My research data indicate pressure related to the cooperation network. For example, one worker explained the effect of the negative feedback that the shelter received from other institutions with which the shelter cooperated in immigrant victims' cases (e.g. the immigrant reception centre, municipal social services and municipal child protection services):

> I feel a professional conflict: these services gave us negative feedback that "we do too much for the clients," and they advised us, "Don't do things instead of them, they can do things themselves." (Workshop notes, D6)

Although the shelter workers shared the opinion that it is important for the victims themselves to learn things that will later enable their independence, they also emphasised the need to understand the specific situations in which all victims, majoritised and minoritised, find themselves when they come to the domestic violence shelter. When victims need concrete help, it is usually a period of acute crisis, and some things must be done for or/and instead of them. Leaving a victim in an acute crisis to do things on her own by simply advising or verbally supporting her (or even expecting effective learning to happen) is, according to the perceptions of the shelter workers, a way of neglecting victims' needs in an urgent situation.

Shelter workers felt that social and healthcare services have a generally insufficient understanding of domestic violence and abuse:

> Domestic violence is so common, but the social-and-health service field does not recognise it. (Workshop notes, D6)

The fact that immigrant victims of domestic violence encounter barriers when reaching out for help can be a result of different social services' work aims. For example, immigrant integration services can, while basing their responses on their expertise in social integration work with immigrants, not recognise domestic violence as a decisive personal circumstance for their immigrant service user. The shelter workers explained that in such cases, an immigrant victim does not receive help soon enough, which often allows the abuse to continue:

> It has happened already a lot before the immigrant client gets help. (Workshop notes, D6)

When perceived merely as a target of integration interventions, an immigrant is approached as a capable subject who needs to learn how to do things independently, and the worker is complementarily constructed as an enabler of this learning process. However, trauma-informed professionals know that at the moment of an acute crisis, the acquisition of new knowledge and skills is weakened if not impossible. Therefore, the shelter workers were critical of the insufficiently trauma-informed social services with which the shelter cooperated when handling cases of immigrant victims. Moreover, in the service network cooperation, the shelter workers faced a lack of understanding of the domestic violence shelter as a crisis unit:

> Do our network partners understand that a domestic violence shelter is a crisis unit? That often means that we don't have the time, and we have too few resources (...) so in each client case, we must choose what we are able to do and what not. (Workshop notes, D6)

According to the trauma-informed work approach, an immigrant shelter victim in crisis does not have the capacity to perform certain tasks that, in the eyes of municipal social workers, would benefit their integration and empowerment. Second, in light of the previous results regarding the shelter's understaffing and the lack of essential support services (Chapter 4), the shelter workers found themselves in a very difficult position, the network partners were expecting a kind of work performance for which the shelter workers lacked the basic preconditions:

> Activating people is important of course, but you cannot ask the one without hands to draw the painting. (Workshop notes, D6)

Emphasising their own specific position in the field as a crisis unit, together with the problems of understaffing and insufficient support services, the shelter workers explained that they needed to focus on numerous practical tasks directly related to the domestic violence situation at hand instead of performing integration work with immigrant victims. Were shelter workers to focus on domestic violence counselling only, the numerous practical and urgent needs of immigrant victims would be left unattended. These urgent tasks constitute the concrete practical work that is left undone unless shelter workers do it. In this sense, the immigrant domestic violence victim is positioned as "no one's client" (Piippo et al., 2021), and a complex and potentially conflicting situation develops in "multiprofessional decision-making and divisions of tasks when power is balanced between the various professions involved in domestic violence cases" (ibid., 120). My study suggests that the development of this conflicting situation includes the malignant positioning of shelter work subjects as difficult and of network cooperation as troublesome.

My research data indicate that shelter workers worry about how other services perceive them and the immigrant victims. The workers were aware that immigrant victims of domestic violence are perceived as extremely difficult and that cooperation with the shelter in such cases is also seen as challenging, which endangers immigrant victims' possibilities of getting the help they need and to which they are entitled:

> The clients do not get the services, the social workers experience that they are "so damn difficult." (Workshop notes, D6)
>
> The relationships… Do we report the issues (...) to whom and when? So that the client gets at least some services… The social workers are just people. It is not good that we have the "reputation of pricks," the relationships must be good. (Workshop notes, D6)

The significant challenges related to support network cooperation in domestic violence work with immigrant victims' cases can be interpreted as the result of various misrecognitions that occur in social and healthcare services: the misrecognition of domestic violence and abuse itself, the misrecognition of its traumatic effects and the misrecognition of the nature of shelter work. Although extant research has identified the general challenges of multiprofessional cooperation in domestic violence cases (Piippo et al., 2021, 120), my findings indicate that such challenges are exacerbated for immigrant victims of domestic violence. Perceiving immigrant victims primarily as targets of integration interventions, as well as misrecognising their specific needs related to the domestic violence situation, which intensify the need for practical help, results in the construction of such immigrants' needs as "no one's responsibility." Consequently, shelter workers are left with little choice: they either do the practical assistance work at the expense of domestic violence counselling, or the work is not done at all.

The shelter workers explained that despite some troubling issues related to network cooperation, it is crucial to choose when and how such issues are verbalised to make sure that victims receive at least some services. These kinds of negotiations between improper handling of immigrant clients' cases and the possibility of securing at least some needed services for clients are a productive power strategy in the navigation of hierarchical relations among the various fields of social work. The shelter field is in a hierarchically lower position compared to other social service fields. Therefore, shelter workers, unable to delegate the practical or childcare work to other institutions, end up doing such work themselves while being pressured to sensitively negotiate network tensions to arrange for at least some support for immigrant shelter residents without being labelled as difficult.

The paradoxical construction of immigrant victims of domestic violence and abuse as difficult, opportunistic, dishonest and well connected, as well as vulnerable,

traumatised and isolated, suggests workers' conflicted attitudes towards shelter work with immigrant victims. As my research data show, these contradictory perceptions stem from the discourses, structures and power relations within the shelter work field and from the intersections of this field with other social and healthcare fields. Therefore, the shelter workers reflected not only on their own experiences with immigrant clients in the shelter but also on the gaze from the outside to which they were subjected through the feedback and expectations of network partners.

6.5 Productive effects of action research workshops

Autoethnographic action research as a method of data collection resulted in changes to shelter work perceptions and practices. For example, during the fifth and last workshop, the workers expressed a developed sensitivity of their own privileged and victims' deprivileged positions, as demonstrated by the following quotations: "the task helped me understand what prejudice even a little difference can cause" and "the task made me think about my privileges" (Workshop documents, D5). Moreover, the workers wanted to revise the working definition of shelter work from the first workshop; instead of saying that shelter work aims for change, they wanted to leave out the word *change* because a victim might not aim for change but for something else. The workers wanted to emphasise collaboration with victims. Therefore, a new definition of shelter work was established.

> "Violence work in the domestic violence shelter is professional and goal-oriented work ~~*(towards change)*~~[52] in collaboration with the client. The aim is to increase safety. We generally use client-centred and client-needs-based professional methods. This work has its background in self-determination and human rights." (Workshop notes, D5).

[52] This is exactly how they wrote: they crossed out the two words.

My intersectional intervention in the second workshop had a surprisingly strong effect on workers' awareness of intersectional power relations. In addition to reflecting on the power relations in their work during the last workshop, the workers also considered the visibility and invisibility of power hierarchies and their implications for shelter work. The following quotation exemplifies such reflections.

> "The power positions between the worker and the client become visible when we consider them from the point of view of different categories. On the other hand, part of these power positionings are not visible – they need reflection. This makes me think, how I can, as a worker, affect these power positionings, and am I able to?" (Workshop documents, D5).

The workers suggested that the intersectional reflection on the worker–victim relationship raised their awareness of the effects of power:

> "It made me understand my own privilege in many relationships. And how it can, in some cases, negatively affect the constitution of the good/trustful relationship" (Workshop documents, D5).

The shelter workers agreed that the main message of the workshop was, "What do you do with power?" (Workshop documents, D5). Therefore, the autoethnographic critical action research method proved to be transformational: it contributed to changes in the perceptions of shelter work and so to changes in shelter work practices. The intersectional intervention resulted in the deconstruction of some of the shelter workers' habitual perceptions of racially minoritised victims.

As My ethical concern was not to cause additional harm with my research to my already-overburdened colleagues, I was content when the workers expressed pride and satisfaction when looking back on the working tasks they accomplished in the previous workshops. These tasks also highlighted the variety of professional methods and approaches that the workers leaned on: "Everyone has its own point of view and the methods to use" (Workshop documents, D5). They synthesised the general reflection on shelter teamwork in the following words:

> "We are surfing on the waves of uncertainty, but mostly keeping our heads above water" (Workshop documents, D5).

I believe something similar can be said of my methodological approach to the shelter field: using an autoethnographic observation approach together with action research methods informed by feminist intersectionality and social constructionist theory meant that as a researcher, I was deeply in the sea of uncertainty; however, with the help of my colleagues, I mostly kept my head above water. When needed, I changed my research focus in accordance with the development and construction of the research problem, which evolved in dialogue between theory and practice.

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed how intersectional dynamics in the relationship between victims and shelter workers produce different hierarchical positions with empowering and/or disempowering effects on the agency of both victims and workers. The focus on empowering and disempowering effects, on workers and victims and on their relationship was enabled by my relational approach to the shelter field and its subject positions (see Chapter 3), which expanded the usual focus on disempowered racialised victims (see Chapter 2).

The relationship between shelter workers and victims is a hierarchical power relation institutionally constituted and supported with the aim of increasing the safety-related empowerment of domestic violence victims. Although the shelter work content and methods are institutionally predefined, they allow for relevant adaption to achieve deliberate and sensitive responses to victims' needs. The recognition and verbalisation of these needs are the results of dialogical worker–victim cooperation, in which the workers use their own professional knowledge, skills and institutional power to establish a victim-centred counselling relationship. This kind of counselling relationship constitutes a legitimate use of the shelter counselling power hierarchy and involves the construction of the shelter worker as the legitimate subject for the task and of the domestic violence victim as the legitimate user of shelter services.

Intersectional power dynamics interfere with the counselling relationship and affect the perceived legitimacy of shelter work subjects. When shelter workers perceive intersectional differences as relevant to shelter work and recognise their harmful effects, they apply different power strategies to deconstruct such effects (as in the cases of age and language). However, shelter workers tend to misrecognise the relevance of race and gender in shelter work and instead use the category of culture to make sense of racially minoritised victims, such as Finnish Roma or immigrants. The misrecognition of race and gender in shelter work and the consequently reduced agency of shelter workers are evident in the reproduction of stereotypes and prejudices through habitual culturalisation and habitual disbelief towards racially minoritised victims. Such culturalised perceptions negatively affect victims' legitimacy and reinforce the hierarchical counselling relationship, which involves privileged and oppressed subject positions. Such hierarchical positions are illegitimate modalities of the shelter counselling relationship.

As they do not recognise the effects of intersectionally constituted hierarchies between the privileged and oppressed racialised positions, shelter workers tend to habitually reproduce their harmful effects instead of reflexively countering them. In addition, it is important to note that racialised hierarchies can harm the legitimacy of both workers and victims, thus reducing the possibility of empowering counselling.

Shelter workers' perceptions of intersectional differences and racially minoritised survivors are also affected by concrete working conditions in everyday shelter work. Shelter workers deconstruct some of the culturalised perceptions of racially minoritised victims when provided with adequate time, space and guidance to reflect on the intersectional subject positions and power dynamics in shelter work. Moreover, shelter workers contextualise the construction of immigrant victims as affected by the racialised power relations of the shelter social space and the hierarchical relations between social service providers. These power relations contribute to the construction of immigrant victims as difficult clients and of the shelter workers working with them as difficult to cooperate with. I argue that instead of labelling them as difficult, both workers and immigrant victims need to be recognised as occupying contextuallly produced disadvantaged positions.

7 RACIALISED PRACTICES IN EVERYDAY SHELTER WORK

This third and final empirical analysis chapter addresses the effects of racialised perceptions and practices[53] on everyday shelter work. My analysis focuses on three central dimensions that emerged from my research data as being significantly affected by the habitual racialisation present in shelter work: access to shelter services, empowerment of victims and safety in shelter work. This chapter considers the third and final research question of my dissertation: How do shelter work practices affect access to shelter services, the empowerment of racially minoritised victims and the safety of racially minoritised shelter work subjects?

First, the chapter analyses the effects of shelter practices on the accessibility of domestic violence shelter services by examining the intersectional dynamics of the shelter service need evaluation for victims of international marriage abandonment, asylum-seeking domestic violence victims and Finnish Roma survivors. Second, the chapter investigates the effects of shelter work practices on the empowerment of racially minoritised victims by analysing individual counselling work with racially minoritised survivors, the effects of habitual culturalisation on the Finnish Roma, the application of standardised counselling methods in interpreted-assisted counselling and the intersectionally sensitive adjustment of shelter work with immigrant victims. Finally, this chapter examines the effects of racialised everyday

[53] I consider racialised practices to be co-relative processes of racialisation in the shelter worker–victim relationship that produce hierarchical positions and the associated institutions, policies and everyday encounters (Keskinen et al., 51).

shelter practices on the safety of shelter work subjects and the security of shelter premises. More specifically, I focus on the shelter work practice of calling the perpetrator, shelter workers' exposure to violence, the ambiguous effectiveness of security strategies related to the racialised positions of shelter subjects and the questionable effectiveness of shelter security measures due to the racialised perceptions of perpetrators.

Although extant research suggests the importance of recognising intersectional vulnerabilities in domestic violence work with racially minoritised survivors and of trauma-informed intersectional sensitivity to enable the empowerment of victims, in this chapter, I explain the logic and dynamics of racialised habitual practices and institutional mechanisms that contribute to the exclusion, disempowerment and endangered safety of shelter subjects. However, this chapter also indicates the possibility of deconstructing the harmful habitual reproduction of racialised hierarchies by means of autonomous shelter workers' subversive use of existing institutional mechanisms for the benefit of victims.

7.1 Access to domestic violence shelter services

To analyse the effects of racialised shelter practices on the accessibility of domestic violence shelter services, I examine the intersectional dynamics of the shelter service need evaluation. Shelter workers evaluate whether a person calling the shelter or arriving directly at the shelter is actually in need of domestic violence shelter services or whether this person should be referred to other services, such as urgent accommodation in case of homelessness. The evaluation of the need for shelter services is thus a central task in shelter work that affects survivors' access to the domestic violence shelter. Therefore, the role of shelter workers in recognising domestic violence and abuse in the experiences of victims in intersectionally vulnerable positions is significant.

7.1.1 Domestic violence and abuse in international marriage abandonment

In domestic violence shelter work, immigrant victims' domestic violence and abuse experiences can be misrecognised as, for example, simply another divorce process. Such misrecognitions can stem from the presupposition that a victim should be able to name her experiences as psychological, physical and/or economic violence. Moreover, the conceptually inadequate definition of domestic violence and abuse and the gender-neutral work approach in domestic violence shelter work influence the misrecognition of abuse as a normal divorce process.

My autoethnographic data on everyday shelter work describe the challenges related to the recognition of domestic violence and abuse in a case of international marriage abandonment: a woman from the Asian continent, who spoke neither Finnish nor English, sought shelter after her Finnish husband suddenly forced her to leave their home and filed for divorce. In addition, the husband changed the victim's address without her awareness. The shelter worker who was handling the case reacted with sensitivity towards the victim's vulnerable position and applied the shelter's low-threshold principle, offering immediate safety and thus enabling a careful evaluation of the victim's shelter service need. However, after the first individual counselling meeting, the worker said to the team that the victim did not report any of the established modes of violence, such as physical, economic or psychological violence:

> Our client from Asia (...) what her husband did was throw her out of his apartment that he owns and submit the divorce papers to the court. They have been living for a few years in the apartment, from which the husband has suddenly thrown her out (...). The shelter worker accepted this woman to the shelter in order to ask (...) to be sure about what was happening (...) but now said that (...) the client is saying that the husband was not physically or economically or psychologically violent. (Voice tape recording, D71)

Despite the fact that the victim herself turned to the domestic violence shelter for help in a situation where her husband had suddenly made her homeless, the victim did not identify her experience as domestic violence and abuse. My autoethnographic data suggest that the shelter workers assumed that the victim herself should be able to name her experiences using established categories (e.g. psychological, physical, economic violence), thus presupposing effective

verbalisation capacity that complies with the recognised ways of identifying violent and abusive experiences.

The fact that the immigrant woman who was made homeless by her husband was able to recognise her own situation as entitling her to seek help from the domestic violence shelter indicates her awareness of her experience being a form of domestic abuse. However, the shelter workers did not recognise the sudden abandonment and the action of making her homeless as forms of domestic violence and abuse. As Anitha et al. (2018, 767) have shown, this is not unusual: in the West, "abandonment within the context of marriage is generally not considered a form of violence against women." Therefore, it seems understandable that this victim's case was understood as constituting the normal divorce process. However, I argue for a critical examination of the prevailing definitions of domestic violence and abuse employed by shelter workers because, as this case indicates, they may not capture a variety of survivors' violent and abusive experiences.

For example, Walby et al. (2017) suggested that when evaluating what counts as violence, various aspects must be considered: not only the actions themselves but also their intentions and the resulting harm. They suggested that physicality should be approached as a threshold in defining violence, not only the physicality of the event itself (e.g. a physical attack) but also the physicality of the intention and harm, as well as (especially in the case of domestic violence) the seriousness of the action and its repetition and duration. In the case of the immigrant victim from Asia, even though her husband had not physically attacked her, the effects of the husband's actions were devastating, as she was suddenly made homeless and without access to essential resources, such as housing and clothing:

> The psychological and perhaps the physical violence is in the fact that he threw her out of the house, which was also her home (...) her things, her property is still in the home, and her clothes are still there. (Voice tape recording, D71)

I argue that there was a physical aspect in the husband's act itself and in the harm this act produced (leaving the victim without physical shelter and access to her clothes). Moreover, the husband's action of changing the victim's address without her knowledge indicates that he was being abusive deliberately; without a key and with the changed address, the victim could not claim her right to access the

apartment anymore. This is an example of a husband taking advantage of his privileged position as a native in Finnish society and abusing his wife's vulnerable position as a non-Finnish-speaking immigrant:

> The husband used his knowledge and hierarchical privilege in this society in order to make her homeless (...). So she is here with a very limited knowledge of English, with really little knowledge of Finnish, with really basically no clue about how the society works, how to search for an apartment (...) .The husband changed her address to poste restante so she is not anymore officially living there (...) .This is quite a strong abuse of power (...) and then he just takes the keys from her and say, "Ok, goodbye, you cannot come back home anymore." (Voice tape recording, D71)

The serious consequences of the husband's actions (forcing her to leave the home and preventing access to her clothes), the harm (making her homeless) and deliberate intentions (changing her address without her knowledge) indicate that this immigrant victim's case is an example of domestic violence and abuse. Furthermore, the problem of recognising this victim's experiences as a form of domestic violence and abuse is related to the framing of domestic violence and abuse as a problem. Bacchi (2005) argued that the question has to be posed as follows: "What's the problem represented to be?" While the case was understood as a normal divorce problem, the victim's homelessness was represented as a problem rather than an effect of domestic abuse. Consequently, the victim was later denied shelter access because she did not meet the criteria for domestic violence shelter accommodation.

This kind of problem representation is not surprising when one considers the prevalent gender-neutral approach to domestic violence work in Finland. This approach contributes to the difficulty and perhaps even the impossibility of critically evaluating decisive aspects of victims' experience, such as immigrant-specific factors, which not only exacerbate the effects of international marriage abandonment but also enable the abuse. For example, the global gendered flows of power enable men from the Global North to abuse women from the Global South. Consequently, the "abuse and abandonment in transnational marriages requires us to understand how, in a globalized world, gender intersects with other axes of disadvantage including class, nationality, and immigration status" (Anitha et al., 2018, 767). The research (ibid.) argued that abandonment of transnational marriage should be recognised as a form of domestic violence and violence against women because gender relations are ordered and negotiated across transnational contexts, with global flows of capital

and power producing "the embodied third world disposable woman" (ibid.), whose abandonment "is rooted and results in gendered devaluation of women and is enabled by 'gender-neutral' transnational formal-legal frameworks which construct abandoned women as subordinate citizens who can be abused, exploited, and disposed of, with impunity" (ibid.). One of the forms that such abandonment takes is that a "woman migrating upon marriage is subjected to domestic violence and thrown out of the marital home" (ibid., 749).

The subject positions of "disposable women" constructed through global flows of capital and power are structurally preconditioned for exploitation and abandonment in transnational marriages (Anitha et al., 2018, 767, 2021). Studies have documented cases when "their husbands utilized the legal system of the foreign country to their own advantage" (ibid., 764). Research indicates that "men colluded with their families to derive benefits from such a marriage" and together were able to "command greater resources, mobility, knowledge of state institutions, and legal systems to the detriment of the woman" (ibid., 796). As Anitha et al. (2018) suggested, women experience "added vulnerabilities when their residency is tied to their marriage, as being divorced by their husbands could mean deportation and separation from their children" (ibid., 749), and they lack the formal and informal sources of support because of the distance and the absence of networks in an alien country (ibid., 748).

The processes that contributed to the misrecognition of domestic violence and abuse in the case of the Asian shelter victim are complex. First, the shelter workers expected a considered and effectively verbalised presentation of the victim's experiences using the dominant definition (focusing mostly on the act itself and not on the intentions and harm) instead of engaging in dialogical encountering through which new awareness of her situation could be established. When the victim did not fulfil this expectation, her experiences were not recognised as domestic violence and abuse; consequently, she was perceived as an illegitimate victim (i.e. a homeless person rather than a domestic violence and abuse victim), which contributed to her exclusion from the domestic violence shelter. Insensitivity to intersectional inequalities contributed to this process, which resulted in the exclusion of misrecognised domestic abuse victim from the shelter services. This confirms the results of extant research, which indicate that the misrecognition of violence not only

"affects how individuals deal with violence in personal relationships, but it also affects institutional arrangements and practices concerning violence interventions" (Husso et al., 2016, 230). Moreover, the gender-neutral framing of domestic violence and abuse affects problem representation (e.g. homelessness seen as a problem and not as the cause of domestic abuse), which shapes the construction of victims' subject positions (e.g. perceptions as legitimate/illegitimate victim), resulting in various proposed and implemented solutions and interventions (e.g. exclusion from the domestic violence shelter).

7.1.2 Contested entitlement to domestic violence services for asylum seekers

Even when victims' experiences are recognised as domestic violence and abuse, they can still be perceived as illegitimate users of shelter services after offering immediate safety. My analysis of shelter work with an immigrant victim who was an asylum seeker indicates the challenges faced by asylum-seeking domestic violence victims when seeking help from shelter staff. More specifically, an immigrant victim came to the shelter after her husband became increasingly aggressive and threatening. A negative decision concerning their asylum-seeking process intensified the husband's aggression towards her. Due to her long history of domestic violence and abuse, she thought it was safer for her to escape from home and seek protection at the shelter. The victim spoke neither Finnish nor English, which made communication challenging and required the use of an interpreter. Based on her accounts of domestic violence, she was offered shelter accommodation. However, her case was met with disbelief and hurry, quite differently from how cases of majoritised Finnish women with similar experiences are met. My autoethnographic reflections and observations reveal the context in which disbelief towards this victim emerged.

Initially, a worker from the immigrant reception centre called the shelter, expressing disbelief towards the victim's story:

> It was disturbing to hear about the call from the reception centre, that they have been a little bit, like, negatively oriented towards her (...) that somehow, they are relativising her story (...) immediately there was doubt if the client was speaking the truth to us. (Voice tape recording, D64)

Consequently, disbelief and doubt were strongly present in the shelter workers' team meeting. My autoethnographic data demonstrate my confusion when I reported on this victim's case and was met with indifference:

> It felt weird when we had the shelter team meeting, and when I started to report on this case, my workmate did not look me in the eyes at all. I had a feeling she was avoiding me (...) was not at all interested in what I was saying. (Voice tape recording, D64)

My reporting was strongly focused on the question of the asylum-seeking process, which was also the victim's first preoccupation, with domestic violence being second. My data suggest that I was overwhelmed with the victim's feelings of desperation and urgency related to the asylum process, which consequently dominated my reporting at the shelter workers' team meeting:

> And I said that she can make legal objection, within 21 days, and she can also ask for additional time (...) because of special reasons, and I was thinking that this domestic violence she has experienced and that intensified now (...) I think this could be the reason. (Voice tape recording, D64)

Although I mentioned domestic violence while reporting on the case, my focus remained on the asylum-seeking process. This, together with the pressure from the immigrant reception centre, resulted in the victim's domestic violence experiences being disregarded and the focus shifting primarily on her as an asylum seeker. Consequently, this affected the decisions regarding shelter work: the shelter workers were instructed to perform only stabilisation work with this victim, while all the other tasks would be transferred to the reception centre:

> A shelter worker was discussing with the social worker from the reception centre that this woman has a place in the reception centre, so we in the shelter will transfer all the tasks and responsibilities to the reception centre personnel. This is where all the things will be handled (...) practical things like how this client will physically go from one place to another, for example, to visit the lawyer. (Voice tape recording, D64)

While work related to the victim's main concern about the asylum process was delegated to the immigrant reception centre, the victim's domestic violence experiences were completely separated from the issue of asylum seeking. Shelter work was limited to offering immediate safety and stabilisation. My data show me being puzzled by such an unusually narrow working approach:

> I was confused because somehow, when we work with usual victims, we approach like… Has she been at the doctor, does she have injuries, do we need to help her file a report, maybe we should assist with Victim Support Finland (...). But the shelter worker said that no, no. We will only do stabilisation work with her and nothing else because everything will be done at the reception centre. (Voice tape recording, D64)

The two simultaneously lived realities of this victim, the asylum process and domestic violence, were not considered together. Her immigration status decisively overdetermined the way in which domestic violence and abuse were dealt with. The shelter workers did not approach the victim with the usual domestic violence work routine, which includes conducting risk evaluation and preparing a safety plan and a shelter plan. Shelter work was downscaled, and decisions about shelter work content were made for her and without her, thus overriding the principle of the victim's self-determination, agency and participation, which the workers themselves had identified as crucial in their work.

I argue that the shelter workers' harmful and habitual perceptions of immigrant victims (Chapter 5), together with the pressure from the social service network, resulted in the construction of this asylum seeker as an illegitimate subject of domestic violence shelter services. My data indicate an exclusionary effect produced by misrecognitions of intersectional power hierarchies, which rendered the immigrant victim's domestic violence experiences invisible and prevented the workers from adequately addressing the multiple intersecting oppressions (immigrant status, gender, domestic violence and abuse) in the subject position of this victim. Such misrecognition of intersectional positions resulted in disturbing effects on the quality of shelter services, not only raising the shelter threshold for this victim but also negatively affecting the quality of the services related to risk evaluation, the safety plan and individual counselling.

Objective obstacles to helping asylum seekers in the Finnish context, such as limited options for offering psychosocial help and safe housing, may have affected

the evaluation of what kind of shelter work was reasonable or worth doing. As the vision of effective assistance related to the victim's safety and safe housing was considered unrealistic. Her case was dealt with in a hurry:

> I was listening to the shelter workers discussing that we don't know how long this woman will be here, and that from here on, she will basically only be able to go to the reception centre, there are no other places. I was again confused (...) because I mean, the client came yesterday, so I was a bit surprised that somehow there was a sense of hurry in her case, and this is not the first time that I have experienced this kind of hurry (...) for those immigrants, it is somehow… We are uncomfortable with them, we are in a hurry, immediately we want to know where they will go after the shelter. (Voice tape recording, D64)

Insisting on the need to perform the usual violence work with her, I was listing what we usually do in similar cases, including providing a referral to Victim Support Finland; this was turned down with the argument that by the time that the victim would have the first appointment there, she would not be in Finland anymore:

> She is a victim of domestic violence (...) and we could at least help her with filing the report, or to arrange the appointment with Victim Support Finland… But this was also turned down because it might be that this client will not be here anymore when she gets the Victim Support appointment. (Voice tape recording, D64)

Although it may be reasonable that victims should only be offered services that are relevant to them in a particular situation – with a Victim Support appointment, perhaps, not being one of those – it was reasonable to expect that the shelter workers would discuss other potential domestic violence interventions in her case. However, the whole idea of working with this victim within the domestic violence framework was abandoned. My autoethnographic data indicate my attempts to advocate her case within the domestic violence framework by emphasising the universalistic approach of the standardised procedure (Keskinen, 2011), a strategy for defending equal treatment:

> So it was really strange, and I don't think that we have being treating this client in fairly. She is clearly a victim of this man, and we should still work with her like we work with other clients, we work from the point of view of domestic violence and inform of legal advice (...). Because what this husband was doing during the stay in Finland constituted criminal acts against her, human right violation (...) I mean, I don't get it, why this hurry. (Voice tape recording, D64)

Frustrated with the disbelief, hurry and disregard of the victim's domestic violence experiences, I expressed a concern regarding this women's safety in the future, especially if she were forced to leave Finland and return to her country. While expressing my wishful thinking regarding transnational cooperation in protecting victims of domestic violence, I was met with laughter; obviously, the statement was in such stark contrast with the reality that all the team members were aware of – namely, that her country would certainly not protect her from domestic violence and abuse by her husband because domestic violence is not even criminalised there:

> I wondered if there is a possibility that we can do something in cooperation with her country's authorities so that they will protect her and (...) my colleagues started to laugh; that oh! Actually no. And actually, that country does not even recognise domestic violence as a criminal act (...). So, at this point, I said, well, but in this case, this might be a good reason why she needs asylum in Finland. Because the fact is that if she goes back to her country (...) then it means that she will probably be again the victim of domestic violence from this man and (...) we have just said it out loud that the country will not protect her. So this could be one of the reasons to seek international protection on the basis of the Istanbul Convention. She is (...) under big threat of becoming a victim of domestic violence again exactly because of her gender. And this is a human rights violation from which her country does not protect her. (Voice tape recording, D64)

At this point, I was arguing for the need to claim asylum based on gender-based violence, part of which is domestic violence, as acknowledged in the Istanbul Convention. However, the team meeting was already filled with enough conflictual views, and after this last response, I withdrew from further discussion.

While being emotionally overwhelmed by the victim's story and anxiety related to the asylum process, I presented the victim's case by focusing on the asylum issue. This contributed to the decision to delegate the work to the reception centre, losing, in turn, the focus on the domestic violence frame. Only stabilisation was seen as needed, which is part of the trauma-informed frame. In attempting to remain within the domestic violence frame, I argued for an appointment that was seen as less relevant to this client case, which became the central point of the argument. When my argument was turned down, there was little room left for a discussion. Reacting to my frustration, I engaged in wishful thinking, imagining transnational domestic violence victim protection. The disbelief, doubt and indifference towards this victim's case clashed with my confusion, resistance and concern, and in the

negotiation between these elements, my rising frustration reached its limits and turned into escapism through idealistic wishful thinking, which caused the team to burst into laughter, as the contrast with reality was simply too great. This is an example of how nation states and borders form obstacles to helping victims.

Under these circumstances, I experienced an inner professional conflict, negotiating between following instructions and doing what I considered to be my duty as a shelter worker. As a result, I performed a counselling act that contrasted with the instructions and the suggested prioritisation of the tasks for the upcoming work shift:

> I felt really demoralised in this case, I felt sorry for this woman (...) so while my colleagues started to do the priority tasks, I could not help myself but to arrange another interpreter talk, only for forty minutes (...) and went to talk to her (...). She spoke about domestic violence, and how she already wanted to leave the husband many times but never succeeded. (Voice tape recording, D64)

Because other tasks were prioritised in our calendar, I could only squeeze the interpreter-assisted meeting with my client in between other tasks, which also meant that the meeting could not be longer than 40 minutes, an insufficient amount of time for interpreter-assisted work. I could not take more time due to understaffing and a lack of childcare services (Chapter 4). In the context of disbelief, doubt and hurry, the domestic violence work with the asylum-seeking domestic violence survivor was situated in the realm of illegitimate counselling acts in the domestic violence shelter. Squeezed in between other tasks perceived as more important, domestic violence work with this victim was done in stolen moments, especially as my counselling act lacked the shelter's full institutional support. This research material reveals how international norms, such as the Istanbul Convention, provide normative support for performing such acts of resistance.

This case suggests that the effects of shelter counselling actions are ambiguous: although the gender-neutral approach can have disempowering effects, it can also be used to defend a victim's equal rights to standardised shelter services. The moment of resistance emphasises the importance of the shelter counsellor as an autonomous reflexive professional and not just someone performing delegated tasks. However, as Bourdieu and Passeron (1990, 27) indicated, such an autonomous agent is nevertheless a "delegated holder of the right to exercise symbolic violence"

(Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, 24), and this autonomy is always limited and "entails the impossibility (...) of freely defining the mode of imposition, the content imposed and the public on which it imposes it" (ibid., 27). The delegation of authority and the relative autonomy of agents assigned to exercise it (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, 11) can be considered preconditions for counselling work. As the victim in my autoethnographic case was constructed as illegitimate, and as the shelter's social worker did not delegate the power for me to perform the counselling work with the victim, I lacked immediate institutional support for the counselling act. In search of institutional authority that would support my counselling act, I leaned on internationally institutionalised norms, the most important of which was the Istanbul Convention. This enabled me to perform the domestic violence counselling act despite initially lacking the shelter's institutional support. Nonetheless, the counselling act partly remained in the realm of illegitimacy.

The beginning of this victim's shelter period was marked by hurry, but later, the situation improved somewhat. In the following days, there was no more rush, and the shelter workers were instructed to work with this victim using the standard domestic violence framework. My data suggest that the Istanbul Convention had a decisive effect on our everyday shelter work: the shelter's social worker resisted the pressure from the reception centre to transfer the victim there by leaning on the Istanbul Convention, which calls for protection of all victims from domestic violence, no matter their status. Below is my autoethnographic reflection on this change:

> Our social worker was mentioning the Istanbul Convention and trying to… Well, keep the side of the client (...). From the reception centre, they have called to the shelter, and they don't really like this idea that the client is in the shelter when the client has room in the reception centre (...). It was somehow very comforting to see our social worker, who, in a very calm voice, explained that "Oh, but you know, Finland has ratified the Istanbul Convention (...) and wherever a victim comes from, it is the client's right to have this service if she is a victim of domestic violence." I liked very much our social worker's explanation that the Istanbul Convention, which Finland had ratified, enables (...) protecting women from domestic violence and giving shelter. (Voice tape recording, D33)

From that moment, shelter counselling work with the immigrant domestic violence victim gained full institutional support. The shelter's social worker, leaning on the Istanbul Convention, used the shelter's relative autonomy to resist the

pressures of the social service network. This dispelled the disbelief and hurry and opened up more space for empowering shelter work with this victim, including such services as risk evaluation, psychoeducation and psychological support and advice, among others.

The findings suggest that disbelief towards immigrant victims, in this case an asylum seeker, has a negative effect on access to shelter services. Negative construction of immigrant clients as opportunistic benefit-seekers and social service abusers (see Chapter 5), negatively affect victim's chances of being accepted into the domestic violence shelter and receiving high-quality domestic violence counselling work. However, the relative autonomy of shelter workers – together with the relative autonomy of the shelter as a social service subsystem in a network of social services in a context influenced by international norms, such as the Istanbul Convention – offers the possibility of resisting exclusionary intersectional effects in the cases of immigrant victims. At the same time, even though the gender-neutral working approach can be used reflexively to advocate standardised procedures for immigrant victims to counter exclusion, it is the understanding of domestic violence as a gender-based phenomenon, which addresses domestic violence as a human rights violation and considers the intersectional realities of victims' subject positions, that successfully contributes to widening the space for adequate shelter work with immigrant victims. Both approaches demand the relative autonomy of individual agents (i.e. shelter workers) and the institution (i.e. the shelter as a social service subsystem). My analysis thus indicates the importance of the autonomy of the shelter field and its agents, as well as the decisive impact of international norms (e.g. the Istanbul Convention) on the sensitivity of local domestic violence work practices.

7.1.3 Raising the shelter threshold for Finnish Roma

Despite being in the position of a counsellor-researcher and paying special attention to the issues of cultural sensitivity, I have not been immune to the phenomenon of habitual disbelief and/or habitual culturalisation (Chapter 5) of racially minoritised victims, such as Roma survivors. My autoethnographic data from everyday shelter work demonstrate the effects of habitual racialised perceptions on the shelter service need evaluation and on the assessment of the urgency of racially

minoritised victims' situations. The extract below refers to an occasion when a racially minoritised victim called the shelter in a moment of acute crisis:

> I had a phone call, and there was a woman saying that her husband has been beating her (...). He was now sleeping, and he was very drunk. This woman said that she was from quite far away and that she would need to come to shelter (...). On the basis of her way of speaking and her voice, I thought that she was Roma. Immediately, there was this silent voice in my head saying to me that yeah, right, she just needs some… You know, whatever, but maybe she is not telling the truth. But there was another internal voice helping me to work professionally, and I asked her if she can move or is she completely, like, in shock.
>
> Then I started to think that ok (...) you have a car, can you go out of the house and go into the car and come to the shelter. And she said that yes, she has a car, but she is shaking very much. In that moment, I was thinking whether to say to her, "You can just tell me the address, and I will order a taxi for you." Previously in my work, if a woman was from far away somewhere and was in shock after just being beaten, I always, like, ordered a taxi. But in this case, it was because I understood that she is Roma that (...) the idea of taxi ordering came to my mind, but then I did not really want to offer that.
>
> When the woman came to the shelter (...) I was surprised because I expected a Roma, but she was completely, like, Finnish (...). When she arrived, she said that she was shaking very much when she was driving the car; she was shaking so much that she had to stop by the road every now and then and try to relax to continue her way to the shelter. I think that if I didn't have an impression that she is a Roma, I would have ordered her a taxi. Because it is completely normal that person who is in shock, after being beaten, that person, I mean… It is not safe for her to drive. (Voice tape recording, D22)

The example above documents my shelter work when a victim called and explained her situation, and I had to carry out a shelter service need evaluation and decide whether to offer her a place at the shelter. It also contains my autoethnographic reflections on how my categorisation of the victim as a Roma person resulted in a suspicion towards her. The data show my inner conflictual relation to this victim: although I suspected and disbelieved her, I also aimed to relate to her professionally. However, my trauma-informed working principles did not effectively counter my habitual disbelief of this racially minoritised survivor. I asked the victim whether she could move and thus escape the house, which shows that I was trauma informed, but I still ignored the victims clearly expressed traumatic bodily reactions of shaking and trembling. In a similar situation with a racially

majoritised Finnish victim, I would have ordered her a taxi so she could arrive at the shelter as quickly as and as safely as possible (as driving while shaking and trembling from trauma can be dangerous). This is something that I failed to do in the described case, precisely because of categorising the victim as a Roma person due to internalised harmful perceptions of racially minoritised victims as abusing social services. Consequently, this resulted in raising the access threshold for this victim to come to the shelter. Finally, when she came to the shelter doors, I realised that, to my surprise, she was not Roma. Only then did I retrospectively realise how the presumed ethnicity of the caller in distress affected my work.

This case is telling: my internalised habitual perception of Finnish Roma framed my understanding of the victim's accounts of violence (i.e. I experienced disbelief), the extent of the harm (I dismissed her distress) and my responses (I offered her a shelter place but not the transportation). This confirms extant research on cultural encounters in violence work, which indicates that "perceptions of culture often frame the understanding of how much harm was done, and what the responses should be," even when professionals themselves are not aware of that (Jalušič, 2019, 43). After I realised my own biased and harmful response, I tried to justify myself in a typical self-defensive response by a privileged White subject, which is usually followed by a racist remark (Bonilla-Silva, 2000; Bonilla-Silva and Forman, 2000). First, I tried to distance myself from my racist perceptions and practices:

> I do not see myself as a racist, and this is completely against my values, and I consider this to be like trash in my head, and this trash in my head has automatically had an influence on my decision (...) and I find this very problematic. I am myself an immigrant, and when I came to Finland, I did not recognise Roma people as Roma because Roma people look differently in our country. When I came to work at the shelter (...) sometimes I heard that the workers said, when talking on the phone, that there was a Roma woman who called. I was wondering and asking my colleagues, like, how do you recognise that there was a Roma person on the phone. They explained that, oh, they have a typical way of speaking (...). And this Finnish language is a foreign language to me, so I did not during first encounters with Roma people… I did not recognise that they had a different speaking habit, I also did not recognise by the names that they are Roma, I just thought that they are Swedish. This is something I learned while working in the shelter. It started to live inside my head and started to have automatic effects on my work, on my decisions, on my evaluations of clients' need for a shelter and I find this (...) I find it really disturbing. (Voice tape recording, D22)

Although the above autoethnographic data suggest that I recognised my own actions as inappropriate, one should not be satisfied with such a response. As Kendi (2019) showed, not being a racist is not enough; what is needed is being an antiracist, which involves a process rather than an achieved identity whereby one constantly learns about one's own racist beliefs and actions, committing to their deconstruction and the construction of antiracist ideas and actions instead. Similarly, one cannot be a culturally competent counsellor as an achieved condition, as Sue and Sue (2016) emphasised, but one can be culturally sensitive, humble and competent in a processual meaning. This process is continuous and much more demanding than declarative distancing from racist perceptions.

The logic of racialised ideas and actions is complex. Racialised ideas and practices can be habitually enacted without our full consciousness, despite our good intentions and without any particular intention at all. My research data demonstrate the everyday reproduction of racialised practices in shelter work. These habitual reactions reproduce the perceptions and practices of the individuals. A twist in my case was that the supposedly racially minoritised victim was not actually Roma. If she had been, I would probably not have become conscious of my disturbing bias. Thus, the analysis of this case indicates the existence of structural obstacles for Roma survivors, which negatively affect access to shelter services not only for them but also for other survivors who are categorised as Roma. I use the term structural obstacles because the racialised perceptions (e.g. disbelief) and practice (e.g. not offering transportation) constituted an invisible obstacle for the aforementioned survivor. This obstacle manifested itself as an elevated shelter-access threshold for the victim, who was racially minoritised during the short interaction over the phone. This obstacle was neither physical nor intentional. However, its effects are real, posing real limitations to survivors' chances of quick and smooth transfer to immediate safety.

Furthermore, the analysis also indicates how I learned to recognise and relate to the Roma while working in the shelter. I immigrated to Finland at an adult age and have only recently learned Finnish, so I did not at first recognise Roma as Roma in Finland. By emphasising this point, I was searching for responsibility outside of myself, as if to say that previously, this was not a part of my bias but is something that I have only acquired in Finland while working in the shelter, as if to emphasise

the institutional process of learning racist forms of relating to Roma. Although this institutional learning process should be taken into consideration, it is worth noting that I said that "I did not recognise Roma people as Roma because Roma people look different in our country" (Voice tape recording, D22). This citation indicates that I have not been an outsider to the racist categorisation of Roma people earlier, a categorisation that homogenises the group according to how they look and ascribes to them particular (often negative) traits. Of course, the process of learning to recognise and therefore categorise Finnish Roma occurred within the shelter: the data show that I learned to recognise how they look and speak. Thus, although the structure of racist categorisation was already present in my rationality, I was quickly able to adapt it to (and learn) the specifics of the Finnish context. Another proof of the categorisation structure at work is the fact that I thought that they were Swedish (because of their names) before integrating Finnish-specific racial categorisations into my pre-existing disposition towards racist categorisation.

This autoethnographic analysis suggests the limitations of a practitioner's reflections on the field; it was rather the theoretical conceptualisation and the scientific analysis that enabled me to achieve an insight into my own role in the habitual reproduction of racist perceptions and practices associated with shelter work. However, if not for my own experience presented in the data above, I might have, as a distant researcher, easily criticised and condemned the way in which shelter workers construct Roma victims and the effects that such constructions have on shelter work, perhaps identifying a lack of training or problematic personal attitudes of some workers as the reason. Thus, the combination of scientific and experiential insight was important to realise that as social agents living in a context saturated with racism, we all possess racialised perceptions and engage in racialised practices. Thus, they need to be recognised as embodied habituality that operates effectively in the existing institutional structures and processes, which further reinforce it.

The findings suggest that the racialised perceptions and practices of shelter workers affect the shelter service need evaluation and thus, by raising the shelter-access threshold, access to shelter services. This indicates the need for shelter workers to reflect on their own racialised perceptions of victims and the necessity of implementing adequate institutionalised mechanisms, such as the low-threshold

principle, for countering the negative effects of habitual racialised perceptions and practices in shelter work.

7.2 Empowerment of victims

To address the effects of shelter practices on the empowerment of racially minoritised victims in shelter work, I will now analyse the shelter work that takes place after a victim's initial acceptance into the shelter. Individual counselling work includes a more detailed risk evaluation, safety planning and shelter work planning and relies strongly on the verbalisation of domestic violence and abuse experiences. The analysis focuses on the central principles of domestic violence work with victims, namely helping them gain a sense of personal control and empowerment on their way to safety (Goodman et al., 2016) while supporting survivors' choices and autonomy (Kasturirangan, 2008). Moreover, I consider empowering encountering as an approach that validates victims' experiences by hearing and seeing the victim and her experiences so that she feels understood and believed in, with her experiences being taken seriously and her views valued. Such an experience of worker–victim encountering depends on trust, which takes time. My autoethnographic observation data describe cases of individual counselling meeting with a Roma survivor, interpreter-assisted counselling meetings with an immigrant victim and shelter counselling with an asylum-seeking victim with a deportation decision.

7.2.1 Disempowering the Roma survivor

My autoethnographic case study of an individual counselling meeting with a young Roma survivor reveals the disempowering effects of habitual culturalisation on racially minoritised victims. More specifically, this case demonstrates how I culturalised a Roma victim at an individual counselling meeting without being aware of it. In my autoethnographic reflections, I use the term "client from a Roma culture"

to refer to the victim. This expression indicates that I perceived the victim primarily in terms of a fixed group identity, with the Finnish Roma person being addressed not as an individual but as a representative of a homogenised group. Instead of perceiving her position as a relational subject position within Finnish society, I constructed her as an essentially different, the culturalised other:

> I was working with a client from the Roma culture, and in the conversation, she explained how the perpetrators in this case were her family... (Voice tape recording, D53)

My data show my attempt to verbalise the violence and abuse experiences to perform risk evaluation and prepare a safety plan. The Roma victim explained to me that her family forbade her from leaving the home. Instead of giving her the opportunity to name the experiences that led to her decision to seek help from the shelter in her own words, I offered a definition that involved a criminal-law term, indicating that the act was a criminal offence:

> I said that it was unlawful restraint and it was a crime, but she was not interested in seeing it that way. Somehow, she wanted to see it as a cultural thing. She said that nobody meant anything bad, her family didn't mean anything bad, it is just part of their culture. (Voice tape recording, D53)

> It is just a habit that when a Roma girl goes out to the world, her parents still try to keep her at home. (Voice tape recording, D61)

Although I did not notice my own use of the culture category to make sense of the victim with whom I was working, I did notice her use of the same concept to explain her experiences. I offered a particular definition of the victim's experience, but she did not agree with it. The victim was not willing to define her culture in negative terms and refused to name her experiences within the framework of criminal offence.

I argue that this moment demands closer analysis. My interpretation is that the Roma victim was well aware of being a target of culturalisation as part of racial minoritisation. As I showed earlier, Roma victims sometimes use the concept of culture to renegotiate its meaning (Chapter 5) in relation to the shelter workers who enable Roma victims to do this. As the culturalisation of domestic violence and abuse results in equating the whole culture with the violence, it becomes difficult for a

worker to perceive such a culture as valuable or for the victim to feel such cultural belonging as empowering. I argue that the Roma victim was aware that I was culturalising her and thus devaluating her cultural belonging. Therefore, the victim used her power of naming her own experiences and the power of defining the role of culture in her case to renegotiate her subject position.

Unfortunately, I did not recognise her attempt for what it was – namely, a power strategy to reposition herself in relation to my racialising oppression and the act of culturalisation. Instead, I remained insensitive to the fact that the equation of culture with violence may have been the central problem and proceeded to confront the victim about the concept of culture:

> What does that mean that it is a cultural thing? (Voice tape recording, D53)

To which she replied as follows:

> It is, like, nobody is meaning anything bad, it is just, like, it is the way things are. (Voice tape recording, D53)

It is worth noting that I was a shelter worker who had culturalised her ("a client from the Roma culture") and remained unaware of her own use of culture to make sense of the victim's subject construction; however, I did notice this use when the victim tried to explain that it is a cultural thing and means nothing bad. This was the third time that the Roma victim attempted to indicate that the core of the communication problem was my negative understanding of her culture (or the Roma as a group), which she resisted. This struggle brought her into a conflict between the verbal affirmation of the value of the Roma culture and the practical rejection of the specific act of violence. My question of "What does it mean for it to be a cultural thing?" had the potential to open the possibility of negotiating the meaning of culture and the different experiences the victim had had. However, remaining blind to the victim's need to affirm her culture while speaking of her experiences, I continued with another insensitive confrontation:

> Is that OK with you that this is the way things are? (Voice tape recording, D53)

The question above is almost tantamount to questioning the acceptability of her culture. Moreover, this question indicates insensitivity and a contemptuous attitude

towards her cultural belonging. Consequently, the possibility for dialogue and an empowering worker–victim relationship was finally lost, and the Roma victim reacted with avoiding behaviour. After the failed individual meeting, she did not want to participate in individual or group shelter counselling and left the shelter soon after. Culturalisation can thus negatively affect the recognition and naming of domestic violence and abuse as well as empowering encountering between a counsellor and a client.

If I as a shelter worker had been aware of the role that racialised perceptions of Roma have on the counselling relationship, then I could have used different strategies to deconstruct habitual culturalisation and so facilitate the beginning of the trust-building process. Such a strategy could, for example, involve directly verbalising the fact that White Finns (including me) often habitually perceive the whole Roma culture as negative and violent, which is problematic. As a shelter worker, I could have explicitly distanced myself from such negative constructions and directed the attention to the fact that in the majority Finnish culture, there are also very high rates of domestic violence and abuse, which are usually not ascribed to the Finnish culture as a whole. With such a strategic move, I could have made a distinction between violence and cultural belonging and so enabled the victim to affirm her own culture while condemning the act of violence. However, my misrecognition of racialisation in the counselling relationship and my lack of awareness regarding the effects of the culturalisation of the racially minoritised Roma survivor prevented me from modifying my shelter work to deconstruct harmful hierarchies.

Furthermore, my data indicate the limits of workers' reflections while being embedded in everyday shelter work. Ferguson (2017) defended the importance of rethinking the possibilities and limits of reflexive practices in social work, showing that practitioners defended themselves from the emotional impact of the work and the complexity in which they found themselves; in brief, non-reflection is common. Ferguson (2017) argued against a simplistic perception of the possibilities for reflection in practice (ibid., 424). My case study confirms that reflecting on one's practices while being embedded in the demanding everyday work of the shelter field is extremely difficult. Instead of resulting in a critical examination of my racist practices, my practical reflection only reinforced the content of my pre-existing understanding of culture in shelter work. After the unsuccessful meeting with the

Roma survivor, I tried to make sense of it, still using culture as the main explanatory force. My understanding of the Roma victim's situation was that she was undermining her own experience of violence by using culture as a justification for that experience:

> The Roma client herself undermined the violence and explained this violence using cultural reasons (...). She believes that the situation will calm down and that this is just related to the culture. (Voice tape recording, D61)

As I perceived the control of this young woman and the domestic violence related to it exclusively as a characteristic of the inherently patriarchal Roma culture, I constructed the victim as weak and victimised by her community. Instead of facilitating her agency and making space for her to take power and control over the definitions of her experiences and the meaning of culture, I defined her experience for her within the framework of criminal law. Together with a totalising perception of her culture as violent, my actions negatively impacted the processes of naming the violence, risk evaluation and safety planning, thus preventing safety-related empowerment.

Nevertheless, the culturalising approach and its devastating effects can be deconstructed. Research has shown that the control of daughters also occurs in majority Finnish families (Honkatukia and Keskinen, 2018): the social control of young women cuts across racialised and ethnicised boundaries; thus, assuming that patriarchal social control is a key element of exclusively racialised family relations falls under racialising and culturalist knowledge production. Instead, Honkatukia and Keskinen (2018) suggested approaching social control from the perspective of difference, which enables analysing "the multifaceted dynamics of gendered, racialized and age-related social control, including practices that can be discussed as honor-related violence" (ibid., 158).

As described above, my shelter work with the young Roma woman could have been more sensitive if I had allowed her to claim her agency when negotiating between, on the one hand, accepting and resisting normative control in close relationships and, on the other hand, accepting and resisting internalised control by adhering to the rules and values of her family (Honkatukia and Keskinen, 2018, 147). This approach to her experiences of restricted personal freedom by her family would

have been more fruitful because it could have opened up more space for her agency, enabling her to experience herself not as a weak culturalised victim but as an empowered subject – that is, as a young woman resisting her family's expectations and making her own decisions. This would still leave the possibility of naming a particular part of her experience as violence (i.e. unlawful restraint) while recognising that the social control of young women cuts across ethnicised and racialised boundaries (Honkatukia and Keskinen, 2018, 157) and that forcefully enacted power is only one form of social control besides other, more enabling forms (Honkatukia and Keskinen, 2018, 145).

This approach would have deconstructed the racialised image of the Roma victim as a "docile object of her parent's control" (Honkatukia and Keskinen, 2018, 150), helping counter the racialising discourse "which often presents them as merely suppressed by their patriarchal families" (ibid., 157). Perhaps this approach could also serve as a starting point for deconstructing the presupposition that violence is culturally based and accepted by the minority community (Honkatukia and Keskinen, 2018, 143). Consequently, it would have been possible for the young Roma victim to consider a variety of meanings in relation to her experience (e.g. resistance, independence, agency and violence) while enabling both of us to address her cultural belonging as a source of empowerment.

This finding suggests that there are few opportunities to engage in the deconstruction of the culturalisation practices related to Roma victims while carrying out individual in-practice reflection only, at least until this reflection work is supported by adequate conceptual analytic tools. My research indicates the challenges and limits of practitioners' reflections on their practices when proper circumstances are missing, such as the time and space for guided reflection grounded in theories and concepts.

7.2.2 Using the interpreter to explain rather than listen

The verbalisation and naming of violent experiences are important elements of an empowering dialogue with a victim. Critical consciousness raising at the level of the individual is one dimension of victim empowerment and is seen as a "means of

extending our understanding of the social power relations that are embedded in domestic violence" (Magalhaes et al., 2019, 165). Contextualising victims' personal experiences within wider social power relations facilitates empowerment (ibid., 183). The verbalisation of experienced violence and abuse facilitates victims' voice, participation and agency, which are also part of empowerment (Magalhaes et al., 2019). Furthermore, the verbalisation of domestic violence and abuse enables risk evaluation and safety planning. If the experiences of violence are not verbalised, the associated risks may not be recognised, which is harmful to the safety of the client.

Shelter workers have several tools available to assist in the verbalisation of violence and abuse experiences. The most commonly used one is the Types of Violence form, which consists of different acts of violence and abuse listed under types of violence, such as physical, economic, sexual, psychological, religious and so forth. Workers often use this tool, asking victims to mark the types and acts of violence and abuse that they and/or her children have experienced or have been exposed to. This assists shelter workers in efficiently presenting the case to the municipal social office or the child welfare office and identifying the direct victims of the violence (targets) as well as those who were exposed to it (witnesses). This working method can be understood as the prevalent shelter counselling work method, which reveals the expectation that domestic violence victims will and/or should name their experiences of violence, abuse and pain. The victims' actual verbalisations do not necessarily meet the expectations associated with these lists and forms, which reflect the prevailing content and method of counselling work, whose symbolic violence "most fully, though always indirectly, expresses the objective interests (material and symbolic) of the dominant groups or classes" (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, 9).

Shelter workers often use interpreters when counselling non-Finnish-speaking immigrant domestic violence survivors. My autoethnographic data indicate that interpreter-assisted application of the prevalent working method based on the Types of Violence form has disempowering effects. My data show that by insisting on the use of this method with immigrant survivors, shelter workers deviate from the official ideal of victim-centredness. Instead of giving victims the space to express their meanings, interpreter-assisted work is used to explain the meaning of particular words to the victim:

> We tried to review the list of types of violence, which is usually a very difficult task for interpreters (...) and [the interpreter] had problems interpreting some things, because… Of course, there are nuances, there might be words missing in the native language (...) and our student, who is here for her practice, helped to explain some nuances and differences between different types of violence. (Voice tape recording, D49)

The example suggests that three institutional agents (worker, interpreter and student) participated in decoding the meanings and nuances of the listed violence and abuse examples for the non-Finnish-speaking immigrant survivor. As a worker, I tried to explain the meanings of the listed words so that the victim could say whether she had experienced such violence instead of giving her the space for her own articulation. Despite all the effort, this working approach remained difficult for all participants and was very time consuming. When this working method involved interpreter assistance over the phone, it became even more challenging:

> We were using the interpreter on the phone, and we went through the economic types of violence, and the sexual violence (...) and this took a really long time. At least one hour for these two types of violence (...). I could not just use the list like I can use it with Finns, who can easily understand the nuances between different expressions, it was much more difficult. First of all, I had to somehow put those nuances into examples and plain language so that the interpreter would understand. Many times (...) the client still did not understand and basically, I could not be sure, is it because the client does not recognise such acts as violence or is it because there was a problem with interpretation… (Voice tape recording, D29)

The data indicate my confusion regarding the ineffectiveness of my work with the immigrant victim despite using interpreter assistance. The Types of Violence form that shelter workers use in their work with victims is often very efficient with majoritised Finnish victims, who possess the linguistic and cultural code needed to fill in the forms by ticking the boxes for themselves and their children. The benefit of this working method is that the complex situation of domestic violence experiences in the family is objectified via commonly used expressions across two pages. This enables the shelter's social worker to communicate efficiently with the municipal social worker about the family's situation: who did what violence to whom, including adults and children and the exposure to those acts of abuse. However, the application of this working method is highly inefficient with non-Finnish-speaking victims.

I argue that to understand the inefficiency of the interpreter-assisted application of the aforementioned working method, it is important to focus on how the interpreter is being used. A decisive difference between empowering and disempowering interpreter-assisted work lies in the difference between workers using interpreters to explain words/things to victims and enabling the victims themselves to explain the issues to the workers. Moreover, the experiences that a victim might want to talk about may not necessarily be related to recent violence and abuse. Traumatic experiences of present interpersonal violence often reactivate similar memories from the past, and the victim may have the need to talk about these experiences as well or to avoid talking about them at all. Although shelter work is often focused on recent violent experiences that occurred in Finland, victims may want to talk about violent experiences from their childhood and the things that happened to them before arriving in Finland, as confirmed by my data:

> When she was talking about physical violence, she started to remember something from the childhood (...) and this was very difficult for her and she wanted to speak about it, and I gave her the opportunity, so she told (...) and it was really heart-breaking to hear. (Voice tape recording, D49)

Giving the victim time and space and paying attention to what she considered to be important for her in that particular moment, as well as listening with the assistance of the interpreter and meeting her with supportive empathy, enabled her to talk about her experiences of sexual violence:

> The client started to talk about something… And prepared for a very long time, and then she told something unrelated (...) but then I realised that ok, I must be very alert (...) and I responded with empathy. After which she dared to tell a glimpse of something that happened to her (...) connected with sexual violence. (Voice tape recording, D49)

Thus, it was not the interpreter-assisted decoding of the list containing forms of violence that enabled the victim to speak about experienced violence; rather, it was providing her with time and space and using interpreter-assisted work to listen to her experiences and meanings. This example indicates that making time and space for a victim's own verbalisation without imposed meanings and timeframes enables the immigrant victim to verbalise her experiences of violence and abuse. The analysis suggests that despite approaching the victim using the prevalent form (the Types of Violence list), the flexible application of this working tool opened up the space for

the victim's voice. Again, victim-centredness was crucial for naming the violence, whereas interpreting the meaning of the list proved to be quite inefficient. Instead, the process of listening to the meanings that the client gave to her experiences enabled the verbalisation of violence experiences. In the first case, the interpreter was used to explain the contents of the form to the client. In the second case, the interpreter was used as a means for the client to convey her experiences to the worker. This finding provides insights into the mechanisms of empowering victims in the worker–victim relationship, which is often unclear (Goodman et al., 2016: 288), and confirms the results of extant research, which suggest that survivor-defined advocacy (Goodman, et al., 2016; Kulkarni, 2018; Kulkarni et al., 2012), trauma-informed care (Harris and Fallot, 2001) and intersectional and trauma-informed advocacy (Kulkarni, 2018) constitute effective alternatives to the one-size-fits-all working approach.

7.2.3 Cycle of violence without contextualisation

In addition to offering immediate safety and aiming to empower victims, the goal of shelter counselling, as defined by the Shelter Services National Quality Recommendations in Finland (Ewalds et al., 2019), is also to assist victims in breaking the cycle of violence. However, unreflexive use of psychoeducative materials about the cycle of violence may have a disempowering effect in some circumstances – for example, in the case of an asylum-seeker under the threat of deportation to a country where domestic violence is not criminalised. Psychoeducation on the cycle of violence that does not consider the contextual realities of an asylum-seeking victim contributes to the individualisation of the responsibility for ending violence, despite the fact that victims with deportation decisions have few possibilities of protecting themselves and their children. The extract below shows that both the shelter worker and the victim accepted the victim's presupposed individual responsibility to exit the violent relationship:

> She had tried to break the cycle of violence already many times, and she wanted help and counselling in this respect. So, I have printed her the material about the cycle of violence (...) and we went through the material with the interpreter, and we talked about how this violence was affecting her children and what kind of symptoms her children have, and what she can do about it. (Voice tape recording, D49)

When the victim and the shelter counsellor accepted the individualistic view of the possibility of exiting violence, they were both participating in the construction of the victim as the agent responsible for ending the violence and abuse. This position can be interpreted as empowering the victim because it involves a belief in her agency and capability to affect the situation. However, the data suggest that the worker approached the victim as responsible not only for her own but also for her children's experiences. Previous research has found that such gendering of responsibility is common among domestic violence professionals in Finland and Russia (Virkki and Jäppinen, 2016), and is only one step away from the "question about her parenting abilities" (Kiamanesh and Hauge, 2019). Moreover, extant research has shown that such focus can leave a victim feeling as "not good enough mother" (ibid., 306). Approaching domestic violence victims as responsible for the safety of their children contributes to victims' experiences of "being treated as a risk to their children" (ibid., 307), while workers subject victims to "predefined procedures and notions of parenthood" (ibid.).

Breaking the cycle of domestic violence and abuse is not just a question of individual responsibility; rather, it is a question of actual possibilities for the victim to be safe. A domestic violence victim threatened with deportation to a home country that does not protect women from domestic violence has few prospects of breaking the cycle of violence. There are at least two preconditions of empowerment: a woman's willingness to change the situation and a context that provides opportunities to do so (Zimmerman, 1995). Therefore, the psychoeducative working method, which involves explaining the cycle of violence, can disempowering effects on victims by rendering them responsible for ending the violence without providing adequate opportunities. Difficulties in the verbalisation of violence and abuse experiences, which the shelter workers expressed when working with immigrant victims (Chapter 5), are thus not just a question of differences in native languages but also a matter of differences in intersectional subject positions, which affect immigrant victims' experiences of domestic violence and abuse and their prospects of safety.

7.2.4 Power and control in the domestic abuse of immigrant victims

Although, in individual counselling meetings, shelter workers predominantly use the aforementioned Types of Violence form to document the abuse suffered by victims, they can also use the Power and Equality Wheel tool. The Power and Control Wheel is a model that was created during the co-development of feminist practice and theory as part of a community response to perpetrators in Duluth, Minnesota, in the US (Björnholt, 2021, 13). This tool was created by the Duluth batterer intervention programme in "close consultation with battered women's groups" and is based on a model that connects a variety of violent and abusive behaviours to power and control (Björnholt, 2021). The Power and Control Wheel facilitates the process of recognising and naming violent and abusive experiences while emphasising the role of power and control in domestic violence, supports the process of making sense of victims' lived experiences and helps find adequate words for naming such experiences. The Power and Control Wheel presents the most common abusive behaviours and tactics that occur in male domestic violence and abuse of women. The model makes visible the patterns, intentions and impacts of violence. Nowadays, it is widely used and has been adapted to different cultural and social contexts.

The case of the individual counselling process of an immigrant victim examines the effects of the application of the Power and Control Wheel adapted to the needs of immigrant survivors. The immigrant victim, who spoke fluent English, had experienced various forms of domestic violence and abuse from her majoritised Finnish husband and his family. She named her experiences using the established codes, such as psychological, economic and physical violence, and did not express the slightest intention to return to the perpetrator. After the first couple of individual counselling meetings with her, as a shelter worker, I did not know how to approach the next counselling session. Therefore, I reflected on different working methods and approaches and discussed them with my shelter colleague. I told my co-worker that the victim was already conscious of the types of violence and only wanted to divorce the perpetrator and move on with her and her children's lives. Therefore, it was not relevant to her at that moment to discuss the cycle of violence. Even the usual stabilisation exercises did not seem relevant because she was very calm and

stable. The data below demonstrate my insecurity, which I shared with my shelter colleague:

> I actually don't know in which direction to guide this process. For example, she doesn't have an intention to go back to him, she is not like (...) that I would have to talk with her about the cycle of violence. I don't know what violence work I should do with her (...). Some exercises for calming down… I don't see that she would need that because she is not very over-aroused, no, she is actually quite stable, right? (Voice tape recording, D53)

Seeing me struggle, my shelter colleague advised me to use the Power and Control Wheel adapted to the needs of immigrant survivors. However, using the Power and Control Wheel was not an established working approach, despite the fact that this tool was one of the options that we could apply in individual counselling. Moreover, the adapted Power and Control Wheel was not used before a shelter worker who was interested in and committed to the development of shelter work with immigrant victims collected and organised various domestic-violence-related counselling materials relevant to shelter counselling work with immigrant survivors. This shelter worker gathered these different materials in one large folder for other workers to use. Among these materials, which the worker had collected in numerous languages and forms and for a variety of contexts (also visual material suitable for victims with disabilities, illiterate victims or those who do not read Latin script), there was the Power and Control Wheel adapted to the needs of immigrant survivors.

My colleague's advice was decisive in my work with the immigrant survivor in this case study. The application of the adapted Power and Control Wheel enabled what Magalhaes et al. (2019) described as empowering dialogue whereby workers enable victims to contextualise their personal experiences (ibid., 168). In addition, research on cultural encounters in interventions against violence has shown that in practice, critical evaluations of victims' situations were often "approached from an individualistic perspective so that collective and structural aspects were overlooked (Magalhaes et al., 2021, 183). In contrast to this individualistic approach, my data suggest that the use of the adapted Power and Control wheel facilitated the process of critical consciousness raising by contextualising the victim's experiences instead of individualising them.

For example, the victim and the worker considered the effects of the victim's and the perpetrator's intersectional subject positions (e.g. gender, race and immigration status) in relation to the tactics used by the perpetrator and the victim's intensified vulnerabilities. The autoethnographic extract below contains my reflections on how the adapted Power and Control wheel enabled a thematisation of topics that would otherwise have remained invisible.

> We often overlook the types of violence that she brought up yesterday (...) from that Violence Wheel (adapted to immigrants). For example, "using male privilege" is mentioned. She corrected that it is not only about male privilege but it's about cultural privilege. She told me that her husband said, "Now you are here in Finland (...) things cannot be any more like at your home." After she arrived in Finland, they threatened to send her back home (...) and take her children away. (Voice tape recording, D 53)

In this example, the immigrant victim explained how the intersection between male privilege and cultural privilege, as she called it, affected the violence. By using the term cultural privilege, the victim addressed the racialised and patriarchal dynamics of abuse: a White man from the Global North arranging an international marriage with a woman from the Global South only to abuse her upon her arrival, threatening her with abandonment and with taking away her children. As indicated by this case study's data, such cultural privilege can be interpreted along three dimensions. First, the Finnish husband and his family, familiar with the organisation of Finnish society and its mechanisms, abused his newcomer immigrant wife by threatening her with deportation and with taking away her children. Second, cultural privilege can be interpreted using the victim's description of the perpetrators' reliance on presumed cultural and racialised superiority and their contempt towards the racially minoritised, non-Finnish victim. The extract below contains the victim's testimony regarding the reactions of the perpetrator's family when she turned to them for help:

> [They said to the victim] that she should herself become a better person which she would become if she would be more Finnish-like. If she doesn't want to become more Finnish, then that this is the real problem (...) and not that the husband is doing anything bad. (Voice tape recording, D84)

Finally, what the victim called cultural privilege can also be interpreted as an expression of the culturalisation of domestic violence, whereby violence and gender inequality are othered and the Finnish social context is perceived as gender equal and

non-violent. The culturalisation of domestic violence, together with racist abuse, resulted in blaming the racialised victim for her experiences while presenting the Finnish husband as non-violent. For this manoeuvre, the husband's family employed the tactics of using the supposed Finnish gender equality as a tool to psychologically abuse the victim. My data indicate that after demanding that she become more Finnish, they started leaning on gender equality to oppress her:

> The perpetrators said to her that it's not that the husband is doing something bad, he is just used to equality in the relationship. So this Finnish family said to her – who was oppressed at home and kept without money and her benefits, and the child benefit went to the husband's account – that this is just like the Finnish equal relationship: in an equal Finnish relationship, the husband does not finance the wife but both have their own money, own income, own salary. (Voice tape recording, D84)

When combined, the all three elements (i.e. the advantage of home courts, the structural racism and the culturalisation of domestic violence) functioned as effective tools for the majoritised perpetrator in abusing the immigrant victim. More specifically, this case shows that the racially majoritised perpetrators referenced the supposed Finnish gender equality to attempt and convince the racially minoritised victim that, despite the Finnish husband applying for the social benefits that she was entitled to (the Child Home Care Allowance) from the Finnish Social Insurance Office (Kela) while keeping her without money, her experiences were not a form of economic violence and abuse. Kela refused to pay the Child Home Care Allowance to his account, after which he did not assist her with receiving that money into her own account. He did, however, succeed in directing the Child Benefit to his own bank account. After being deliberately left without any money, she had to ask him for money each time she needed food or a ticket for public transportation. He, in turn, provided her with so little money that she could only buy food for her children but not for herself. When she spoke about her difficult position with his family, they said that in Finland, the husband is not supposed to financially support the wife, that what she was experiencing was normal and that this is Finnish gender equality.

Thus, the family of the abusive Finnish husband constructed the racially minoritised immigrant victim as a victim of her supposedly patriarchal culture, with the wife's dependency on the husband's income being seen as one characteristic of such culture. The abuser's Finnish family othered gender inequality and used the supposed gender equality in Finland as a tool for manipulating her. However, the

immigrant domestic violence and abuse victim recognised the economic abuse and the intersection of gender, race and immigration status in this abuse. In response to her reaching out to the husband's family for help, the family only normalised the abuse by blaming her for her economic hardship and safeguarding the husband's economic privilege. The immigrant victim, who did not know about her entitlements to social benefits and how to apply for them and who did not have the basic preconditions to start the application process (e.g. money for a bus ticket to go to the social office or enough credit on her phone to call the service numbers), was in an extremely vulnerable situation and was highly exposed to the abuse of the majoritised Finnish perpetrators familiar with the system. This case is an example of how majoritised Finnish perpetrators abuse the existing social services and lean on their social networks to gain financial benefits. In addition, the perpetrators directly harmed the victim by keeping her misinformed about her entitlements to social benefits:

> He directed the Kela benefits to his own account and left the woman, who was completely dependent on him (...), completely without help and advice. She was entitled to the Child Home Care Allowance but did not know it. Only now, when she is in the shelter and we have assisted with the application, has she received the benefits retroactively. So, nobody helped her, but yes, she has been brainwashed about the Finnish equal relationship. (Voice tape recording, D84)

If one perceives Finnish culture as essentially gender equal, the visibility of the Finnish husband's violence towards her immigrant wife becomes blurred and can be explained as something else:

> They said that hey, what you are experiencing is not true, it is just a misunderstanding because we in Finland, here we have equality, and because of that, the man is not supporting you financially. In Finland, men are not used to financing women but women finance themselves. (Voice tape recording, D84)

Another strategy of normalising the abuse while culturalising violence and inequality involved treating the racialised victim's experiences as just another normal conflict within the relationship, a communication problem rather than a power-abuse problem:

> When the victim explained to his family how badly he treats her and oppresses her, they did not support her but said, well, yes, but you have relationship problems, and

there are always two needed for that, and you have to talk about it. (Voice tape recording, D84)

The analysis indicates the significance of using a method of counselling that addresses power and control as part of the perpetrator's tactics of domestic violence and abuse while adapting this approach to the victim's circumstances, which perhaps most decisively affect her vulnerability – for example, due to an insecure immigration status.

Applying the Power and Control Wheel when working with an immigrant victim of a Finnish perpetrator would not have occurred if not for the initiative and commitment of my shelter colleague who actively developed her domestic violence counselling knowledge and skills for working with immigrants. She found and printed out the Wheel adapted to immigrants' needs. Moreover, she listened to my insecurities regarding individual counselling and responded in an informed and sensitive way. This response encouraged me to approach the immigrant woman with whom I was going to hold an individual counselling meeting using the aforementioned tool, which proved to be empowering for us both. The adapted Power and Control Wheel helped us address issues that are usually overlooked, such as imbalanced access to resources and support and racialising and culturalising actions as part of a perpetrator's abuse tactics. The approach provided the victim with the opportunity to strengthen her voice and to name the experiences as she wanted to while defining their meaning. However, this does not mean that I as a worker did not impose anything on her; on the contrary, I approached her using the specific method of the adapted Power and Control Wheel. Although this is still an imposition of chosen meanings from a position of power and thus constitutes symbolic violence according to Bourdieu and Passeron (1990), this modification of the standard working approach produced empowering effects. It enabled the victim to search for and find her own (new) words for naming the experiences of abuse, and it also allowed me as a worker to consider gendered and racialised dynamics in abuse patterns. This had a significant positive effect on conducting adequate risk evaluation and preparing a safety plan. For example, the immigrant victim verbalised abusive behaviours, such as racist ranting, that predicted episodes of physical domestic violence, thus enabling me as the victim's counsellor to assist her in more relevant safety planning:

> When we were doing the safety planning and were speaking about the signs on the basis of which she can predict that the husband will become violent so she can still grab her things and run away (...) she explained that yes, the husband's behaviour changes and he starts to have this violent hate speech (...). He starts to express his hate towards immigrants or the unemployed. (Voice tape recording, D65)

The Finnish husband directed hate speech towards immigrants and the unemployed in the presence of his unemployed immigrant wife, a warning sign based on which she could predict physical violence. The application of the adapted Power and Control Wheel facilitated the discussion on the hate speech of the racially majoritised perpetrator directed at the racially minoritised victim. The analysis indicates that the adapted Power Wheel approach enabled a discussion of what was at the centre of such abuse, namely power and control, which opened up a space for considering other dynamics of privilege and disadvantages, such as racially majoritised and racially minoritised positions. This empowered situation contributed to the recognition of risks that would otherwise have been misrecognised.

The analysis of this immigrant client's case suggests that male privilege, cultural privilege and the culturalisation of violence and inequality were part of the Finnish perpetrator's violence and abuse towards the immigrant victim. These elements, which the victim voiced after a counselling session involving the adapted Power and Control Wheel, are missing from the other tools for enhancing the mapping of victims' experiences, such as the Types of Violence list, which is commonly used in shelter work. Similar to previous research on the empowerment of victims in shelter work (Nichols, 2014), my findings indicate that empowerment is conditional on listening and hearing the victim, on the worker's learning effort while counselling and on sensible adaptations of counselling work. This kind of flexible, survivor-centred and collaborative practice was the basis of feminist advocacy in the domestic violence work field at the start of the battered women's movement (Nichols, 2014).

7.3 Safety in shelter work

Providing immediate safety for domestic violence victims means that shelter workers must consider the threat of perpetrators' possible acts of violence and abuse towards the victims and towards the shelter as an institution. Whereas victims are under the threat of domestic violence and abuse, shelter workers are also at risk because of the work they do. Below, my autoethnographic data analysis focuses on the safety aspects of shelter work in relation to calling the perpetrator, workers' exposure to abuse and shelter security strategies.

7.3.1 Calling the perpetrator

The absence of intersectional reflection in domestic violence shelter work negatively affects safety in shelter work. For example, due to the prevalent gender-neutral work approach in Finnish shelter work, shelter workers' tasks include calling perpetrators. For example, when a woman with children arrives at the shelter, shelter workers are expected to contact the father of the children (i.e. the perpetrator of the domestic violence) and inform him that his children have arrived and that he can get help from the local family centre. This task is usually delegated by the shelter social worker to one of the counsellors on the shift. I argued earlier (Chapter 4) that in the context of an acute crisis unit with insufficient resources, the practice of calling the perpetrator while neglecting victims' needs is highly problematic, as workers are placed in the burdensome situation of encountering the perpetrator right after hearing the victim's often-shocking details of abuse. Furthermore, this problematic practice also affects the safety of both shelter work subjects, namely victims and workers.

The supposedly gender-neutral child-protection discourse of shelter work supports the practice of calling the perpetrators. The idea is working with both parents without perceiving them as the victim and the perpetrator and, instead, seeing them as clients who need help will positively affect the children's safety. Calling the perpetrator, who is often neutrally referred to as the client or the

counterpart who stayed at home, is perceived as well-informed violence work. However, gender neutrality and the bureaucratic notion of the client blur the subject positions of the victim and the perpetrator and thus relativise the victim's account of violence. In the case of racially majoritised perpetrators and victims, the gender-neutral approach to understanding domestic violence and abuse often results in relativising the perpetrator's violent acts and emphasising the victim's aggressive responses to the perpetrator's abuse, which leads to a misrecognition of unequal power relations and the possibility of exiting the violent relationship. Therefore, workers can perceive both parents as equally eligible for domestic violence shelter services. The autoethnographic data below demonstrate my frustration regarding the blurred distinction between the positions of the victim and the perpetrator:

> To say that also the father could have come to shelter because he said that she was also yelling at him and she was calling him names and so on (...). Well, I work with women who came to the shelter because of violence, and I am well aware that they can also be those who are in some situations violent, but I mean, you cannot really relativise everything. It's not normal that we cannot call victims the victims. (Voice tape recording, D38)

When victims and perpetrators are replaced with neutral expressions, such as clients, and the power and control relations between them remain hidden, shelter work offers victims impartiality and accommodation instead of validation and empowerment. Moreover, shelter work becomes centred around treating the perpetrator equally, enabling his voice and offering help, instead of limiting his power and control over the victim. This negatively affects the safety of victims. I argue that treating the victim and the perpetrator equally in a situation that is not at all equal – that is, domestic violence and abuse is about power and control over the victim – results in the revictimisation of the victim. Moreover, victims of the domestic violence and abuse often fear being disbelieved, and the fact that shelter workers call perpetrators and give them a voice contributes to victims' insecurity regarding their chances of being believed.

Perpetrators can accuse victims of fleeing to the shelter to alienate the children from the father as part of supposedly false accusations of domestic violence. For example, research has shown that the ideology of the "alienating" mothers produces contradictory responses from child protection services and shifts the focus away from men's violence and control towards women and children (Côté et al., 2022;

Lapierre, 2021). My autoethnographic reflections on shelter practices also touched on the idea of victims abusing shelter services to harm the fathers:

> Well, the shelter is not a relaxing place, it is, like, it's residential care, it's not nice to be here (...) it's like, victims flee from their own homes (...) and the shelter is the only solution when they don't anymore know what to do next, where to go next, how to behave, where to get help (...). So it's not somehow, they are using this against the other one, who is staying at home. (Voice tape recording, D38)

The idea of women abusing domestic violence shelter services to harm the fathers, who are wrongly blamed for violence and abuse, is actually part of the perpetrators' rights discourse (Krizsan and Roggeband, 2014), an extreme form of the gender-blind approach to understanding domestic violence and abuse, whereby vocal father's rights groups claim that the fathers are wrongly accused "without due process" and challenge measures such as restrictive order (ibid., 47).

I argue that the gender-blind perpetrators' rights discourse operates effectively only when shelter workers are dealing with racially majoritised perpetrators and victims. I argue that this happens because of the culturalisation of domestic violence and abuse: whereas racially minoritised fathers are perceived as perpetrators and their wives as victims, the racially majoritised fathers are perceived as clients needing help.

Furthermore, during my data collection in the shelter, the workers did not call the perpetrators if they were not the child's custodians despite being part of the same household, which is problematic from the perspective of ensuring children's safety. Thus, I argue that the shelter practice of calling the perpetrators is based not so much on concerns about children's safety but rather on concerns regarding racially majoritised fathers' and male perpetrators' entitlements and power.

Calling the perpetrators after a victim has arrived at the shelter is not the neutral task of calling a client in need of help. Instead, the task is highly gendered: often, a female shelter worker calls a male perpetrator who committed domestic violence and abuse against a female victim. As the phone call happens during very tense moments, when a victim has just fled her home and shelter workers cannot allow the perpetrator to come to the shelter, the risk of some level of verbal abuse for the shelter worker from the side of the perpetrator is high. This risk is intensified for

racialised shelter workers. My autoethnographic data below contain my reflection on this risk in general and as an immigrant shelter worker in particular:

> There is this idea that we must immediately inform the father who stayed at home (...) that his children are in the shelter (...) so we are probably the first who are contacting him. Of course, his reactions are very strong, usually (...) violence that earlier was targeting this woman is now targeting us. And with my Finnish, it's like I expose myself, allowing him to start to pick on me. (Voice tape recording, D38)

Because of my racialised audible visibility (Toivanen, 2014), which limits my possibilities of being perceived as a Finn instead of a contagious Other (Krivonos, 2020, 388), I occupy a vulnerable subject position, the effects of which are intensified when calling the perpetrator:

> When we are calling the fathers who stayed at home, I find that especially troubling. When we as shelter workers are calling (...) we are not the good guys, of course. And for me, with my accent, which is like a red cloth to many anyway, it makes me much more vulnerable to experiencing more and new kinds of hate speech on the basis of my presupposed ethnicity or language background (...). I get these situations every now and then. (Voice tape recorder, D86)

The threat of verbal abuse when shelter workers are calling the perpetrators is not considered in institutional measures meant to protect workers from unnecessary exposure to violence and abuse. The lack of recognition regarding the risk of verbal abuse can be interpreted as the normalisation of violence towards women working in social services and a misrecognition of the role of race in encounters between shelter workers and perpetrators. Moreover, it shows that institutional security measures focus exclusively on physical threats.

7.3.2 Targeted workers

Shelter workers work with victims of domestic violence, which is a human rights violation, and can thus be perceived as human rights defenders, particularly women's rights defenders. The shelter workers, leadership and residents are almost exclusively women. Therefore, the threat of potential violence by the perpetrators against shelter workers and the shelter as an institution is constant and can be better understood using the notion of violence against women, who are human rights defenders

(Krook, 2020) and who are targeted for what they do, namely being engaged in women's rights advocacy.

For racialised shelter workers, the intersectional vulnerability that increases the risk of being targeted with verbal abuse is not just a subjective fear but an embodied experience. This vulnerable position and the objectively increased risk of verbal abuse are clearly demonstrated in the following example from my autoethnographic data. Someone called the shelter's hotline and asked whether one could seek safety at shelter. In the short verbal exchange, the caller misrecognised me as Russian, after which they cursed at me, used a racial slur and hung up the phone:

> Someone called and asked if this is a shelter where one can come when seeking safety. And I said yes, and can you say a bit more about your situation (...). Then, he started to be verbally aggressive, shouting at me, saying, "You are a Russian," and then he said that "you are one of those ryssä" and hung up the phone. (...) When he said that I am Russian, I started to feel uneasy, I started to be very cautious about the way I speak. I had experienced this kind of racial, ethnicised aggression before, and I knew that whatever you say, you are the wrong person. So, I was quiet and was thinking what now? But before I could figure out what now, he hung up the phone. So, I get this kind of hatred (...) a racialised, ethnicised oppressive speech, hate speech (...) because of my presupposed ethnic origin. And this was not the first time. (Voice tape recorder, D86)

The caller might have needed shelter service, thus being a possible victim, but did not want to proceed with the conversation due to my supposedly Russian origin. I was left with little possibility of passing off as a legitimate counsellor in a situation where, over the phone, I could not capitalise on my phenotypical capital (Krivonos, 2020) or on my institutional authority delegated by the shelter. My data confirm that non-Russian speakers can be misrecognised as Russians, as my accent contributed to the construction of my racially minoritised position. Even the strategy of speaking as little as possible (and thus enhancing the chances of being perceived as Finnish) did not suffice to avoid the risk of racialised verbal abuse. I argue that it is reasonable to address the risks of violence and abuse towards shelter workers and victims as objective possibilities instead of subjective experiences marked by over-reaction.

The shelter did include physical threats and risks, such as when perpetrators tried to enter the shelter, into the security protocol. However, whereas the measures to increase the physical safety of shelter workers and victims are taken seriously, my

analysis indicates that security measures are lacking when it comes to increased vulnerabilities due to shelter working conditions (Chapter 4) and the vulnerabilities related to the intersectional positions of victims, workers and perpetrators. During my eight months of data collection in the shelter, there were several occasions when perpetrators became physical threats. The extract below describes the moment when the workers received information about an armed perpetrator, a shelter resident's husband, possibly coming to the shelter:

> There was a risk that the perpetrator would come to the shelter with an explosive device. This was quite a security risk for us, so we decided to consult the police on how to proceed with our security. (Voice tape recording, D48)

Perpetrators' attempts to come to the shelter are not uncommon. Finnish domestic violence shelters' addresses and contacts are public. The perpetrators can arrive at the shelter's backyard or at the front door, wanting to enter. Such situations demand an immediate response from shelter workers to protect what is at the centre of shelter work, namely the victims. Shelter workers follow a security protocol to manage such situations. One of the first strategic tasks is to verbally negotiate with the perpetrators and try to calm them down and convince them to leave the shelter area. Explicitly risky situations have detrimental effects on workers' personal safety when performing their work. The data below reveal the traumatic effects of exposure to risk:

> In these situations, when you are yourself under a threat, and the person doesn't want to leave despite repeated instructions (...) I started to tremble, I trembled and I was scared, I was aware of my heart beating fast, and my breathing was fast, it was very difficult to speak in a composed way and calmly, so that I could pacify this person. (Voice tape recording, D36)

It is important to note that automatic responses of the nervous system (e.g. trembling and elevated heart and breathing rates) in risky situations are not merely examples of workers' subjective emotional and bodily reactions but normal bodily reactions when workers are exposed to abuse. International research has shown (Iliffe and Stead, 2000, 402) that a high percentage of counsellors reported being threatened by perpetrators since having started work in the field of domestic violence. Although incidents were rare, they resulted in an increased awareness of one's personal safety at work and in one's personal life (ibid.). One of the impacts of domestic violence work on counsellors is the feeling of being less secure in the

world, which is partially a result of the risks and harms to which counsellors are objectively exposed (Iliffe and Stead, 2000, 402). Despite shelter work affecting workers' feelings of safety and their objective security, such situations of elevated risk and their burdensome effects often remain unaddressed.

Another unrecognised safety risk for shelter workers is witnessing in court. In some shelter cases, shelter workers are summonsed to court as witnesses without the right to decline the summons. The date of the court hearing can coincide with the worker's personal free time. There is no mechanism in shelter work to support shelter workers when they face forced participation in court hearings, and there is no associated security procedure, either. My autoethnographic data below indicate my anxiety as a shelter worker before a court hearing regarding my personal safety due to physical exposure to the perpetrators and my feeling of anticipated isolation in dealing with my emotional reactions afterwards:

> I received the summons to court to be a witness in one client's case (...) I feel a very strong anxiety about this (...). The question of my personal safety arises (...) I will be there waiting in the same waiting room with the perpetrators, and they can take photos of me (...) they can follow me after the court hearing (...) and this is really disturbing (...) and after the court I will be left alone with all my feelings of anxiety and insecurity (...). This is really difficult to handle on your own. (Voice tape recording, D31)

Although summons to court as a witness are relatively rare, this possibility is clearly overlooked at the system level as a possible threat, and there are no structural procedures to protect and support the shelter worker who must respond to the summons. During my five years of shelter work, I have been summonsed as a witness to a court hearing three times, each time with the threat of a fine. Although shelters have security protocols to protect workers and victims while both are physically in the shelters, the shelter field lacks security procedures for shelter workers testifying in court hearings.

7.3.3 Effectiveness of security strategies

Racialised power relations affect the availability and effectiveness of existing shelter security strategies, such as verbal negotiations with perpetrators at the shelter

entrance. In situations in which the shelter as an institution sets rules and limitations for perpetrators, they often direct their aggression towards shelter workers. My data include cases of perpetrators trying to enter the shelter against the will of the victims and despite the verbal negotiations led by shelter workers. These confrontations were marked by structural inequalities and should be read through intersectional lenses. In the first case, a Finnish perpetrator entered the building but failed to enter the shelter premises on the second floor. However, two shelter workers and the perpetrator found themselves side by side in the hallway, within less than two metres of distance, in a negotiation situation. My autoethnographic data show that as an immigrant shelter worker, I had difficulties in successfully applying the negotiation strategy with the Finnish perpetrator:

> Although I tried to calmly direct that person away, it was extremely difficult. I noticed the gaze when I spoke (...) I was recognised as a foreigner, from the way I speak, so I tried to speak as little as possible. (...) I was there an ethnic minority and a language minority (...) the way how that person looked at me, and then said that if she [our immigrant client] thinks that she can stay here in this country, then she is mistaken (...). And I was there myself an immigrant, listening to this, and it was disgusting (...). I had to, as an immigrant, defend another immigrant from an angry majoritised Finnish perpetrator. (Voice tape recording, D81)

The perpetrator's xenophobic hostility ("if she thinks that she can stay here") was also indirectly targeting me as an immigrant shelter worker. As a racially minoritised worker, I had to navigate the perpetrator's hostility because of the work I do and the racialised position that I occupy. I used the strategy of speaking as little as possible to avoid being recognised as a foreigner because of not speaking "proper Finnish" (Krivonos, 2017, 1152). I occupied a vulnerable position in relation to a racially majoritised perpetrator. In my encounter with the native Finnish perpetrator, my audible visibility (Rosa, 2018; Toivanen, 2014) affected my legitimacy as a shelter worker, and I could not effectively lean on institutional authority like my Finnish colleagues could. In these difficult moments of asserting limits in front of the domestic violence perpetrator, I had to perform the additional labour of regulating my audible output to appear as a legitimate counsellor and to manage the increased risk of verbal abuse.

The privilege of the subject position in which such labour is not needed is visible in the next example from my autoethnographic data, in which I verbally negotiated with immigrant perpetrators at the shelter entrance:

> When they were at the doors today, it was easier for me to speak and negotiate, and reject them, because they were speaking poorer Finnish than me (...) so there was this power dissymmetry, and I had it easier because of that. If there would be three majority Finns, I am not sure if I would be that assertive; it would have been more demanding for me to set the limits. (Voice tape recording, D15)

The two examples show that I occupied highly different subject positions while possessing the same immigrant background and language skills and that these racialised positions differently affected my application of the shelter security protocol. In both cases, I was (mis)recognised for something else: the majoritised Finn probably misrecognised me as an East European Other due to my Slavic accent, while the non-Finnish speakers probably misrecognised me as a majoritised Finn because of my fluent Finnish. These examples confirm that racialised positions are constructed relationally and contextually (Choo and Ferree, 2010) – the same characteristics can, through the racialisation process, lead to privileged or disadvantaged subject positions. Whereas claiming legitimacy was more difficult for me when talking to the Finnish perpetrator, I effortlessly appeared as a legitimate shelter worker when occupying the privileged position of Finnish whiteness in the encounter with the racially minoritised perpetrators. This analysis confirms that a racially privileged position enables a more effective execution of the shelter security strategy of verbal negotiation with perpetrators than does a racially minoritised one. When vulnerability is on the side of perpetrators, risk management is more accessible to workers.

7.3.4 Misleading alarm triggers

A central task in domestic violence shelter work is to provide immediate safety to victims. In the last resort, this simply means that a victim can find refuge within the shelter walls and that a shelter's locked doors are keeping the perpetrator out, making the victim physically safe. However, my study suggests that shelter workers habitually perceive racially minoritised perpetrators as a threat, which is not the case for racially majoritised perpetrators. Racialised power relations in shelter work thus

affect the recognition of risk and threats and consequently the safety of shelter work subjects. My autoethnographic and observation data below describe different situations in which the shelter workers were managing the perceived risks and preventing perpetrators from entering the shelter.

In the first case, a Finnish perpetrator succeeded in entering the building in which the shelter was located, though not the actual shelter. The perpetrator in this case was a Finnish woman, and the victim who was in our shelter was the immigrant woman. The Finnish woman perpetrator came to the shelter doors and told us that she is coming to visit her friend who is in shelter. The intersections between gender and race were important factors contributing to the misrecognition of this security threat; we let the perpetrator in. Only when the immigrant shelter resident said that she is not expecting any visits, we realised that something is wrong.

> A woman came to shelter doors and said that she is here for a visit, which was agreed with our immigrant shelter client, and we (...) let her into the building. (...) But when the client said that she is definitely not expecting any visits, we realised that it is the perpetrator who is now within our premises. (Voice tape recording, D36)

I argue that in this case, the shelter workers misrecognised the risk due to specific race and gender intersections. If the gender-neutral approach to domestic violence implies an understanding that any gendered subject is capable of violence, then it should be expected that the woman at the shelter entrance should also be recognised as a possible perpetrator. Instead, I argue that the gender-neutral approach resulted in othering violence and thus constructing male racially minoritised subjects as perpetrators while relativising violence in the cases of racially majoritised subjects, such as Finnish male perpetrators (e.g. individualising explanations based on substance abuse, mental-health problems or the like).

As workers are informed of the issues of honour-based violence, which is often seen as characteristic of other cultures, the family members of the racially minoritised perpetrators are also perceived as possible perpetrators. However, the family members of White Finnish perpetrators are generally perceived as harmless. Moreover, the abuse done by the racially majoritised Finnish husband and his family against the immigrant woman from the Global South remained unthinkable and thus unrecognised. My data indicate that when the racially majoritised Finnish woman

appeared at the shelter doors with the common excuse of an agreed-upon visit, the shelter workers made a mistake in risk evaluation. As the misrecognised perpetrator entered the building, the workers had to deal with the perpetrator face to face in the hallway. After an unsuccessful verbal negotiation, the workers followed the shelter's security protocol and activated the alarm:

> We asked her to leave the building, and she would not agree… We had to say that if she does not leave, we will call the guards (...). So, still that did not help (...). Only after starting the alarm she left the building. (Voice tape recording, D36)

It would be incorrect to claim that it was only the habitual misrecognition of risks based on racialised and gendered dynamics that affected the workers' evaluation of the situation described above. Rather, my data show the relevance of the context in which the mistake was done, namely the detrimental working circumstances, which made the shelter workers vulnerable to committing such mistakes:

> The context in which we made the mistake and let the perpetrator in was that (...) the worker was on the floor alone, being on alert for the crisis call, while taking care of the children, and then (...) at the same time, there was also this person at the doors (...). In this situation, when multitasking workers have many responsible tasks going on at the same time, we are very vulnerable to making mistakes. (Voice tape recording, D59)

The shelter's working conditions, characterised by understaffing and insufficient essential services (Chapter 4), constituted a risk to the security of the shelter and the safety of shelter subjects. Together with racialised perceptions, these conditions enabled habitual racialised practices, which led to a concrete threat to the safety of the workers and the shelter residents. Although the shelter's emergency protocol and safety measures took the shelter work conditions into consideration to the extent of arranging for a personal panic button, the more general effects of working alone on the shelter floor and taking care of the children while being on duty on the crisis phone and controlling the shelter entrance doors are insufficiently addressed.

The detrimental shelter working conditions made the workers vulnerable to misrecognitions of risks and contributed to the workers performing their work habitually rather than responding with professional reflexivity. Although some risks were not recognised at all, other, non-threatening situations were misrecognised as risky. The following extract contains my autoethnographic reflection on how an

immigrant man, a taxi driver, was interpreted as a threat while simply waiting for the passenger in front of the shelter doors:

> The Finnish woman (...) she got in very easily (...) and she was the perpetrator in our immigrant client case, but the one because of whom there was an unnecessary alarm activated was that immigrant taxi driver with darker skin (....) Such profiling happens all the time (...) and it affects safety in our building. This is a big deal because (...) one of our central tasks is to ensure safety. So, because of our ethnic and gender profiling, we fail in risk evaluation. (Voice tape recording, D36)

When comparing the two examples, some problematic assumptions that underpin domestic violence become visible. As violence is culturalised, the racially othered subject, such as a male immigrant taxi driver, occupies the position of a possible perpetrator. Simultaneously, a racially majoritised Finnish woman does not occupy this position, especially not in relation to a female immigrant victim:

> Because we do wrong ethnic profiling and gender profiling, we do not recognise the threat, or we recognise it in the last moment (...) endangering the client's safety (...) and also workers' safety. (Voice tape recording, D84)

It would be incorrect to claim that only women or those occupying the racially privileged position are perceived as not posing a threat. My data show that such perceptions are influenced by a specific intersection between race and gender or by other intersectional inequalities, such as disability. The example below shows how gender combined with disability triggered the shelter workers' alertness. When a man with a disability was in front of the shelter building and rang the shelter doorbell because he came to visit his relative, the shelter workers did not let him in:

> A male person was at the door and didn't answer our questions about who he is and where he is going because (...) he was deaf and speech disabled, and so we didn't let him in, right? He caused suspicion, while moments before him, we let in an actual potentially dangerous person. (Voice tape recording, D39)

The workers checked with the shelter residents to see if the person at the door was really the expected visitor and not the perpetrator, after which the workers let the harmless visitor in. The intersection between gender and disability resulted in the perception of a majoritised Finnish man with deafness and speech disability as a suspect. He occupied an audio-visible othered subject position that, in the context of shelter work, resulted in the workers' suspicion regarding his intentions.

7.4 Conclusion

This final empirical analysis chapter has examined the effects of racialised perceptions and practices on everyday shelter work. First, the analysis of the shelter service need evaluation indicated that in shelter work, racialised perceptions and practices significantly affect access to shelter services. The racialised perceptions of Finnish Roma victims as illegitimate shelter subjects raised the shelter-access threshold and thus negatively affected the racially minoritised victims' access to immediate safety. The prevalent gender-neutral work approach contributed to the misrecognition of domestic violence and abuse in the case of international marriage abandonment, which resulted in the exclusion of an immigrant victim from the shelter. The racialised perceptions of asylum-seekers as abusers of social services, the context of deportation and the pressures from the shelter's network partners shifted the focus away from domestic violence work and resulted in disputes on the victim's entitlement to domestic violence shelter counselling.

Second, the analysis of the individual counselling meetings in the shelter indicated challenges to empowering counselling for racially minoritised survivors. The culturalisation of Roma victims negatively affected the recognition of domestic violence and abuse and resulted in victims' disempowerment. While her culture was constructed as violent, a Roma survivor had few possibilities of affirming her own cultural belonging while condemning the particular acts of violence. Imposing standard procedures in mapping the violence and abuse experiences of a non-Finnish-speaking victim by using an interpreter to explain instead of actively listening deviated from the norm of victim-centred work and prevented the victim from developing her own voice. The insufficient contextualisation in explaining the cycle of violence when counselling an asylum-seeker with a deportation decision contributed to her disempowerment due to the gendering of the responsibility for domestic violence and abuse. Finally, addressing power and control in an immigrant victim's experiences of abuse expanded the possibilities for empowering shelter work. The application of the Power and Control Wheel adapted to immigrants' needs facilitated an immigrant victim's participatory knowledge production regarding her subject position, which enabled the recognition of domestic violence and abuse that would otherwise have remained unrecognised. This intersectionally sensitive

approach contributed to the empowerment of the victim by strengthening her agency and contextualising her experiences.

Third, the analysis of everyday shelter work practices indicated the decisive effects of detrimental shelter working conditions and racialised perceptions and practices on the safety of shelter work subjects and the security of shelter premises. The supposedly neutral practice of calling the perpetrator resulted in blurring the distinction between the victim and the perpetrator and exposed shelter workers to verbal abuse, the risk of which was intensified for the racially minoritised worker. The risks of violence and abuse for shelter subjects were shown to be partially addressed by shelter security protocols for situations involving physical threats. However, adequate recognition of risks is crucial for ensuring the safety of shelter subjects and the security of the shelter premises. To provide an example, although a racially majoritised perpetrator was misrecognised as harmless and was consequently allowed entry into the building, a racially minoritised and harmless bystander triggered alarm. The misrecognition of the intersections of race, gender and shelter working conditions affected workers' perceptions of risks and resulted in a reduced efficiency of shelter security strategies. These strategies appeared to be effective against racially minoritised perpetrators, in relation to whom even the immigrant shelter worker could successfully apply the security protocol. At the same time, the racially minoritised (immigrant) shelter worker had difficulties effectively negotiating with a racially majoritised (Finnish) perpetrator, consequently having to escalate the response and use the institutionally provided mechanism (a personal panic button) to force the perpetrator out of the building.

The chapter demonstrated that working conditions, racialised perceptions and racialised practices affect access to domestic violence shelter services, the possibility of empowering counselling, the safety of shelter subjects and the security of the shelter premises. The chapter indicated the important role of the autonomous shelter worker and the autonomous shelter as a social service subsystem when it comes to individual and institutional resistance to exclusionary and disempowering effects in racialised shelter work. Whereas detrimental working conditions set limitations on the success of such resistance, international mechanisms, such as the Istanbul Convention, positively contributed to their effectiveness. The difficulties in recognising the gendered and racialised bias in shelter work suggest the need for the

development of a structured and guided antiracist practice, along with drastically improving shelter working conditions.

This chapter contributes to the extant international research on exclusionary and disempowering shelter practices, the superimposition of immigrant status onto other forms of oppression and issues related to standardised approaches to violence work with immigrant victims. Furthermore, the chapter contributes to Finnish debates on successful violence intervention practices and the need for a better understanding of the differences and intersections of race and gender that would not reproduce racist perceptions of racialised subjects (Keskinen, 2011, 2017; Honkatukia and Keskinen, 2018, Törmä, 2017; Lidman, 2015).

8 RACIALISATION IN SHELTER WORK – CONDITIONS, PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES

My doctoral research has examined racialisation in domestic violence work in a Finnish shelter. The objectives of this study were to explore intersectional power dynamics in shelter work and indicate possible mechanisms to improve access to safety and empowerment for a diversity of survivors. The study focused on shelter working conditions, workers' perceptions of racially minoritised victims and the effects that shelter work practices have on racially minoritised survivors' access to shelter services and empowerment as well as the safety of shelter work subjects.

In this concluding chapter, I describe my contributions to scientific knowledge about the effects of domestic violence shelter work on racially minoritised victims' access to safety and empowerment. The chapter begins by summarising the research findings on the three research questions. First, I present the findings on shelter working conditions and their effects on racially minoritised domestic violence survivors. Second, I present the findings on shelter workers' perceptions of intersectional differences and their effects on racially minoritised shelter subject positions. Third, I present the research findings on everyday shelter practices and their effects on access to shelter services, empowerment of racially minoritised survivors and the safety of shelter work subjects.

The chapter continues by indicating my theoretical and methodological contributions in relation to extant international and Finnish domestic violence shelter work research. Furthermore, it addresses the strengths and weaknesses of my research design and the ethical considerations related to the research process. I conclude the chapter by presenting future development suggestions for the Finnish domestic violence shelter field, indicating possible modalities and mechanisms that

could contribute to intersectional sensitivity in shelter work and improve the quality of domestic violence shelter services for racially minoritised survivors.

8.1 Harmful working conditions

I approached the analysis of the shelter working conditions and their effects via the first research question: How do shelter working conditions affect the work with racially minoritised victims? I began the analysis by focusing on shelter workers' experiences of shelter work and its conditions. This crucial step sheds light on the possibilities and limitations of workers' reflexive agency, which is a precondition of sensitive shelter work with any victim, particularly with the racially minoritised one. The analysis of the traumatising effects of workers' full-time exposure to victims' accounts of violence and abuse suggested a considerable impact of secondary trauma, which caused harmful emotional and bodily reactions that negatively affected shelter workers' well-being. Workers' anxiety regarding the next dreadful story, the emotional and bodily over-arousal, the mental pressure causing insomnia, intrusive images and thoughts related to victims' cases while being off work and accumulated emotional burden resulted in worker exhaustion and reduced agency. The shelter workers were well aware of the risks of secondary traumatisation in domestic violence shelter work. However, the institutional measures to counter the devastating effects of shelter work on workers were insufficient, which indicated the individualisation of the responsibility to cope.

Supportive shelter working conditions could have neutralised the negative effects of secondary trauma on the shelter workers. Nevertheless, my analysis indicated that shelter working conditions, such as understaffing and a lack of essential services, intensified negative effects on workers and limited workers' agency, which resulted in neglecting victims' needs. The analysis of the working conditions from the perspective of a shelter worker trying to cope with the overwhelming demands of the crisis unit environment to provide dignified encountering to victims while

simultaneously door keeping, cleaning, washing and babysitting suggested that shelter work was severely understaffed and lacked essential services. These insights were further supported by the working tasks of shelter counsellors: while running a 24/7 crisis residential unit, workers were expected to perform the shelter service need evaluation and individual and group counselling with adult and children victims of abuse, to actively answer crisis phone calls and to do cleaning and babysitting. For example, shelter workers would clean victims' rooms and prepare them for new arrivals, handle the shelter laundry, tidy the common area and babysit the children. Whereas the gendered shelter regime provided sufficient on-demand IT-support services, caring and cleaning were supposed to be done by the shelter workers themselves. Combined with understaffing, these tasks often resulted in interruptions of individual counselling meetings with victims or even cancellations of planned individual appointments. Moreover, the workload meant having to adjust shelter work to anticipated interruptions and thus perform individual counselling in unsuitable settings, such as victims' private rooms. Interruptions of individual counselling sessions were especially harmful to interpreter-assisted work with non-Finnish-speaking victims, as interrupted counselling could not be done later without the interpreter.

When understaffing and the lack of essential services intersected with the gender-neutral understanding of shelter work, these working conditions result in the neglect of newly arrived victims' needs while attending to perpetrators. The lack of practical support in the more demanding cases of shelter work with immigrants led to shelter workers neglecting central shelter work tasks, such as risk evaluation and the safety plan. Expensive interpreter-assisted work was used to solve practical problems instead of performing domestic violence work counselling. At the same time, the cost-related pressures regarding the use of interpreters forced workers to negotiate their professional commitment to sensitive work with immigrant victims. Gendered austerity pressures further restricted workers' agency, forcing them to balance between the struggle to counter the negative effects of reducing interpreter-assisted work and the neoliberal forces pressuring workers to conform to austerity measures. Gendered power relations were evident in the shelter practices of the cleaning, childcare and maximally flexible work performance of predominately female workers and their secondary victimisation.

The discrepancy between shelter workers' professional commitment to dignified encountering and the reality of hastily done work in the chaotic shelter environment triggered workers' feelings of inadequacy and frustration. Nevertheless, workers resisted the individualisation of responsibility by comparing shelter work quality with available resources. Consequently, working conditions, instead of meeting the immigrant victims' needs, became criteria for good-enough shelter work. Against the background of these findings, I argued for naming the described working conditions and their effects as neglect by design, or institutionalised neglect that results in workers' suffering and victims' revictimisation while contributing to the reproduction of intersectional inequalities and intensifying harmful effects on racially minoritised subjects, such as non-Finnish-speaking domestic violence and abuse survivors.

8.2 Habitual racialisation

I approached the analysis of the shelter workers' perceptions of intersectional differences and racially minoritised survivors by means of the second research question: How do shelter workers perceive intersectional differences and with what effects on the racially minoritised victims' positions? I began the analysis by focusing on shelter workers' understanding of power and hierarchies in the counselling relationship, examining how different social categorisations affect the worker–victim relationship. This crucial step enabled me to describe the possibilities of workers' reflexive agency in deconstructing harmful racialised hierarchies in the counselling relationship. For example, the analysis indicated that workers perceived the shelter counselling relationship as a hierarchical power relation between institutionally constructed subject positions that entailed a potentially enabling and productive hierarchy, especially when workers used their knowledge and existing institutional mechanisms to facilitate the empowerment of victims. However, workers considered power and hierarchy as potentially harmful when hierarchies emerged as a result of the domestic violence context (e.g. victims' restricted access to basic goods and

housing) or the inadequate working conditions that intensified the negative effects of forced displacement (e.g. individual counselling performed in victims' private rooms).

When workers noticed the negative effects of power hierarchies in the worker–victim relationship, they attempted to deconstruct such hierarchies. These efforts were evidenced by workers' reflexive practices of addressing the disempowering effects of power hierarchies by, for example, adjusting how they dressed, where they sat and how they talked. Workers attempted to use their institutional power for the benefit of victims. Although shelter workers recognised the aforementioned aspects as constituting harmful hierarchies in relation to victims, they often misrecognised the effects of intersectional differences on power dynamics and hierarchical positions.

Sensitivity to the effects of intersectional differences in the counselling relationship is crucial for sensitive shelter work with racially minoritised victims. My research suggests that some differences (e.g. age and language) and their effects were easier to recognise than others (e.g. race and gender). Shelter workers recognised the enabling and constraining effects of age- and language-related power dynamics in the shelter counselling relationship. Positive effects were related to victims' perceptions of workers as legitimate agents for the task at hand and workers' perceptions of victims as legitimate shelter service users. Negative effects were related to the decreased legitimacy of workers (e.g. in the case of a very young worker and a middle-aged victim or a non-native-Finnish-speaking worker encountering a native Finnish victim) and the limited agency of non-Finnish-speaking victims.

The findings suggest that shelter workers attempted to deconstruct the harmful effects of intersectional differences, such as the construction of the illegitimate subject position or limitations on subjects' agency, with deliberate strategies. One such strategy involved workers leaning on their education or working experience (e.g. in the case of age difference) to recover counselling authority and trust. Furthermore, workers adjusted their language and spoke plain Finnish or even victims' own native languages and used institutional mechanisms such as asking for an interpreter to empower non-Finnish-speaking survivors.

However, shelter workers misrecognised the relevance of race and gender to shelter work. Instead, they used the culture category to make sense of racially minoritised victims, such as Finnish Roma and immigrants. Such survivors were often culturalised: their experiences of domestic violence and abuse were seen as the result of their inherently patriarchal cultures in opposition to the supposed gender-equal Finnish culture. The combination of the culturalisation of the racially minoritised survivors and the misrecognition of race and gender resulted in different levels of visibility of gender as an important social category affecting shelter work. For example, when workers reflected on the relationship between a racially majoritised female worker and a racially majoritised female victim, gender remained invisible as an important factor in counselling work. Differences in gendered subject positions (e.g. a male worker and a female victim) when the racially majoritised subject positions were similar (both subjects were majoritised Finns) increased the level of gender visibility in the counselling relationship. In such cases, workers became aware of their uses of space and deliberated on appropriate physical distance, conversation themes and legitimate touch. Differences in racialised subject positions of workers and victims also increased the visibility of gender – for example, when workers reflected on the relationship between a racially majoritised female worker and a racially minoritised female victim, they recognised the enabling effects of the gendered positions. When a racially majoritised male worker addressed a racially minoritised female victim, the differences in gender positions were interpreted as a constraining factor for counselling. I argued that in the case of differently racialised subject positions, gender became visible due to the culturalisation of the racially minoritised victim.

The misrecognition of race and gender resulted in reduced worker agency. Instead of professional reflection on the effects of the intersections of race and gender, shelter workers habitually reproduced the culturalising perceptions and disbelief of racially minoritised domestic violence victims. Habitual culturalisation manifested itself in the perceptions of racially minoritised victims, such as Finnish Roma and immigrants, as victims of their patriarchal cultures. Workers reproduced stereotypical perceptions of essential cultural difference, whereby culture was seen as the property of racially minoritised victims, while culture was misrecognised in the case of racially majoritised victims. Despite gender becoming more visible in shelter work with racially minoritised victims, it was culture and not gender that workers

believed needed to be considered as part of a sensitive working approach: workers believed that more knowledge of different cultures would result in more sensitive shelter work with racially minoritised victims. Thus, the discourse of cultural competence became a tool for racialising domestic violence and abuse survivors.

The research findings suggest that habitual culturalisation became an obstacle to recognising a Roma survivor as a legitimate shelter resident when she did not match workers' perceptions of a culturalised, weak victim. In the case of immigrant survivors, workers believed that curiosity about racialised minority victims' origins and encouraging them to make their own so-called cultural food indicated the workers' positive attitude towards them. However, while the intention may have been good, such curiosity can be disempowering for racially minoritised victims, as questions about their origins can become racialised intrusions indicating survivors' non-belonging. Paradoxically, culturalisation helped maintain workers' professional attitudes towards victims when their behaviours challenged the workers. For example, appealing to culturalisation, a worker did not take a victim's behaviour personally.

Although the culturalisation of racially minoritised victims could be expected to result primarily in increased access to shelter services, my study indicates a more ambiguous effect. For example, in the case of suspiciously empowered Roma survivor, habitual disbelief played a more important role than culturalisation. Consequently, the Roma survivor's intentions were questioned, and she was perceived as someone who wanted to take advantage of free accommodation and provision. Similarly, immigrant victims were often perceived as abusing the system of social services and benefits. Particularly asylum-seeking domestic violence survivors were perceived as deceitful and opportunistic, seeking benefits for their asylum process. Moreover, immigrant victims were perceived as misusing shelter workers for babysitting.

Nevertheless, such perceptions were also challenged, and some workers warned against stereotypical and judgmental interpretations of racially minoritised survivors' behaviours. Deconstruction of habitual culturalisation and habitual disbelief was mostly observable in the action research workshops, when workers had the rare opportunity to engage in guided professional intersectional reflection with distance

from the chaotic everyday shelter work. Consequently, workers practiced reflexive agency in the construction of alternative perceptions of racially minoritised victims. For example, they contextualised the racially minoritised survivor's subject positions and reflected on the social marginalisation that such survivors often suffer. Moreover, in the case of Roma survivors, shelter workers rejected stereotypical cultural assumptions. Instead, they argued for enabling Roma victims' agency and allowing them to define the meaning of culture for themselves. Workers also emphasised diversity among Roma victims and the importance of considering their deprivileged position in society.

Nevertheless, the habitual reproduction of racialised stereotypes and prejudices was prevalent and supported by concrete and highly inadequate working conditions in everyday shelter work. Harmful working conditions limited workers' agency, who became more susceptible to the habitual reproduction of racialised perceptions and practices instead of becoming more capable of sensitively reflecting on the needs of diverse victims. While considering their work with immigrant victims to be highly demanding, shelter workers were committed to high-quality work and sensitivity. However, inadequate shelter working conditions and the context of power relations between the shelter field and other social services resulted in the vulnerable positioning of shelter workers and immigrant victims. In their attempts to defend their commitment to work with immigrant victims, shelter workers had to navigate other services' misunderstandings of domestic violence shelter work while being mindful of not endangering their own reputation. The combination of inadequate shelter work conditions and the relatively weak power positioning within the field of social services resulted in shelter workers and shelter residents occupying vulnerable positions. It was the institutional autonomy of the shelter (granted by national legislation and international treaties) and the relative autonomy of shelter workers that enabled countering some of the negative effects of harmful working conditions and the relatively subordinate power position within the social service system.

8.3 Racialised access, empowerment and safety

I approached my analysis of the shelter working practices and their effects via the third research question: How do shelter work practices affect access to shelter services, the empowerment of racially minoritised victims and the safety of racially minoritised shelter work subjects? The analysis addressed the central themes of domestic violence shelter work that emerged from my research data: accessibility, empowerment and safety. My investigation of everyday shelter work practices required paying attention to the simultaneous effects of shelter working conditions (Chapter 5) and shelter workers' perceptions of intersectional differences (Chapter 6) on the constitution of the shelter work practices.

I began the analysis by focusing on the practice of the shelter service need evaluation. The analysis of this practice in the cases of shelter work with an immigrant, an asylum-seeker and a Finnish Roma revealed the presence of exclusionary effects and suggested the importance and limitations of shelter workers' autonomy for countering the harmful effects of racialisation. The analysis of shelter work with an immigrant victim from the Global South suggested that the gender-neutral perception of domestic violence and abuse negatively affected the shelter service need evaluation. Gender neutrality in domestic violence work corresponded with the habitual culturalisation and othering of domestic violence, which contributed to the misrecognition of violence and abuse in the case of international marriage abandonment. The abusive acts of the Finnish perpetrator and his Finnish family towards the immigrant wife were perceived as just another normal divorce process instead of being seen as the perpetrators' deliberate violent actions enabled by global power relations, whereby men from the Global North can abuse women from the Global South with impunity.

Furthermore, my analysis of shelter work with an asylum-seeking domestic violence survivor revealed that the harmful perceptions of asylum seekers as opportunists, the pressures from the immigrant reception centre and the context of deportation negatively affected the shelter service need evaluation. Given that the victim was constructed as a subject of immigration services instead of domestic

violence services, she appeared to be an illegitimate subject for domestic violence shelter work. The pressures from the immigrant reception centre added force to this misrecognition. Consequently, the victim was offered only immediate safety and stabilisation without the usual domestic violence counselling. The autonomy of shelter workers and the shelter as a social service subsystem, combined with the power of a ratified international treaty, namely the Istanbul Convention, were decisive factors in enabling individual and institutional resistance to exclusionary practices. A gender-sensitive approach that addressed the asylum-seeking victim's experiences as a human rights violation and gender-based violence, together with leaning on the Istanbul Convention, enabled the victim's experiences of domestic violence to be recognised as gender-based persecution. This indicates that the working fields of domestic violence shelters and the immigrant reception centre intersect rather than exclude each other.

The analysis of the shelter service need evaluation in the case of shelter work with a Finnish Roma suggested that racialising dynamics negatively affected this domestic violence victim's access to immediate safety. The habitual disbelief of Roma survivors not only raised the shelter-access threshold only for them but also for a racially majoritised victim who was misrecognised as a Roma. Engaging in critical reflection on workers' racial bias in everyday shelter work practices appeared to be challenging. This suggests the need for developing a systematic, structured and guided antiracist practice in the shelter field.

I continued my analysis of shelter practices by focusing on individual domestic violence counselling. The analysis of this practice indicated significant challenges in empowering shelter work with racially minoritised survivors. The culturalisation of Roma victims negatively affected the recognition of domestic violence and abuse and disempowered the victims. As the whole culture was constructed as violent, a Roma survivor had limited possibilities of affirming her own culture while condemning acts of violence. Immigrant victims faced additional challenges: the imposition of standard procedures in mapping a victim's experiences of violence revealed a disempowering effect produced by failing to listen. Interpreter-assisted counselling was used to explain different issues instead of enabling the immigrant victim to develop her own voice. The use of standard working procedures supported by existing institutionalised forms revealed an institution-focused practice instead of

a victim-centred shelter practice. Moreover, the lack of contextualisation of the victim's experiences when discussing types of violence and the cycle of violence resulted in the disempowerment of the victim through the gendering of responsibility.

However, the analysis of individual counselling with the immigrant victim also indicated the possibility of empowering working practices – for example, by considering the role of power and control in domestic violence and abuse. Applying the Power and Control Wheel adapted to immigrants' needs (Attachment 4) facilitated a worker's active listening practice and the victim's voice in a cooperative search for adequate naming and sense making of the victim's experiences. This approach enabled the recognition of domestic violence and abuse experiences that would otherwise have remained unrecognised. The approach also contributed to the victim's empowerment because it enabled the victim's agency, contextualised her experiences and situated the responsibility for violence where it belongs, with the perpetrator.

Finally, I addressed shelter working practices related to the evaluation of risks and the provision of safety to shelter work subjects. My analysis addressed the factors that affect the misrecognition of safety risks in shelter work. A critical examination of the practice of calling the perpetrator revealed its negative effects on the safety of shelter subjects for two reasons. First, this practice blurred the distinction between the victim and the perpetrator. Second, it exposed shelter workers to verbal abuse from perpetrators. The analysis indicated that although the shelter and shelter workers were often targeted due to their work, which is why the shelter had a security strategy, the risk of verbal abuse was intensified for the racially minoritised worker. Due to the audible visibility caused by having an accent, the racially minoritised worker became vulnerable to racist abuse.

The risks of physical violence and abuse, such as the threat of a perpetrator with an explosive device or perpetrators tying to enter the shelter premises, were treated more seriously than the verbal abuse and were addressed by the shelter's security protocol. Nonetheless, the available security strategies had limited effectiveness because they overlooked the effects of racialisation. The security strategies were effective when perpetrators were racially minoritised; then, even the racially

minoritised shelter worker could effectively apply the security procedures. However, the racially minoritised shelter worker had difficulties in the effective application of the verbal intervention with a racially majoritised Finnish perpetrator and had to escalate the response by leaning on an institutionally provided mechanism (i.e. a personal panic button) to convince the perpetrator to leave the building. The analysis indicates that the combination of detrimental working conditions, habitual racialisation and the gender-neutral approach to domestic abuse and shelter work negatively affect the safety of the shelter work subjects.

My study examined the limitations and possibilities of intersectionally sensitive domestic violence shelter work with racially minoritised survivors. The analysis highlighted the dynamic interplay of shelter working conditions, shelter workers' perceptions of intersectional differences and everyday shelter working practices. The intersection of these factors affected access to shelter services, the empowerment of racially minoritised victims and the safety of shelter subjects. By approaching the analysis relationally (i.e. by focusing on workers, victims and their relations) and contextually (i.e. by relating the worker–victim relationship to the shelter field and its social space), the study focused on various intersecting modalities of shelter work. I argued that the interplay of shelter working conditions (understaffing and insufficient essential services), racialised embodied habitualities (culturalisation and disbelief) and shelter practices marked by misrecognition of race and gender constituted the conditions under which shelter subjects engaged in reflexive agency. Together, these conditions increased the probability of the habitual reproduction of racialised perceptions and practices in shelter work while also indicating the possibilities for reflexive change.

The findings indicate that intersectionally sensitive domestic violence shelter work demands suitable working conditions (e.g. sufficient staffing and essential services, such as childcare, cleaning and practical support), institutional support for shelter workers' reflexive agency (e.g. time and space for guided intersectional professional reflection, recognition of racialisation, and deconstruction of culturalisation and disbelief), enabling discourses (e.g. domestic violence as a gender-based violence) and a suitable institutional context (e.g. the Istanbul Convention and the Shelter Law). The findings suggest that intersectionally informed reflection and enabling working conditions are crucial factors in countering disempowerment, the

habitual reproduction of racialised exclusion and the misrecognition of risks in domestic violence shelter work.

8.4 Theoretical and methodological contributions

My research has shown that domestic violence shelter work is situated within structured and structuring working conditions and involves (mis)recognition of race and gender as well as tension between habitual and reflexive shelter practices. Together, these factors play a decisive role in shaping everyday shelter work that results in intersectional inequalities. By demonstrating how the habitual reproduction of racialisation occurs in shelter workers' perceptions and practices, my study offers a new perspective on racialisation in domestic violence shelter work in Finland and contributes to a better understanding of relationally and contextually constituted racialised shelter subject positions.

For the first time in the field of Finnish domestic violence shelter research, this dissertation has demonstrated that detrimental shelter working conditions, such as understaffing and insufficient essential services, create harmful hierarchies, facilitate insensitive worker–victim encounters and reinforce habitual reproduction of racialised stereotypes and prejudices. The findings related to shelter working conditions constitute an important contribution to domestic violence shelter research (Murray et al., 2010; Donnelly et al., 2005; Nnawulezi and Sullivan, 2014) by revealing work experiences from the perspectives of those who are working directly with victims (Hughes, 2020; Merchant and Whiting, 2015; Shuler, 2007; Della Rocca, 2021). Although researchers have shown that an inhospitable environment for racially minoritised survivors is created by racial stereotyping (Burman et al., 2014) or negative identity constructions (Donnelly, 2005; Kulkarni, 2018; Nnawulezi and Sullivan, 2014), my research indicates that this kind of inhospitable environment can also be created by inadequate working conditions, characterised by understaffing and insufficient essential services. More specifically,

my study of the effects of shelter work conditions on shelter work with racially minoritised survivors contributes to the scarce research on shelters as institutions and their everyday work and its effects on shelter workers and their work (Brown and O'Brien, 1998; Baker et al., 2007; Hughes, 2020; Merchant and Whiting, 2015; Slattery and Goodman, 2009). Consequently, this research contributes to an improved understanding of the impact of shelters' institutional structures (Bent-Goodley, 2005; Blitz and Illidge, 2006) on sensitive work with racially minoritised survivors. My findings indicate that working conditions in the shelter field must be approached as the decisive context that shapes the conditions of sensitive work with domestic violence survivors. In addition, awareness of racialisation processes in shelter work is key to understanding the possibilities of sensitive domestic violence shelter work with racially minoritised survivors.

Compared to extant research on intersectional inequalities in domestic violence work, which presents mostly negative effects of intersectional subject positions on victims, my research expands the usual focus on disempowering effects (e.g. subjects' decreased agency) by also considering empowering effects (e.g. subjects' increase agency). My findings suggest that the intersectional dynamics in the relationship between victims and shelter workers involve different hierarchical positions with empowering and/or disempowering effects on the agency of shelter work subjects. In contrast with previous research (Bent-Goodley, 2005; Donnelly, 2005; Nnawulezi and Sullivan, 2014; Burman et al., 2004; Kulkarni, 2018), my study focused not only on the subject positions of victims but also of shelter workers. This double shifting of the focus (enabling and disabling effects and the focus on both victims and workers) was possible by approaching the shelter field and the subject positions within it as relational (Bourdieu, 2020) and by acknowledging that the effects of hierarchies in the counselling relationship can be both empowering or disempowering (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990).

Moreover, the study contributes to the extant international research on exclusionary and disempowering shelter practices (Bent-Goodley, 2005; Burman et al., 2004; Donnelly et al., 2005; Kulkarni, 2018; Nnawulezi and Sullivan, 2014), confirms the superimposition of immigrant status onto other forms of oppression (Burman et al. 2004; Kulkarni, 2018; Menjivar and Salcido, 2002) and contributes to the problematisation of the standard working approach to violence work with

immigrant victims (Hagemann-White et al., 2019). Furthermore, the findings contribute to Finnish debates on successful violence intervention practices (Husso et al., 2020; Piippo et al., 2021) and help address the need to understand relevant differences between and intersections of race and gender without reproducing racist perceptions of racialised subjects (Keskinen, 2011, 2017; Honkatukia and Keskinen, 2018; Lidman, 2015, Törmä, 2017).

In my dissertation, I have conceptualised different levels of visibility of gender depending on the racialised positions of the subjects participating in the shelter counselling dyad. Furthermore, the study showed that the better the workers were able to recognise the role of intersectional differences, the better they were able to apply deliberate strategies to counter their negative effects on the counselling relationship. These findings suggest that sensitive domestic violence shelter counselling demands critical reflections on race and gender instead of rendering them invisible by using culture to make sense of racially minoritised survivors. Moreover, countering the misperceptions of shelter work as gender neutral is an important step in making race more visible as a form of social categorisation, thus creating possibilities for a critical investigation of its effects on shelter work.

I have theorised the shelter counselling relationship as hierarchical by default and as potentially empowering. The hierarchy in the worker–victim relationship is qualitatively and effectively different from the oppression of intersectionally constituted hierarchical relations that reproduce the subject positions of the oppressor and the oppressed. By combining Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990) theory of symbolic violence with feminist intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991; Nash, 2008; McCall, 2005; McKinzie and Richards, 2019; Choo and Ferree, 2010) and the extant research on racialisation in shelter work (Nnawulezi and Sullivan, 2014; Blitz and Illidge, 2006; Nichols, 2013; Törmä, 2017; Keskinen, 2011), I have contributed to a better understanding of the difference between a legitimate hierarchy that empowers (and is grounded in a professional relationship between workers and victims) and an illegitimate hierarchy that oppresses (and is grounded in an oppressive relationship between workers and victims). This approach to domestic violence shelter work contributes to a conceptualisation of the difference between subordination and oppression in the worker–victim relationship. I showed that oppressive hierarchies can originate in and are constituted by poor working conditions and intersectional

subject positions. However, my conceptualisation of the shelter worker–victim relationship as a hierarchical relation by default may be only partially applicable in other shelter work contexts, especially in those organised and/or supported by survivors themselves.

The study contributes to the existing scholarship on racialisation in domestic violence shelter work by showing the importance of shelter workers' acknowledgement of hierarchies constructed based on racialised differences and similarities and of their effects on the counselling relationship, authority and trust. More specifically, the novelty of my research consists in showing the limitations of the theory of symbolic violence (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990) via intersectional feminist analysis. Contrary to Bourdieu and Passeron's theorisation of institutionally grounded authority and legitimacy of the agents imposing that which they are delegated to impose, my study suggested that in the case of harmful intersectional interference with the counselling relationship, workers must put effort to achieve credibility and gain victims' trust by deliberately using different power strategies.

The explication of the dynamics of racialisation in shelter work enabled me to address the question of safety in shelter work, a theme that, to the best of my knowledge, has not been considered in extant research in Finland. Whereas international studies suggest that racial microaggressions in shelters create an unsafe environment for racially minoritised survivors (Nnawulezi and Sullivan, 2014), my findings regarding the effects of racialisation on the effectiveness of shelter security strategies present a new perspective on the impact of racialised perceptions and practices on the safety of shelter work subjects, workers and victims, particularly racially minoritised ones.

To the best of my knowledge, my doctoral dissertation is the first autoethnographic action research study conducted in a Finnish domestic violence shelter. Autoethnographic research on the shelter work field constitutes an important contribution to the scarce research on everyday shelter work. My dissertation presents a novel methodological approach to generate knowledge that can benefit agents doing grassroots shelter work, thus addressing the research–practice gap whereby, according to Murray et al. (2010), the current vast research on domestic violence does not necessarily benefit practitioners.

Autoethnography proved to be efficient in researching everyday shelter work because it allowed me to access what otherwise often remains hidden or inaccessible to a distanced observer: the personal insider experience of the shelter worker, the experience of inevitable pressures in the field and the overwhelming urgencies and demands that impose themselves on workers and victims. However, my autoethnographic storytelling did not approach emotions and vulnerabilities through a practice of confession or the opposition to epistemology in favour of a cognitive, intellectual understanding. By rigorously applying the procedure of scientific qualitative research, the storytelling of everyday shelter work became autoethnography via theorising (Ettore, 2017, 8). Consequently, the autoethnographic approach was used to problematise and conceptualise the everyday work of a domestic violence shelter, revealing the relational, contextual and cultural aspects of the personal, which thus becomes political and social.

The possible shortcoming of my autoethnographic methodology in researching racialisation in shelter work was my proximity to and familiarity with the field. According to Bourdieu (1999), such closeness to a field can cause the "illusion that we've already seen and heard it all" (ibid., 614). As a researcher-practitioner, I may have been caught up in an "immediate half-understanding" of the field, which may have discouraged "the effort needed to break through the screen of cliches behind which each of us lives" (ibid.). In shelter work, encountering (kohtaaminen in Finnish) and culture are two such clichés. However, my problematisation of these familiar, self-evident notions in the field by my use of research procedures and theoretical concepts enabled me to gain critical insights into racialisation in shelter work.

The methodological novelty of my research was that I combined the methods of feminist intersectional autoethnography with action research to gain conceptualised insights into the shelter work field, in which I worked full time. The combination of these two approaches resulted in my imposition of feminist intersectional reflection on my colleagues during the second research workshop (Chapter 3). I named this methodological approach intersectional intervention (Attachment 1), which I believe to be an innovative method in autoethnographic critical action research of domestic violence shelter work. Moreover, the intersectional intervention proved to have productive effects: it resulted in the deconstruction of some of the shelter workers'

habitual perceptions of racially minoritised victims. Thus, this intervention constitutes a possible mechanism worth developing and integrating into everyday shelter work to improve the intersectional sensitivity of shelter workers and their reflexive understanding of racialised shelter subject positions.

The possible shortcomings of my research were related to the process of discovery and learning while researching: as a researcher and shelter worker, I was not immune to the culturalisation of racially minoritised victims, which affected my initial research design. At first, I constructed the research problem as an issue of culturally sensitive shelter work, focusing on the immigrant subject position in shelter work. However, the feminist intersectional autoethnographic approach and my own specific position in the field – that is, at the intersection of the immigrant, researcher and shelter worker positions – helped me overcome the essentialist subject construction of immigrant victims and shift my focus onto the relationally constructed worker–victim subject positions. This shift in research focus enabled me to problematise the invisibility of race and gender and the overwhelming use of culture to make sense of shelter work with racially minoritised victims, such as Finnish Roma and immigrants.

Autoethnographic action research conducted in a single Finnish shelter could be perceived as interesting but unreliable according to the argument that such research is not objective enough or that it only presents the researcher's subjective perceptions and experiences. Nevertheless, the aforementioned reflexive shift of my research design suggests an application of rigorous, systematic and conceptual reflection, integrated into my analysis throughout the research. Such reflection is crucial for all scientific research, as Bourdieu (1999, 607–626) suggested: all scientific research is affected by subjective selection, which involves distinguishing between the important and the unimportant, the crucial and the irrelevant, based on one's theoretical and methodological approach. Despite one aiming at scientific objectivity, the impact of unconscious selection in research cannot be completely eliminated. Therefore, the key difference is between research that addresses this effect and that which does not (ibid.).

Similar to other qualitative research, I took the (always already constructed) autoethnographic and action research data not as immediately truthful claims but

rather as material for the conceptual analysis. This means that my autoethnographic intersectional approach to researching the shelter field is situated on a relatively similar footing with the more traditional research approaches. However, the feminist autoethnographic approach facilitated the generation of new knowledge on shelter subject positions and the racialised experiences of trauma and violence marginalised based on gender and race.

Ethical concerns in data collection affected my decisions regarding my research focus and thus the construction of the research problem. Having to exclude minors and other victims in extremely vulnerable positions to avoid harm and ensure informed consent affected my research design, focus and outcomes. Minors and other victims with considerably reduced power to make decisions concerning their own lives were excluded from my research design due to ethical concerns, such as the capability to provide informed consent. Nevertheless, my research findings suggest possible ways of improving domestic violence shelter work, particularly with victims in vulnerable positions, such as racially minoritised survivors.

8.5 Improving shelter work with racially minoritised survivors

The findings of my doctoral dissertation, which provide new perspectives on racialisation in domestic violence shelter work, have practical implications for the development of intersectionally sensitive domestic violence shelter work in Finland. First, the findings suggest that there is space for improving shelter work with racially minoritised survivors by raising awareness of the intersectional dynamics of race and gender and their effects in shelter work. Shelter workers who are aware of these dynamics and effects would be better equipped to recognise, reflect on and control the effects of racialisation in their work. However, in addition to changes at the individual level, changes at the institutional level are also necessary.

The problem of the production and reproduction of racialised inequalities in domestic violence shelter work cannot be fully addressed without improving shelter working conditions, which have a profound effect on shelter workers' agency and, consequently, on their work with victims. As the reproduction of harmful racial hierarchies occurs through habitual responses, it is crucial to provide working conditions that would enable professional reflection informed by intersectional insight. Sufficient staffing and the provision of essential services, as well as guided intersectional interventions in which race and gender are critically addressed, would contribute to the development of non-oppressive perceptions and practices in shelter work.

Moreover, my study suggests the importance of addressing domestic violence and abuse as gender-based violence and defining shelter work as work in the context of gender equality, anti-discrimination and antiracism. In addition, knowledge exchange between practitioners in domestic violence shelter work and feminist intersectional scholars would constitute a fruitful collaborative production of new perspectives on the deconstruction of harmful racialised perceptions and practices in domestic violence shelter work.

I conclude my dissertation with the argument that the improvement of domestic violence shelter work with racially minoritised survivors requires interventions at the following three levels: institutionalised structures, embodied habitualities and practices. All three levels must be approached as processes rather than achieved states. Intersectionally sensitive domestic violence shelter work can be developed and implemented by introducing innovative mechanisms, such as guided intersectional interventions in processual and collaborative knowledge development integrated into everyday shelter work. Such mechanisms can enable changes in racialised embodied habitualities and practices. In addition, structural changes to shelter working conditions can improve access to safety and empowerment for survivors of domestic violence and abuse, consequently saving lives. The task ahead is as challenging as it is necessary and urgent.

9 ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Intersectional intervention

I asked the shelter workers to reflect on power and hierarchies and their effects on the counselling *relationship* (the categorised subject position occupied by a victim and the categorised subject position occupied by a worker, as well as the relationship between them) according to selected categories on the left side of the table below. I invited the workers to reflect on three different counselling relationships.

Category	**Client 1 and me**	**Client 2 and me**	**Client 3 and me**
Gender			
Religion			
Ethnicity			
Race			
Class			
Disability			
Sexuality			
Citizenship			
Language			
Skin colour			
Age			

Attachment 2 – Consent Form for Adult Victims

Notice of consent for a study on multicultural violence work in shelter

Tampere Shelter participates in the scientific research on cultural competence in violence work in shelters. The research is done by the shelter's counsellor Natasa Mojskerc. Natasa is studying what are the conceptual foundations and the elements of culturally competent violence work in shelter.

Natasa will collect the data by participative observation (observing violence work in shelter, its methods, case constructions and meetings), autoethnography (constructing a narrative of violence work where researcher's point of view is related to client's and worker's point of view) and action research (evaluation and development of cultural competence in violence work in shelter).

Your anonymity and privacy will be strictly protected and confidential and no individual client will be able to recognise. Data will be collected for purposes of this research only, and it will be destroyed after the research. No data will be stored for secondary research. Children will not be subjected to data collection in any way. Data protection sheet has been made in accordance with EU data protection regulation. You can ask any worker at any time to show you this document.

Participation in the study is voluntary and you have the right not to participate. Refusal to participate has no effects whatsoever on the services provided for you in the shelter.

You can give the permission for participating in the study by signing the consent below. You can withdraw the consent at any stage without giving a reason, by informing anyone of the shelter's personnel.

You can ask the researcher herself or any of the counsellors in the shelter for more information about the research (research questions, methodology and theoretical framework) and the Data protection sheet at any time. You can find the printed version of the research plan, that includes also Data protection sheet, from the shelter's brochure stand in the hall.

Tampere, date:_____
I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's signature _____ Name in print: _____

Attachment 3 – Consent Form for Shelter Workers

Information on the research

Tampere Shelter participates in the following research: "Modalities and Mechanisms of Culturally Competent Violence Work in Shelters". The research is done by shelter's counsellor Natasa Mojskerc, and it is a PhD project in the field of Gender Studies at Tampere University. The mentors of the research are Johanna Kantola and Päivi Honkatukia.

The aim of the research is first, to explore the conceptualisations of violence work particularities in the case of clients with immigrant background, the productiveness of intersectional approach and conceptualisations of Freire´s encountering for transformation as central to violence work, and secondly, to evaluate the existing mechanism and practices of multicultural violence work in shelters in Finland.

The research will aim to present ideas for possible upgrading of the existing mechanisms and practices, that would be beneficial both for the clients as well as for the counsellors participating in violence work.

Natasa will collect the data by participative observation, autoethnography and action research of violence work in shelter from October 2018 to June 2019. No directly identifiable data will be collected (such as names, addresses, photos). Indirectly identifiable data (such as age, gender, education, mother tongue, nationality, ethnicity) will all be categorised into groups so that no individual client nor the worker will be recognisable. Data will be collected for purposes of this research only. Data collection process will produce three types of data: 1) field notes in researcher's reflective diary, 2) researcher's own voice tape recordings, and 3) memos from the development days of the working team. The anonymity and privacy or clients as well as workers will be strictly protected and confidential and will not influence on any decisions whatsoever.

I will protect the collected data regularly and without delay: at the end of each working shift the collected data will be transferred to researcher's personal desktop at Shelter's computer, where from it will be transferred to Tampere University Cloud by means of protected link. After that the data will be deleted them from researcher's

desktop. The data in the University of Tampere Cloud will include some indirect identifiers that will be crucial from the point of the research questions. When using the data in the analysis, the indirect identifiers will be either categorised and masked and used so, that in combination with other data, it will be impossible to recognise the person. The computers in Shelter's office are regularly serviced (provided by Tamico Oy) and the personal desktops are protected by personal username and password. In case of not using the desktop for ten minutes, the user is automatically logged off. The data will be used for the purpose of this research only and no data will be stored for secondary research. All the data will be destroyed after the completion of the research (in year 2021).

Special care will be taken to protect the privacy, anonymity and safety of the clients and workers not only during the research, but also when publishing the results. No research participant will be presented in any identifiable way: indirect identifiers will be carefully masked (categorised) or omitted altogether. Since the study is performed in Tampere Shelter, this institution itself will be, of course, identifiable. However, extra effort will be put to mask any identifier, that would make possible to recognise not only the clients but also institution's workers. Since the violence work field in Tampere is small and those who are working in the field know each other, researcher cannot promise that they would not - even when well masked – potentially recognise each other (maybe because of their professional role). I will give special attention to treat the research participants in a respectful manner and the results will be presented analytically, without the labelling attitude. The fluctuation of workers in such a demanding field of work as the shelter work is, has typically been high; not only the clients, but also the personnel of the shelter is very likely to change by the time the research will be published, and this might also be the element of additional anonymisation. In the publication of the research only I as a researcher, will be identifiable.

Participation of the clients and workers in this research is voluntary. Workers can give the permission for participating in the study by signing the consent below. Any worker can withdraw the consent at any stage by informing the researcher. Only the researcher will know whether the worker agreed or disagreed to participate in the study, and this information will not be disclosed to anyone. Workers may freely ask the researcher at any stage to provide more information on the research.

Notice of consent for a study on multicultural violence work in shelter

I have been asked to participate in the above-mentioned scientific study. I have received information about the study and had a chance to ask questions about the study.

I understand that participation in the study is voluntary and that I have the right not to participate and the right to withdraw my consent at any given time without giving a reason. I also understand that all information given will be confidential.

Tampere, date:_____

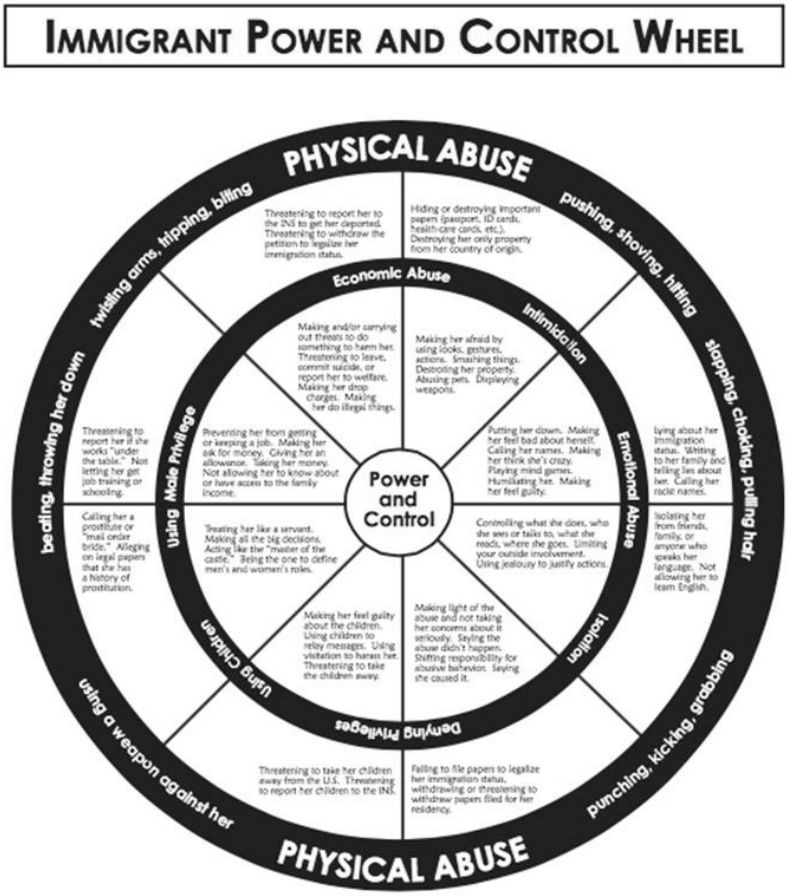
I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's signature _____

Name in print:_____

Attachment 4 – Immigrant Power and Control Wheel

Below is an example of the Immigrant Power and Control Wheel, adapted from the Duluth original wheel by the National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence, Austin, Texas. Accessed on 11.9.2022: http://www.ncdsv.org/images/Immigrant%20P&C%20wheel%20NO%20SHADING%20-%20NCDSV-ICE_updated2009.pdf



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