



SQS-lehden numeron 3/2024 kansikuvan on tehnyt taiteilija Siiri Viljakka.

Cover image of the issue 3/2024 of SQS – *Journal of Queer Studies in Finland* by artist Siiri Viljakka.

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QUEERIT KRIISIT

Koronapandemiasta kansanmurhaan, gentrifikaatiosta pakolaisuudteen

QUEER CRISES

From COVID-19 Pandemic to Genocide, from Gentrification to Exiles

Marjaana Jauhola & Jarmo Harri Jantunen

Ympäristökatastrofit, aseelliset konfliktit sekä terveysriskejä aiheuttavat pandemiat ovat maailmanlaajuisesti moninkertaistuneet viimeisten vuosikymmenten aikana. Tutkimuksessa katastrofeja ja kriisien vaikutuksia tarkastellaan sosiaalisten, poliittisten ja taloudellisten eriarvoisuuksien kautta: niiden tiedetään vaikuttavan väestöön eri tavoin riippuen esimerkiksi iästä, sosiaaliluokasta, sukupuolesta ja seksuaalisuuden ilmaisusta ja niitä koskevista normeista. Tiedämme, että ympäristökatastrofit ja ilmastonmuutos koskettavat erityisesti globaalin etelän marginalisoituja ihmisiä (Sultana 2024). Globaali verkottuneisuus sekä ihmisten ja maailmantalouden keskinäisriippuvuus puolestaan tarkoittavat, että tulevaisuudessa kriisit koskettavat yhä useammin myös globaalin pohjoisen väestöä, kuten COVID-19-pandemia ja Venäjän hyökkäyssota Ukrainaan ovat jo osoittaneet.

Katastrofien ja kriisien kietoutumista yhteen – erityisesti poliittisen väkivallan, konfliktien ja katastrofien yhteydessä – on kutsuttu humanitaarissa avussa monimutkaisiksi hätätilanteiksi (*complex emergencies*), mutta

ilmastokriisin yhteydessä käsitteeksi on alkanut muotoutua monikriisi (*polycrisis*), joka “ei tarkoita vain erilaisten ongelmien luettelointia vaan tilannetta, jossa useat kriisit osuvat samaan hetkeen ja kytkeytyvät yhteen vahvistaen toisiaan” (Lähde 2023). Kriisit kasautuvat ja limittyvät toisiinsa ja koskettavat sosio-ekologisia ja taloudellisia järjestelmiä yhtäaikaisesti ja monipaikkaisesti. Braithwaite ja D’Costa (2018) ovat kuvanneet tätä ilmiötä kaskadiksi (*cascade*), kriisien ja katastrofien ryöpsähdykseksi.

Tämä SQS-lehden teemanumero *Queerit kriisit / Queer crises* herättelee queer-tutkijoita pohtimaan erilaisten katastrofien ja kriisien vaikutuksia sateenkaari-ihmisten elämäntilanteisiin. Samalla se tavoittelee queer-tutkimuksen kontribuution näkyväksi tekemistä katastrofien ja kriisien tutkimuksen kentällä.

The impacts of disasters and crises reinforce hetero- and cis-normative structures in society and further marginalize minorities. In various disasters and crises, such as the recent experience with the COVID-19 pandemic,

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binary gender and family models are emphasized, and the specific needs of non-cis-heterosexuals are often overlooked. The middle-class nuclear family becomes the norm, and other forms of relationships become difficult to maintain during crises. Numerous studies (e.g. Groman-Murray et al. 2014; McSherry et al. 2015; Gaillard et al. 2017; Goldsmith et al. 2022) show that in crisis situations, attempts are made to control queer people, and their human rights are not respected. In extreme cases, this can even lead to arbitrariness and violence. Additionally, internal discrimination within marginalized groups can occur during crises when different members of the queer community do not understand each other's needs (e.g. Gorman-Murray et al. 2018). On the other hand, although crises often increase discrimination, they can also strengthen the resilience of minority communities as these communities utilize their previous experiences and networks to survive (e.g. Brown & Westaway 2011; Gorman-Murray et al. 2017). However, the interpretation of resilience can be problematic if it is simplified or if the political and social needs of marginalized groups are ignored.

Käsitteenmäärittelyä ja terminologian vakiinnuttamista

Tämän teemanumeron yhtenä tavoitteena on vakiinnuttaa katastrofi- ja kriisitutkimuksen avainkäsitteistöä ja pohtia termien kääntämisen haasteita. Tämä on tarpeen, sillä suomeksi kirjoitettua tutkimusta on alalta vielä niukalti, eivätkä termit ole siten vakiintuneet. Erityisesti Yhdysvalloissa ja Isossa-Britanniassa yhteiskunnallisesta katastrofitutkimuksesta on muodostunut oma monitieteinen tieteenalansa (*disaster studies*) tai oma tieteenalan sisäinen suuntautumisensa (esim. *disaster sociology*, *disaster critical geography*, *disaster anthropology*) ja tutkimusta tehdään alan tutkimusinstituuteissa (esim. University College Londonin Riskien ja katastrofien vähentämisen laitos ja sen alla toimiva Sukupuoli ja katastrofit-keskus). Yhteiskuntatieteissä katastrofitutkimus vakiintui omaksi alakseen

1950–1960-luvuilla, kun katastrofit alettiin ymmärtää yhteiskunnallisina ilmiöinä (Meriläinen ym. 2020, 92) teknisen ja luonnontieteellisen painotuksen sijaan.

Suomalaisissa yliopistoissa ja suomalaisten toimesta muualla maailmalla tehty katastrofitutkimus hakee edelleen paikkaansa suomalaisessa yhteiskuntatieteellisessä tutkimuksessa (Meriläinen ym. 2020, 92). Tutkimusta tehdään yhä edelleen yksittäisten tutkijoiden ja tutkimushankkeiden turvin eri tieteenaloilla kansainvälisestä politiikasta rauhan- ja konfliktitutkimukseen, sosiaalityöstä sukupuolentutkimukseen ja viestintä- ja kielentutkimukseen – kuten teemanumeromme toimittajien ja kirjoittajien taustatkin paljastavat. Pääosin tutkimusta tehdään ja siitä raportoidaan englanniksi, joten alan suomenkielinen käsitteistö on vasta muotoutumassa ja vakiintumassa.

Anglosaksinen yhteiskunnallinen katastrofitutkimus puhuu jo vuosikymmenien rutiinilla katastrofivaaroista (*hazard*), riskeistä (*risk*) ja katastrofeista (*disaster*) tai tuhoisista katastrofeista (*catastrophe*). Kahdella jälkimmäisellä tarkoitetaan tuhoisien ilmiöiden inhimillisiä vaikutuksia (Meriläinen 2020, 180; Meriläinen ym. 2020, 94; ks. myös Mikkonen ym. 2023), ja ne sisältävät moninaiset luonnonilmiöt ja niiden katastrofaaliset inhimilliset vaikutukset sodista nälänhätään, tulvista maanjäristyksiin ja pandemioihin. Tätä silmällä pitäen teemanumeromme kirjoittajakutsussa pyysimme kirjoituksia erimuotoisista katastrofeista johtuvista kriiseistä (*crisis*). Painottaakseen katastrofien yhteiskunnallista luonnetta anglosaksinen tutkijakunta on myös panostanut arkikielessä ja mediassa runsaasti käytetyn käsitteen *luonnonkatastrofi* kritiikkiin – esimerkiksi #NoNaturalDisasters-kampanjalla¹. Tähän kampanjaan on lähtenyt mukaan myös YK:n katastrofiriskien vähentämisen toimisto², joka toteaa:

1 <https://www.nonnaturaldisasters.com/>

2 <https://www.undrr.org/our-impact/campaigns/no-natural-disasters>

A natural hazard, such as a hurricane, earthquake, or flood, only becomes a disaster when it impacts a community that is not adequately protected, and whose population is vulnerable as a result of poverty, exclusion or socially-disadvantage.

There are also disasters that result from natural hazards, like wildfires or desertification, that have a devastating effect on natural resources, laying waste to ecosystems and wildlife habitats. Some of these originate from man-made hazards, like chemical spills or nuclear leaks. This destruction can have serious effects on the communities that co-exist and rely on these resources, causing economic and cultural losses, and ruining lives and livelihoods. Still, those aren't natural disasters.

Näin on myös COVID-19-pandemian osalta. Kuten Eija Meriläinen (2020) lektiiossaan toteaa, voidaan pandemian – epävirallisesti *korona-pandemian* – aiheuttamaa SARS-CoV-2-virusta pitää *vaarana (risk)*. Vaara on siis potentiaalinen häiriötilan aiheuttaja, ja sen ihmisten elämään ja yhteiskuntaan kohdistuneista toteutuneista vaikutuksista voidaan käyttää termiä *katastrofi (disaster)*, joilla viitataan tuhoisan ilmiön inhimillisiin vaikutuksiin – termiä käytetään mm. Jarmo Harri Jantusen ja Taina Järvenpään COVID-19-pandemiaa käsittelevässä artikkelissa tässä julkaisussa. Tällaiset ihmisten kohtaamat vaikutukset ovat Meriläisen (2020, 180) mukaan pitkälti sosiaalisten rakenteiden ja pitkän aikavälin tuotoksia luonnonvoimien välittömän vaikutuksen sijaan. Jauhola ja Meriläinen (2021) ovatkin väittäneet, että määriteltäessä jokin tapahtuma luonnonkatastrofiksi *luonto*-määriteosan avulla termi vie huomion pois kriisien juurisyistä eli katastrofien epätasa-arvoistavista vaikutuksista ja eriarvoistumisesta.

Mikkonen ja muut (2023, 410) painottavatkin, että kriisien ja katastrofien määrittely on kontekstisidonnaista ja kertoo usein enemmän niiden määrittelijästä kuin varsinaisesta ilmiöstä ja sen vaikutuksista. Esimerkkinä he

käyttävät Eurooppa-keskeistä tapaa kuvata siirtolaisten siirtymistä EU:n alueelle ”pakolaiskriisinä”, jota populistiset poliittiset toimijat lisämäärittelevät hallitsemattomaksi vyöryksi. Katastrofien vaikutusten tutkimus vaatiikin kriittistä silmää määrittelyjen poliittisuudelle ja sille, kuka tai mikä kuvataan kriisin ja katastrofin synnyttäjänä, kenet huomioidaan sen vaikutusten alaisena ja kenen tarpeisiin vastataan katastrofien kohdatessa.

Queer disaster studies in Finland

This current bilingual special issue of the SQS journal *Queerit kriisit – Queer Crises* can be seen as a continuation of both the 2017 Gender, Place & Culture special issue *Sexual and gender minorities in disasters* and the contributions of individual researchers to queer disaster research. The 2017 special issue located queer disaster research specifically in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami (2004) and Hurricane Katrina (2005). What the diverse research of the first two decades has in common is that they were born out of the concern that disaster reduction and recovery (DRR) programs can at worst repeat and worsen discrimination experiences before the disasters for queers.

Finnish research prior to this special issue has focused on challenging the heteronormativity of disaster and post-conflict reconstruction promoting gender equality after the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami, and on forms of queer solidarity in civil society in Indonesia (Jauhola 2010; 2012; 2013) and on the entanglement of populist Islamist sexual politics in the everyday life of queer people in the Aceh peace process in Indonesia (Jauhola 2020). Research has also centered on sexual harassment and intimate partner violence in armed conflicts from the perspective of queer people (Bian et al. 2024; Myrntinen & Schultz 2022; Schultz et al. 2023; Mertens & Myrntinen 2019), on the consideration of SOGI issues in

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peacebuilding (Daigle & Myrntinen 2018) and homosexuality in Finnish wars (Mustola 2006). In 2024, two doctoral theses have been accepted that deal with the experiences of queers as asylum seekers in Finland (Ali 2024; Söderström 2024), the lecture of one of which will be published in this issue. Due to the pandemic, there has also been a COVID-19 study on the Finnish queer population (Lehtonen 2021; 2022).

Silmäys teksteihin / A glance on the contributions

Julkaisun aloittava Izat el-Amoorin artikkeli käsittelee Israelin ja sen sotilaallisten liittolaisten Gazaan 7. lokakuuta 2023 jälkeen kohdistamia sotatoimia ja kansanmurhan rinnalla käytettyä pinkkipesukampanjaa. El-Amoor analysoi Israelin kampanjan rinnalla queer-palestiinalaisten reaktioita vastapinkkipesuna eli pinkkihavainnointina, kansainvälistä kansanmurhaa vastustavan kansalaisliikkeen osana. Artikkelin media-analyysi paneutuu Israelin pinkkipesuun ja pro-palestiinalaiseen vastapinkkipesuun (pinkkihavainnointiin) – järjestäytymiseen, joka syntyi rajat ylittävästä kansanmurhaa vastustavasta liikkeestä. Analysoituaan näitä kahta yhtäikää el-Amoor ehdottaa artikkelissaan, että kansainvälisen oikeuden ja kansanmurhatutkimuksen tulisi huomioida palestiinalaisen queer-vapautuksen ja yhteisöllisen palestiinalaisen dekolonisaation irrottamaton yhteys, sekä sisällyttää analyysiinsä queer-näkökulma dokumentoidakseen, analysoidakseen ja selittääkseen epäonnistuminen estää Israelin kansanmurha – ja suojellakseen palestiinalaisia.

In their article, Jarmo Harri Jantunen and Taina Järvenpää focus on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the lives of queer people. The study investigates how individuals' relationship status has influenced their experience of the pandemic. In the analysis based on questionnaire data, respondents are divided into those who are single and those living in a relationship. The study shows that being in a relationship generally helped

people to cope with the pandemic, while the quality of life for singles was significantly reduced due to increased loneliness and resulting emotional distress. The article also highlights the particular problems faced by people in multi-partner relationships and transgender people. Since research shows that mental well-being deteriorates as couple normativity and singlism increase during a pandemic, Jantunen and Järvenpää argue that resilience-building experiences should be increased even before disasters strike. Similarly, further attention should be paid to heteronormative and singlism-producing structures and their dismantling.

Ukrainalaisen Mark Maletskan ja suomalaisen Susi Nousiaisen kirjoittamassa esseessä käsitellään ukrainalaisten transsukupuolisten pakolaisten tilannetta Suomessa. Esseen kirjoittajat tarkastelevat tekijöitä, jotka vaikuttavat sateenkaari-ihmisten päätöksiin muuttaa Suomeen, sekä heidän elämänsä järjestämiseen liittyviä käytännön kysymyksiä. Ensimmäisessä luvussa keskitytään siihen, millä perusteilla ukrainalaiset sateenkaarihenkilöt valitsevat kohdemaansa ja miksi tietyt maat valitaan useammin. Toisessa luvussa Mark kertoo kokemuksistaan Suomeen muuttaneena ukrainalaisena. Kolmannessa luvussa Susi puolestaan tarkastelee Suomea ja pakolaisuutta kohdemaalaisen näkökulmasta ja nostaa esiin ongelmia, joihin hän on kiinnittänyt huomiota Markin Suomeen saapumisen yhteydessä. Kirjoittajat ovat havainneet, että oikean tiedon saanti ja kulttuuristen normien ymmärtäminen on ratkaisevaa sekä ennen Suomeen saapumista että sen jälkeen. Heidän mukaansa intersektionaalisuus on myös olennaisen tärkeä lähestymistapa valmisteltaessa materiaaleja ja palveluita Suomeen saapuville pakolaisille, sillä nykyisessä tiedottamisessa ei yleensä oteta huomioon pakolaisuuden ja vähemmistöön kuulumisen risteyskohdita. Kotoutumisen ja osallisuuden parantamiseksi onkin tärkeää tarjota pakolaisille helposti saatavilla olevaa tietoa ja myös turvallisia tiloja käsitellä sateenkaarielämään liittyviä aiheita.

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IV

Introduction

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Sateenkaarevat henkilöt voivat olla sekä gentrifikaation uhreja että sen synnyttäjiä, kun liike-elämä pyrkii tuotteistamaan queeryyttä. Jonna Tolosen visuaalisessa esseessä tarkastellaan, mitä kaupunkitilat voivat kertoa gentrifikaation etenemisestä ja sen vaikutuksista asukkaiden elämään. Esse perustuu Madridissa Lavapiésin kaupunginosassa vuosina 2017–2024 tehtyyn kenttätööhön. Alue tunnetaan queer-yhteisöstään ja voimistuneesta gentrifikaatiosta; viime vuosikymmenten aikana Madridin asukkaat ovat joutuneet kohtaamaan asumis- ja palvelukustannusten nousun ja muutoksen naapuruston sosiaalisissa rakenteissa juuri gentrifikaation vuoksi. Esseessä tarkastellaan kaupunkitilan erilaisia viestinnän keinoja, kuten tarroja, seinämaalauksia, seinäkirjoituksia sekä myös kadulle jätettyjä roskia. Näiden elementtien avulla Tolonen pääsee kiinni asukkaiden gentrifikaatiokokemuksiin. Hän tarjoaa esseessään kriittisen näkökulman gentrifikaation aiheuttamiin materiaalsiin ja symbolisiin muutoksiin ja pohtii, miten sateenkaarevuus liittyy tähän prosessiin.

Kesällä 2024 Suomi jättäytyi pois Ukrainan jälleenrakennusta tukevasta kansainvälisestä tasa-arvoliittoumasta. Päätöksen taustalla oli kehitys- ja ulkomaankauppaministeri Tavion tekemä päätös. Marjaana Jauhola tekee puheenvuorossaan queer-feministisen analyysin tästä päätöksestä ja ulko- ja turvallisuuspoliittisen johdon kriisiytymisestä sen jälkeen. Analyysissään Jauhola kytkee päätöksen ja siitä käydyn kiivaan poliittisen keskustelun hallituksen populistiseen leikkauspolitiikkaan. Jauhola osoittaa ulkopolitiikan konsensukseen pyrkivän arvopohjaisen realismin dogmin olevan erityisen käyttökelpoinen populistiselle politiikalle: pinkki- ja valkopesulle, islamofobialle ja rasismille sekä kritiikittömyydelle Ukrainan talousuudistusten tasa-arvo- ja yhdenvertaisuutta heikentäville vaikutuksille.

Teemanumerossa julkaistava Ali Alin väitöskirjaan perustuva lektio käsittelee ei-heteronormatiivisten maanpaossa olevien henkilöiden matkaa, rajoja ja normeja sekä kuulumisen ja politiikan normeja. Ali pyrkii ymmärtämään

etnografisen tutkimuksen keinoin, miten sateenkaari-ihmisten käsitys kodista ja kuulumisesta muuttuu maanpaon aikana. Tarkastelemalla yhtäältä väliaikaisia queer-yhteisöjä ja toisaalta kohtaamisia viranomaisten ja lain kanssa muodostuu kuva henkilökohtaisen, ruumiillisuuden ja affektien politisoitumisesta – arjesta, josta kumpuaa voimaannuttavan politiikan mahdollisuus. Julkaisussa ilmestyvä Siiri Valjakan sarjakuva on syntynyt Alin ja Valjakan dialogina, ja se liittyy Alin väitöskirjan tematiikkaan.

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QUEERING GENOCIDE: Israel's Pinkwashing Campaign and the Ineptness of International Law in Gaza

Izat el-Amoor

ABSTRACT

Immediately after the Hamas attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, as the escalation grew into a war, then the war into a genocide, Israel and its Zionist allies invoked queer Palestinians to vindicate the genocide in Gaza using a largescale pinkwashing campaign. Being an Israeli colonial practice that queer Palestinians have constantly reframed in service of the wider Palestinian struggle against occupation and apartheid, pinkwashing pre- and post-October 7 has been largely akin. Considering the severity of the Zionist colonial violence since October 7, however, the queer Palestinian response to Israeli pinkwashing reemerged with the added merit of challenging the failures of genocide discourse in both international law and academia.

This article presents a media analysis of (1) Israel's actions to pinkwash genocide; (2) the pro-Palestine anti-pinkwashing (pinkwatching) organizing that emerged from the anti-genocide transnational movement, and finally; (3) I contextualize the two to argue that, besides the irremovable link between Palestinian queer liberation and collective Palestinian decolonization, it is beneficial for international law and genocide studies to integrate queer perspectives/analyses in documenting, analyzing, and explaining the failures to prevent Israel's genocide and protect the Palestinians.

Keywords: pinkwashing, genocide, Gaza, Palestine, internation law, ICJ, Israel.

In 1948, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, which defined genocide as any of five acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group (Kreb 2007; Kabatsi 2005; Ambos 2009). The acts are killing members of the protected group, causing them serious bodily or mental harm, imposing living conditions intended to destroy the group, preventing births, and forcibly transferring children out of the protected group. Victims must be targeted because of their real or perceived membership of a protected national, ethnic, racial or religious group (Kabatsi 2005; Kreb 2006). Reflecting this legal and scholarly definition, immediately after Hamas' attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, Israeli genocidal intent and actions far surpassed the occupation and apartheid Palestinians experienced in the past 76 years.

Soon after, genocide and international law scholars recognized the international community's failure to protect Gazans from genocide, the weak humanitarian intervention, the lack of scrutiny over Israel, the

broader inconsistencies in the application of the terminology of genocide, and the selective enforcement of international law due to the political considerations of powerful states undermining its moral objectives (Segal and Luigi 2024; El-Affendi 2024; Moses 2024). They recognized that the insufficient response to this genocide confirms the well-documented history of international law always failing Palestinians as Israel has always violated it with impunity (Buttu 2020; Boyle 2010). As evident in the case of Palestine, in part, that has been possible because international law is not inherently just or neutral but can be wielded for enabling suppression of groups over others (Erakat 2020).

Consequently, citing the growing global awareness of Palestinian suffering following the genocide in Gaza, genocide and international law scholars such as Raz Segal and Daniele Luigi (2024), Abdelwahab El-Affendi (2024), and Jeremy Moses (2024) called for an unprecedented change in how academia and the international community engage with Palestine, advocating for a more critical and inclusive understanding of the historical and ongoing injustices Palestinians face. They also warned that as academic and political frameworks analyze genocide but often fail to intervene or hold powerful actors accountable, these failures undermine the credibility of genocide studies. They stipulated a reassessment of the field's goals and methodologies, arguing that without deeper political engagement and action, genocide studies risk becoming futile and unable to effect real-world change in the face of ongoing atrocities (Segal and Luigi 2024; El-Affendi 2024; Moses 2024).

As the bloodshed continued uninterrupted with no substantial international response to protect or prevent killing 43,000 people¹ in a year—as demonstrated in South Africa's case against Israel at the International

1 Other sources estimated the death toll to be at 186,000 or higher (Khatib, McKee, and Yusuf 2024).

Court of Justice (ICJ), discussed later—Israel and its Zionist allies swiftly employed queer Palestinians to vindicate the genocide in Gaza (AJLabs 2023; Al Jazeera 2023). Being an Israeli colonial practice that queer Palestinians have constantly reframed in service of the wider Palestinian struggle against occupation and apartheid, pinkwashing pre- (Atshan 2020; Schulman 2012; Maikey and Stelder 2015; Kouri-Towe 2015) and post-October 7 has been largely akin. Considering the severity of the Zionist colonial violence since October 7, however, while still centering collective Palestinian liberation, the queer Palestinian response to Israeli pinkwashing reemerged with the added merit of challenging the failures of genocide discourses in both international law and academia.

Queer studies has recently started engaging with genocide studies as the latter grew into a robust category of scholarly inquiry (Rosenberg 2013). Due to the gap in literature on how heteronormative and homonormative logics and violence get employed in genocide discourse (Vernon 2021), Israeli pinkwashing and Palestinian pinkwatching contribute to this new interdisciplinary relationship. Using pinkwashing and pinkwatching to queer genocide studies, I re-center the Palestinian struggle, for queers and non-queers alike, in a process that also enables genocide studies to move from “multidisciplinary to interdisciplinary research to avoid fragmentation” and achieve justice objectives (Rosenberg 2013, 16).

Positioning Israel's framing of queer Palestinians as an idiosyncratic group in genocide studies emphasizes the need to “develop efficacious means of prevention and intervention” (Totten 2011, 212). Israeli pinkwashing narratives have been expended in what scholars synthesize into the “inexorable” stages of genocide, which include classification, symbolization, dehumanization, organization, polarization, identification, extermination, and denial (Stanton 1998). Israel's exploitation of queerness within its genocide against Palestinians illustrates the significance of

queerness in both the study of genocide and the Palestinian liberation processes (Nellans 2020; Vernon 2021).

After presenting an overview of pinkwashing as an ideology and practice prior to October 7, I present a media analysis² of (1) Israel's actions to pinkwash genocide; (2) the pro-Palestine anti-pinkwashing (pinkwatching) organizing that emerged from the anti-genocide transnational movement, and finally; (3) I contextualize the two to argue that, besides the irremovable link between Palestinian queer liberation and collective Palestinian decolonization, it is beneficial for international law and genocide studies to integrate queer perspectives/analyses in documenting, analyzing, and explaining the failures to prevent Israel's genocide and protect the Palestinians.

Why Pinkwash?

To pinkwash, Israel exploits queer rights to project a progressive queer friendly image of itself while concealing its occupation and apartheid of Palestinians. For decades, Israel has been colonizing Palestinians, queer and non-queer alike (Khalidi 2020; Pappé 2006). Yet, via pinkwashing, Israel strategically diverts attention from this colonization to present a façade of progressiveness, perpetuating the orientalist narrative that Palestinians are more deserving of militaristic occupation - and genocide since October 7 - than liberation (Stelder 2018; Said 1978).

Not only are occupation, apartheid, and genocide antithetical to democracy, a status Israel exceptionally claims in the region, but Israel's pinkwashing also contradicts its avowal of being a beacon of queer rights culturally and legislatively. This is evident in the areas of same-sex marriage,

conservative and religious rightwing political leadership, and same-sex surrogate and adoption parenting (Gubbala, Poushter, and Huang 2023; Peleg 2023). Israel also continues to coerce West Bank queers to become informants in its intelligence forces, or it threatens to deport and out them to their families (O'Connor 2013). Israel, additionally, only grants temporary asylum status to a few queer Palestinians under financial and housing constraints until they get permanently relocated into a third country (Schulman 2012; Atshan 2020).

Israel's Pinkwashing frames Palestinians as unworthy of sovereignty and self-determination using Western queer acceptance measures (Stelder 2018; Duggan 2002). Pinkwashing, then, iterates Western anti-Arab and anti-Muslim classic orientalist rhetoric, including the pretext of the war on terror (Said 1978) and the protection of Western values meant for capitalizing on conflicts in Southwest Asia and North Africa (SWANA) and the appropriation of their resources (Khalidi 2020). Israel's allyship with the West, sustained around neo-imperialist and geopolitical economic goals, relies on classic human-rights based discourses aimed at dividing core nations from backwards peripheries in service of the state politics of Israel (Ritchie 2015; Khalidi 2020). Most recently, opinion columnist Thomas L. Friedman's "Understanding the Middle East Through the Animal Kingdom" was published in the New York Times and dangerously presented a racist colonial analogy trying to argue that SWANA will despondently remain conflict ridden with Israel a victim in its midst (2024).

To understand pinkwashing in this context of orientalism, it must be noted that in its early days, the Zionist movement's views on masculinity and homosexuality were part of the definition of the 'new Jew'. (Plapp 2005). Homosexuality was seen as an oriental vice which Zionists had to separate themselves; the diaspora was considered feminine due to its assumed weakness, while the 'new Jew' (i.e. the Zionists in Palestine) had to be its

² All media items referenced in the article appear in the Appendix.

opposite (Ilany 2017). When the Jew ‘contracted’ sodomy, it was a severe symptom of ideological weakness and the “destructive influence” of the Arab environment. Mirroring Israel’s use of militant hypermasculinity and homonormativity in Gaza since October 7, but also in the decades prior to justify the ethnic segregation under a colonial apartheid system, this history unveils how pinkwashing functions under the same orientalist separationism in the present day.

Hence, pinkwatching reemerged to combat Israeli queer-based rationalization of genocide by (1) exposing Israel’s homonormative nationalism (Duggan 2002) showcasing illusory queer rights despite Israeli homophobia and transphobia; (2) refuting claims of intrinsic racialized and Orientalized Palestinian queer experiences; and (3) emphasizing the agency and voice of queer Palestinians as inseparable of the overall Palestinians struggle (Alqaisiya 2018). Against this pinkwatching, as an arbiter to Western political imperial economic interests, Israel must repeatedly pinkwash its actions against Palestinians as they undergo genocide, effectively negating their collective right to life, while erasing the existence of queer Arabs all together (Schotten 2018). In this pattern, pinkwashing becomes a disciplining instrument of Israel’s subjects within its genocidal project, which solidifies through exploitation of queer Palestinians for constructing the abjection of Palestinians collectively as the ‘other’ (Ritchie 2015).

As a genocidal tactic, pinkwashing is an ethnoracist formation tool instrumentalizing discourses and affects of Israeli exceptionalism, which extends beyond Israel’s falsified stellar queer rights record. This exceptionalism – the idea that Israel is unique and should be judged by different standards – has increasingly come under scrutiny, particularly within the field of genocide studies following the shifting discourse around Israel’s treatment of Palestinians since October 7 (Segal and Luigi 2024).

Gaza’s genocide and the growing global awareness of Palestinian suffering have led to a reevaluation of Israel’s actions through the lens of human rights, genocide, and colonialism (El-Affendi 2024). This scrutiny brought back into focus challenges to the use of the Holocaust, which has long been used to frame Israel’s security policies and actions in exceptionalist terms (Finkelstein 2003). As genocide studies is at a turning point, where scholars must move beyond exceptionalism to consider the wider implications of Israel’s policies toward Palestinians in the context of global histories of violence and oppression, pinkwashing persisted since October 7. It is in this turning point that I frame queerness – as manifested in the acts of pinkwashing and pinkwatching - in genocide studies in the service of Palestinian liberation.

Pinkwashing Genocide

Pinkwashing reemerged exuberantly after October 7. On November 13, 2023, two images of Israeli soldier Yoav Atzmoni holding rainbow flags, taken in the northern Gaza area of Al-Atatra, were posted on X by screenwriter Lee Kern and captioned “the first ever pride flag raised in Gaza” (Masarwa 2023). In the first photo, behind the soldier lays an apocalyptic landscape of ravaged urban life destroyed by Israel’s military campaign while he is holding a pride flag with the handwritten words “In the Name of Love” in Arabic, Hebrew, and English. Atzmoni told the Israeli media that he chose these words in response to seeing “Bismillah” – a popular and revered word meaning “in the name of God” on Palestinian houses. In the second photo, he poses in front of a tank holding a rainbow-edged Israeli flag.

According to Atzmoni, the message the first flag’s message was “global solidarity” hoping “to plant the first pride flag in Gaza as a call for peace

and as a message of freedom”. The second flag’s message was that “despite the pain of war – the IDF is the only army in the Middle East that defends democratic values. It is the only army that allows gay people the freedom to be who we are”. With nearly 17 million views in one week, the post was enthusiastically picked up on by multiple official social media accounts, including the state of Israel on X, and some Israeli embassies. Noa Tishby, Israeli actress turned activist-diplomat, reposted the images in a shared post adding, “the hidden Palestinian LGBTQ+ community can be hopeful as soon they will live and love free of Hamas” (Tishby and Jews of NY 2023). Atzmoni told the newspaper *Insider* that his own rights as a gay man would be threatened if Israel does not defeat Hamas; “I won’t let them bring me back into the closet” (Masarwa 2023).

Yet, based in Israel’s illusive militaristic higher moral ground, Atzmoni’s post is repugnantly oblivious. It attempts to resuscitate morality amidst a genocide when there is no freedom for the dead, queer or not, making Israel’s exploitation of the rainbow flag, under a cloak of queer rights, one of the most blatant displays of genocidal justification, even as the undiscerning death project obliterating all life in Gaza cannot possibly liberate anyone. Responding to the flag’s manipulation, some scholars such as Scott Long publicly denounced its entire existence (2023). As someone who came out in the era of Silence = Death of the pink triangle³, he said,

Intuitively I mistrusted an all-purpose emblem that meant everything to everyone. Instinctively I find it ominous to proclaim Love and Inclusion before they actually exist. The horrible spectacle of the smirking soldier planting the flag like a gravestone, half hiding and half prettifying the wasteland of devastation his guns have caused,

3 In 1986, with the increasing crisis of AIDS, activists inverted the Holocaust pink triangle in a design for a wheatpasted poster, which included the iconic phrase “Silence = Death.”

affirming that all the murder was done in the name of love, only confirms to me how unbearable the flag has become... symbols are substitutes for discourse.

Palestinian activists, such as Ghadir Shafie, argued that despite Israel’s manufactured impression that homosexuality is punishable by death in Gaza, all queer Palestinians that have been killed recently were actually slain by Israeli forces (Masarwa 2023). Rejecting the weaponization of Israeli queer rights against Palestinians and arguing that rainbow flags had no place in genocide, activists also highlighted that such images dangerously reinforce homophobia amongst some Palestinians who may see homosexuality as something exclusive only to Israel (Masarwa 2023). Similarly, within the transnational queer solidarity movement, and inspired by the pro-Palestine Jewish non-Israelis who launched the “Not in Our Name” campaign against the genocide (Elassar 2023), many queers adopted the same slogan in response to Atzmoni’s images. Josh Kadish, a U.S. Jewish activist, wrote on X, “As a gay Jew, nothing has ever made me more sad, ashamed, angry, and disgusted all at once” (2023). These activists, Palestinian and others, have repeatedly rejected the cynical use of queer rights to frame the death machine targeting all Palestinians as a liberatory or rights-based concept.

Another Israeli pinkwashing act is the sketch titled “Welcome to Columbia Untisemity” made in Israel’s version of *Saturday Night Live* (*Eretz Nehderet* – ‘A Wonderful Country’ in Hebrew) (Lyons 2023). Playing with antisemitism tropes that Israel often deploys to sustain its righteousness as a state and justify colonizing the Palestinians, the sketch adds the word university to produce “Untisemity” aimed at U.S. college campus protests that have been repeatedly yet falsely accused of antisemitism. With millions of views, lampooning pro-Palestinian students as politically clueless looked upon with contempt, the video stages two conventionally

queer looking students with Palestinian flags. It starts with student Keley, co-host of the fictitious news program saying, "Everyone is welcome right now — LGBTQH." Fellow student and co-host, Wordle, inquires "H?" and Keley responds, " Hamas". The keffiyeh wearing Wordle declared "Yeah, I totally simp Hamas, it's so trending right now," before they both break out into a chant of "from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free" and begin denouncing "Zionist liars" for spreading "toxic" propaganda about the hostages Hamas holds. Wordle then declares, "I major in queer post-colonial astrology."

The two students can then be seen tearing down posters of hostage Israelis, with one declaring "Jews make the world dirty," but quickly noting "I'm not antisemitic, I'm racist fluid." The two proceed to interview a conjured Hamas spokesperson but fail to notice that the spokesperson is leveling homophobic slurs at them. When asked if he is safe, the spokesperson responds, "I am safe. I am under the Gaza hospital," and when asked about his need of humanitarian aid, he responds, "I have everything. I am only hungry for rockets." The spokesperson then tells Wordle that he can come to Gaza anytime, adding, "we will throw you from the roof, you homosexual dirt" to which Wordle responds, "Did you hear? They want to throw me a rooftop party!" again staging the two as oblivious of a deadly queer life being the only one imaginable in Gaza.

The show's executive producer, Muli Segev, said that he wrote the sketch after seeing social media footage of U.S. students tearing down posters of Israeli hostages (Lyons 2023). He made the sketch in English to reach U.S. audience and start a "more nuanced" conversation online because, "it's not this, you know, Israel is evil and Palestinians are victims. It's much more complicated than that" adding "I am not saying Israel hasn't done anything wrong, but the one-sided way (many on U.S. college campuses) perceive this conflict is amazing" (Lyons 2023). The video, however, is

illustrative of the prevalent rhetoric since the genocide began. Israel and its allies deem queer solidarity with Palestinians as contradictory and naïve as they deceptively perceive Israel as the sole upholder of queer rights in the SWANA region.

Furthermore, this sketch exposes the despise Western imperialism has for queerness; a sentiment that has fallen under the surface of Israeli-Zionist propaganda (Mitchell 2024a). Since transnational queerness has historically aimed to destabilize the longstanding heteronormative, Christian, white supremacist, colonial nature of the West, pinkwashing incriminates queers as terrorists for opposing a genocide. To do so, pinkwashing adopts an orientalist imperialist narrative rising from the war on terror discourse, which under a fictional extinction panic, frames anyone seeking to destabilize Western imperialism and Israel's genocidal ethnonationalism a terrorist (Schotten 2022). Rallying the derisive image of dull-witted queer theory and unhinged college progressives, this sketch and other Israeli propaganda is an ideological duplicate of transphobia amongst the U.S. rightwing (Mitchell 2024a). Under a similar fictional extinction panic against the spirit of U.S. ethnonationalism, such a shared lexicon poses transgender lives as a domestic threat to the same racist, Christian, cis-heteronormative imperialist values that get deployed to justify a Western genocide abroad.

In another pinkwashing case, on December 11, 2023, the official X account of the State of Israel run by its foreign ministry, shared an image of two gay men engaging in a marriage proposal (Israel 2023). The post stated that,

Shmuel drove to the border to see his partner Dennis, a combat soldier and company commander. He then got down on one knee and proposed to him [in military uniform, carrying a weapon]. Shmuel proposed with a ring from the "Adir's Diamond" project, in memory of Adir Messika who was murdered at the Nova music

festival after saving seven people. Adir's father decided to honor his son's memory, by sanctifying life, through couples who will build their own families.

This post does more than attempting to erroneously spread that same-sex marriage is legal in Israel. Although Israel traditionally fostered queer rights to trademark itself as the most forbearing state of in SWANA, taking advantage of the region's reservations in this regard during a genocide has been an attempt for Israel to 'humanize' itself against what the world has been perceiving as dehumanization of Gazans. As Israel relies on pretentious acceptance of queer families to legitimize its genocide, in a stark contrast, since October 7 it has wiped out 902 Palestinian families in the Gaza Strip and erased them from the civil registry (Middle East Monitor 2024).

An online cluster of videos and posts has disdainfully compared expressions of solidarity like "queers for Palestine" to "chickens for KFC" (Spaulding 2023). A combined image of an old protest banner saying "Queers for Palestine," decorated with pride and Palestinian flags held by four protesters, and another of a similar photoshopped banner saying "Chicks for Kentucky Fried Chicken" with four chickens behind it became viral on social media. Mockingly emphasizing an alleged contrast between Queers for Palestine versus Queer in Palestine, in another example, queer U.S. activist Peter Kalisch posted a video explaining the danger of pinkwashing and the need for queer people to support the Palestinian cause on social media. In response, the X page *Libs of TikTok* wrote the caption "Queer for Palestine v. Queer in Palestine" and reshared Kalisch's video next to a news story and image of queer 25-year-old Palestinian Ahmad Abu Marhia,⁴ who was killed in Hebron in the West Bank on October 6, 2022,

4 It is unclear how Abu Marhia ended up in the city, but a video of the murder scene in Hebron has spread widely on social media raising speculation about the

after spending two years in Israel waiting on an asylum claim to relocate abroad and receiving death threats within his community (Martin 2024).

Using such a gruesome crime against Kalisch shows the denial of pinkwashers who persist, amidst genocide, on limiting the queer Palestinian lived experience to a strict, deadly framing despite it being unrepresentative of the diversity of queer Palestinian experiences (Atshan 2020; Alqaisiya 2018). Due to the occasional news stories covering anti-queer deadly violence in Palestinian society, which Western media romanticizes, pinkwashers cannot imagine queer Palestinians having "mediocre" experiences with homophobia that are less dramatic, and, often milder or at least comparable with those in the West. The contrasting of 'queers for Palestine' and an assumed queer-friendly Israel in an austere benevolent-malevolent divide also feeds into the notion of a "beleaguerment narrative" where Israel casts itself as the perpetual victim against what it deceitfully claims to be anti-queer "innately threatening, evil, or 'savage'" dogmatic rival deserving of a genocidal campaign (Schotten 2022; Mitchell 2024a).

Eurovision, the European Broadcasting Union's (EBU) annual international song contest that took place in the Swedish city of Malmö on May 7-11, 2024, is another Israeli genocide pinkwashing moment. Eurovision is known as the biggest international pop cultural music event with a vast queer audience. Israel's entry, initially called "October Rain", is a ballad sung by female soloist Eden Golan. When the lyrics of "October Rain" were leaked in February, it looked as if the EBU might ban Israel's participation, after the contest organizers broke Eurovision's rules on political neutrality by scrutinizing the lyrics and finding it to be too political in reference to Hamas' October 7 attack (Fink 2024). The standoff was resolved only when

motive. Israeli media quoted friends of the victim as saying he was kidnapped to the West Bank. His family, however, said he regularly visited Hebron to see them and to work, describing the claims about the motive as rumors.

Israel's president Isaac Herzog intervened to work with Israeli broadcaster KAN on changing the lyrics three times to suit Eurovision's criteria (Shihab-Eldin 2024). Though Eurovision bills itself as a non-political event and can disqualify contestants deemed to have breached that rule, the 150 million people who tune into it annually make Israel take its pinkwashing efforts through the pan-continental event seriously.

Exposing Israel's anxiously needing Eurovision's pinkwashing opportunity, Israeli Culture Minister Miki Zohar said in a post on X that any decision to disqualify Israel's participation would be "scandalous" (AFP 2024a). He denied that the song is political, saying it "gives voice to the feelings of the people and the country nowadays." Settling for altering the lyrics and not banning Israel from participation starkly contrasts the ban of Belarus in 2021 over its government's crackdown on dissent, or that of Russia after its invasion of Ukraine in 2022 (Muir 2024; Shihab-Eldin 2024). The EBU then argued that Russia's participation would bring the competition into disrepute. More so, the EBU banned Palestinian flag and symbols. In protest, Swedish singer Eric Saade, whose father is Palestinian, wore a keffiyeh on his wrist despite the ban and Eurovision said his action was "regrettable" (Muir 2024).

Palestinians, rights groups, and over a thousand musicians in Europe and the host country Sweden have demanded to bar Israel from the contest (Fox 2024). Over 60 queer groups have called for a boycott of Eurovision over Israel's inclusion (Monteil 2024). On May 10th, 2024, an estimate of 12,000 protesters gathered in Malmo before a march through the city close to Eurovision's venue (Jawless 2024). Protesters also organized 'FalastinVision – The Genocide-Free Song Contest' which took place at the same time of the Eurovision finale in the same format to give boycotters an alternative (FalastinVision 2024). While Eurovision is one of the biggest nights of the year for many queer venues across Europe, the 2024 event

saw several high-profile screenings of the finale cancelled in across the UK and Europe in protest of Israel's participation (Addley 2024). When Golan performed her song in the finale, she faced loud boos and attendees screaming "Free Palestine" (Whisnant 2024).

For months, the EBU was under increasing pressure to ban Israel from competing. Yet Israel's participation unveils the EBU's barefaced hypocrisy and double standards around its definition of "political". Including Israel under such circumstances trivializes its well-documented genocidal crimes against Palestinians (Shihab-Eldin 2024). Israel's participation in Eurovision has always been part of its national branding public relations campaign called "Brand Israel", which BDS activists rebranded "Brand Apartheid" in 2017 during a disruptive silent protest at a conference for the campaign at New York University (Mondoweiss 2017). In its culture wars, Israel uses this campaign and Eurovision to deploy culture for state propaganda. That is why Israel's president Herzog said in February, "it is important that Israel appears in Eurovision" because its participation is "a statement" and "a matter of political and explanatory significance and that should be taken into account" (Jerusalem Post Staff 2024). Israel last hosted Eurovision in 2019. Then, too, over a hundred queer groups demanded a boycott that over the killing of over 200 Palestinians during the "Great March of Return" protests in Gaza (PACBI 2019). During the Eurovision 2019 finale, Iceland's Hatari showed Palestinian-flag scarves, and RUV, Iceland's national broadcaster was fined €5,000 as a result (Fontaine 2019).

Israel does not direct its pinkwashing efforts globally only. To sustain its regional exceptionalism domestically, Israel constantly reminds its citizenry that it is a - misleadingly - queer paradise in the SWANA region. In January, the Israeli channel *News13* aired a Hebrew ten-minute prime-time story of Maayan Gross, a transgender reservist who returns to Gaza

“as a woman” after two decades since her active duty, in a feel-good story about the uniqueness of the spirit of Israel’s unified people against their speciously perceived ‘ferocious’ enemy (Shehada 2024). Gross proudly talked in the video about the fact that her fellow soldiers from the Orev Givati anti-tank elite unit designated for the destruction of armored enemy vehicles know her as Maayan, not Natan (her dead name), denoting an alleged inclusion of her transgender-ness.

Talking about her experience upon her return from a month of fighting in Gaza, she said, “even beyond just being a transgender, this is a precedent. A woman militant in a combat unit of men” who is no different than other combatants with motivation to fight. When asked how fighting was, she responds, “just like active duty, it feels like home.” Gross’ task according to the video was to scan tunnel shafts in Gaza and go from home to home in two neighborhoods and identify weaponry. This task switched eventually to taking control over Gaza’s Supreme Court Building. Such local news stories showcase queer and transgender soldiers as normalized contributors in Israel’s domestic homonormative national branding amidst a genocide. They sway the Israeli public opinion and conscience to indisputably support a genocide as though any level of queer inclusion could ever rationalize one.

As of February 6, 2024, in a reverse to a decades-long policy, the Tel Aviv Court for Administrative Affairs ruled that queer Palestinians can request asylum in Israel (Jordan 2024). The ruling came after a 29-year-old Palestinian man from the West Bank appealed his rejection by the Population and Immigration Authority for extended residency in Israel on grounds of his sexual orientation. The approved appeal occurred despite the Population Authority’s view that not all Palestinians are subject to the UN Refugee Convention, which has historically meant Israel is not required to grant asylum to Palestinians. Prauding the ruling, Hen Mazzig, writer

and founder of the Tel Aviv Institute said, “the notion of pinkwashing, which means that anything positive that Israel does towards LGBTQ+ people must be a sinister attempt to divert public opinion, is rooted in antisemitism” (Jordan 2024). On his X account, sharing the news of the ruling, he said that “‘Queers for Palestine’ had nothing to do with it” (Mazzig 2024). He told *The Jewish Chronicle*,

While Israel is not perfect, it’s still a safe country for LGBTQ+ people. It’s not like the Israeli government gave us those rights, we had to fight for them, and while we still can’t get married inside Israel – you can’t have a civil union in Israel – there was legislation passed last year that allows surrogacy for same-sex couples, that allows for adoption, and LGBTQ+ people have been protected by law for decades. The way to achieve full equality is by promoting those sorts of achievements.

Not only do these “achievements” reveal the limits of the Israeli assimilationist queer liberation discourse that has historically completely disregarded Israel’s occupation of Palestinians but defending them also reiterates the tropes equating any critique of Israel to antisemitism, the same discourse Israel and Zionism have historically deployed to colonize Palestinians with impunity. Besides, the verdict has also not been universally welcomed in Israel; interior Minister Moshe Arbel, a member of the Orthodox Shas party, announced that he would file an appeal against the court’s decision.

In the same month, an investigation by Shomrim, an independent investigative journalism and news organization, revealed that Israel Police collects information about the sexual orientation of people they arrest (Dolev 2024). The information is fed into a police database known as “Rimon”. Shomrim has obtained a printout from this system, relating to Israeli author Orna Coussin who was arrested on February 10, 2024, at a

rally calling for the release of Israeli hostages in Gaza. Under the “Detainee characteristics” section of the form, the “abnormal sexuality” category still appeared. In this case, the officer wrote “LGBTQ community.” Coussin wrote on her website that amongst the questions she was asked, one was “Is my sexuality ‘abnormal’” and she asked the officer what is considered abnormal sexuality, and he said, “You know, sex with your own gender.” The police claimed that this information is required to protect detainees from mistreatment and is not stored in the system. Such homophobic and anti-democratic Israeli tactics against its own queer citizens to hide a genocide are not surprising seeing there is a well-documented history of similar practices against queer Palestinians which Israel pinkwashed long before October 7 (O’Connor 2013).

Pinkwatching Genocide

Within transnational efforts calling for ending the genocide in Gaza have been queer and trans people rejecting any attempted framing of queer Palestinians to justify the genocide (Arria 2023; Chapin 2023). In key queer solidarity moments, queer journalists resigned from the New York Times (Monteil 2023a) over the paper’s coverage of Gaza, and queer celebrities like Kehlani, Jonathan Van Ness, Angelina Jolie, Susan Sarandon, Dua Lipa, and Indya Moore publicly took pro-Palestine stances (Factora 2023). Online, the anonymous group *Queers in Palestine* collected nearly 35 thousand followers on Instagram since November 2024 and kept a running list of queer organizations around the world that have signed onto its *No Pride in Genocide* statement in 19 languages (*Queers in Palestine* 2024 A and B. n.d.; Tamarkin 2023). Their message, currently listing than 567 signatories, says:

In the name of revolutionary love, a love which fuels our struggle for liberation and yearning for freedom, rooted in our love for

our communities and our land; we tell you, there is no pride with genocide, and there is no pride in settler-colonialism. Our pride can only come through true liberation for all, for us and for all the peoples fighting worldwide.

On the ground, over 40 queer groups across nine cities around the world came together for the Queer Cinema for Palestine *No Pride in Genocide* event (Queer Cinema for Palestine n.d.). Queer and trans people in London, New York, and Washington, D.C. and other major cities have formed “blocs,” marching together at protests and staging their own direct actions (No Pride in Genocide n.d). Online, the group *Queers for Liberation* gathered 30,000 signatures on a petition asking national queer advocacy organizations to publicly use their influence to demand ending the genocide, and to pressure officials to end U.S. aid to Israel (2023).

On February 14, over a hundred people led by *No Pride in Genocide*, a coalition of queer Muslim and Jewish, Palestinian, and SWANA people protested in Washington, D.C. outside the national headquarters of the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), the largest queer organization in the U.S., calling them to “break their silence” and denounce the use of any rhetoric involving queerness to justify the genocide (Rummler 2024). This demonstration followed a similar protest earlier on February 3 outside the HRC’s annual gala in New York City, which organizers with *No Pride in Genocide* said was not orchestrated by their group (Factora 2024).

Indya Moore, star of the award-winning queer television show *Pose*, joined the New York protest, saying that queer and trans Palestinians deserve a human rights campaign on their behalf. Moore said, “the Human Rights Campaign is mobilizing our community and our allies to support their initiatives because they believe their initiatives are in our best interest. However, these initiatives that are meant to benefit us, are being funded by a weapons manufacturer,” referring to Northrop Grumman,

a major defense contractor, adding “not cute, not queer. You cannot aid liberation by taking someone else’s.” Demonstrators also called for the HRC and for other major queer groups like the Trevor Project, a queer youth crisis organization, and GLAAD, the U.S.’ largest queer media advocacy group to denounce the use of pinkwashing to warrant attacks on Gaza.

Since the first protest for *No Pride in Genocide* on February 14 in Washington, the group organized queer protests in Detroit, Reno, and Los Angeles (No Pride in Genocide n.d.). The group also spread awareness of demonstrations by groups like ACT UP New York, the HIV/AIDS movement that originated in the 1980s (ACT UP n.d.). ACT UP has also demanded that the HRC stop accepting philanthropy from Northrop Grumman. Posing in front of Lincoln Center in NYC, ACT UP activists held a sign that read “Fund Healthcare Not Warfare” (ACT UP n.d.).

Pinkwashing mobilizing was also evident in *Queering the Map*, a community-generated counter mapping platform for digitally archiving queer experiences in relation to physical space, launched in 2017 by Lucas LaRochelle (O’Neal 2023). The platform has been adding submissions by queer Palestinians within its mission of creating a global digital archive of queer memory that allows users to pin stories and memories of their queer and trans experiences (Queering the Map 2024). Without falling for Western visibility politics imposing on queer Palestinians modes of queer resistance—coming out and pride—as universally desirable, (Ritchie 2015), the platform combated pinkwashing’s implying that queer Palestinians must flee to a more liberal society to live truly and safely. As *Queering the Map* shows, queer Palestinians have often constructed their own modes of being in their communities whom they refuse to abandon under a genocide erratically targeting all Palestinians.

As journalists have been under attack and a blockade on civil infrastructure has severely limited the ability of Gazans to get their message out (CPJ 2024), *Queering the Map* became an essential tool for queer Palestinians whose stories could have disappeared beneath the rubble of genocide altogether. The entries are equal parts romantic, wistful, and heartbreaking—the testimony of people trying to find love and beauty in a world that wants to erase them from existence. *Queering the Map* is a digital memory-keeping for queer people as they and their loved ones are killed and the end of their own life feels imminent, granting them a liberatory tool under a genocide when other channels such as international law and Western powers failed to grant them such an ability to resist (O’Neal 2023).

Beyond the shocking horror of seeing their bodies mutilated by Israeli missiles, the memories of queer Palestinians in Gaza on *Queering the Map* become a connective tissue for people who have also had first crushes, been in love, and had to hide it for a myriad of reasons, which in turn humanizes Palestinians against a genocidal narrative that has been dehumanizing all Palestinians. Since its inception, users have contributed more than 500,000 posts in 23 languages to the platform. The submissions queer Palestinians contributed to the platform were printed on signs and brought to protests. In another case, queer UK activists hacked London Transit ads to support queer Gazans using these submissions (Monteil 2023b). Inspired by *The Dyke Project*, an autonomous group of NYC artists also replaced subway ads with designs from *Queering the Map* (Writers Against the War on Gaza 2024).

To pinkwatch Israel’s genocide, Arab queer organizations and people in the SWANA region published a joint statement on October 23, 2023 (Atyaf 2023). This statement emphasized that the collective queer Arab vision for a liberated Palestine is to “relentlessly pursue justice and equality for all”

while recognizing that the true realization of this liberation is “unthinkable unless we actively work to demolish the mechanisms and practices that perpetuate state-supported violence and oppression.” The statement was signed by 40 queer and feminist Arab organizations, 14 non-Arab ally organizations, 100 individuals with public names, and 62 anonymous individuals stating,

True liberation and inclusion for all, especially LGBT individuals in the region will be a distant dream if the shadows of economic devastation, rampant religious extremism, unrestrained military endeavors, and continued support for occupations, illegal settlements and impunity persist.

The political agency reflected in this statement conceives queer Palestinians as part of a transnational community engaging in regional liberatory processes. Rejecting the entire neo-imperialist regional status quo beyond just queerness, such reactions to Israel’s genocide dismantle typical orientalist and Islamophobic representations of queer Palestinian and Arab experiences in media and politics as nonexistent and/or often strictly deemed to violence and death in a region that the West deviously framed as inherently anti-democratic and anti-queer.

Queer Palestinians living in Palestine are not excluded or absent in this movement, even if it may appear otherwise in this section. Since most local queer Palestinian organizing often jointly encompasses Palestinian citizens of Israel and Palestinians in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem), under Israel’s intensified crackdowns on freedom of expression that have targeted primarily its Palestinian citizens (not Jewish Israelis) since October 7, queer Palestinian organizing was forced into more “clandestine channels” (alQaws 2024; Lynfield 2024). Queer Palestinians had to reinvent their organizing strategies to both ensure safety and security to their networks and guarantee that their political work remains sustainable

in providing mutual aid, community care, as well as housing to people affected by the genocide, in and out of Gaza (alQaws 2024). Pinkwashers attempted taking this absence as proof of the nonexistence of queer Palestinians, when in reality, Israel is the primary cause of their repression and silence.

A Liberated Palestine – Queerness, Genocide, and International Law

In the colossal scope of the annihilation of Palestinians since October 7, queerness is not a mere addendum when positioned in the scholarship and legality of genocide. As Palestinians contested Western discourses of international law and genocide for their liberation, queer Palestinians in parallel challenged Western discourses of queerness – pinkwashing – that have been employed as genocidal tools against all Palestinians. Within the larger Palestinian decolonization struggle, a queer analysis reveals additional shortcomings of the current genocide scholarship and legal frameworks that are use useful for Palestinian resistance yet might otherwise remain hidden.

Pinkwashing genocide emerged boisterously from within Israel’s toolbox against an increasing diplomatic and legal global isolating pressure (Gale 2024). This pressure entailed a string of legal and humanitarian actions such as UN Security Council votes for Palestinian statehood and membership (Morrison et al. 2024; Nicholas 2024); UN Human Rights Council resolutions of crimes against humanity; ambassador recalls and severance of diplomatic relations with many countries; states’ recognition of Palestine; state-calls on the International Criminal Court (ICC) to investigate war crimes against civilians; and state-requests for a court opinion on whether Israel’s occupation violates international law (Madry 2024). Pinkwatching aims at strengthening this pressure that Israel

has been diligently countering via pinkwashing, among other schemes. Consequently, pinkwashing and pinkwatching —while contradictory — transpire as instructive of the pretense of Western hypocritical dichotomies as tied to human rights, international law, and preventing/ending genocide insofar Palestinian liberation.

While seemingly unrelated at first, South Africa's case against Israel—brought before the ICJ on December 29, 2023—regarding Israel's conduct in Gaza, and arguably the greatest legal/diplomatic action to isolate Israel, can be positioned in this queer analysis (Al Jazeera 2023). South Africa claimed that Israel has been committing a genocide against Palestinians in Gaza, contravening the Genocide Convention, including 75-year apartheid, 56-year occupation, and 16-year blockade on Gaza pre-October 7 (Al Jazeera 2023; Berg 2024). In Gaza specifically, South Africa has accused Israel of eight “genocidal acts”; killing Palestinians; causing serious bodily and mental harm; mass expulsions and displacement; deprivation of food and water; deprivation of shelter, clothes, hygiene and sanitation; deprivation of medical assistance; destruction of Palestinian life; and imposing measures intended to prevent birth (Berg 2024).

Two days of public hearings were held on January 11 and 12, 2024 at the Peace Palace in The Hague regarding South Africa's request for provisional measures of protection. The Court issued an order regarding this request on January 26, 2024, in which it ordered Israel to take all measures to prevent any acts that could be considered genocidal according to the 1948 Genocide Convention (Simon 1996). The court said that at least some of the acts South Africa claims appear to fall under the provisions of the Genocide Convention. The Court did not order Israel to suspend its military campaign in Gaza, which South Africa had requested. Yet both South African and Israeli officials welcomed the decision, with each considering it a victory.

While ICJ rulings are legally binding, they have no enforcement power, and Israel has not been complying. South Africa's foreign minister Naledi Pandor said that it is impossible for Israel to comply with the ICJ without a ceasefire. On February 26, Human Rights Watch asserted that Israel had failed to comply with the ICJ's provisional measures and “continued to obstruct the provision of basic services and the entry and distribution within Gaza of fuel and lifesaving aid” (HRC 2024). On the same day, Amnesty International said Israel was “defying” the ICJ ruling (Amnesty International 2024). On March 28, 2024, following a second request for additional measures, the ICJ ordered new emergency measures, given the deterioration since the initial ruling; ordering Israel to ensure basic food supplies, without delay, as Gazans face famine and starvation. On May 24, the court ordered an immediate halt to Israel's offensive in Rafah, a position rejected by Israel (Corder 2024).

Because both Israel and south Africa are parties to the Genocide Convention, jurisdiction can be established. South Africa asserts that as a state party to the convention, it has a duty to prevent genocide and is therefore obligated to take all necessary measures to do so. Since genocide encompasses more than just mass killings, the Genocide Convention is designed to prevent it from occurring, not merely to punish it afterward (Totten 2011; Kabatsi 2005). South Africa's petition highlighted these aspects with the aim of fulfilling the convention's purpose. Despite the low likelihood, and the historic pattern of international law failing Palestinians (Buttu 2020; Boyle 2010; Erakat 2020), there was hope that the ICJ not only would rule in favor of South Africa but also effectively halt Israel's genocidal campaign.

Pinkwatching efforts are driven by a similar hope for collective Palestinian liberation, despite the low likelihood that Israel will end its pinkwashing campaign. South Africa's case and pinkwatching efforts align with

Palestinian decolonization in similar ways, making pinkwashing a powerful tool available for Palestinian liberation, despite its marginal size on the international legal/political stage in the grand scheme of the genocide. The fight against pinkwashing mirrors South Africa's case in that, while it may not result in an immediate, definitive victory, it serves as another tool to potentially advance the Palestinian cause. Using different tools, both efforts contribute to the broader campaign aimed at globally isolating Israel and its allies. In this context, pinkwashing aligns with Erakat's (2020) analysis that law can only be part of the solution for Palestine, when combined with political strategies for liberation.

Pinkwashing, much like South Africa's case, highlights the divide between law and morality on the legal/diplomatic international stage. The Western response to both overlooks the moral dimension, which in turn prevents the potential for an accountability-driven, decolonial breakthrough (Ajplus and Aljazeera English 2024). As a legal tactic, the ICJ case is necessary to stop the genocide, but not only has stopping it on a legal ground failed, it has also been insufficient for the mandatory spiritual moral transformation in the Western psychic to ensure that it in fact effectually stops and never happens again. Combating genocide solely through legal means reveals an ineffective measure against which Israeli society's immoral belief—that it has a right to commit a genocide—persists. Guided by this Israeli immoral position, pinkwashers claim a false moral high ground to justify their actions alongside the same fumbling morality in Western international justice systems, which South Africa has been challenging. Understanding that not all focus should be placed on legal tribunals or legal experts, pinkwashing organizers have long recognized the flaws in these frameworks—flaws that the queer approach to the genocide in Gaza has once again revealed (Ritchie 2015; Alqaisiya 2018; Atshan 2020). As a result, they organize outside such structures and deliberately distance themselves from Western queer discourse, recognizing that a queer-

informed Palestinian liberation cannot depend on Western notions of rights or law alone.

Developed in international law, the responsibility to prevent genocide, and protect if it occurs, often ended with “realpolitik, the lack of political will, and economic interests all played a part in the lack of timely and effective action” (Totten 2011, 217). Historically, most reactions to genocide have been “inconsequential. Nothing that will rock or threaten a [genocidal] government or nation's well-being. Nothing punitive” (Totten 2011, 218). Indeed, Israel characterized South Africa's charges as “baseless”, describing the country as “functioning as the legal arm” of Hamas and arguing that it was conducting a war of self-defense in accordance with international law, all statements that remained mostly unchallenged (Berg 2024).

In a vivid example of the realpolitik beyond the complete dismissal of scholarly and legal frameworks of genocide, the U.S., Germany, and France—all countries that are complicit in past genocides—backed Israel at the ICJ. France said that accusing Israel of genocide “is to cross a moral threshold” (AFP 2024b). Germany agreed to defend Israel at the ICJ for what it presents as obvious reasons being the Nazi Holocaust against European Jews (Talmon 2024; Murphy 2024). The U.S. has called the ICJ case a distraction from “peace and security” (Mitchell 2024b). Exceeding the realpolitik and lack of political preventative will, South Africa's case poses failure to prevent a genocide in Palestine as a goal actively pursued in service of Western interests⁵ (Moses 2024). Consequently, the West's

5 Some signs include the May 6th threatening letter by 12 U.S. republican senators, led by Sen. Tom Cotton, to the ICC chief prosecutor Karim A.A. Khan with sanctions and banning ICC “employees and associates” from entering the U.S. over possible warrants against Israel, saying explicitly, “target Israel and we will target you” (Hasan 2024). South Africa's Pandor received the same letter. On May 20th, Khan applied for arrest warrants for Hamas chief Yahya Sinwar and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (Atlantic Council Experts 2024).

dismissal of its own self-made ‘justice’ institutions, such as international law and the U.N., frames it as a partner⁶ and facilitator of the genocidal campaign, not only complicit in it. The justifications these countries use to actively sustain the genocide closely mirror the narratives of pinkwashing campaigns, which weaponize queerness to serve the same Western interests. These campaigns are masked under a facade of progressive liberal values, but they show no regard for Palestinian lives—queer or otherwise.

A queer perspective on the Gaza genocide highlights the “danger of classifications” in prevention efforts. The exploitation of queer Palestinians demonstrates that genocide “must be understood as an unfolding process, considered in light of historical, political, and social factors” and seen as a complex social phenomenon rather than a definition (Rosenberg 2013, 17). The formation of genocide as a legal definition “against which unfolding events are to be measured” centers “legalism [and] subjects each genocide to a rigid test in order to maintain the integrity of the term and determine criminal culpability” (Rosenberg 2013, 17). Viewing genocide in Palestine as fluid, not as a static term, then, is what allows for pinkwashing and pinkwatching to emerge as units of analysis in genocide studies. Palestinian queerness dissolves the field’s inability to move on from old debates over definitions. Queerness underscores the importance of genocide scholars’ advocacy for “early warning systems [that] seek to collect, analyze, and communicate information” about escalating situations that could potentially lead to genocide (Rosenberg 2013, 20). In the genocidal Palestinian queer experience, and beyond centering legalism, such early warning systems could include the voices of pinkwatching organizers as part of the development of such systems in the future. The decades-long orientalist imperialist dehumanization of

6 The U.S. and Germany, Israel’s top arms suppliers, saw their weapon manufacturer corporates directly profit from the genocide as their share prices have exponentially risen since October 7 (Light 2024).

Palestinians, which utilizes tropes of homophobia, could have served as a small but significant early warning if queer Palestinian experiences had been regarded with gravity.

Beyond South Africa, a queer analysis of Gaza’s genocide points to the critique seeking to destabilize understandings of groups in genocidal contexts (Nellans 2020, 48). Noting the failure of the Genocide Convention to consider groups based on gender and sexuality (Vernon 2021, 257), Waites argues that including sexual orientation and gender identity in the understandings of protected groups allows describing violence against queer people in Nazi Germany, Uganda, and the Gambia as genocidal. Although Israel’s genocide indiscriminately targets both queer and non-queer Palestinians, pinkwashing’s exploitation of queerness to manufacture genocidal consent creates an opportunity to challenge and refocus attention on ‘Queers’ as a group often manipulated in genocidal narratives. Due to the nature of pinkwashing, this manipulation of queerness in Gaza appears distinct from how queerness has been manipulated in previous genocides.

In the early legal definitions of genocide, the Convention drafters assumed that the purpose of protection was for groups already existing as “permanent, stable, and intractable,” and recognizable by all (Simon 1996). Since queer Palestinians have not historically adhered to Western queer visibility politics—focused on demands for recognition, citizenship, and coming out (Ritchie 2015)—they cannot emerge as a new protected group in the context of the genocide based on this framework of protected groups. Yet, while according to these drafters the existence of a group is a necessary prerequisite for other rights (Simon 1996; Kabatsi 2005), for pinkwashers, queer Palestinians as a group come into existence but only through an alleged savior gaze that becomes the condition for granting them any rights or protection.

By forcefully singling out queer Palestinians from the rest of Palestinian society, this group-oriented framing ultimately legitimizes the genocide, which in reality targets all Palestinians indiscriminately. This becomes possible when the “group and membership in it are defined by the perpetrator” (Kabatsi 2005, 394). Through the pinkwashing process, Israel manipulates the definition of the collective Palestinian group by using its queer members. It frames these queer individuals as exceptions to the broader Palestinian population, categorizing them as a distinct group. This allows Israel to justify its actions against the entire population, queers included, while fraudulently portraying itself as a protector of queer rights.

Considering pinkwashing and pinkwatching, the employment of queers for rationalizing the genocidal campaign highlights a notable distinction between modern/contemporary and past genocides. (Melson 2011). Even though the killing of queers happened in prior genocides (Nellans 2020), it is different in Gaza due to the weaponization of the (irrelevant and inaccurately deployed) heteronormative logics of Palestinians and the homonormative logics of Israel claiming to supposedly ‘save’ queer Palestinians as part of an ‘othering’ process against all Palestinians (Vernon 2021). This makes both heteronormativity and homonormativity “relevant to genocidal violence against non-queer people as well as violence against queer people” (Vernon 2021, 258). As this happens, genocide becomes a behavior, meaning that it is never consistent across all cases. In the Palestinian case, in what is called the “compartment of genocide” that can be used to define or divert genocide, pinkwashing can be a new defining behavior that helps justify (define) yet divert from genocide in the genocidal narrative construction against the Palestinians (Kabatsi 2005). Such compartment through pinkwashing in genocide may in fact be the first case documented.

Queering the genocide in Palestine fluidly beyond legal measures, additionally, confirms that in genocidal contexts “testimonies of victims

and survivors must be taken into account in order to better understand the motives of the perpetrators and bystanders” and give victims and survivors a voice in the narrative of destruction (Melson 2011). Testimonies of Palestinian queers, and the overall pinkwashing effort, have been less visible not only because they are killed in the genocide like all Palestinians, but also because pinkwashing itself evolves around framing queer Palestinians as nonexistent or as strictly experiencing societal death in their communities and could not possibly have their own evidentiary testimonies. This is especially noteworthy as the ICJ ordered Israel to avoid destroying any evidence of genocide in Gaza and to comply with all UN investigations going forward, but it has gone out of its way to suppress, and kill off, any evidence of its genocide. Israel has blocked journalists from entering Gaza and systematically killed them and blocked the entry way of UN workers to document on the ground (CPJ 2024).

Israel’s use of pinkwashing to evade accountability for genocide carries broader implications beyond the mass destruction of Palestinian life. Israel has been signaling to other states that they, too, can exploit queer communities in the pursuit of their ethnonationalist goals, knowing there will be little to no consequences for pinkwashing and other repressive sexual and gender-based practices. Condemning Israel and the West’s blatant disregard for international law, and highlighting the broader dangers this silence poses beyond Palestine, Irish Member of the European Parliament Clare Daly remarked that “the rules-based order is in roaring form.” (2024). Besides encouraging the undervaluing of international law, Israeli exceptionalism affirms that the West has always had one international law for its allies, and another for everybody else. After months of throwing international law on the bonfire in Gaza, however, the evidence that something is broken is too undeniable. The genocide in Gaza is precipitating the collapse of the post-WWII system established by the US and Europe, a system that has, for decades, crushed those who

defied its global dominance. Palestinians, including queer Palestinians and ally pinkwashing organizers, remain amongst the permanent rebellious against this destructive order.

Conclusion

Pinkwashing and pinkwatching underscore the necessity for genocide studies and international law to integrate queer perspectives/analyses in documenting, analyzing, and explaining the failures to prevent Israel's genocide and to protect the Palestinians. Following the leadership of pinkwatching activists, genocide, international law, and queer scholars must place greater emphasis on the heteronormative and homonormative frameworks of Zionism, nationalism, colonialism, orientalism, and imperialism in relation to the genocidal violence in Gaza and beyond. As this scholarship evolves, it is crucial to acknowledge queerness as a vital potential contributor to Palestinian liberation alongside other political strategies. In a context where these strategies must be integrated with law—a tool that has often proven inadequate in advancing Palestinian decolonization—recognizing queerness at this intersection remains essential.

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SATEENKAAREVAT SINKUT JA LÄHEISSUHTEISET COVID-19-PANDEMIASSA

Raastavaa tuskaa vai antoisaa kotoilua?

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ABSTRAKTI

Artikkelimme tarkastelee sukupuoli- ja seksuaalivähemmistöihin kuuluvien kokemuksia covid-19-pandemiasta ja sitä, miten suhdestatus on vaikuttanut pandemiakokemuksiin. Fokusoimme erityisesti sinkkujen ja läheissuhteissa eläviin henkilöihin, mutta myös transsukupuolisten kokemuksiin. Aineistona on Webropol-ohjelman avulla tehty kysely, josta analysoitiin tilastollisesti ja laadullisesti 474:n sateenkaareviksi itsensä määritelleiden vastauksia. Tulokset osoittavat, että läheissuhde on voinut helpottaa pandemiasta selviytymistä ja yksinäisyyttä ja että sinkut ovat selvästi kärsineet pandemian aiheuttamasta henkisestä huonovointisuudesta. Monisuhteiset ja transsukupuoliset vastaajat nostivat esiin varsinkin sateenkaarierityisiä kokemuksia, kuten monisuhteisten vaikeuden löytää parisuhteita jo olemassa olevien rinnalle ja transsukupuolisten haasteet toteuttaa sukupuoli-identiteettiään.

Tutkimuksen perusteella sinkkujen heikentynyt elämäntilanne johtui osittain siitä, että parisuhtenormatiivisuus ja singlismi näyttivät voimistuvan covid-19-pandemian aikana. Lisäksi tapaamisrajoitusten aiheuttama vertaiskohtaamisten vähentyminen heikensi yleisesti vähemmistöön kuuluvien hyvinvointia. Esitämme, että resilienssiä voimistaviin kokemuksiin on luotava mahdollisuus myös vähemmistössä oleville, sillä resilienssi auttaa katastrofeista selviämässä. Lisäksi heteronormatiivisia ja singlismiä tuottavia rakenteita on pystyttävä purkamaan ennen katastrofeja ja vähemmistöihin kuuluvia on otettava mukaan katastrofien ehkäisyyn tähtäävään työhön, koska katastrofien aikana yhteiskunnan voimavarat eivät tunnu riittävän marginaalissa olevien ihmisten erityistarpeiden huomioon ottamiseen.

Avainsanat: covid-19, hlbtqi+, katastrofit, kyselytutkimus, marginaalit, parisuhtenormatiivisuus, polyamoria, resilienssi, singlismi, suhdestatus, transsukupuolisuus

ABSTRACT

Our article looks at how members of the gender and sexual minorities have experienced the Covid-19 pandemic and how their relationship status has influenced their experiences of the crisis. We focus particularly on single individuals, those in relationships, and the experiences of transgender people. The data were collected through a survey conducted using the Webropol software, from which the responses of 474 people who identified themselves as LGBTQI+ were statistically and qualitatively analyzed. The results suggest that cohabiting relationships may have facilitated coping with the pandemic and eased loneliness, whereas singles have suffered from the mental distress caused by the pandemic. Multi-partnered and transgender respondents highlighted specific LGBTQI+ experiences, including difficulties for multi-partnered people in finding new relationships and challenges transgender people face in expressing their gender identity.

The study found that the deteriorating life circumstances of singles were partly due to the fact that relationship normativity and singlism seemed to intensify during the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, the reduction in peer encounters caused by dating restrictions negatively impacted the well-being of minority members. We argue that resilience-building experiences should be made accessible to minority groups as well, as resilience helps cope with crises. Furthermore, heteronormative and singlism-producing structures must be dismantled before crises occur, and minority groups must be included in crisis prevention efforts, as societal resources are often insufficient to meet the specific needs of marginalized people during crises.

Keywords: couple normativity, Covid-19, disasters, LGBTQI+, living conditions, marginality, multi-partner relationships, relationship status, resilience, singlism, survey, transgender

Pandemian alettua YK on dokumentoinut, että seksuaalivähemmistöt ovat kohdanneet pahempaa syrjintää, väkivaltaa, vihapuhetta, poisjättöä, stigmoja ja esteitä. Heillä on ollut vaikeuksia päästä terveydenhuoltoon, koulutukseen, työelämään ja peruspalveluihin käsiksi. Meillä on myös todisteita siitä, että vähemmistöjen suojelusta ja oikeuksia on yritetty polkea.

YK:n pääsihteeri António Guterres Kansainvälisenä homofobian, transfobian ja bifobian vastaisena päivänä 17.5.2021 (YK 2021)

YK:n pääsihteerin kannanotto nostaa esiin huolen sateenkaari-ihmisten¹ heikentyneestä tilanteesta koronapandemian aikana. Covid-19-pandemia on aiheuttanut hyvin yleisesti sosiaalista ja fyysistä eristäytymistä, pelkoa ja epävarmuutta (ks. Gayatri & Irawaty 2022). Huolimatta kuitenkin siitä, että eri ihmisryhmillä on ollut hyvinkin erilaisia tarpeita pandemian aikana, kansainväliset ja kansalliset ohjeistukset ja rajoitukset ovat olleet kaikille yllättävänkin samansisältöisiä ja jättäneet huomiotta monet ryhmät, esimerkiksi seksuaali- ja sukupuolivähemmistöt, ja heidän tarpeensa. John Wei (2023) korostaa, että pandemia saattaa jäädä merkittäväksi historialliseksi tapahtumaksi, jolla on ollut suuri vaikutus ihmisten toimeentuloon, terveyteen ja elämään, joten on erittäin tärkeää pysähtyä tarkastelemaan, millaisia nämä vaikutukset ovat olleet ja mitä niistä voidaan oppia.

Käsillä olevassa tutkimuksessa raportoidaan suomalaisten sateenkaarevien ihmisten kokemuksia pandemiasta ja elämisestä rajoitusten keskellä. Etenkin mediassa – ja paljon tutkimuksessakin – huomio on keskittynyt heterosuhteissa ja -perheissä elävien ja heteroseksuaalisten ikääntyneiden

¹ Käytämme tutkimuskirjallisuudessa yleistynyttä sateenkaari-termiä ja siitä johdettuja ilmauksia välttääksemme mm. erilaisten kirjainyhdistelmien ulossulkevuuksia. Mikäli aiemman tutkimuksen esittely tai aineiston analyysi vaativat, myös tarkkarajaisemmat termit ovat käytössä, samoin kuin vakiintuneet termit, kuten *vähemmistöstressi*.

ja nuorten ihmisten pandemiakokemuksiin. Sen sijaan kiinnostus vähemmistöjen (kriisi)kokemuksiin ja niistä dokumentointiin on ollut vähäistä (ks. esim. Langenkamp ym. 2022), ja näin on voimakkaasti myös Suomessa.² Tämä voi Gaillardin, Gorman-Murrayn ja Fordhamin (2017, 19) ja Bishopin (2020, 14) mukaan johtua siitä, että sateenkaari-ihmisten tarpeet jätetään yleensäkin helposti huomiotta katastrofitilanteissa. Suomessa vähemmistöt eivät yleensä kohtaa katastrofeissa samankaltaista julmuutta ja väkivaltaa kuin monissa muissa maissa (ks. esim. Gorman-Murray ym. 2018), mutta yhteiskunnassa vallitseva heteronormatiivisuus ja rakenteelliset käytänteet synnyttävät myös Suomessa eriarvoisuutta. Nostamme tarkasteluun etenkin läheissuhteissa elävien ja sinkkujen kokemukset, koska näitä ryhmiä koskevaa vertailevaa korona- ja katastrofitutkimusta on tehty vähän (ks. kuitenkin esim. Nkire ym. 2022; Carotta ym. 2023). Yhteiskunnan rakenteelliset muutokset (kuten tasa-arvoinen avioliittolaki) parantavat erityisesti läheissuhteissa olevien ja niihin pyrkivien hyvinvointia, ja samalla yhteiskunnassa käytävä keskustelu oikeuksista on painottunut nimenomaan parisuhteissa olevien elämään (ks. Kolehmainen, Lahti & Kinnunen 2023, 12), ja se unohtaa läheissuhteiden monimuotoisuuden. Lisäksi Kolehmaisen, Kinnusen ja Lahden (2020) mukaan sinkkuja koskeva tutkimus on ylipäätäänkin ollut vähäistä eikä etenkaan sa-

² Suomessa valtioneuvoston kanslia on covid-19-tutkimuskatsauksissaan ignoroinut olemassa olevan sateenkaari-ihmisiä koskevan tutkimuksen: sen koostamassa 26 katsauksessa (yhteensä n. 1 400 esiteltä covid-19-tutkimusta) on mainittu vain yksi heitä koskeva tutkimus (ks. Valtioneuvoston kanslia 2021; Grant ym. 2021) huolimatta siitä, että esiteltujen tutkimusten joukossa ovat myös sellaiset tutkimusteemat kuin väestön hyvinvointi ja eriarvoistuminen. Lisäksi katsauksiin nostetuissa tutkimuksissa sukupuolikäsitys on hyvin binäärinen. Myöskään Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitoksen (Kestilä ym. 2022) covid-19-pandemian vaikutuksista eri väestöryhmiin raportoivassa julkaisussa ei tätä ihmisryhmää huomioida millään tavalla. Tämä nostaa räikeästi esiin sen, millaista tutkimusta on Suomen valtiojohtoon selvityksissä pidetty relevanttina ja millaisen arvon sateenkaarevat ihmiset ovat saaneet pandemiasta raportoitaessa ja toimenpiteitä suunniteltaessa.

teenkaarisinkkuja käsitellä esimerkiksi mediassa yhteiskunnallisen aseman näkökulmasta oikeastaan ollenkaan. Tämä motivoi vertailuasetelmaamme. Koska transsukupuolisten on todettu (Gorman-Murray ym. 2018; Lehtonen 2022) kohdanneen erilaisissa katastrofeissa traumatisoivia tilanteita, pahoinvointia ja hoitojen laiminlyöntiä, käsittelemme aineistomme avulla myös transsukupuolisten henkilöiden pandemiakokemuksia.

Reidin ja Ritholtzin (2020, 1103) mukaan pervonäkökulmainen pandemiatutkimus on jakautunut kahtia: yhtäältä homomiesten pandemia-aikaisen seksikäyttäytymisen ja toisaalta sateenkaarivähemmistöjen haavoittuvuuden tarkasteluun; käsillä oleva tutkimus lukeutuu jälkimmäiseen yhdessä Lehtosen (2022) sukupuolivähemmistöihin kuuluvien työelämäkokemuksia koskevan tutkimuksen kanssa. Oma tutkimuksemme perustuu kyselyaineistoon, joka kerättiin maaliskuussa 2021, jolloin pandemiassa oli meneillään ns. kolmas aalto ja viruksen saapumisesta Suomeen oli kulunut runsas vuosi. Viruksen leviämisen ehkäisemiseksi ryhdyttiin valmiuslain turvin keväällä 2021 rajuihin valtakunnallisiin ja alueellisiin sulkutoimiin, kuten liikkumis- ja tapaamisrajoituksiin, jotka vaikuttivat monella tapaa ihmisten elämiin.

Katastrofien pervouttaminen

Katastrofien pervouttaminen nostaa esiin sen, miten katastrofitilanteet vahvistavat yhteiskunnan heteronormatiivisia käyttäytymismalleja ja (uudelleen)marginalisoivat vähemmistöön kuuluvia. Osoitamme aiemman tutkimuksen ja käsillä olevan aineiston avulla, että heteronormatiiviset ja binääriset diskurssit vahvistuvat katastrofeissa ja marginalisoitujen identiteettiryhmien erityistarpeet jäävät huomiotta. Katastrofeissa myös keskiluokkainen ydinperheen normi vahvistuu muiden suhdemuotojen muuttuessa tunnistamattomiksi tai sääntelyn vuoksi mahdottomiksi

toteuttaa. Reid ja Ritholtz (2020, 1102) korostavat, että globaalin covid-19-pandemian tarkastelu queer-näkökulmasta vaatii pandemian aiheuttamien prosessien ja vaikutusten dekonstruktioita. Tämä pätee kaikkiin katastrofeihin. Niiden vaikutusten tutkimisessa ei riitä, että sateenkaari-ihmisiä käsitellään vain kohteina ja kokijoina, vaan pervouttamisen näkökulmasta on selvítettävä, mitkä tekijät tuottavat ja voimistavat heidän marginaalisuuttaan ja synnyttävät poissulkemisia katastrofeissa.

Gaillardin ym. (2017, 19) mukaan on tavallista, että monet vähemmistöryhmät jäävät huomiotta tai niitä syrjitään katastrofien aikana. Koska katastrofien aikana ei-heteronormatiivisia ja ei-cis-sukupuolisia piirteitä on pyritty pikemminkin kontrolloimaan kuin pitämään ihmisyyteen ja identiteettiin liittyvinä inherentteinä ominaisuuksina (McSherry ym. 2015, 27), voi katastrofien aiheuttama sekasorto ja epäjärjestys lisätä ennestäänkin heteronormatiivista sortoa ja jopa mielivaltaa (Gorman-Murray ym. 2018, 170). Vaikka Scott McKinnon (2017, 504) painottaakin, että katastrofit itsessään eivät ole vähemmistöjä syrjiviä, Enarson ja Pease (2016, 3), Gorman-Murray ym. (2017, 39) sekä Meriläinen (2020, 180) korostavat, että ne ovat pohjimmiltaan sosiaalisia tapahtumia, joissa poliittis-taloudelliset valtasuhteet kohtaavat sosiaalis-kulttuuriset järjestelmät; myöskään covid-19 ei ole muodostunut katastrofiksi riippumatta ihmisen käyttäytymisestä (Kelman 2020). Koska sukupuoleen ja seksuaalisuuteen liittyvin perustein marginalisoidut ryhmät ovat lisäksi usein jääneet ilman yhteiskunnallista ja poliittista asemaa sekä valtaa jo ennen katastrofejakin, nousevat sukupuoli ja seksuaalisuus merkittävään rooliin kriiseissä ja katastrofeissa. Katastrofeissa jo ennestään marginalisoituneita ryhmiä voidaan marginalisoida ja stigmatisoida edelleen niin maantieteellisin, sosiaalisin, taloudellisin, poliittisin kuin uskonnollisinkin perustein (Neumayer & Plümper 2007, 556; Gaillard 2010, 222; Gorman-Murray ym. 2018, 170), mikä voi johtaa ennen katastrofiakin haavoittuvassa asemassa olevien henkilöiden entistä voimakkaampaan syrjintään (Gorman-Murray

ym. 2017, 48). Reid ja Ritholtz (2020, 1103) lisäksi painottavat, ettei kaikkia marginaalissa olevia voi niputtaa yhden sateenkaaritermin (esim. *queer*) alle, koska eri sateenkaari- ja identiteettiryhmillä on omanlaisensa kokemukset katastrofeista ja niiden synnyttämästä marginalisoinnista (ks. myös Barrietos ym. 2021 erityisesti eri seksuaalivähemmistöjen, kuten pan- ja aseksuaalien, osalta). Tarpeen olisi myös tarkastella intersektionaalisesti risteäviä identiteettejä; käsillä olevassa tutkimuksessa identiteeteistä tarkastellaan sekä vastaajien seksuaali- ja sukupuoli-identiteettejä (myös ei-cis-sukupuolet) ja niiden risteymiä läheissuhdestatuksen kanssa (mono- ja polyamoriset suhteet).

Sukupuolia ja seksuaalisuuksia epätasa-arvoistavat toimet ja asenteet voivat lisääntyä katastrofeissa (Grant ym. 2021, 648; ks. myös Daigle ja Myrntinen 2018). Tämä voi näkyä sateenkaariväen tarpeiden huomiotta jättämisenä, tai vähemmistöön kuuluvat ovat voineet kokea suoranaista diskriminointia ja väkivaltaa. Katastrofit on myös voitu julistaa esimerkiksi uskonnollisin perustein ”syntisten” vähemmistöjen aiheuttamiksi tapahtumiksi. (Gaillard ym. 2017, 19–20; Gorman-Murray ym. 2017, 42; Gorman-Murray ym. 2018, 170; Reid & Ritholtz 2020, 1102.) Hälyttäviä syrjimis- ja väkivaltatapauksia on raportoitu ympäri maailman katastrofin yhteydessä: Esimerkiksi Australiassa kriisipalvelut ja -keskukset eivät ole olleet vähemmistöille saavutettavia tai turvallisia paikkoja (Gorman-Murray ym. 2017, 44–45), Japanissa on voitu evätä pääsy HIV-hoitoihin sairaaloiden kapasiteettien luhistuessa (Yamashita ym. 2017, 68–69), New Orleansissa trans- ja lesbonaisilta on kielletty naisille tarkoitettujen suihkutilojen käyttö ja samaa sukupuolta olevien pariskuntien jäsenet on erotettu toisistaan (D’Ooge 2008) ja Haitissa sateenkaari-ihmisiä on raiskattu ”korjaavana” toimenpiteenä tai esimerkiksi ruoan vastineeksi (Gorman-Murray ym. 2017, 42). Kالتوinkohtelu on lisännyt mielenterveysongelmia, joita ei ole kuitenkaan voitu hoitaa terveyden- ja sosiaalihuollon rakenteiden kuormituttua ja luhistuessa, mikä on puolestaan

voinut johtaa itsetuhoisiin ratkaisuihin. (Gorman-Murray ym. 2017, 42; Gorman-Murray ym. 2018, 180.) Huomionarvoista on, että katastrofien aikana myös marginaaliryhmien sisällä ja kesken on voitu luoda omia sorrettuja marginaaleja: esimerkiksi transhenkilöt ovat kohdanneet paitsi heteronormatiivista myös lesbonaisten, homomiesten ja biseksuaalien harjoittamaa syrjintää (Gorman-Murray ym. 2018, 168).

Toisaalta katastrofit voivat olla myös vähemmistöyhteisöjä tiivistäviä tapahtumia: kun yhteisöissä luodaan selviytymiskeinoja aiempien kokemusten, taitojen ja verkostojen avulla, syntyy kapasiteettia, joka ilmenee sekä yksilön omana että sosiaalisesti rakennettuna toimijuutena, kykynä ylläpitää toimintakykyä eli resilienssiä³ ja kykynä tehdä itsen ja yhteisön jäsenten kannalta selviytymistä auttavia ratkaisuja (Brown & Westaway 2011, 322–323; Gorman-Murray ym. 2017, 40). Marginaalissa oleminen ei siten aina johda pelkästään negatiivisiin kokemuksiin katastrofin aikana, joskin Meriläinen (2020) korostaa, että resilienssin epäpoliittisella ja yksinkertaistavalla tulkinnalla voi olla marginalisoitujen ihmisten hyvinvointia heikentävä vaikutus.

Pervot marginaalit ja covid-19

Muiden katastrofien tapaan myös koronapandemian aikana marginalisoidut ryhmät ovat kohdanneet omanlaisiaan haasteita. Se, miten sateenkaarihenkilöt ovat kokeneet pandemian, on riippunut muun muassa iästä, sukupuolesta, identiteetin kehittymisen vaiheesta, perheen tuesta

3 Resilienssin käsitettä on pyritty haastamaan viimeaikaisessa tutkimuksessa. Sen sijaan että sitä tarkastellaan yksilön tai yhteisön kriisinkestävyysnä ja toimintakyvyn palautumisena, resilienssiä voidaan selittää mm. erilaisten taloudellis-poliittisten ja institutionaalisten toimien sekä katastrofia edeltävien ja seuraavien toimenpiteiden ja tapahtumien avulla (ks. Meriläinen ym. 2021).

ja tarjolla olevista tukimuodoista. Toistaiseksi on tarkasteltu runsaasti erityisesti nuorten pandemiakokemuksia. Sateenkaarinuoret ovat voineet kokea pandemian aiheuttaman eristyksen voimakkaasti hyvinvointia heikentävä tekijänä: Eristys on estänyt pääsyn turvalliseksi koettuihin paikkoihin, kuten kouluihin ja harrastustiloihin, ja nuorten on pitänyt jäädä kotiin esimerkiksi sellaisten vanhempien kanssa, jotka eivät ole tukeneet nuoren identiteetin kehittymistä tai ovat olleet jopa sateenkaarifobisia. Transnuorten sukupuolidysforia on myös lisääntynyt kotona vietetyn eristyksen aikana. (Lapsistrategian koronatyöryhmä 2020, 53; Fish ym. 2020, 451; Grant ym. 2021, 656; Pacey ym. 2021, 100–102.) Nuoret ovat kaivanneet myös ystävien ja ammattilaisten muodostamia tukiverkostoja, ja he ovat voineet kokea myös huolta vertaistensa hyvinvoinnista. Samanaikaiset vaikeudet oman identiteetin rakentamisessa ja ongelmat tuen saamisessa ovat entisestään heikentäneet hyvinvointia ja lisänneet itsetuhoisia ajatuksia. (Fish ym. 2020; ks. myös Barzilay ym. 2020, 3; De Man ym. 2021; Parikka ym. 2022.)

Myös sateenkaariaikuiset ovat tunteneet enemmän jaksamiseen ja selviytymiseen liittyviä haasteita sekä kärsineet enemmän sosiaalisesta eristäytymisestä kuin heteroseksuaalit (Baumel ym. 2021). Eristäytyminen on aiheuttanut huolta yhteisöllisyyden kokemisen ja oman sateenkaari-identiteetin näkyvyyden vähenemisestä (Grant ym. 2021, 656). Goldbach, Knutson ja Milton (2021, 123) nostavat puolestaan esiin muun muassa sateenkaari-ihmisten sosiaalisen eriarvoistumisen terveydenhuollossa: Kuten muissakin katastrofeissa, myös covid-19:n aikana esimerkiksi Kiinassa on raportoitu HIV-positiivisten homo- ja bi-miesten vaikeudesta päästä hoitoihin (Wei 2023, 16). Etelä-Afrikassa pakolaistausta yhdistettynä sateenkaari-identiteettiin on aiheuttanut ongelmia saavuttaa yhteiskunnan järjestämiä tukipalveluja, kuten ruoka- ja majoitusapua (Reid & Ritholtz 2020). Pandemian aiheuttama syrjintä on siten pahentanut sateenkaari-ihmisten ennestäänkin vakavia terveyshuolia (Krause 2021).

Suomalaisittain vähäistä queer-covid-19-tutkimusta edustaa Lehtosen (2022) kyselytutkimus sukupuolivähemmistökokemuksista. Siinä paljastui esimerkiksi, että vastaajista 70 % koki yksinäisyyden lisääntyneen, 54 % itsensä entistä ahdistuneemmaksi, 39 % masentuneemmaksi ja 33 % pelokkaammaksi. Myös itsetuhoiset ajatukset olivat kasvaneet 17 prosentilla, ja 40 % koki voivansa ylipäänsä entistä huonommin pandemian vuoksi. Lisäksi sukupuolivähemmistöön kuuluvien työllistyminen on saattanut entisestään heikentyä. Lehtonen (2021; 2022, 90) korostaa lisäksi, että pandemiaan liittyvät kokemukset voivat olla myös alueellisesti jakautuneita: erityisesti pääkaupunkiseudulla elävät ovat voineet kokea pandemian erityisen raskaasti muuta maata pitemmän eristyksen ja etätöiden keston sekä ihmispaljouden aiheuttaman tartuntariskin vuoksi.

Vaikka pandemian on todettu lisäävän pahoinvointia ja vähemmistöstressiä, aiemmat kokemukset ovat voineet kuitenkin helpottaa siitä selviytymistä (Goldbach ym. 2021; Gonzalez ym. 2021). Esimerkiksi HIV/AIDS-epidemian kokeneet homomiehet ovat tunteneet, että aiemmat kokemukset sairaudesta ja stigmatisaatiosta ovat auttaneet selviämään myös covid-19-pandemiasta, koska myös HIV/AIDS-epidemian aikaan vallitsi voimakas epätietoisuus taudin etenemisestä ja sopivista hoidoista. Nämä kokemukset ovat auttaneet ymmärtämään suojautumisen tärkeyden ja luottamaan terveydenhuoltoon. (Quinn ym. 2021.) Lehtosen (2022, 85) tutkimus puolestaan paljastaa, että 10 % kyselytutkimuksen ei-cis-sukupuolisista vastaajista oli kokenut heihin kohdistuvan syrjinnän tai epäasiallisen kohtelun vähentyneen koronapandemian aikana, koska oli siirretty etätöihin kotiin. Samalla etätöskentely on myös vähentänyt painetta noudattaa työyhteisön sukupuolinormeja. Aiemmat kokemukset ovat siis voineet vahvistaa resilienssiä, ja jotkut ovat kokeneet pandemia-ajan jossain määrin positiivisestikin.

Sinkut ja läheissuhteiset covid-19-pandemiassa

Kolehmainen ja Lahti (2020, 106–107) toteavat, että sateenkaarisinkkujen suhdevalinnat ovat monin tavoin ”outoja” suhteessa keskiluokkaiseen ydinperhenormiin, sillä sinkkuus ja yksin eläminen nivoutuvat paitsi hetero- myös parisuhtenormatiivisiin rakenteisiin. Näin ollen sateenkaarisinkkujen osaksi on tullut kaksinkertainen marginalisoituminen. Koska sinkkuja ei välttämättä tunnusteta marginalisoiduksi ryhmäksi, sinkkuuteen liittyvä syrjintä eli singlismi (DePaulo & Morris 2005) ja epätasa-arvo esimerkiksi palveluiden saatavuudessa ja päivittäisessä arjen tuessa jäävät yhteiskunnallisesti tunnistamatta ja ongelmat säilyttyvät yksilöiden itsensä ratkaistavaksi (Kolehmainen & Lahti 2020, 106; Kolehmainen ym. 2023). Lisäksi eriarvoisuus ulottuu yhteiskunnan rakenteista kumpuaviin tunnekokemuksiin, joissa parisuhde ja perhe-elämä liitetään perinteisesti onnellisuuteen ja sinkkuus muun muassa häpeään ja yksinäisyyteen (Kolehmainen & Lahti 2020, 107–108).

Koska sinkkuuden kokemukset vaihtelevat tilanteisesti ja ajallisesti (Kolehmainen ym. 2023), on oletettavaa, että katastrofien sattua tänäkin ennestään marginaalissa olevan ryhmän yhteiskunnallinen eriarvoisuus korostuu ja siten suhdestatus on vaikuttanut pandemiakokemuksiin. Sateenkaari-ihmisillä on usein perinteisten perhesuhteiden rinnalla tai niitä korvaavina muita läheisiä ihmissuhteita, jotka toimivat tukiverkkona ja ns. valittuna perheenä (Alasuutari 2020, 180; Weston 1991), ja näihinkin verkostoihin, samoin kuin monisuhteisten läheissuhdeverkostoihin, covid-19 on oletettavasti vaikuttanut.

Aiemmin onkin havaittu, että läheissuhteissa elävät ovat selvinneet covid-19-pandemiasta ainakin jossain määrin paremmin kuin sinkut. Läheissuhteisten ahdistuneisuus ja masennus on ollut lievempää, koska selviytymisessä ovat auttaneet hyvä kommunikaatio ja aiemmin hankit-

tujen selviytymisstrategioiden hallinta, hyvä taloudenhoito ja käytännön yhteiseloa vahvistavat rutiinit, kuten yhteiset ruokailuhetket, kodinhoito ja viestintäteknologian käyttö (Gayatri & Irawaty 2022, 133–137; Nkire 2022). Lapsiperheissä puolestaan pandemia saattoi lisätä yhdessä vietettyä aikaa lasten kanssa (Gayatri & Irawaty 2022, 133). Langenkamp ym. (2022) ja De Man ym. (2021) havaitsivat vuorostaan sinkkujen kärsineen enemmän sosiaalisten suhteiden puutteesta ja eristäytymisestä sekä näiden aiheuttamasta yksinäisyydestä ja masennuksesta.

Läheissuhteisten positiivisten kokemusten lisäksi pandemia on aiheuttanut Gayatrin ja Irawatyn (2022) useita maita koskevan katsauksen mukaan myös lastenhoidon ja kotitalouden ylläpitämisen aiheuttamaa stressiä tai jopa johtanut ääritapauksissa ihmisyyttä loukkaavien tekojen, kuten lasten hyväksikäytön, lisääntymiseen yhdessä vietetyn ajan lisääntyessä. Heteronaiset taas ovat kokeneet suhteissaan miehiä enemmän ahdistusta sekä fyysisen ja emotionaalisen läheisyyden puutetta (Cornelius ym. 2022, 3652). Yksinhuoltajat kärsivät puolestaan stressistä, taloudellisista ongelmista ja myös yksinäisyydestä enemmän kuin kahden vanhemman perheet (Langenkamp ym. 2022).

Aineisto ja menetelmät: kyselyvastauksen tilastollinen ja laadullinen analyysi

Tutkimuksen aineisto on peräisin kyselystä, joka tehtiin maaliskuussa 2021 tutkimusta *Seksuaali- ja sukupuolivähemmistö-segregaatio ja stigmatisoituneet paikat* varten. Kysely sisälsi kysymyksen *Millä tavalla koronaepidemia (covid-19) on vaikuttanut elämääsi erityisesti sukupuoli- ja seksuaalivähemmistöön kuuluvan näkökulmasta?* Vastausajankohta osui valtakunnalliseen sulkuaikaan, jolloin pandemiaan liittyvistä toimenpiteistä oli kokemuksia runsaan vuoden ajalta. Kyselyyn vastasi 521 yli 15-vuotiasta sateenkaarevaa henkilöä, ja tähän covid-19-kyselykseen rea-

gointeja saatiin 509:ltä; näistä poistettiin lopuksi kysymyksen ohittamista merkitsevät, pelkän viivan tai jonkin muun merkin sisältävät vastaukset, minkä jälkeen vastausten kokonaismääräksi saatiin 474. Kysely toteutettiin Webropol-työkalulla ja jaettiin useiden järjestöjen ja yhdistysten (mm. Seta ry., Suomen seksologinen seura, Sinuiksi-tukipalvelu) ja ryhmien (mm. Sateenkaari-Suomi, Sateenkaariperheet, Sukupuoleltaan moninaiset, DreamWear Club) sähköpostilistojen, Twitter-tilien ja Facebook-sivujen avulla.⁴ Kyselylomake sisälsi osion, jossa kysyttiin vastaajien taustatietoja (mm. ikä, suhdestatus, koulutus, seksuaalinen ja romanttinen suuntautuminen, sukupuoli- ja sukupuoli-identiteettiä, sukupuoli-identiteettiä. Ei-cis-sukupuolisten vastauksia käsitellään kuitenkin erikseen lähemmin, koska aiemmassa tutkimuksessa (esim. Yamashita ym. 2017; Reid & Ritholtz 2020) on nostettu esiin transsukupuolisten erityisongelmat katastrofien aikana ja heidän lukumääränsä vastaajien joukossa on suuri (n = 144). Monisuhteisten vastaajien (n = 25) parisuhdejärjestelyt ja kokemukset pandemiasta poikkeavat monoamorisissa suhteissa olevien vastauksista jossain määrin, ja haluamme nostaa myös nämä artikkelissa esiin.

Analyysi toteutettiin tilastollisen avainsana-analyysin ja teoreettisen kriittisen lähiluvun avulla (ks. mm. Jantunen & Juvonen 2021). Avainsana-

4 Kysely pilotoitiin 12:lla sukupuolentutkimuksen ja queer-lingvistiikan tutkijalla ja sateenkaarivähemmistöön kuuluvalla henkilöllä, ja siihen tehtiin tarkennuksia.

analyysia varten aineistot muutettiin korpusluettavaan muotoon, jolloin tekstit ns. perusmuotoistettiin (*Tehnyt elämän yksinäiseksi -> tehdä elämä yksinäinen*), mikä mahdollisti aineiston keskeisen sanaston analysoinnin myöhempää teemoittelua varten. Sinkkujen ja läheissuhteissa olevien vastauksia (yhteensä n. 12 000 sanaa tekstiä) verrattiin erikseen menetelmän mukaisesti laajaan vertailuaineistoon (6 milj. sanaa tekstiä), joka sisälsi muun muassa uutis- ja verkkokeskustelutekstejä⁵. Menetelmällä saatiin esiin nimenomaan tutkimusaineistoille tyypilliset ja niiden sisältöä kuvaavat avainsanat (n = 116), minkä jälkeen niistä luokiteltiin tutkimuksen kannalta merkitykselliset sanat temaattisiksi ryhmiksi. Luokittelussa tarkistettiin merkitys kontekstista: esimerkiksi sanat *kumppani*, *parisuhde* ja *suhde* sijoittuvat taulukossa (1) eri luokkiin, koska sinkut viittaavat näillä toiveeseen löytää (uusi) romanttinen suhde, läheissuhteiset puolestaan olemassa olevaan perhe- ja parisuhteeseen. Syntyneet ryhmät paljastavat kummankin vastaajajoukon vastauksista nousevat temaattiset kokonaisuudet. Näin saavutettiin tieto siitä, mitkä teemat nousevat ryhmässä esiin tilastollisin perustein. Tämän jälkeen aineistoa lähiluettiin ja vastauksista nousevia teemoja luokiteltiin edelleen merkityskokonaisuuksiin avainsana-analyysin viitoittamana. Myös lähiluvussa löydettyjä kategorioita (ks. liite) kvantifioitiin ja testattiin tilastollisesti ryhmien välisen erojen havaitsemiseksi.⁶ Näin saavutettiin sekä tilastollisen että laadullisen analyysin hyödyt, ja erityisesti laadullisen analyysin avulla kattava ja systemaattinen kuva vastauksista ja myös selityksiä määrällisen analyysin tuloksiin. Jäljempänä tulosten esittelyssä aineistosta poimitut esimerkit on kursivoitu ja avainsanat on lihavoitu.

5 Analyysissä käytettiin WordSmith Tools -analyysityökalua.

6 Tuloksissa ilmoitetaan tarpeen mukaan lukumäärä, suhteellinen osuus ja merkitsevyys z-testin mukaan ((p>0.1) -, (p<0.1) *, (p<0.05) **, (p<0.01) ***).

Koska vastaajat muodostavat niin sanotun erityisen henkilötietoryhmän, aineistoa käsitellään tieteellistä tutkimusta koskevien TENK:n eettisten ohjeiden ja tietosuojalain 6 §:n 7-kohdan mukaisesti. Kyselyyn vastaaminen tapahtui anonyymisti, eli vastaajilta ei kysytty suoria henkilötietoja, jolloin aineiston käsittelijällä ei ole pääsyä tunnisteelliseen henkilötietoon eikä hänellä ole mahdollisuutta yhdistää uusia tietoja. Seksuaalisuutta ja sukupuolta koskettavissa kysymyksissä vastaajilla oli mahdollisuus itsemäärittelyyn. Kyselyyn vastaaminen oli vapaaehtoista, ja vastaaja saattoi keskeyttää vastaamisen milloin halusi.

Tulokset

Luomme tässä luvussa aluksi yleiskuvan siitä, missä määrin pandemia on vaikuttanut käsillä olevan aineiston valossa sateenkaari-ihmisten elämään. Sen jälkeen siirrymme käsittelemään avainsana-analyysin ja avainsanojen luokittelun avulla saatuja tuloksia. Käsittelymme alkaa ystävyyss- ja romanttisten suhteiden ja vertaistapaamisten merkityksestä ja muutoksesta pandemian aikana, minkä jälkeen fokusoimme henkiseen hyvinvointiin sekä monisuhteisten ja ei-cissukupuolisten kohtaamiin erityisiin ongelmiin.

Läheissuhde ja kotoilu helpottivat elämää

Merkillepantavaa on, että yksineläjistä vain 14,6 % (n = 30) ilmoitti, ettei pandemia ole vaikuttanut mitenkään heidän elämäänsä sateenkaari-ihmisenä (*Ei erityisesti mitenkään, ihan samassa jamassa ne heterotkin on [S]*). Läheissuhteissa elävistä sen sijaan peräti 42,5 % (n = 114, ***) kertoi, ettei pandemialla ole ollut vaikutusta tästä näkökulmasta. Ero on selvä, ja vastauksista käy ilmi, että läheissuhteen ja yhdessä asumisen katsottiin ikään kuin suojaavan pandemialta (*Lgbtq-ihmisen näkökulmasta covid-pandemia*

ei ole vaikuttanut elämääni, koska asun avoliitossa [L])⁷ ja suhde on voinut jatkua laadukkaana (*Olen vakituudessa parisuhteessa. Onneksi! Elämämme koronaepidemian aikana on laadullisesti ollut varsin hyvää [L]*). Myös suhteen taloudellinen tilanne on voinut vaikuttaa suotuisasti pandemiasta selviämiseen: *Meillä on myös hyvä taloudellinen tilanne ja pystymme tilaamaan ruokaa kotiin halutessamme [L]*. Kaikki pariskunnat eivät kuitenkaan asu yhdessä, ja pandemia on voinut muuttaa suhteen laatua: *Koronaepidemian myötä suhde [paikkakunta] asuvaan nykyiseen kumppaniini on saanut enemmän etäsuhteen piirteitä [L]*. Vastaajien joukossa oli jonkin verran myös sellaisia, jotka olivat löytäneet pandemian vaikutuksista selvästi positiivisiakin puolia. Läheissuhteessa olevat nostavat tyypillisesti esiin kotoilun lisääntymisen ja sen positiiviset vaikutukset, kuten yhteisen ajan lisääntymisen puolison kanssa (*Antanut aikaa olla enemmän kotona, mitä molemmat puolisoni kanssa arvostamme [L]*). Etätöihin siirtyminen ja sen aiheuttaman, työyhteisön tarjoaman ”henkireiän” häviäminen (Lehtonen 2022, 86) ja jatkuva yhdessäolo eristyksissä kumppanin kanssa ovat kuitenkin voineet kiristää välejä (Malmquist ym. 2024, 973–974) ja luoda tilanteita, joissa on syyllistytty lähisuhdeväkivaltaan (Grant ym. 2021, 655–658), mutta omassa kyselyssämme ei tällaista juuri nostettu esiin, kuitenkin yhden vastaajan [*p*]arisuhde on kylläkin ajautumassa kriisiin, ja on mahdollista, että koronan aiheuttama työstressi kummallakin osapuolella on vaikuttanut asiaan [L].

Tavatonta ei kuitenkaan ole, että läheissuhteissakin elävät mainitsivat huolia, joita pandemia on tuonut elämään mutta joiden ei koeta olevan erityisesti sateenkaarevuuteen liittyviä. Tällaisia ovat muun muassa yksinäisyys ja kotona vietetyn ajan lisääntyminen (*Pandemian aikaan on tylsää ja yksinäistä, olipa homo tai ei [L]*) tai työhön ja terveyteen liittyvät seikat (*Korona on vaan vaikuttanut työllisyyteen ja joidenkin terveydellisten tutkimuksen siirtymiseen [L]*).

7 S = sinkut, ilman läheissuhdetta elävät, L = läheissuhteissa elävät.

Siirrymme seuraavaksi tarkastelemaan vastauksia ja ryhmiä yksityiskohtaisemmin. Analyysimme perustuu avainsanojen temaattiseen luokitteluun, jonka tulokset on kuvattu taulukossa 1.

TEEMAATTISET LUOKAT	SINKUT	LÄHEISSUHTEISET
Sosiaaliset suhteet	<i>tavata, kontakti, ystävä, sosiaalinen, ihminen, tapaaminen, elämä, uusi, kohtaaminen, tutustua, nähdä (11/331)</i>	<i>sosiaalinen, tavata, elämä, kontakti, ystävä, tapaaminen (6/159)</i>
Romanttiset ja seksisuhteet	<i>Tinder, treffit, kumppani, suhde, parisuhde, romanttinen, seura, seksuaalinen (8/77)</i>	
Taphtumat	<i>Pride, tapahtuma, Seta, perua, järjestää (5/63)</i>	<i>Pride, perua, tapahtuma, homobaari, Seta (5/61)</i>
Tapaamisen tapa työssä ja vapaa-ajalla	<i>etä, live, netti, harrastus (4/34)</i>	<i>etä, etätyö, kuntosali, vapaa-aika, työ (5/58)</i>
Henkinen hyvinvointi	<i>yksinäinen, mielenterveys, yksinäisyys, hankala (4/36)</i>	<i>yksinäisyys, hyvinvointi, rajoittaa (3/21)</i>
Vähemmistöt ja identiteetti	<i>seksuaalivähemmistö, sukupuoli-vähemmistö, seksuaali (3/22)</i>	<i>seksuaalivähemmistö, sateenkaareva, kuuluminen, kuuluu, vähemmistö, sukupuoli (6/55)</i>
Perhe ja koti		<i>puoliso, koti, kumppani, parisuhde, suhde, asua, viettä (7/128)</i>

Taulukko 1. Avainsanat ja luokittelu aineistoittain (avainsanat lueteltu merkitsevyyssjärjestyksessä).

Ystävät, läheiset ja uudet suhteet

Sinkkujen vastauksissa korostuvat erityisesti sosiaalisiin suhteisiin liittyvät ilmaukset (taulukko 1). Tämän ryhmän muodostavat sanat (yhteensä 331 sanaesiintymää), joiden avulla kuvataan ihmisten tapaamista (– – *vietän paljon aikaa yksin asunnollani, eikä minulla ole tarpeeksi tärkeitä, syvempiä kohtaamisia ihmisten kanssa [S]*) tai olemassa olevien kontaktien vähentymistä (*Enimmät sosiaaliset kontaktit ovat jääneet muutamiin parhaisiin tuttuihin [S]*). Huomionarvoista on kuitenkin, että sosiaalisiin suhteisiin liittyviä mainintoja on yhtä lailla myös läheissuhteisilla: sosiaalisten suhteiden vähenemistä tai ystävien ja läheisten tapaamista koskevien kommenttien määrä on aineistossa yhtä suuri (S: 20,9 %, n = 43; L: 20,1 %, n = 54, –).

Vastaukset tukevat aiempia havaintoja siitä, että molemmilla ryhmillä on sosiaalisten suhteiden merkitys yhtäläinen (ks. esim. Carotta ym. 2023). Sen sijaan nimenomaan uusien tuttavuuksien löytymisen mainitsivat sinkut läheissuhteisia useammin (S: 11,2 %, n = 23; L: 5,2 %, n = 14, **), mikä nostaa myös taulukossa (1) olevien avainsanojen määrääkin sinkkuaineistossa (*Vähemmän tapaa uusia ihmisiä [S]*). Läheissuhteissa elävät eivät ole kaivanneet uusia tuttavuuksia yhtä usein kuin sinkut, joskaan aivan tavatonta se ei ole: *ei ole päässyt tutustumaan uusiin ihmisiin samalla tavalla kuin aikaisemmin [L]*.

Läheissuhteissa elävien vastauksista erottuvat erityisesti ystävyys-suhteiden ylläpitoon liittyvät seikat (*Kuitenkin vahvasti kaipaamme ystävien tapamista kotonamme, heidän luonaan ja muualla [L]*), joskaan kaikki eivät ole pidättäytyneet ystäviensä tapaamisesta (*Elän parisuhteessa ja olen nähnyt lähimpiä ystäviäni myös koronan aikana [L]*). Merkille pantavaa on, että biologisiin tai juridisiin parisuhteen ulkopuolisiin perheenjäseniin liittyviä ilmauksia ei noussut avainsanalistalle, ja niiden osuudet jäivät myös lähiluvussa pieniksi (S: 2,4 %, n = 5; L: 3,7 %, n = 10, –). Tämä voi kieliä siitä, että ystävät saattavat olla sateenkaariväelle monella tapaa merkityksellisempiä ja he voivat muodostaa valitun perheen biologisen ja juridisen perheen tilalle tai rinnalle. Vähemmistöön kuuluvat ovatkin voineet kärsiä pandemian aikana katkenneista suhteista valittuihin perheisiin: *Kärsin siitä, etten voi tavata - - itse valittua perhettä niin paljon kuin haluaisin/ollenkaan [S]*) (ks. myös Fish ym. 2020, 451). Vaikka sateenkaarevat ihmiset turvautuvat katastrofeissa usein oman kasvuperheensä apuun ja jopa muuttavat takaisin kotiinsa, joitakuita muutto voi kuitenkin ahdistaa, sillä se voi pakottaa heidät takaisin kaappiin ja piilottamaan identiteettinsä (Gorman-Murray ym. 2017, 46). Tässä kyselyssä teema ei noussut juuri esiin, joskin yksittäisiä kaapissa olemiseen liittyviä kommentteja löytyi: *Kun en ole tavannut sukulaisia, olen päässyt jopa helpommalla tässä suhteessa, koska olen käytännössä kaapissa sukulaisilleni [L]*.

Romanttisten suhteiden kaipuu

Erityisen selvästi aineistot eroavat toisistaan, kun tarkastelu siirretään romanttisiin ja seksisuhteisiin: sinkkuaineistossa tähän kategoriaan luettujen avainsanojen määrä on 77, läheissuhdeaineistossa näitä avainsanoja ei ole, ja myös lähiluku tukee havaintoja. Deittailun ja seurustelusuhteen syntyamisen (S: 18,4 %, n = 38; L: 2,2 %, n = 6, ***) ja parisuhteen löytämisen (S: 8,7 %, n = 18; L: 1,5 %, n = 4, ***) mahdollisuus korostuu sinkkujen vastauksissa. He ovat kärsineet siitä, että deittailusta ja kumppanin etsimisestä on tullut vaikeaa (*Ihmisten tapaaminen ja varsinkin kumppanin etsiminen on lähes mahdotonta [S]; Treffit on paljon hankalampaa kaikkien rajoitteiden ja oman varovaisuuden takia [S]*). Tämä on aiheuttanut myös ahdistusta: *Kumppanin löytämisen mahdollisuus on hiipunut olemattomiin, mikä aiheuttaa raastavaa tuskaa [S]*. Myös uusien seksisuhteiden mahdollisuus näkyy sekä avainsanoissa että laadullisissa analyysissa: *Normaalinaikana seksuaalinen elämä olisi aktiivisempaa kuin epidemian aikana [S]; Nettitreffit ovat vähän vähentyneet ja osa ns. vakipanoista ei nyt liiku [S]*, (S: 7,8 %, n = 16; L: 2,6 %, n = 7, **). Kuitenkin myös läheissuhteisten vastauksista löytyy muutama kommentti romanttisen tai seksiseurauksen löytämisen hankaluudesta (*Myös satunnaiset seksitreffit ovat muuttuneet muutaman vakituisen suhteen ulkopuolisen ystävän kanssa harrastamiseksi [L]*).

Riskikäyttäytymistään ei haluta harjoittaa yksinäisyyden uhallakaan: *Treffit ventovieraan kanssa tuntuu myös koronan takia riskikäyttäytymiseltä. Rajoitettava ja ahdistavaa [S]*. Lisäksi pandemia on tuonut haasteita myös jo alkaneisiin uusiin ihastus- ja seurustelusuhteisiin: *Lähiaikainen ihastukseni myös pelkää koronaa niin paljon, ettemme ole voineet tavata kunnolla. [S]*. Kumppanin löytämisen rinnalla esiin nousee myös kokemus ihmisen perustarpeen, läheisyyden, puutteesta: *Tämä [seuran puute] on vaikuttanut negatiivisesti hyvinvointiin, läheisyyttä olisi kiva saada [S]*.

Vastaavanlaisia kokemuksia on ollut pandemian aikana luonnollisesti

muillakin kuin sateenkaari-ihmisillä (ks. esim. Candel & Jitaru 2021), eli tilanne ei ole sinänsä sateenkaarierityinen. Vastauksia tarkastellessa on kuitenkin syytä muistaa, että sateenkaarevien ihmisten mahdollisuus löytää romanttisia suhteita on muita vaikeampaa (ks. esim. Blair & Hoskin 2019), ja pandemia on vaikeuttanut kumppanin etsimistä entisestään.

Vertaistapaamiset turvallisissa tiloissa, tapahtumissa ja verkossa

Selvästi sateenkaarierityisiä ilmauksia ovat tapahtuma-luokkaan kuuluvat avainsanat (taulukko 1), ja ne ovat lähes samoja molempien ryhmien vastauksissa. Ryhmät ovatkin hyvin samankaltaisia sen suhteen, miten erilaisten tapahtumien ja palveluiden peruuntuminen nostettiin vastauksissa esiin. Vähintään kerran tapahtumien perumisen on maininnut joka neljäs vastaaja kummastakin ryhmästä (S: 27,2 %, n = 56; L: 25,5 %, n = 69, -). Ryhmien välillä ei myöskään ole eroja sen suhteen, mitkä aktiviteetit tässä yhteydessä mainittiin: esimerkiksi (homo)baarien ja ravintoloiden sulkeminen saivat mainintoja suunnilleen yhtä usein (S: 9,7 %, n = 20; L: 7,7 %, n = 20, -): *Joskus olisi kiva käydä teatterissa, oopperassa, gaybaarissa tanssimassa, ulkona illanvietossa [L]*. Samoin myös pridet ja muut sateenkaariväelle suunnatut tapahtumat mainittiin usein (S: 11,7 %, n = 24; L: 10,0 %, n = 27, -): *Priden puuttuminen oli kova kolaus, sillä se on itselleni sellainen tapahtuma -, mitä odottaa aina innolla [L]; Kaikki sellaiset tapahtumat, joissa olisi ollut mahdollista tavata muita sateenkaari-ihmisiä ja löytää ystäviä tai jopa kumppaneita, on peruttu [S]*. Myös avainsanat *seksuaalivähemmistö* ja *sukupuolivähemmistö* liittyvät usein keskusteluun siitä, ettei kaltaisten tapaamiseen ole ollut tilaisuutta (*En ole pystynyt tapaamaan muita seksuaalivähemmistön edustajia [S]*). Vertaistapaamisten puute saattoi liittyä myös hengellisen elämän näivettymiseen: *Eniten harmittaa, että Tampereen seurakuntien sateenkaarimessua ei voida järjestää normaalisti eikä hengellinen sateenkaari-ihmisten vertaisryhmä kokoonnu tavalliseen tapaan [S]*.

Aineiston perusteella on selvää, että erilaiset turvallisiksi koetut tilaisuudet, tapahtumat ja tapaamispaikat ovat tärkeä osa arjen rutiineja suhdestatuksesta riippumatta – joskin sinkuille baareilla ja klubeilla voi toki olla eri merkitys kuin vakituisissa suhteissa eläville. Mattsonin (2020) ja Cattanin ja Vanolon (2014) mukaan esimerkiksi homoravintolat ovat edelleenkin paikkoja, joissa sateenkaariväkeen kuuluvat voivat vapaasti ja turvallisesti kokoontua ja osallistua niiden järjestämiin yhteiskunnallisestikin merkittäviin tapahtumiin ja vastustaa heteronormatiivisia rakenteita. Turvallisten tilojen puute näkyy myös sanallistettuna aineistossa: *Olisin halunnut yrittää tavata miittien kautta ns. "turvallisista" ihmisiä tältäkin [uudelta] paikkakunnalta [L]*. Tapahtumista nousi erikseen esiin myös yhdistystoiminnan kautta saadun vertaistuen väheneminen, ja sen nosti esiin noin 8 prosenttia vastaajista molemmista ryhmistä (S: 8,3 %, n = 17; L: 7,7 %, n = 21, -): *Setan vertaisryhmiin pystyi ennen mennä ilmottautumatta. Nykyään ryhmäkokoja rajoitetaan ja ryhmiin pitää ilmoittautua hyvissä ajoin etukäteen. - - En siis enää käy vertaisryhmissä [L]*.

Gorman-Murray ym. (2017, 40, 47) korostavat, että sateenkaariystävät ja -verkot sekä -yhdistysten järjestämä toiminta muodostavat yhteisiä resursseja ja solidaarisuuden verkostoja, jotka vahvistavat resilienssiä ja ovat siten olleet tärkeitä katastrofitilanteissa. Covid-19-pandemiassa nämä turvaverkot luhistuivat tai muuttivat muotoaan siirtyessään verkkoon. Tapahtumien ja tapaamisten siirtymistä verkkoon työn rinnalla käsitellään vastauksissa paljon, ja teema nousee esiin myös avainsanoissa (*etä, live, netti, etätyö*; taulukko 1). Verkkoyhteisöt ja verkkomateriaalit ovat tarjonneet mahdollisuuden ylläpitää sosiaalisia verkostoja (Fish ym. 2020, 451), ja laajemminkin verkko on tarjonnut korvaavia vapaa-ajanvieton tiloja baarien, pridejen ja harrastusten tilalle pandemian aikana (Anderson & Knee 2021). Myös tähän kyselyyn vastanneet ovat kokeneet, että verkon käyttö on jossain määrin helpottanut osallistumista tapahtumiin, ja toisinaan verkoitsee järjestetyt tapahtumat ovat olleet jopa houkuttelevia

(*Biseksuaalien naisten vertaisryhmän kokoontumisiin on pikemminkin taas tullut osallistuttua kun ne ovatkin etänä [L]*.) Verkko on myös tuonut aivan uusia osallistumismahdollisuuksia (*Verkon kautta pääsee osallistumaan valtakunnallisiin sateenkaaritapahtumiin, ilman että tarvitsee matkustaa [L]*), ja verkoitsee tapahtuva viestintä on voinut myös helpottaa jännitystä ja asiointia (*Korona on helpottanut transpolin kohdalla, sillä olen ollut vähemmän jännittyneempi ja ahdistuneempi videopuheluiden kautta, kuin itse paikan päällä [L]*). Pandemia ei ole täysin estänyt uusienkaan tuttavuuksien muodostumista; apuna on ollut nimenomaan verkko: *Palasin koronaeristyksen seurauksena Facebookiin, jonka kautta olen tutustunut toisiin homomiehiin ja luonut rentoja nettisuhteita [S]*.

Verkossa tarjottava tuki ei ole kuitenkaan saavuttanut kaikkia tasavertaisesti eivätkä kaikki ole mieltäneet online-tiloja mielekkäiksi, vaikka sateenkaariyhteisöjen jäsenillä on pitkä historia Internetin kautta verkostoitumisessa (Grantin ym. 2021, 658). Toisaalta vastaajat ovat saattaneet kokea myös jonkinlaista verkkoähkyä, jolloin tilaisuuksiin ei tullut osallistuttua (*Etäryhmiin en halua, töissä ollut tarpeeksi etäilyä [L]*). Halukkuus osallistua verkkotapahtumiin onkin hyvin yksilöllistä ja riippuu päivittäisestä verkon käytön määrästä ja omasta suhtautumisesta verkkoviestintään sekä omasta iästä ja kokemuksesta tapahtumien sopimisesta itselle (*Verkkotapahtumat ovat suunnattu pääasiallisesti nuorille [L]*). Lehtonen (2022, 85) on puolestaan nostanut esiin, että järjestötoiminnan työskentelytapojen muuttuminen on heikentänyt myös vapaaehtoisten aktivistien jaksamista, etenkin jos rinnalla on ollut myös esimerkiksi katkoja työsuhteissa. Toimintatapojen lakkautumisella ja muuttumisella on siis ollut haitallisia vaikutuksia vertaistukea ja -toimintaa tarvitseville sekä niitä järjestäville.

Henkisen hyvinvoinnin heikkeneminen

Pandemian rajoitukset ovat vaikuttaneet henkiseen jaksamiseen, mikä näkyy selvästi avainsanoissa. Ilmaukset *yksinäinen, yksinäisyys* ja *mielen-*

terveys viittaavat pandemian aiheuttamaan henkiseen pahoinvointiin (*Ei juurikaan kontakteja, en ole käynyt treffeillä, homobaareissa, tapahtumissa tms. Yksinäisyyden tunne korostunut entisestään [S]; Kontaktit ovat vähentyneet rutkasti ja näin ollen mielenterveys kusee [S]*). Vaikka tämän ryhmän avainsanoja on vain vähän (taulukko 1), aineiston laadullinen tarkastelu paljastaa, että peräti joka neljäs sinkkuvastaajista (26,2 %, n = 54) on maininnut vähintään yhden henkiseen hyvinvointiin liittyvän seikan (esim. yksinäisyys, mielenterveyden järkkäminen, turhautuminen), jota pandemia on heikentänyt; läheissuhteessa olevien osuus on 14,8 % (n = 40, ***). Seksuaali- ja sukupuolivähemmistöihin kuuluvien on havaittu kokevan yksinäisyyttä ja mielenterveysongelmia enemmän kuin enemmistöön kuuluvien (ks. esim. Kylmä ym. 2014), ja pandemian rajoitukset ovat entisestään lisänneet yksinäisyyttä ja tuntemuksia mielenterveyden heikentymisestä.

Selvimmän sinkkujen henkisen hyvinvoinnin heikentymistä kuvattiin yksinäisyyden tunteena (S: 11,7 %, n = 24; L: 4,1 %, n = 11, **) ja mielenterveyden järkkymisenä (S: 14,6 %, n = 30; L: 9,0 %, n = 24, *), joihin voi liittyä myös itsetunto-ongelmia (*Lisäksi pandemia on vaikuttanut - - niin paljon, että itsetuntoni on kärsinyt [S]*) tai lievempää turhautumista (*Koko tilanne turhauttaa, kun juuri koin "valaistumisen" suuntautumiseni suhteen, niin tottakai sitten puhkeaa jokin pandemia ja laittaa kaiken tauolle [S]*). Pandemia on voinut myös korostaa suhdestatusten vastakkainasettelua ja nostaa esiin monenlaisia tuntemuksia läheisyyden kaipuusta ja yksinäisyydestä aina syyllisyyden- ja häpeäntunteeseen asti: *Kaipaani läheisyyttä mutta en jaksa etsiä sitä enkä halua tuntea syyllisyyttä mahdollisista tartunnoista. Minua hävettää kuinka yksinäinen olen välillä ja kuinka pitkään aikaan en ole ollut fyysisesti läheinen toisen ihmisen kanssa [S]*. Koska norminmukainen parisuhde edustaa tavoiteltavaa onnea (Kolehmainen & Lahti 2020, 107) ja pandemiassa yksin eläminen voi voimistaa ympäristön aiheuttamia kielteisiä tuntemuksia, toteutuu singlismin eriarvoistava vaikutus pandemian aikana entistä selvemmin.

Myös läheissuhteisten vastauksissa mainittiin yksinäisyys: pelkkä kumppanin seura ei riitä korvaamaan sosiaalisia suhteita, etenkin jos ihmisuhteiden määrä on kaventunut vielä esimerkiksi työttömyyden myötä (*Korona on siis lisännyt yksinäisyyttä huomattavasti. Olen myös työtön joten ainoa ihmiskontaktini on avopuolisoni. Koen siis erakoituneeni. [L]*) Toki parisuhteen myös koettiin vähentävän yksinäisyyden tunnetta, vaikka muiden ihmisten kanssa ei pääsytäkään kosketuksiin totuttuun tapaan (*-- olen pystynyt työskentelemään kotoa käsin - - ja asun yhdessä puolisoni kanssa, joten en koe olevani erityisen yksinäinen [L]*).

Verkko ei ole aina tuonut helpotusta yksinäisyyteen ja henkiseen pahoinvointiin: *Ei ole paikkaa missä tavata ihmisiä ja netti täynnä urpoja [S]; En halua käyttää Grindrä, ja Tinder on niin sanotusti "kuollut paikka" [S]*. Verkko saatettiin kokea välttämättömäksi pahaksi ja henkilökohtaista esiintymistä pidettiin ahdistavana, mikä puolestaan syvensi yksinäisyyden ja osattomuuden kokemusta entisestään (ks. myös. Grant ym. 2021, 655; Malmquist ym. 2024). Kaiken kaikkiaan sinkut mainitsivat verkkoitse tapahtuvan viestinnän hieman useammin kuin läheissuhteessa olevat (S: 19,4 %, n = 40; L: 12,7 %, n = 34, *); huomattakoon kuitenkin, etteivät nämä maininnat kerro verkossa tapahtuvan viestinnän todellisesta määrästä. Sinkut kokivat verkkoviestinnän hieman läheissuhteisia useammin negatiiviseksi, koska sen ei koettu lisäävän hyvinvointia. Erityisesti he nostivat esiin romanttisten ja seksisuhteiden löytämisen vaikeuden verkossa, läheissuhteissa olevat puolestaan pitivät verkkoa hyvänä keinona pitää yllä olemassa olevia ystävyysuhteita. Tämän kaltaiset kommentit tukevat aiempia havaintoja siitä, että verkkoviestintä ei ennusta sinkkujen hyvinvointia mutta ennustaa läheissuhteissa olevien pärjäämistä (Carotta ym. 2023, 2540–2541).

Vaikka henkistä hyvinvointia koskevat vastaukset eivät heijasta pelkästään sateenkaarevien kokemia ongelmia pandemian aikana, poikkeavat koke-

mukset siinä, että pandemian aiheuttaman stressin ja vähemmistöstressin yhteisvaikutus on voinut olla raskasta: *Vähemmistöstressi tuo lisäpainoa korona stressille, ja ahdistuneisuus lisääntyy kun on useampaa stressattavaa aihetta [L]*. Toisaalta pandemian aiheuttamat rajoitukset ovat voineet myös helpottaa jokapäiväistä elämää ja vähentää vähemmistöstressiä ja ahdistusta, joita ovat aiheuttaneet elämänlaatua heikentävät ja jopa väkivaltaiset ympäristöt (ks. Goldbach ym. 2021, 124; Malmquist ym. 2024, 979). Nämä kokemukset ovat yhteisiä sekä sinkuille että läheissuhteissa eläville: *Toisaalta vähemmistö stressi on vähäisempää, kun teen töitä kotoa ja ei tarvitse miettiä vessoja tai sosiaalisia tilanteita niin paljon [L]; Oon saanu - - pysytellä kotona eikä oo tarvinnu kokee julkisilla paikoilla dysforiaa [S]*. Vastauksissa näkyy Gorman-Murray ym. (2017, 46) esiin nostama seikka siitä, että koti voi olla myös emotionaalinen turvapaikka, jossa voi olla oma itsensä ja etäällä julkisesta tarkkailusta. Edellä mainittujen seikkojen lisäksi aineistossa mainittiin vielä muutaman kerran pelko yhteiskunnan radikalisoitumisesta, turvallisuuden tunteen puuttuminen ja epä tietoisuus tulevaisuudesta, jotka saattoivat nekin lisätä henkistä pahoinvointisuutta.

Monisuhteisten kaventuneet ihmissuhteet

Kyselyyn vastanneista 25 (4,8 %) ilmoitti elävänsä moni- tai polyamorisessa suhteessa. Heistä kaksi oli maininnut pandemiasta koituneen jotain positiivista: monisuhteessa elävä muunsukupuolinen vastaaja on kokenut vähemmistöstressin vähentyneen, koska *teen töitä kotoa ja ei tarvitse miettiä vessoja tai sosiaalisia tilanteita niin paljon [L]*. Toinen kumppaniensa kanssa eri paikkakunnilla asuva vastaaja on kokenut puolestaan saaneensa tarpeellisen tauon hankalassa suhteessaan: *käytimme sitä [koronan liikkumisrajoituksia] tekosyynä pitää muutoinkin tervetullutta taukoa vaikeasta suhteesta. Se tuottikin tulosta [L]*. Neljä vastaajaa puolestaan kommentoi, ettei pandemia ole vaikuttanut heihin sateenkaarevuuden näkökulmasta mitenkään.

Loput monisuhteissa elävistä vastaajista nostivat esiin samankaltaisia ongelmia kuin muutkin vastaajat, kuten tapahtumien loppumisen ja vertaistuen vähentymisen. Myöskään yksinäisyyden tunneelta he eivät ole välttyneet, koska ystäviä ja läheisiä on ollut vaikea tavata. Aineistosta nousee esiin kuitenkin yksi erityinen monisuhteisia koskeva piirre, joka on pikemminkin lähellä sinkkuvastaajien kuin läheissuhteessa elävien kokemuksia: uusien seksi-, seurustelu- ja romanttisten suhteiden löytämisen vaikeus. Koska monisuhteisuuteen liittyy samanaikaisesti useamman kuin kahden henkilön muodostama polyamorinen tai seksuaalinen suhde, on suhteissa mahdollisuus etsiä uusia kumppaneita jo olemassa olevien kumppaneiden rinnalle. Samaan tapaan kuin sinkuillakin, monisuhteisten vastaajien mahdollisuudet etsiä kumppaneita kapenivat merkittävästi pandemian aikana: *monet treffit on peruutunut sen [pandemiarajoitusten] vuoksi [L] ja deittailu on aika mahdotonta [L]*.

Liikkumis- ja tapaamisrajoitukset kokivat hankaliksi myös ne, joilla oli useita kumppaneita ennestään mutta joiden kumppaneista yksi tai useampi asui toisella paikkakunnalla: *mahdollisuudet tavata etäkumppania ovat olleet olemattomat [L]; romanttiset etäsuhteet ovat olleet todella vaikeita, koska emme ole uskaltaneet matkustaa juurikaan toistemme luokse [L]*. Yksi vastaajista pohtiikin, että *[k]orona on luultavasti vielä suurempi ongelma niille polyille joiden kumppanit asuvat eri paikkakunnilla [L]*, vastaaja itse on päättänyt *pitää pidempää taukoa kumppaninhaussa [L]* pandemian vuoksi. Monisuhteisten kokemuksissa yhdistyvät siis sinkkujen kokemukset ja sellaisten henkilöiden kokemukset, jotka asuvat pariskuntana etäsuhteessa. Eräs vastaaja on kuitenkin ollut valmis ottamaan riskejä oman henkisen hyvinvointinsa takaamiseksi: *kumppaneitani olen tavannut - -, vaikka me eri talouksissa asummekin. Tämä toimintatapa kyllä mahdollistaa melko pitkätkin hyvinvoinnin ja mielenterveyden kannalta [L]*.

Ei-cis-sukupuolisten viivästyneet transitiot ja identiteetin tukahtuminen

Lehtosen (2022) ei-cis-sukupuolisten ihmisten pandemia-ajan työelämäkokemuksia kartoittavassa tutkimuksessa kävi ilmi, että sukupuolivähemmistöihin kuuluvat ihmiset kärsivät paljon yksinäisyydestä ja mielenterveysongelmista sekä työssään että muutoin elämässään. Lisäksi transhenkilöiden työtilanne oli heikentynyt ja he kohtasivat syrjintää. Toisaalta he saattoivat myös kokea, että epäasiallinen kohtelu ja tarve noudattaa työpaikan sukupuolinormeja olivat vähentyneet etätöiden myötä. (Mts. 85.) Myös tämän kyselyn vastauksissa käsiteltiin yksinäisyyden kokemuksia ja mielenterveysongelmia. Näiden lisäksi nousi esiin kaksi teemaa: Ensinnäkin transhenkilöiden diagnoosit ja sukupuolenkorjausprosessit ovat viivästyneet, mikä on ollut omiaan lisäämään sukupuolidysforiaa: *Puolisoni transdiagnoosin saaminen on hidastunut huomattavasti ja hän on kokenut ahdistusta ja masennusta tästä johtuen [L]*, (ks. myös mts. 88). Transitiota on voitu myös viivästyttää itse, koska on pelätty terveydenhuollon kuormittumista: *[o]len venyttänyt joitain hoitoon liittyviä asioita (sotun muutos, labrat ym.), etten käyttäisi terveydenhuollon resursseja tällä hetkellä [L]*.

Toinen toistuva teema liittyy oman identiteetin rakentamiseen. Tilaisuudet elää ja tulla hyväksytyksi transsukupuolisena henkilönä ovat osoittautuneet vähäisiksi pandemian aikana, koska oman identiteetin toteuttamisen mahdollistavista julkisista tiloista on ollut puute; sukupuoli-identiteettiä merkityksellistetään kodin lisäksi paljon juuri julkisissa tiloissa (Grant ym. 2021, 654–656): *Koronaepidemia on käytännössä lopettanut elämäni transnaisena. Kaikki vapaa-ajan tilaisuudet on peruttu. - - Olen riippuvainen läheisistä kodin ulkopuolisista kontakteista [L]*). Pandemian on koettu jopa *kuihduttavan, koska vain ihmisten keskellä oleminen mahdollistaa kukoistukseni [S]*, tai *pandemia on vähentänyt sukupuolieuforian kokemuksia, kun on harvemmin syy laittaa binderi päälle ja oikein panostaa ja tuntee sen seurauksena itsensä komeaksi [L]*. (Esimerkissä mainitun rintakehää muokkaavan

liivin tms. eli binderin käyttöön on voinut liittyä myös lääketieteellisiä rajoituksia henkilöillä, joilla on pandemian aiheuttamia hengitystieongelmia, ks. Paceley ym. 2021, 100–101). Vastaavia kokemuksia siitä, ettei ole tullut nähdyksi identiteettiään vastaavana henkilönä pandemian aikana, on raportoitu myös Lehtosen (2022) ja Grantin ym. (2021) tutkimuksissa. Lähitapaamisia korvaavat verkkotapaamisetkaan eivät ole olleet kaikille transsukupuolisille henkistä hyvinvointia parantava asia: eräs vastaaja kertoo etäopiskelun olleen *äärimmäisen ahdistavaa deadnamella [’haamunimi, aiemmin annettu nimi’] muodostetun tunnuksen vuoksi [S]* ja pelänneensä tulewansa väärinsukupuolitetuksi äänensä ja verkkotunnuksensa vuoksi. Pandemian aikana väärinsukupuolittamista on tavattu laajemminkin, esimerkiksi verkoitse hoidetuissa työtilanteissa (ks. Grant ym. 2021, 654).

Koonti ja pohdinta

Olemme tarkastelleet artikkelissa sukupuoli-identiteettinsä ja seksuaalisen suuntautumisen vuoksi marginaalissa olevien henkilöiden selviytymistä covid-19-pandemian aikana. Fokusoimme erityisesti siihen, miten eläminen läheissuhteessa ja sinkkuna on vaikuttanut pandemian aikaisiin kokemuksiin ja selviytymiseen. Lisäksi tarkastelimme erikseen monisuhhteissa elävien ja ei-cis-sukupuolisten kokemuksia. Kyselyaineisto kerättiin keväällä 2021 eli vuosi pandemian alun jälkeen, ja kyselyyn vastasi yhteensä 521 henkilöä. Aineistoa analysoitiin sekä tilastollisesti avainsana-analyysin että laadullisesti avainsanojen temaattisen ryhmittelyn ja lähiluvun avulla.

Tutkimus ensinnäkin vahvistaa aiempia, muualla tehtyjä havaintoja siitä, että marginaalissa olevien ryhmien erityistarpeita ei yleensä oteta katastrofitilanteissa huomioon (esim. Gaillard ym. 2017) ja että sateenkaari-ihmisten henkinen huonovointisuus ja vähemmistöstressi kasvoivat pandemian aikana (Malmquist ym. 2024). Vastauksista käy myös selvästi ilmi, että

verrattuna läheissuhteissa eläviin sinkut kokivat pandemian vaikuttaneen elämään enemmän nimenomaan sateenkaarevuuden näkökulmasta. Tätä kokemusta selittää osittain sateenkaarisinkkujen asemoituminen selvästi kahteen marginaaliryhmään: yhtäältä seksuaali- ja sukupuolivähemmistöön ja toisaalta myös parisuhde- ja ydinperhenormeille vieraaseen sinkku- ja yksineläjävähemmistöön. Pandemia ja rajoitukset aiheuttivat vähemmän harmia yhteiskunnassa perinteisenä pidetyille suhde- ja perhemuodoille (joiden mukaisesti useat sateenkaariperheetkin elävät), sillä läheissuhteissa eläminen toi tukea ja turvallisuutta katastrofien aikana (ks. myös Nkire 2022). Sinkkuilla, joiden henkiseen hyvinvointiin eristäytyminen vaikuttaa voimakkaammin kuin läheissuhteissa oleviin (Matthews ym. 2019), tätä mahdollisuutta ei yleensä ollut, ja sosiaalisen tuen saaminen jäi helposti vain verkon varaan.

Vaikka sosiaalisen elämän kaventuminen koski vääjäämättä molempia vastaajajoukkoja, se, millaisia vaikutuksia tällä oli sinkkujen ja suhteessa elävien kokemuksiin, vaihteli. Sinkkujen vastauksissa korostuivat mahdollisuus luoda uusia suhteita ja tavata seurustelu- ja seksikumppaneita; tähän ongelmaan eivät verkkojen tarjoamat mahdollisuudetkaan tarjonneet apua. Vaikka tapaamisrajoitukset koskivat toki kaikkia suomalaisia, marginaalissa olevat kokivat ne erityisen ahdistaviksi, sillä potentiaalisen kumppanin löytäminen on heteroväestöön ja sukupuolienemmistöihin kuuluvia hankalampaa. Läheissuhteissa olevat nostivat puolestaan useammin esiin ystävien tapaamisen vaikeuden. Heillä pandemia ja rajoitukset saattoivat myös vahvistaa keskinäistä yhteenkuuluvuutta, ja suhde mahdollisti turvan ja tarjosi jonkinasteisen sosiaalisen piirin. Aivan tarkkarajaisia nämäkään erot eivät kuitenkaan olleet: myös jotkut läheissuhteissa elävät kaipasivat suhteen ulkopuolisia seksisuhteita, ja monisuhteissa elävät polyamorikot puolestaan kokivat, että uusien romanttisten suhteiden luominen jo olemassa olevien rinnalle oli tullut mahdolliseksi eli suhdekirjo kaventui. Ei-cis-sukupuolisille pandemia aiheutti uudenlaisia ongelmia oman

identiteetin kehittämisessä: vaaraksi koitui uudelleenkaapittuminen ja hoitojen keskeytyminen.

Sosiaalinen tyhjiö aiheutti erityisesti sinkuille yksinäisyyttä ja mielenterveysongelmia. Tämä johtuu paitsi kasvokkaisten tapaamisten vaikeudesta, myös siitä, että yhteydenpito valittuun perheeseen muuttui hankalaksi. Singlismen rakenteelliset ongelmat tuntuivatkin vahvistuvan pandemian aikana: sinkkujen – etenkin sateenkaarisinkkujen – erityistarpeita ei juuri huomioitu rajoitusten aikana. Kolehmainen, Lahti ja Kinnunen (2023) ovatkin todenneet singlismiin liittyvän syrjinnän vaihtelevan tilanteisesti; katastrofien aikana tällainen helposti piiloon jäävä syrjintä tuntuu vain lisääntyvän. Pacleyn ym. (2021, 98) sanoin yhteiset sosiaaliset kokemukset loppuvat siinä, missä marginalisointi alkaa; sosiaalisen luonteensa vuoksi katastrofit marginalisoivat kokemuksia entisestään marginaalien sisälläkin, ja siten pandemiakokemukset eivät ole kaikille marginalisoiduille samantaisia (ks. myös Reid ja Ritholtz 2020).

Läheissuhteisten ja sinkkujen vastaukset eivät kuitenkaan tyystin poikenneet toisistaan, vaan ryhmät jakoivat yhteisiäkin kokemuksia (ks. myös Carotta ym. 2023). Molempia ryhmiä yhdisti erityisesti liikkumis- ja tapaamisrajoitusten aiheuttama kokemus vertaistapaamisten radikaalista vähenemisestä. Tähän johtivat mm. vähemmistöille tärkeiden baarien ja tapaamispaikkojen sulkeutuminen, yhdistysten järjestämisen tuki- ja vertaistoiminnan loppuminen (ja lopulta siirtyminen verkkoon) sekä sateenkaaritapahtumien, kuten pridejen, peruuntuminen. Tällaisten vertaiskohtaamisten merkitys on marginaalissa oleville hyvin tärkeää henkisen hyvinvoinnin vuoksi, mikä näkyi selvästi vastauksissa: vertaistukea kaivattiin kovasti ja sen häviäminen aiheutti henkistä ahdistusta suhdestatuksesta riippumatta. Tällaiset pandemiakokemukset ovat hyvinkin sateenkaarierityisiä, ja samantaisia havaintoja on tehty myös muualta Euroopasta (Malmquist ym. 2024).

Tutkimuksemme valossa on selvää, että yhteiskunnan on pidettävä huolta, että resilienssiä synnyttäviä ja ylläpitäviä kokemuksia voidaan järjestää niillekin, joiden elämä ei kulje normien uomissa. Lisäksi resilienssiä on pyrittävä vahvistamaan nimenomaan ennen katastrofeja (ks. Goldbach ym. 2021, 129; ks. myös Meriläinen ym. 2021 resilienssistä ja katastrofin ajallisista suhteista). Hyvinvoinnin ja resilienssin tarkastelu tarjoaa uutta ja tarkempaa ymmärrystä sateenkaari-ihmistien selviämisestä katastrofeissa (Grant ym. 2021, 659). Käsillä oleva tutkimus käsitteli suomalaisesta kontekstista käsin nyky-yhteiskunnassa uudentyypistä vaaraa eli viruspandemiaa, joka leviää ihmisestä toiseen muutoin kuin esimerkiksi seksiteitse tai huumeiden käytön välityksellä leviävä HI-virus, jonka aiheuttaman taudin ja pandemian vaikutuksia on tarkasteltu maailmanlaajuisesti ja myös sateenkaarinäkökulmasta viljalti. Covid-19:n aiheuttamaa epävarmuuden, eristyksen ja henkisen huonovointisuuden merkitystä tarkasteltiin nyt nimenomaan sateenkaari-ihmistien elämässä, sillä on tarpeen selvittää erityisryhmien tarpeita, jotka unohtuvat helposti kaikkia ihmisiä koskevissa katastrofeissa. Koska tämänkaltaisen pandemia oli uudentyyppinen Suomessa, ei kriisi- ja hyvinvointiorganisaatioilla ollut valmiuksia suunnitella toimenpiteitä, jotka olisivat turvanneet kaikkien kansalaisten yhdenvertaisen huomioimisen; tämä tutkimus onkin paljastanut sellaisia erityisongelmia, joita sateenkaari-ihmiset ovat pandemian aikana kohdanneet ja jotka voidaan tulevaisuudessa ottaa huomioon vastaavan tyyppisten vaarojen uhatessa. Tämän lisäksi fokusoimme erityisesti sateenkaari-ihmistien omiin kokemuksiin (ks. myös Malmquist ym. 2024), emme esimerkiksi terveydenhuollon klinisiin tilastotietoihin. Huomattava on kuitenkin, että vaikka vastauksissa nousi voittopuolisesti esiin pandemian aiheuttamia negatiivisia seikkoja, joillekuille rajoitukset saattoivat olla joissain määrin positiivisiakin; parisuhteelle jäi enemmän aikaa ja suhde toimi voimavarana ja oli resilienssiä lisäävä tekijä. Vähemmistöstressi saattoi puolestaan jopa vähetä, koska paineet kodin ulkopuoliseen kanssakäymiseen esimerkiksi töissä poistuivat (ks. myös Malmquist ym. 2024).

Katastrofeistakin selviämisen näkökulmasta suurimpia haasteita ovat edelleen hetero- ja sukupuolinormatiivisuuden sekä parisuhdenormatiivisuutta ja singlismiä luovien asenteiden ja rakenteellisten puitteiden vähentäminen (ks. myös Gaillard ym. 2017, 22). Megan Daigle ja Henri Myrntinen (2018) korostavat, että syrjintä ei ilmaannu tyhjästä kriisien alkaessa vaan syrjinnän mahdollistavat rakenteet on luotu jo ennen niitä. Suomessa pandemia ei liene synnyttänyt tässä tutkimuksessa raportoitua, ulkomailla tapahtuneen kaltaista väkivaltaa, mutta se on aiheuttanut Suomessakin selviä ongelmia; ne ovat olleet pikemminkin yhteiskunnassamme esiintyneitä rakenteellisia haasteita, jotka ovat heikentäneet yleistä jaksamista ja hyvinvointia. Tutkimuksemme nostaakin esiin ongelmia, jotka jäävät aluksi helposti huomaamatta, koska ne eivät ole syntyneet esimerkiksi laittomien tekojen seurauksena eivätkä vaadi rikosoikeudellisia toimia. Pandemian seuraamukset voivat kuitenkin näkyä yhteiskunnassa ihmisten henkisenä huonovointisuutena vielä pitkään. Katastrofeihin valmistautumiseen tähtäävässä työssä ei ole kyetty ottamaan vähemmistöjä ja heidän erityistarpeitaan huomioon, vaan kokemuksia on kerättävä jälkikäteen tapaus tapaukselta. Helpotusta tähän ongelmaan voisi tuoda se, että epätasa-arvoistavia rakenteita puretaan ja marginaaliryhmiä otetaan mukaan katastrofien ehkäisytyön ja niistä palautumisen suunnitteluun (ks. myös Gorman-Murray ym. 2017, 49; Daigle ja Myrntinen 2018, 115; Saksa 2021), jolloin katastrofeihin varautuminen olisi osaavampaa ja osuvampaa myös marginaalien näkökulmasta. Tällöin voitaisiin päästä myös purkamaan läheissuhteisiin ja ydinperheeseen liittyviä normatiivisuuksia ja ottamaan huomioon moninaiset suhdemuodot ja sinkkuelämän erityispiirteet ja mahdollisuudet.

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Liite: Lähiluvun avulla syntynyt luokittelu

Lähiluvussa tehdyn teemoittelun avulla päädyimme seuraaviin sisältöluokkiin:

- Epidemia ei ole vaikuttanut elämään
- Epidemian vaikutus on koettu positiiviseksi
- Epidemian vaikutus on koettu negatiiviseksi
 - ihmissuhteet
 - uudet tuttavuudet ylipäätään (ei pari- ym. suhde)
 - deittailu
 - romanttisen tai parisuhteen löytäminen
 - seksi ja seksisuhde
 - ystävien tapaaminen
 - läheisten tapaaminen
 - sosiaaliset suhteet, erityisesti sateenkaarihenkilöiden tapaaminen
 - tapahtumat ja tapaamispaikat
 - sateenkaaribaarit ja -tapaamispaikat
 - sateenkaaritapahtumat
 - yhdistystoiminta ja vertaisryhmät
 - tapahtumat yleensä (ei-sateenkaarieryityiset)
 - henkinen hyvinvointi
 - yksinäisyys ja syrjäytyminen
 - mielenterveys
 - väärinsukupuolittaminen ja transitio
 - turvallisuus
 - epätietoisuus tulevasta
 - yhteiskunnan radikalisoituminen
 - muut (esim. harrastukset, matkustaminen)

Experiences about Arriving in Finland as a Ukrainian Trans Refugee

Mark Maletka & Susi Mikael Nousiainen

Introduction

In this essay, we discuss the situation of Ukrainian transgender refugees relocating to Finland. Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, millions of people have left Ukraine and been recorded as refugees across Europe. By the end of 2022, over 44,000 Ukrainians had applied for temporary protection or asylum in Finland (Mikkonen 2022). By February 2023, this number had risen to over 50,000 (Migri 2023), and by July 2024, it exceeded 70,000 (Yle 2024). Among these refugees, there are likely many individuals belonging to LGBTQIA+ minorities, including both sexual and gender minorities, whether open or closeted. Reflecting on our own stories – as a Ukrainian and a Finn – in dialogue, we aim to highlight some of the factors that might influence a transgender (or other LGBTQIA+) person's decision to relocate to Finland, as well as the practical issues affecting their lives. Our goal is to make these points of interest more visible to people and organisations working on this topic, both in Finland and other countries.

In the first chapter of our essay, *Deciding Where to Live (Without Time to Think)*, we focus on how LGBTQIA+ Ukrainians choose their destination countries. We explore why some countries are chosen more often than

others, how decisions are made, and how information about different options is shared among LGBTQIA+ people. While the largest numbers of Ukrainian refugees within EU countries have been recorded in Poland and the Czech Republic, people have also fled to several other countries. In terms of the number of Ukrainian refugees recorded, Finland has similar numbers to other Scandinavian countries such as Norway, Sweden, and Denmark (Operational Data Portal 2024). This section is written collaboratively.

The second chapter of the essay, *Expectations vs. Reality: Before and After Moving*, is written by Mark from his perspective as a Ukrainian now living in Finland. In this section, assumptions and realities – before and after arriving in Finland – are compared: what appeared as expected and what might have been surprising.

The third chapter, *Collaboration and Passing in Finnish Society*, is written by Susi from the perspective of a Finn. This section focuses on the possible moments of collaboration between Finnish and Ukrainian LGBTQIA+ people. It highlights trans-specific issues that may arise during the process of adapting to a new place. We also point out when personal assistance from a Finnish person is needed to access necessary organisation-based

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Essay

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and
Susi Mikael
Nousiainen

services. Finally, after sharing our two viewpoints, we return to writing together in the *Conclusions* chapter.

Deciding where to live (without time to think)

For LGBTQIA+ individuals, migration has always been particularly challenging. Previous experiences of moving to EU countries and the USA have shown difficulties such as healthcare issues, problems with integration into the societies of destination countries, and a lack of financial support for refugees of different ages and pre-migration backgrounds (e.g., Munro et al. 2013; Yarwood et al. 2022). This is especially true for Ukrainian LGBTQIA+ people, who are currently even more vulnerable due to the ongoing warfare (Shevtsova 2023).

Some issues related to fleeing and migrating are particularly specific to transgender people. Currently, it is still nearly impossible for trans women to leave Ukraine, even with a changed gender marker and proof of an F64.0 diagnosis, which leaves them stuck in the country (Iryskina 2022). Moving can be very difficult for trans people in the middle of medical transition if their documents do not match their appearance or if ID document changes are still needed. For those who have not yet started their transition, one relevant question is the possibility of reaching a place where they can get help. This also raises the question of whether they can live openly or need to stay closeted in the destination country. All these issues influence trans people's decisions about which way to move and where to go, in addition to general conditions such as language knowledge, transportation issues, and financial situation.

For many people moving from Ukraine today, the lack of opportunities to get acquainted with a future place of residence is a challenge. It might be impossible for the displaced to have the time and resources to collect

the necessary information. Although some LGBTQIA+ refugees have to do this simultaneously with attempts to leave Ukraine, they still try to search for information and at least find out something regarding the attitude towards minorities. One of the main sources is the Internet. There are websites providing details on possible contact points, organisations offering guidance, housing, and help with medical treatments. Among these, information on safe places to move can be found (Ilga Europe 2022). Personal and indirect contacts with LGBTQIA+ activists are another important source, as people often rely on their opinions regarding other countries and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Sometimes, the experiences of relatives or colleagues who have moved abroad are also considered useful information, but in the case of trans people, it is helpful if the person asked about the situation belongs to the LGBTQIA+ community themselves.

When choosing a place to move, trans people in Ukraine often start by analysing the legislation of the country of interest. Ukraine has quite ambiguous legislation regarding name changes and gender transition (Iryskina 2019), but it seems less complicated compared to neighbouring countries. This is why countries where sterilisation is required to change the gender marker or where psychiatric supervision can last more than a year are usually less preferable for migration. On the other hand, countries like Germany, Belgium, and Luxembourg, where name or gender marker changes are allowed a couple of years after moving and the procedure seems straightforward from outside the country, are usually the planned final destinations. The same considerations apply to gender-affirming therapy and obtaining hormones for hormone replacement therapy (HRT). Although information about long queues at trans clinics is available, the quality of care and reduced risk of harm by doctors are generally seen as better in many European countries.

Another important factor is the existence of networks of LGBTQIA+ organisations providing help to refugees (in general or specifically to Ukrainians), and whether they share information in Ukrainian or simple English. Financial support is also more often expected from activists than from the government; conditions for receiving living allowances are also considered important. Some refugees were in a difficult financial situation before the war started and may now need additional support before arriving at their destination.

For these reasons, some countries are chosen by LGBTQIA+ refugees more often due to seemingly easier migration processes and high expectations before arrival. One such country is Germany, where seemingly simple legislation on gender marker changes can be found. Germany also has several LGBTQIA+ organisations with contact information in Ukrainian, one of which is Munich Kyiv Queer. This organisation consists of people from different countries, including Ukraine, and was formed in 2012 to help protect the rights of Ukrainian LGBTQIA+ people (Munich Kyiv Queer, n.d.). The support of activists is expected, and the presence of Ukrainian LGBTQIA+ communities offers hope for communication with people facing similar issues. This is another reason to seek out LGBTQIA+ communities (both Ukrainian and those formed by citizens of the destination country), as they are perceived as safer environments than general Ukrainian refugee communities abroad, which may be homophobic or transphobic.

Even though some LGBTQIA+ people from Ukraine reach their desired countries, they might return to Ukraine or neighbouring countries quite soon after. This often happens due to a lack of money or difficulties adapting to the social environment. Thus, Poland is another country with many LGBTQIA+ Ukrainians, who either went to Germany through Poland and returned because they were not used to the language and

bureaucracy (Wonderzine 2022), or decided to stay in Poland once they arrived. Although attitudes towards LGBTQIA+ people are more negative in Poland than in many other European countries, the presence of a large Ukrainian community formed by migrant workers before the war, among which minorities could also be found, and the support from LGBTQIA+ groups (Fajt 2022) make it a viable option. It is also easy to reach Poland from Ukraine, and the cost of living is affordable for those moving there. Slovakia and Hungary, as neighbouring countries, are often chosen for similar reasons.

Shevtsova, a Ukrainian LGBTQIA+ activist, collected interviews from Ukrainian LGBTQIA+ refugees in Slovakia, Poland, and Hungary. These interviews highlight a couple of points. Firstly, many Ukrainians did not plan to stay in the countries where they ended up. This is especially relevant for Poland, as already mentioned, and Hungary, which was also seen as a transit country initially but turned out to be a final destination for those who were unable to leave or stay in other places (Shevtsova 2023).

Finland is not among the countries usually reached by LGBTQIA+ Ukrainians, particularly transgender people. They do not typically aim to reach Finland, and the reasons for this can be understood from within Ukraine but not from Finland. Many of these reasons are mentioned in the next section, with further comparison on how it turned out for a trans person fleeing to Finland during the fall of 2022. Although it might appear from the discussion here and further that there is time to consider various options before fleeing, this is often not the case, and decisions are made very rapidly based on the current situation – or just by chance.

Expectations vs. reality: before and after moving

This part is based on my personal experience of fleeing from Ukraine to Finland at the end of October 2022. At that time, I was a pre-transition trans man. Before fleeing Ukraine, I had only been abroad a couple of times as a tourist and knew little about migration in practice. My ideas about moving to another country were mostly based on information available within the Ukrainian information space.

Finland was not a well-thought-out choice, and the decision to flee here was almost accidental. My first option was Germany; however, I did not want to lose my progress in academia (I started working at a Ukrainian university in 2016, received a teaching position in 2021, and began my PhD studies there in 2021). I contacted the Munich Kyiv Queer organisation to ask if they could help me contact any German university, but unfortunately, it was beyond their capabilities. I also knew many Ukrainians in academia who had not found proper jobs in Germany in their fields of research. Thus, I searched for other options and, at some point, tried to reach out to scholars I had met during an online seminar a couple of months earlier.

I had no established view of Finland as a destination country. I had some information about the culture, brief mentions of the political situation, details on help provided to Ukrainians since the Russian invasion, the weather, and some university programs I was interested in applying to. When I discussed Finland as a possible place to migrate to with an LGBTQIA+ activist, they warned me about potential difficulties with trans laws and society in Finland in general. The things I heard were repeated in the information I later found on the Internet.

It appeared that not much information was available regarding Finland in Ukraine or among Ukrainian LGBTQIA+ people. Most easily accessible sources did not go into detail about migrants' and refugees' trans rights.

Sources in English provided some overall ideas, while those in Ukrainian were very limited in terms of information about Finland and trans people.

In global works by NGOs, Finland was mentioned only briefly, with some small cases pointing out difficulties with trans legislation. In their report on trans families, published in 2020, NGO Insight mentioned Finnish legislation mostly from the perspective of its limitations. It stated that there were both direct and indirect limitations in gender marker changes and receiving gender-affirming therapy, although gender equality and diversity in education were mentioned positively (Iryskina 2020a; Iryskina 2020b).

The Ukrainian translation of “Legal Gender Recognition in Europe: Toolkit” (Iryskina 2020a), similar to the original document (Köhler et al. 2016), mentioned Finland a couple of times regarding the requirements for sterilisation and divorce to get treatment and gender marker changes, as did some other sources (Iryskina 2018). Although the laws are currently quite different, including the requirements for sterilisation in gender transition and the gender marker change process, the whole process is still considered more complicated than the procedure in Ukraine.

There were also no details on social attitudes towards LGBTQIA+ people in Finland. Assumptions I heard from other Ukrainians were rather negative. When I had the opportunity to ask directly from people in Finland, I decided to describe my situation openly before arriving. The answer I received was a great relief: although people with negative attitudes can be found in any country, Finnish society was generally described as tolerant. From that point, I started using my real name and pronouns in communication with future colleagues in Finnish academia.

For some time, I tried to find a place to stay in Finland via the Internet. Wanting to start openly as a trans person, I faced a challenge not directly connected to LGBTQ+ issues: the amount of living allowance given after

receiving temporary protection. This is important because it is dangerous for trans people to stay in refugee camps for long periods. If there is no special shelter for LGBTQIA+ individuals or other friendly environments, having a separate place to live is necessary. For pre-transition trans people, this poses even more questions, such as whether to stay silent when living with someone or in a dormitory, or to take the risk of coming out and facing possible dangerous consequences. There is also the fear of further difficulties in finding accommodation, which would be expected in Ukraine.

I started as a guest researcher at the University of Jyväskylä and was provided temporary accommodation, which solved the housing issue for a couple of months. Then, I had to rent an apartment in Tampere. Initially renting shared apartments, I was unsure if I needed to disclose my situation to neighbours and had no experience talking openly about LGBTQIA+ related issues. Fortunately, I received contacts from a person in Finnish academia who was willing to help and had lots of information about LGBTQIA+ issues in Finland. We became friends, and I received a lot of support with challenges I had not anticipated. I could freely ask about social differences, making it easier to navigate everyday communication.

Another challenge faced at the very beginning was related to granting temporary protection, which is different from refugee status and the asylum-seeking procedure. While applying for temporary protection, I had no opportunity to mention that I was trans and needed help with further steps regarding gender transition. This made the situation worse, especially since I had just left a country where it might have been unsafe even to raise this question. I managed to disclose my situation only when I reached Tampere and went to The Red Cross centre there, and I had to initiate this conversation, which was quite stressful. I was also fortunate to meet people comfortable with English, and I knew I could ask for a

translator from Ukrainian to Finnish at least there. However, as I later learned, not every place had English-speaking employees. So, language was another barrier that worked differently from what I expected: I was able to navigate with my English in most places, but healthcare services and banks required additional efforts or help from people in Finland. In my case, healthcare was the most difficult area, since I had to come out to every person and ask uncomfortable questions.

Asking questions about this is additionally stressful for someone who has spent their life in a transphobic environment, so it might be hard to assume how many closeted trans people left Ukraine with the need to silently adapt to a new environment. I heard from several people living in Finland that not many LGBTQIA+ Ukrainians moved here, and that could probably be the reason. If there are supporting organisations, their contact persons may be the ones to reach out to for help. However, Finnish organisations supporting LGBTQIA+ individuals seem unfamiliar to Ukrainians due to the language barrier, and therefore this information channel may not be available. Probably because of that, some things had to be searched for when I asked if it would be possible to start my transition here: we checked my eligibility for healthcare with an LGBTQIA+ organisation in Jyväskylä called Jyväskylän SETA ry, then provided the details to The Red Cross centre in Tampere, and I was able to ask for more support from there.

As I had not started the document change process back in Ukraine, using the correct name was one of the biggest difficulties in official interactions (and continues to be a challenge after a year of attempts to figure things out). The procedure for a name change takes at least six months from abroad and is quite complicated, so when I arrived, I had to use my ID documents with my birth name. It took some time for the name to be changed in the university IT system, which was important for my work and PhD studies. With my experience from Ukraine, I would not have raised

these questions myself at all, since the opportunity to do so contradicts my experience of working at a Ukrainian university. However, here it is possible, which practically embodies the ideas of diversity and equality for me.

Regarding social differences, the only thing I noticed as awkward was the attempts by almost all Finns to connect me with other Ukrainians. I had not expected that – for me, it was uncomfortable to seek communication with potentially transphobic people since my experience taught me that, in most cases, our shared nationality would be less important to them than the fact that I was trans. So, I was prepared to avoid communities of Ukrainians whenever possible until I could determine their attitude towards LGBTQIA+ individuals. It surprised me that I had to explain this, sometimes in detail, while for me it was perceived as obvious.

All in all, the information I got from the Internet and other Ukrainians was different from the reality. The reality is different from how Finland is perceived from the sources available in Ukraine; it is possible to find support here as a trans person with the help of other people from Finland. The lack of language knowledge, as well as the lack of understanding of how society and state systems work, required time and effort to understand, and doing it on one's own could have been much harder.

Collaboration and passing in Finnish society

As a Finn I, Susi, had the chance to gain new perspectives on my country's culture by becoming friends with a Ukrainian academic. My friend and colleague contacted me in late 2022 and asked me to help “a new guy at the university” who had just arrived from Ukraine and was a trans man – like myself. My colleague hoped that I could easily provide the newcomer with information about trans-specific services and share silent knowledge

about the topic in the Finnish context. Some of these questions were more discussed in Finnish society, but others – such as migrating as both trans and Ukrainian – had remained more invisible. Here, I will try to point out some situations where passing within Finnish society was made difficult or almost impossible without the help of a Finnish person (or someone who had lived here for a longer time).

When I first heard from my new Ukrainian friend about how Finland is not among the best countries to move to, I was kind of disappointed. Equality is a strongly important part of Finnish values and even our national identity, so this felt challenging. On the other hand, I was very well aware of the problems with Finnish trans legislation and the political discussions about it during the early 2020s. Somehow, it had been difficult for me to notice that these problems could affect how Finland was seen from the outside. As the trans legislation was discussed in the Finnish media, it felt like the whole case was only inside Finland, but of course, it was seen from other countries too. Becoming aware of the attitude Ukrainians might have towards so-called equal Finland made me realise how connected we are even when apparently discussing within one country. Especially LGBTQIA+ people, whose safety often needs special care, share their knowledge through unofficial channels and social media.

The issues of housing and living openly in shared apartments or refugee reception centres are common knowledge both in Finland and internationally. Throughout Europe, it is estimated that one-third of trans youth have experienced homelessness, and it is recognized that these individuals have a risk of avoiding services, even when they would be helpful to them (Stakelum 2021). In Finland, the organisation Vailla Vakinaista Asuntoa (an organisation for homeless people) published a statement during Pride month 2021 on the diversity of homeless people in Finland. They demanded statistics on LGBTQIA+ people among the

homeless and better recognition of the special threats and needs for them when designing equal services (VVARY 2021). From the viewpoint of refugees, addressing potential issues in safe housing is something to be considered much more carefully in our society, so that decisions wouldn't be made without proper knowledge of risks or safety.

We soon found out that most of the information regarding LGBTQIA+ topics and migration was in Finnish. There was variance between different organisations; the Finnish organisation Seta ry had published some information in English, but not very much. Some of the information, for example about peer support groups in English, was hidden behind several links on the web pages, making it difficult to navigate as a non-Finnish-speaking person. This is what happened in our case: as I was asked to help “the Ukrainian newcomer” regarding trans-specific topics, I began searching for information on the web pages and found it in Finnish.

One of the most important organisations for getting information about Finnish society in the case of refugees is The Red Cross. I knew that their work is directed by Finnish law, which is very strict about equality and discrimination, and assumed that the workers in that organisation understood the importance of this. That was why I, from my viewpoint, believed that coming out would be safe in the refugee services of the Red Cross (of course depending on the persons who happened to work there). I pointed out that the waiting room of the office had a Pride flag among their other leaflets and posters. I know that in public services in Finland, this often is a silent sign that you are allowed to talk about yourself, for example in schools, youth services, or healthcare. Later, I heard that coming out was not made easy in practice because there wasn't necessarily a suitable space or ways of talking offered to the customer. Discussing this later left us both thinking: how to address sensitive topics and who should mention them first? How could you actively give space and safety for such topics?

This is a good question, especially when working with people from very different backgrounds and struggles.

In the case of an LGBTQIA+ refugee coming to Finland, they would need someone both for personal mentoring about societal norms and for finding information. Living at the intersection of being trans and under temporary protection didn't make it easy to get all the practical information needed. It could be pinpointed that to reach truly equal service for people applying for refugee status (or being under temporary protection), it is crucial to produce this kind of intersection-specific information. It was not enough to get information about being trans or being on temporary protection status because both of these aspects were activated together. There must have been many other transgender refugees in Finland before, too, and people in the helping organisations have probably learned a lot about the issues they might encounter. Reporting these past issues and communicating with other professionals about them – which is probably already done at some level – would make it easier for people in the same situation in the future.

Altogether, the information from the organisations did exist but was not easily found or might have been quite mixed. This might appear as a bottleneck for a person trying to get help: there was actually support available once you found it, but how to find information about its location at first? This was where a contact person who could help mattered quite a lot.

Conclusions

In this essay, we have gathered our experiences of arriving in Finland as a Ukrainian trans refugee, from the viewpoints of a Ukrainian and a Finn. As we discussed different situations, both positive and negative, we wanted

to highlight some factors that could significantly affect a person's life in a similar situation.

We found that finding information, both before arriving in the country and while already here, and learning cultural codes and attitudes were very important. Additionally, the importance of an intersectional approach in preparing materials and services for incoming people was one of our main points of interest. People arriving in Finland could find information about refugee status-related topics in English or even in Ukrainian, but not about living at the intersection of being a refugee and LGBTQIA+. It seemed that information about being LGBTQIA+ was mainly for Finnish-speaking people, and Ukrainians were perhaps seen only as Ukrainians (or Ukrainian refugees), without necessarily considering other aspects of their lives.

In our case, the skills or lack thereof in the English language were an important factor. Finding information about Finnish society, LGBTQIA+ topics, or anything else would have been quite different without English fluency. As we raised the question of the need for more accessible information regarding the intersection of refugees/temporary protection and LGBTQIA+, we also noticed that many people within this group cannot communicate in English.

Finnish public services have produced a lot of information about living in the society, from healthcare and the school system to news in Ukrainian, when it has been deemed important. We think it might be that we still tend to see only one category at a time: for refugees, it is assumed that you only need refugee-related information, and other personal life-related topics come after that. But in reality, some personal factors, such as being LGBTQIA+, might be the first category to focus on while integrating into Finnish society. This category might be a significant factor when it comes to basic needs such as housing and safety – it should not be approached as something that relates only to secondary needs or Pride events.

That is why we suggest that these categories should not be considered separately anymore: a person relocating to a foreign country is living through both of them simultaneously. If we want more positive stories of people integrating into Finland and feeling a sense of belonging here, it is important to focus on producing accessible information and creating space for safely discussing LGBTQIA+ related topics for refugees as well.

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DOES QUEERNESS LUBRICATE THE GENTRIFICATION CRISIS?

Observing the Effects in Madrid's Urban Space

Jonna Tolonen

ABSTRACT

This visual essay explores the ability of urban space to communicate the effects of gentrification. The essay is based on field work by walking in Madrid between 2017 and 2024, particularly in the neighbourhood of Lavapiés, known for its large-scale gentrification and queer community. For example, stickers, posters, murals, wall writings, signs of everyday life and even rubbish can represent communication that provides a broader understanding of how gentrification is experienced. The inhabitants of Madrid have faced rising housing and service prices, and changes in the social structure of neighbourhoods due to gentrification that have been observable in the city for the last decade. Some studies have highlighted that queers can be both casualties and accelerators of the gentrification process when the business world attempts to commodify the value of queerness. The author offers a critical perspective on the material and symbolic changes caused by gentrification, along with reflections on how queerness relates to the gentrification process.

Keywords: Airbnb, gentrification, Madrid, Lavapiés, photography, queerness, Spain, touristification, urban space, walking

The constant droning sound in the streets, coming from the suitcases people are pulling. It is almost noon in Lavapiés in April 2024, and I confront large masses of tourists checking out from their Airbnb apartments. I cannot help spotting the 'FUCK AIRBNB. SAVE THE BARRIO [NEIGHBOURHOOD]' stickers nor the 'DO NOT DRAG ROLLING LUGGAGE ON THE STAIRS' posters on the doors the tourists close behind them. The sound of rolling suitcases rattling over pavement might be one of the most noticeable auditory signs of gentrification. (Tolonen 2024)

Gentrification has had an impact on the everyday life of people in Lavapiés, a southern neighbourhood of Madrid. Lavapiés used to be a working-class place with old housing, low rent and a large community of immigrants, and was the most multicultural neighbourhood in the city (see e.g. Sequera & Janoschka 2015, 382; Torres Bernier, Vega Hidalgo & Ortega Palomo 2018, 44). When I first visited Lavapiés in 2011, the neighbourhood had about 40,000 inhabitants and was stigmatised as a place of drugs, sex work and crime. I was even told not to go there by myself. Yet I always felt safe there. As I often spent several days in a row taking photographs there from

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the early hours of the morning until late in the evening, I remember how the drug dealers at the *Plaza de Lavapiés* began to recognize me and after a few days stopped asking me if I wanted to buy hash.

Everything changed in Lavapiés after the Spanish financial crisis (2008–2014) that overheated the construction sector and resulted in high levels of debt among households and companies, as well as bank credit losses and falls in house prices (see e.g. Tolonen 2021). Public investment policies and private initiatives began to boost commercial, cultural, and real estate activities in the Lavapiés area (Sequera & Janoschka 2015, 375). Words like “renewal”, “reconstruction”, “reconfiguration”, “revitalisation”, and “reurbanisation” became more frequent in official reports, articles, and the news I read about the neighbourhood (see e.g. Ardura Urquiaga, Lorente-Riverola & Ruiz Sanchez 2020; Torres et al. 2018). Lavapiés turned into – and not just according to Time Out magazine – one of the world’s “coolest” places (El País 2018).

Gentrification can be described as “the process of privatisation and sanitisation through which previously derelict and economically marginal spaces are regenerated and replaced by spaces that are more upscale, consumerist and commercialised” (Burchiellaro 2023, 15–16; see also Sorando & Ardura 2016). In Lavapiés, the shift from a working-class to a hip environment meant pricing out some people. Rents and apartment prices began to rise by approximately 10% yearly (Aunión 2016). Some people were pushed out of their neighbourhood via evictions, rent increases, demolitions, or public housing closures. The poster shown in Figure 1 is encouraging people to help prevent the eviction of Pepi, who had lived in her flat for 20 years. She had been unable to pay her rent since it was suddenly raised by 300%. In addition to women, other vulnerable groups who are often amongst the most affected by the housing crisis are



Figure 1. “WE WILL STOP THE EVICTION OF PEPI”. The poster calls on people in the neighbourhood to come and sleep in tents in front of Pepi’s house to prevent the eviction. Photo by the author (2018).

queers¹ and migrants (Björklund & Dahl 2014, 19), who are at greater risk of homelessness (Carr et al. 2022). According to Madrid’s city council, between 2019 and 2023 the number of homeless people rose from 2,772 to 4,431 (La Vanguardia 2019; Provienda n.d.). As such, the street view in Figure 2 is not uncommon in Madrid.

1 “Queer is a notoriously slippery term that resists precise definitions” (Brown 2015), but the term queer in this essay is utilised to describe the issues of power and normativities beyond the domains of gender and sexuality, thus aligning with those contributions framing queer as a political position of becoming, connecting multiple social and economic issues (Brown 2015).



Figure 2. Beggar's spot outside the entrance of a church. The sign says "PLEASE, I NEED HELP". Passers-by sometimes leave food, water bottles, or coins on top of the box. Photo by the author (2017).



Figure 3. After a traditional local bar that was a popular meeting place for residents was turned into a trendy restaurant for tourists, the residents showed their dislike through stencils reading "POSH PEOPLE ARE NOT WELCOME", "CAUTION! [REAL ESTATE] SPECULATORS ON THE LOOSE" and "LAVAPIÉS RESISTE, HIPSTERS OUT", which were painted by the entrance of the new establishment where customers queue to enter. Photo by the author (2018).

For many, gentrification has not simply meant 'just relocating', as gentrification impacts on people's quality of life and their *sense of belonging*. Loss of community can be experienced as neighbours, local businesses and meeting places are lost; even if residents do not have to move, the new built environment means they experience displacement (Kern 2022, 10–11; see also Phillips, Smith, Brooking & Duer 2021, 79; Tolonen 2020). Kern goes as far as arguing that gentrification "is an act of theft: of place, and of social, economic, and cultural resources" (Kern 2022, 63). As a consequence, people tend to protest when they lose their favourite neighbourhood places, as Figure 3 illustrates.

As Lavapiés was rebuilt to meet tourism needs, including multinational coffee chains, smoothie shops, poke bowl and sushi bars and yoga studios, tourism numbers rose. Mostly immigrant-owned hardware stores and small fruit and butcher shops were replaced with art galleries, bookshops and vintage clothing stores. As there were hardly any hotels nor land on which to build them, Lavapiés was in a relatively short time *airbnbified* (see e.g. Ardura Urquiaga et al. 2020, 3105). According to Inside Airbnb statistics, in March 2024 Madrid city centre had 25,543 apartments listed on Airbnb, making it the most visited city in Spain. More than half of the apartments were offered by a host who had more than one apartment listed on Airbnb. Meanwhile Berlin, which has slightly more inhabitants than Madrid, had 13,327 apartments listed during the same period. (Inside Airbnb 2024)

Madrid is full of inequalities and exclusions, like any other big capital. Some members of the queer community have benefitted while some have been displaced or experienced exclusion due to gentrification (Costa & Pires 2019, 6; Ghaziani 2014, 144; Kern 2022, 79; Monaco & Corbisiero 2022, 354). Moskowitz (2017) argues that queer people “have both been victims and perpetrators of gentrification”. According to Moskowitz, this is due to the relationship between queer people and the cities they live in. Historically, queer people have moved from the countryside and suburbs to more open-minded cities, where they could find a safer environment, low rent and queer communities (see Costa & Pires 2019, 11; Monaco & Corbisiero 2022, 352). But during this shift, queer people “have been used as pawns by real estate developers to help kick off the gentrification of neighbourhoods and entire cities” (Moskowitz 2017). Their very presence in these neighbourhoods has transformed them and accelerated gentrification. Also, Costa and Pires (2019, 5) and Monaco and Corbisiero (2022, 352) note that queer people can be seen as promoters of and contributors to deeper gentrification, and that often neighbourhoods which have undergone restyling during a gentrification process are known for their large queer communities.

Madrid is often described as a place that embraces difference, and markets itself as an LGBTQIA+ friendly city (see e.g. Madrid Orgullo 2024). As illegal wall writings and street art pieces are rather frequent and accepted in Spanish walls (see e.g. Tolonen 2016; Tolonen 2021), members of the queer community also tend to leave their marks around the neighbourhood. Wall writings and other street art – often accompanied by symbols – are a form of bottom-up street activism (Tolonen 2021). Wall writings are used as codes that are mostly directed, rather than at the general public, at a small group of people who are able to decode and read them (Tolonen 2016). Pieces on walls, such as that seen in Figure 4, also strengthen the queer community’s presence in the area and transform the urban space so that

queers feel more welcome and safe moving around the neighbourhood (see e.g. Brown 2015; Tolonen 2016).



Figure 4. As I walk I gather a lot of information and experience not just about the pieces I spot but also about the area around the wall writings (see also Fransberg, Myllylä and Tolonen 2021, 368–369). This phrase, “TODAY IS A GOOD DAY TO BECOME A DYKE”, was painted perhaps just moments before I photographed it, as the spray paint was still dripping and I could smell it. Queer wall writings articulate the queer presence in the area. This can also be referred to as *queerification* of the space (see e.g. Navarro 2014, 84). Photo by the author (2017).

It is not uncommon to spot queer wall writings that are against the gentrification process either. The wall writings in Figures 5 and 6 narrate these anti-gentrification stories. Figure 5 shows a piece by Orgullo Crítico [Critical Pride], an umbrella term for a series of protests organized by queer people as an alternative to the original pride parades and festivals. Orgullo Crítico calls for non-commodification of gay pride and criticises



Figure 5. Queer wall writings in Lavapiés. Photo by the author (2017).



Figure 6. "OUR PRIDE IS NOT MARKETING". Photo by the author (2017).

gentrification, homonormativity and capitalism (Orgullo Crítico Madrid 2024). The same figure (see Figure 5) also shows a well-known symbol of bisexuality and the letters TRW, which refers to transsexual women. These markings on the wall make the queer presence in the area known and work as interactions within the queer community (Tolonen 2016). A similar kind of communication can be seen in a use of a pink triangle below the text in Figure 6.

The assumption that queer residents are somehow synonymous with gentrification has also faced criticism. According to Amin Ghaziani, author of the book "There Goes the Gayborhood?", there is evidence that LGBT residents boost property prices in the US, but it is also worth noting that "despite the myth of gay affluence, LGBT households are actually more likely to be poor. 11.9% of US same-sex households are living in poverty compared to 5.7% of opposite-sex households" (Ghaziani 2016, as cited in O'Sullivan 2016). Ghaziani (2014, 25) also underlines the process of gentrification by stating that queer people are often among the first wave to rebuild the neighbourhood but that the "super-gentrifiers of the second wave are mostly straight people" who transform the area "for retail commerce and realty speculation" (see also Phillips et. al. 2021, 66). This transformation also often results in the disappearance of queer meeting places as chain stores replace them. Burchiellaro (2023, 112) also highlights the dropping numbers of authentic queer spaces and venues in deeply gentrified areas.

Gentrification is always being facilitated by developers, city governments, investors, and speculators (Kern 2022, 8). Queerness too can be harnessed as the "productive potential of diversity" to achieve better business results and can even be "used to lubricate the process of gentrification"

Figure 7. An example of the new daily aesthetics in Lavapiés: rubbish left in the streets by tourists – a small suitcase, a pair of shoes and three plastic bags full of dumped clothes. Photo by the author (2017)

Figure 8. Another example of the new aesthetics. Photo by the author (2018).

as “queerness becomes commodified through the gentrification process” (Burchiellaro 2023, 16). Moskowitz (2017) states that queerness boosts gentrification in cities as the corporate world seeks to extract the productive value of queerness.

According to Burchiellaro (2023, 16), who studied the relationship between queerness and gentrification in London, gentrification should not be seen only as an “an economic process – nor physical closure – it is also productive of new aesthetics”:

The visuals in the urban space in Lavapiés are changing with mass tourism. There are empty beer cans and bottles, piss and vomit stains in the streets in the early hours of the morning, and when you walk outside at noon, there are not many streets without piles and piles of rubbish left behind by tourists. After doing so much shopping in Primark and Zara, etc., their suitcases are too full and they need to leave their old stuff behind. Sometimes they dump their suitcases as well and buy new bigger ones. (Tolonen 2017) (see Figure 7)

As real estate investors sought more apartments in Lavapiés to fulfil the needs of tourists, a lot of old flats in the area were rebuilt:

There are five or six handymen remodelling a small apartment next door. The neighbour told me it will be another Airbnb flat for the “guiris” [tourists]. The men carried all the furniture from the apartment outside to a dumpster they had ordered but I guess it was not big enough, because next morning I find a toilet bowl and a fridge still full of food outside the flat. (Tolonen 2018) (see Figure 8)





Figure 9. “RESPECT THE NEIGHBOURS DO NOT SPEAK LOUDLY THANKS”. Photo by the author (2017).

Figure 10. 2024 was a time of nationwide anti-tourism protests in Spain. There were marches against e.g. mass tourism, the rise in housing prices, and the use of natural resources for tourism needs. Also, hostility towards tourists rose. (See e.g. El Salto 2024) Photo by the author (2024).



Gentrification is not only producing new aesthetics in the city, as can be seen from the examples above (see Figures 7 & 8), but also a new soundscape. Back in 2017 I remember seeing the first, still quite polite notes to tourists asking them to consider the permanent residents of the area. These notes were usually attached to the doors or entrances of buildings (see Figure 9).

As gentrification proceeded the number of tourists grew every year, and as there were more people singing, talking, sometimes fighting and urinating drunk under their windows, the tone of the messages from the permanent residents changed from politeness to irritation, even hostility towards tourists. Nowadays, it is not surprising to hear locals confronting the tourists verbally, imploring them to “go home”, “go back to your country”, saying “this used to be my home” or calling them “terrorists”, as illustrated in Figure 10 (Tolonen 2024, see also Euronews 2024).

Perhaps one of the most famous anti-gentrification pieces in Lavapiés was created by Madrid-based artist *El Rey de la Ruina*, who painted a series of heart-shaped works between 2016 and 2018 stating “LAVAPIÉS INGENTRIFICABLE...YA PUNTO” [LAVAPIÉS IS IMPOSSIBLE TO GENTRIFY...FULL STOP] (see Figure 11). The pieces were widely used in media news and even appeared on a book cover about gentrification (see Sorando & Ardura 2016). I talked to the artist himself in June 2024, who shared some of his ideas on how to fight the gentrification process in Lavapiés:

Well, it is a structural problem. There should be a law to control touristification, to help residents who have lived there for a long time, especially families and elderly people, and to keep rents down. Investment in health, public spaces and sports and cultural centres can generate attractiveness for the people of Madrid, help the local population organise and generate a strong and resilient social and commercial group [of people] capable of confronting the large private investments that have always tried to concentrate on properties in the [city] centre for speculation or tourism. (El Rey de la Ruina 2024)

Today the profile of the inhabitants of Lavapiés is different from that at the beginning of the 2000s. Due to gentrification, the population is now younger, with fewer children but more education and from wealthier economic backgrounds, living in more expensive apartments (Torres et al. 2018, 64; Ardura Urquiaga et al. 2020, 3104; Ardura Urquiaga, Lorente-Riverola, & Sorando 2021, 69–76). It is important to remember, as Kern (2022, 80–81) underlines, that “we ought to keep the focus on what gentrification means for the most vulnerable members of the queer community”. In the Lavapiés area, for example, it has meant relocation for many trans women who are often single parents and cannot afford the rising rent and house prices. Upscaling the profile of the neighbourhood for the needs of mass tourism has increased police visibility in the area as the city council wants to highlight the safety of the area for tourists. This has resulted in queer youth being ticketed for being a nuisance or loitering and increased the amount of racial profiling of people of colour (see e.g. XLavapiés 2024). In May 2024 the Madrid Tenants’ Union reported that more than one thousand buildings were about to be turned into tourist apartments and it was therefore estimated that over 21,000 people were in danger of being evicted. One of the most affected areas will be Lavapiés. (El Público 2024)



Figure 11. Anti-gentrification piece by artist El Rey de la Ruina [King of the Ruins] in Madrid. He uses the alias because of his love for abandoned places and particularly ruins (Tolonen 2016). Photo by the author (2018).

Post-dictatorship Spain has put a lot of effort into the tourism economy (see e.g. Holleran 2017), and in 2023 a new record was set in international tourism: more than 85 million tourists arrived in the country, making Spain the second-most visited country in the world (Statista 2024), with tourism contributing 13% of GDP (Álvarez Ondina 2024). Despite the restrictions the city council has put in place to reduce the effects of gentrification in Lavapiés (e.g. restricting the number of Airbnb apartments and sanctioning illegal tourist apartments), gentrification does not seem likely to cease. It will not be an easy task for Madrid’s city council to balance the economics of mass tourism and the quality of life of permanent residents.

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"GAYS MENTIONED"¹ – THREAT OR OPPORTUNITY?

Queer Feminist Analysis of Finland's Foreign Affairs Doctrine Value-Based Realism and Support of Ukraine Recovery and Development Plan

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Commentary

Marjaana Jauhola

Introduction: SOGI in Global Politics

Negotiation around heteronormativity and SOGI (sexual orientation and gender identity) questions has been politicized in the global politics at least since the mid-1980s. When the 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1985 adopted UN member states' first formal commitment towards the promotion of gender equality, number of UN member states made reservations of the use of the word *gender* – by demanding it to be square-bracketed, which in UN protocols means it is a disputed concept. To these states, and to the conservative religious civil society lobby present in the parallel NGO forum, the term *gender* was considered a code for accepting homosexuality, fluid sexuality, the destruction of family, and questioning of binary anatomical sex (Baden & Goetz 1997; see also Butler 2004, 181–184). Since then, similar battles and conservative lobbying

have been seen in relation to World Bank loans (Lind 2005), and anti-homosexuality laws (Rao 2020). More generally, such battles can be seen to be aligned with wider anti-gender movement, and opponents of so-called gender ideology (Paternotte & Kuhar 2018) affecting LGBTIQ+ people globally in intensified manner (Honkasalo 2020).

This commentary focuses on how queer crises and responses to them entered the core of right-wing populism in Finland in 2024 and stirred the foreign affairs and security leadership of the government. This historical momentum was shaped in the aftermath of a decision by Minister for Trade and Development Tavo in charge of the support for the reconstruction of Ukraine, to decline the Finnish government's participation in the Alliance for Gender-Responsive and Inclusive Recovery of Ukraine due to the LGBTIQ+ reference in the Alliance's formation documents.

Up until 2024, the main public attention in Finland for the past 2.5 years has been on the military aspects of the Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. The war accelerated the government's application to join NATO in 2022, and Finland became a member less than a year after. The Finnish media follows – with military and war studies dominated expert commentary – on a daily basis both the war effort of Ukraine and Russia

¹ Name of the episode of "Hard week's evening" weekly satire aired by the Finnish Broadcasting Company YLE on 28 September 2024. The episode focused on the political stir that was caused within the foreign affairs and security leadership of the government in the aftermath of a minister declining Finnish government's support for the Alliance for Gender-Responsive and Inclusive Recovery of Ukraine due to LGBTIQ+ reference.

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as well as the military support extended to Ukraine from its international alliance, including Finland. Unlike right-wing populist parties in other European countries and the US, Finns party is formally in favour of the military support of Ukraine.²

Much less focus is on the economic and social recovery plan of the Ukraine, although, the Recovery and Development Plan (RDP) of Ukraine was already drafted and endorsed at the international Ukraine Recovery Conference (URC) in Switzerland in July 2022 with representatives of 41 countries, Council of Europe, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, European Commission, European Investment Bank, and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. The conference reiterated the adherence to transparency, accountability, the rule of law, democracy, gender equality, and inclusion as their guiding principles for the recovery process (Lyubchenko 2022, 21).

The Alliance for Gender-Responsive and Inclusive Recovery of Ukraine was formed in 2024 at the Berlin Ukraine Recovery Conference, with the leadership of UN Women Ukraine in collaboration with the Platform for Gender Mainstreaming and Inclusive Recovery, led by the Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration. According to the UN, the alliance has been joined by 15 governments, major international financial institutions, UN agencies, the EU, and civil society and private sector organisations. (UN Ukraine 2024.) UN website reiterates the aims of the alliance:

Members of the Alliance are encouraged to support initiatives that promote gender equality, women's protection, and empowerment;

2 Recent investigative journalism suggests that the Finnish Security and Intelligence Service Supo had warned the party leadership over ten years ago of the too close relations between certain members of the party and Russian government agents (Teittinen 2024).

and to prioritize the needs of displaced women, returnees, disabled women, veterans, rural women, and LGBTIQ+ persons, ensuring their participation in recovery decision-making processes. (ibid.)

The Finnish government supports the RDP with its own austerity economic order, which has led to a major downsizing of its development aid, but also its diplomatic forces at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs: support for Ukraine was shifted from the Political Affairs Department to that of the Development Policy Department – and Ukraine was declared as the number one partner in Finnish development aid (Government of Finland 2023, 185). All in all, the government, and the newly appointed president, have launched their new foreign affairs and security policy doctrine “value-based realism”, alongside an increase in military spending due to Finnish NATO membership. Value-based realism, as the government defines it, refers to “we stand by values we consider important and central to us, such as democracy, the rule of law, international law and human rights, peace, equality, and non-discrimination. At the same time, we are also ready to engage in dialogue with countries that do not share our views and values.” (Government of Finland 2024, 8.)

The queer crisis of the foreign affairs and security leadership

In September–October 2024, the question of gender equality and support for SOGI inclusive policies in support of reconstruction of Ukraine shook for several weeks the foundations of the Finnish government foreign and security policy – for which negotiated consensus has dominated since the cold war.

Throughout the episode, Prime Minister Orpo and Minister for Foreign Affairs Valtonen appeared in the media emphasising the Finnish foreign and security policy is crystal clear and that “mountain was made of a

molehill” (Yle Areena 2024b). President Stubb, however, took a more openly critical stand stating that “foreign affairs should not be used as a weapon of domestic politics in any form” (Närhi 2024) hinting towards an internal conflict within the government but primarily criticising the bureaucrats of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, rather than the minister in charge. In Finland, as per the constitution, foreign and security policy is directed by the President in co-operation with the Government. Currently all three key positions of foreign and security policy matters – the President, the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs – are held by one party, National Coalition Party.

At stake was the decision made in June by Minister for Trade and Development Tavio, from the populist the Finns Party, that Finland would not take part in the Alliance for Gender-Responsive and Inclusive Recovery in support of reconstruction of Ukraine as the alliance referred to SOGI/LGBTIQ+ and ‘inclusiveness’ in its founding document. This decision was made despite the official government stance, also published in June 2024, which states that “[w]e stand by values we consider important and central to us, such as democracy, the rule of law, international law and human rights, peace, equality, and non-discrimination” (Government of Finland 2024, 8).

The decision not to join the alliance was made in the middle of Finnish summer holiday season and was leaked months later, in September, by a national media outlet drawing from sources from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Once it became public, it led to a strong announcement by President Stubb from the UN General Assembly week in New York that he will personally rectify the matter with the Ukrainian President Zelensky the following day and ensure that SOGI concerns will become a central element of Finnish foreign affairs (Tikka 2024).

After the Ministerial Committee on Security and Foreign Affairs had met with President Stubb in early October, formal press conferences held by both Prime Minister Orpo and President Stubb both reiterated that the core of the Finnish security and foreign policy line stays intact – the government stands for gender equality and support of minorities such as LGBTIQ+ people. The Prime Minister emphasised that “ministers make hundreds of individual decisions” (Närhi 2024) yet such decisions such as the one made by Minister for Trade and Development Tavio in June, do not shake the line of the government. He went on to describe how the said Minister for Trade and Development, together with the Minister for Social Security – a member of the Prime Minister’s party and who is in charge of gender equality policies – will oversee the preparation for Finnish support for Ukraine’s reconstruction program with a gender equality and non-discrimination dimension. President Stubb, furthermore, in his address to the media, emphasised how Finland continues to support SOGI concerns in multilateral relations of Finland between the UN, European Council, and the OECD.

All in all, the message from the President and the Prime Minister emphasized that one such decision does not change the foreign and security policy of the government. Yet, the debate in the national media persisted for several weeks, raising questions such as: Is there a crisis of government? Is there a crisis of foreign affairs and security policy leadership? The opposition parties joined in critiquing the June decision and demanded parliamentary interference. A vote of no confidence was tabled in Parliament less than a week after the President’s and Prime Minister’s press conferences. Despite this, both Minister Tavio and the government retained the confidence of the parliament.

Sexual Politics of Crises – A Queer Feminist Analysis of “Tavio gate”

How to make sense of this ‘queer crisis’ from the perspective of feminist and queer international relations? Firstly, the politicization of sexuality, also called sexual politics of crisis, has been studied for decades across the globe. Crises are often seen as potential catalysts for major social and political transformations. However, it is common also that a normative backlash against sexuality and gender norms, and the focus of the symbolic value of men as protectors and women in need of it, pushes societies in recovery towards heteronormativity and reproductive essentialism. In this backlash gender binary embodies symbolic national border in justifying, for instance, gendered and sexualised violence towards all genders (Yuval-Davis 1997; for the Finnish foreign affairs context, see Jauhola 2016). President of Russia Putin’s announcement of a full-scale attack on Ukraine in 2022 was justified by the need to defend the region – historical Russian lands – from Western influence that would lead to degradation, being against human nature and with this referring specifically to LGBTIQ+ rights. Instead of gaining support for this norm conservatism from Ukrainians, popular support in Ukraine for the LGBTIQ+ community has increased since the war began. Ukraine’s parliament ratified the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) almost unanimously in 2022 after many years of resistance and opposition from conservative politicians and the Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organisations (UCCRO). The opposition in Ukraine had seen the convention, which uses concepts of gender and sexual orientation, to be a threat – driving Ukraine towards equal marriage rights. (Shevstova 2022, 9.) Thus, the Finnish president’s strong message in support of Ukrainian LGBTIQ+ people at the UN week can be seen as a strategic message directed at the same time to Zelensky, Putin, and to the coalition government parties in Finland.

Secondly, Minister Tavio, in his media interviews, clarified that despite declining the participation of Finland in the Alliance, as a parliamentarian, he had in fact previously voted for the rights of LGBTIQ+ people in Finland as a strategy to combat “Islamization” (Muhonen 2024). This statement functions as a form of racist homonationalism – support of LGBTIQ+ concerns combined with nationalist, racist, and Islamophobic attitudes (Puar, 2007) – a clear message sent out to his party and voters. However, this is not the first time when a populist minister in charge of foreign affairs uses populist doublespeak – i.e. taking a formal government line but continuing addressing their primary public with their populist stands: similar message was earlier sent by Minister for Foreign Affairs Timo Soini few years earlier with a well-known Swedish feminist Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wahlström (Jauhola & Lyytikäinen, 2020).

Thirdly, the security and foreign affairs leadership’s reluctance to admit a disconnection between government policy principles (values) and concrete implementation of such policies (budget decisions) reiterated the hierarchy between foreign affairs “hard” and the “soft core” (Yle Areena 2024). The “hard core” requires unanimity within government – whereas the “soft” does not. Thus, while NATO membership and military support for Ukraine are considered examples of the “hard core” requiring consensus, the decisions to support the Alliance and SOGI are considered to belong to the other end of the binary. In sum, one could claim that this reveals the true nature of the hierarchies within the value-based doctrine, and it falls within so-called “realism” – a dominant doctrine in international relations that sees world politics through the eyes of competition, power, security, and use of military force to balance the power. As earlier feminist analysis of Finnish foreign affairs has suggested, such a positioning continues a decade long history of how gender equality principles have, or as a matter of fact, have not been, implemented in Finnish foreign affairs (Jauhola & Lyytikäinen 2020) and development policy also referred as

“strong rhetorics – weak implementation” (Koponen et al. 2012). Thus, it underlines the lack of the government’s commitment to mainstreaming gender and non-discrimination principles across all government policies, except at the diplomatic level – although these are legal obligations in the Finnish legal context.

To come out from the crisis, at the press conference, Prime Minister Orpo announced Finland’s role in supporting gender equality and non-discrimination of Ukraine’s reconstruction programme. Thus, it was an attempt to rectify one of those “hundreds of decisions” that Minister Tavio had made – not openly criticizing him but assigning him to collaborate with the Minister in charge of gender equality on another programme for Ukraine that would support both gender equality and LGBTIQ+ rights in Ukraine – as an attempt to save face of the coalition government consensus.

Fourthly, I suggest that commitment to equality and non-discrimination, as well as support for LGBTIQ+ people pinkwash both the Finnish government’s own austerity measures and its participation in the neoliberal reforms taking place as parts of the reconstruction and development planning for Ukraine. In the Finnish context, the government has announced, and partly already implemented, major restrictions on asylum-seeking and migration policies, cuts to social and healthcare provision, and confirmed a total of 1.2 billion euros in cuts to the Finnish development policy. Having dropped several key long-term development policy partners from the Global South and replacing them with support to Ukraine can be further seen as a form of racist whitewashing. All in all, the direct development policy budget support for SOGI questions between 2006–2022, before the 1-billion-euro cuts to development aid, was just 11.6 million Euros – consisting of a total of 25 projects – none of which directly targeted disaster or post-conflict reconstruction recovery or humanitarian aid commitments.

Finally, let’s turn to a critical analysis of the economic reforms in Ukraine. Just weeks after the first RDP conference in Lugano in 2022, Ukraine had passed labour laws that dramatically withdrew protections from previous labour laws, and austerity measures with major cuts to education, health care, and social protection (Lyubchenko 2022, 21–22). In her analysis of these reforms, specifically focusing on their racialised and gendered impacts on social reproduction, Lyubchenko (ibid., 22) suggests that the reforms, recovery plan included, are fundamentally changing the relations between production and social reproduction, and thus accelerating capital accumulation in Ukraine. Understood as part of these economic reforms, support for gender equality and LGBTIQ+ rights, thus, “rely on and reproduce racialized citizenship and economic neoliberalism, which are structural conditions of capitalist accumulation” (ibid.) and “[d]ispossession at home has generated a reserve of cheap, feminized labour power for the European labour market, mediated through a specific conceptualization of race, class, gender, and sexuality in its proximity to Europe” (ibid., 23) – suggesting that what is at play in Ukraine is what Naomi Klein (2007) has famously referred to as *Disaster Capitalism*, i.e., using war and instability to introduce financial reforms in service of global capitalist interests.

Conclusions

It is still too early to see what form the support of the Finnish government will take in Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) in Ukraine. However, the “Tavio case” illustrates at least two things: First, how value-based realism, and the debates in Finland on the support for gender and inclusivity are intimately entangled with the austerity government, security and foreign policy leadership, and how the populist right-wing government pushes the global gender and SOGI policy of

Finland towards questions of homonationalism, pink and white washing, and finally depletion of social reproduction in Ukraine. Second, it raises the question of the price to be paid for the political consensus in foreign and security policy. As Hanna Ojanen (2024) suggests, consensus can obscure the politicisation of foreign and security policy – but also gaining quick political wins in the context of intensified attacks on LGBTIQ+ people, gender and queer studies, feminism and antiracism.

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Suomen queer-tutkimuksen seura osoittaa tukensa Israel-tiedeyhteistyön katkaisemiselle

Israel-yhteistyön katkaisemista vaativa kansainvälinen liike on voimistunut, ja vaatimukset kohdistuvat myös akateemiseen yhteistyöhön. Suomessa ainakin Helsingin yliopistossa, Turun yliopistossa, Aalto-yliopistossa, Tampereen yliopistossa, Jyväskylän yliopistossa, Oulun yliopistossa, Hämeen ammattikorkeakoulussa ja Taideyliopistossa on järjestetty mielenosoituksia ja muuta toimintaa solidaarisuuden osoitukseksi palestiinalaisille.

Mielenilmauksissa on vaadittu israelilaisyliopistojen kanssa solmittujen opiskelija- ja tutkijavaihtosopimusten katkaisemista sekä yhteisten tutkimushankkeiden katkaisemista tai niistä irrottautumista. Lisäksi yliopistoilta on vaadittu vetäytymistä sijoituksista yrityksiin, jotka ovat toiminnallaan osallisia palestiinalaisten sortoon. Vaatimukset kohdistuvat yliopistoihin ja institutionaaliseen yhteistyöhön, eivät yksittäisiin tutkijoihin. Akateeminen yhteistyö israelilaisten Gazan kansanmurhaa ja Palestiinan miehitystä vastustavien tutkijoiden kanssa on jatkossakin tärkeää.

Helsingin yliopisto ilmoitti toukokuussa 2023 jäädyttävänsä vaihtosopimukset israelilaisiin yliopistoihin mutta jatkaa edelleen yhteistyötä esimerkiksi Horisontti Eurooppa -rahoitteisten tutkimushankkeiden muodossa. Taideyliopisto kertoi marraskuussa 2024 jäädyttävänsä yhteistyön israelilaisten yliopistojen kanssa. (Helsingin yliopisto, 21.5.2024;

Taideyliopisto, 13.11.2024.) Muut yliopistot Suomessa eivät ole vastanneet vaatimuksiin.

Akateemisten siteiden katkaiseminen Israelin tiedeinstituutioihin on – yhdessä taloudellisten pakotteiden ja kulttuurisen boikotin kanssa – keino painostaa Israelia lopettamaan Gazassa käynnissä oleva kansanmurha sekä palestiinalaisalueiden miehittäminen, jonka YK:n kansainvälinen tuomioistuim (ICJ) on todennut laittomaksi heinäkuussa 2024 (International Court of Justice, 2024). ICJ:n linjauksen jälkeen YK:n asiantuntijat ovat vedonneet valtioihin, että ne muiden toimenpiteiden ohella katkaisisivat Israelin kanssa sellaiset akateemiset suhteet, jotka voivat edistää palestiinalaisalueiden laitonta miehitystä ja apartheid-hallintoa. YK:n erityisasiantuntija on myös peräänkuuluttanut yliopistojen velvollisuutta suojata rauhanomaiset mielenilmaukset palestiinalaisten oikeuksien toteutumiseksi. (United Nations, 18.9.2024; 4.10.2024.)

Suomalaisyliopistoilla on yhteistyösuhteita useiden israelilaisten yliopistojen kanssa. Israelilaisilla yhteistyöyliopistoilla on tiiviit yhteydet maan armeijaan, aseteollisuuteen ja tiedustelupalveluihin (Wind, 2024). Esimerkiksi Haifan yliopisto ja Jerusalemin heprealainen yliopisto (HUJ) kouluttavat sotilashenkilöstöä yhteistyössä maan aseteollisuuden ja armeijan kanssa, ja HUJ isännöi kampusalueellaan Israelin armeijan sotilas-

tukikohtaa koulutusohjelmia varten (Kubovich, 14.4.2019). Kaikki Israelin merkittävimmät yliopistot tarjoavat lisäksi ylimääräistä rahallista tukea Gazassa taisteleville opiskelijoilleen (Fiske, 7.11.2023).

Suomen queer-tutkimuksen seura osoittaa tukensa mielenilmauksille ja niiden vaatimuksille tiedeyhteistyön katkaisemisesta Israelin kanssa. Seura vetoaa myös muihin tieteellisiin seuroihin ja toimijoihin, jotta ne osoittaisivat tukensa Israel-tiedeyhteistyön katkaisemista vaativille mielenilmauksille. Tieteenalana queer-tutkimuksella on historiallinen ja elävä sidos queer- ja transaktivismiin sekä intersektionaaliseen feministiseen politiikkaan. Tutkimusta ja aktivismia yhdistää pyrkimys purkaa sortoa tuottavia valtarakenteita.

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QUEER CRISIS: Turbulent Identity Journeys in Gender and Nation

Ali Ali

The doctoral dissertation of Ali Ali, M.Sc., entitled *Queer in Exile and Exile in Queer: Journeys for Asylum and Belonging across Borders and Norms* was examined on November 3rd 2023, in the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Helsinki. Associate Professor Linda Lapiņa (Roskilde University) acted as an opponent in the public examination. The Custodian was Professor David Inglis (University of Helsinki).

Ali Ali. 2023. *Queer in Exile and Exile in Queer: Journeys for Asylum and Belonging across Borders and Norms*. Dissertations Universitatis Helsingiensis 43/2023. 89 p. ISBN: 978-951-51-9120-5, ISSN: 2954-2952. Helsinki: University of Helsinki.

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This text is about identity and crisis. In fact, it is about identity *as* the crisis of today's politics and society. I mobilize queer politics and theory to tackle that crisis, because queer masters and honors the failure to comply with proud and sanctified identifications and conventions (Halberstam 2011).

Scholars have exposed identity as a site of injury. In an article titled "'Gays who cannot properly be gay': Queer Muslims in the neoliberal European city", Fatima El-Tayeb (2012) shows how queer Muslims figure in Europe's public and mainstream narratives as representatives of a homogeneous Muslim other, who threatens the continent's foundational values. That is, even in milieus that flaunt and endorse love across diversity, like "rainbow communities", the mere presence of the othered-as-Muslim evokes a sense of crisis.

In fact, othering has become *the* strategy of explaining and managing crisis. An economic crisis caused by the exploitative global business became synonymous with stigmatized nationalities like the so-identified lazy Greeks (Kantola & Lombardo 2017), while the governance of crisis in Nordic politics and policy making has become coterminous with scapegoating, controlling, and bordering the racialized and the migrant (Keskinen 2023, Mulinari 2010).

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Lectio
Praecursoria

Ali
Ali

12 years ago, I landed in Europe. I carried a small suitcase, but my head was packed with expectations. I wished to leave injuries and bigotry in the places I abandoned, but they haunted me in different forms. The stigma of same-sex love reincarnated as the stigma of racial difference. To my cultural shock, I found myself identified as a crisis figure (a racialized other) in the very place where I sought sanctuary from crisis, stigma, and the violence of forced identification.

Where is that world I had fantasized about, a world beyond crisis? I asked, and the question answered itself: I had been fantasizing. In fact, imagining that there is a world of crisis (and another beyond crisis) *is* a crisis. And so is to stop imagining. Politics is a journey powered by the fantasy of change. More so in queer politics.

Queer has always been a realm of exile, exiled from norms of belonging, whether national or sexual. But that realm is not static. Queer is always expanding in new and further directions (Butler 1993). Journeys for asylum and belonging are not only journeys across territorial borders. The territorial crossing turns out to be a minor crossing in the race and citizenship bordering that exiles experience in the everyday and the everywhere: the media, political speech, on the street, and in intimate relations.

My doctoral thesis has been on the queer quest for belonging and home as unending journeys. Long before crossing territorial boundaries, queers challenge and cross boundaries within communities they abandon. When they cross state borders for a long-desired refuge they experience new forms and norms of exile. In my doctoral thesis, I traced how the chronic and intensified experiences of exilic norms pressed for new meanings of community and belonging. My research question was:

How does the queer exile conceptualization and politicization of home and belonging change through the journey of exile? (Ali 2023a: 21)

In other words, how does the experience of queer exile affect and effect political sensibilities? The study drew on a three-year ethnographic participant observation in a support group¹ for queer exiles. My participation happened in the mundane meetings and activities of the group. The conversations and the remarks that took place within these meetings informed my discussions and analysis on how queers navigate exile and create new meanings and modes of community and belonging. You might call queer exiles ‘LGBTQ refugees’ or ‘asylum seekers’. I will call them *queer exiles*. *Exile* is not a melodramatic term of ‘displaced’ or ‘refugee’ unless melodrama does justice to the exile’s dreadful sense of alienation. And *queer* is not a factor of sex or gender unless we recognize the political and the communal in the intimate and the sexual. In other words, queer is in constant struggle with norms of belonging whether sexual, social or national, and in constant struggle to protest how these norms are inseparable.

In their respective ethnographies on asylum in Denmark and Germany, Malene Jacobsen (2021), and Mervi Leppäkorpi (2022) found that mundane proximity to exiles meant following the strenuous bureaucratic work and its emotional repercussions. I did not participate in the bureaucratic procedures of the other members. However, the bureaucratic trouble and anxieties shaped their everyday and every moment. The ethnographic participation happened in the mundane aftermath of bureaucratic complications.

¹ The Group, and the Organization that created the group has been kept anonymous in my publications and public discussions.

In Finland, state recognition of an exile's right to residence is crucial for accessing social services and ensuring a livable life (Könönen 2018). However, the national and nationalist narrative sets an austere and hostile atmosphere and challenges that recognition (Keskinen 2023). The support group I write about (and from) accompanied and supported the members in legal procedures of asylum. Moreover, in the austere social and emotional atmosphere, the group was a space of companionship. Members often referred to that group as their "community" and "family". I looked into the queer exile's narratives and embodiment of community, family and belonging, and the shifts that happened in these narratives and embodiments throughout the journey of exile.

My ethnography traced and highlighted how affinities and solidarity politics shifted to challenge oppressive norms of governance and belonging. That happened in three aspects that correspond to three research questions that I will now unfold and discuss.

The first question: How does the subject of queer exile evaluate and mobilize affective and experiential knowledge in the official narratives and navigation for state protection? (Ali 2023a: 22)

Or in other words, how did the queer exile navigate and narrate their plea for protection vis-à-vis state authorities?

One of the participants, whom I will call Fadi, said that he was a "son of tribes". He said he was unqualified to argue with the judge in the case appeal for his asylum. Fadi had been appealing and re-appealing for 7 years for an asylum. He had no contact with kin and acquaintances in Iraq. He ended up pleading for a residence permit in the only place he knew for the past 7 years. It was hard to trace whether he had always been too demoralized to recognize and voice his injury or whether the recurrent rejections increased his sense of tribal belonging and decreased his sense of right to asylum.

Another participant, whom I will call Haifa, said that my ethnography on the sense of exile in Finland made no sense. She said that the alienation we experience in Finland was incomparable to the violence we lived "in our countries". Haifa's statement was alarming but also politically generative. It highlighted how the violence in "our countries" sucked up all other considerations.

In their mournful statements, Fadi and Haifa protested how injuries and the right to protection from these injuries had become relativized and trivialized, factoring in terms of identity and national belonging. Fadi protested our current horror of how war crimes in Palestine are happening, documented and evidenced in real time, and they are still ongoing while I write because the targets of these crimes are considered sons and daughters of tribes. The first question and the article (Ali 2022) that tackled that question were acts of lamentation and grieving. They highlighted the sorrowful situation of today's politics.

But, as Judith Butler (2003) remarks, sorrow and grief are communal issues. Likewise, Silvia Federici sees that learning to politicize and communalize our pain is a source of knowledge and a mode of connection and community making (Federici 2020). This leads to the second question, which I investigated in my second research article of my dissertation, which tackled how the injury of race and citizenship effected change in the sense and sensibility of a community.

The question was: How does the exile's embodied and mundane experience of bureaucratic and racializing injuries affect their sense of belonging and their politics of community? (Ali 2023a: 22)

The question tackled and challenged how norms of governance and identity politics hijack the mundane relationality. It has become sad but common

knowledge that fellow exiles in Europe (Akin 2017) and elsewhere (Koçak 2020, Seitz 2017) tend to deem rejected asylum seekers as fraudulent or attempting to abuse the asylum system. In that, the bureaucratic injury doubles back as a racializing stigma, where the racialized and non-citizen fellow figures again as *the* cause of crisis and scarcity. As if safety and security have become a scarce resource for the more qualified, and those deemed unqualified end up bearing the stigma on top of injury. But that is only one chapter of the story, a grievable one. The second question traced the sense of kinship that take shape among members in their shared precarity of exile.

The second article (which tackles the second question) is titled *Warming up Narratives of Community* (Ali 2023b). It narrated how, in the mundane proximity in shared alienation, members warmed up to considerations of the injuries of identity and identification. Warming up narratives of community did not mean emotional ease, but how narratives become more lively, more engaged, more thoughtful rather than easier or simpler.

In fact, ease and simplicity were a cause of worry and injury rather than warmth. For example, it was alarming and painful how members kept drilling sloppy identity clichés. I am talking about statements like “Finns are cold”, “Russians are homophobic” or “Iraqis are drama queens”. Some participants made such statements to justify their choice of distance from the sorrows of fellow exiles, or to avoid engaging in political thinking and exchanging across identification.

The statement “Finns are cold”, justified the lack of engaged political dialogue between the Finn and the racialized by naturalizing a so-called “cold Finn”. That is as injurious to Finns as it is to the racialized, and most injurious to lively and meaningful politics.

Likewise, the notion “Iraqis are drama queens” collapsed vulnerability with drama and melodrama. While the hope in queer communities is to highlight discounted vulnerabilities rather than to dismiss them as drama. While Haifa, mentioned above, thought it was melodramatic of me to highlight the injuries of race and citizenship in Finland, others highlighted and honored these injuries.

Over the period of three years, I have seen and documented how members’ narratives shifted from identitarian into queerer. From remarks of mistrust and rivalry to remarks and acts of fellowship and solidarity across identification, where injuries of race and citizenship were discussed and protested.

One of the participants, whom I will call Bingo, said that only with the support group did he find the joy of recreational activities and the meaning of public participation in queer political events. It was only among people who shared his experience and, as Bingo put it, “walked similar paths,” that he could find meaning and joy. This is not melodrama; it is political speech, even if it did not take the loud and proud form of conventional politics. Because it did not, it signaled precious but often discounted shifts in community and communication. Its warmth could be felt only in proximity, but it was invigorating and life-sustaining to community politics. Members’ proximity in times and circumstances of trouble triggered and mobilized what Donna Haraway (2016) calls *odd kinship*, kinship that does not follow big norms and terms, but emerges in the midst and mess of shared trouble, in unexpected alliances and connections.

However, connection does not always feel warm or smooth. This is the issue I examined in the third article of my dissertation, where I posed a question that traced another kind of warmth. It traced warming up the methods of doing politics and political analysis.



The question is: How do members of a community inhabit the skepticism and ambiguity in belonging and communicability, and how can the embodied experience of uncertainty and skepticism inform and reform community politics? (Ali 2023a: 22)

The question is in other words: What the hell are we doing here and what the hell is the purpose of this community? My answer was, keep asking, this is why we are here. Because closure is the death of political communities (Nancy 1991).

The third question questioned normative and stagnating methods of politics and sloppy political narratives. The article that tackled this question was titled *On Purpose: Solidarity by Accident or Design and the Generative Ambiguity in Between* (Ali 2023c). In that article, I revealed how, throughout my research, I avoid claims of surety over the participants' meaning and meaning-making. For Reiko Shindo (2012), community, in its most political sense, means the working through unworkability of community and communication. And for Derek Ruez and Daniel Cockayne (2021), a committed research dwells on the multiple interpretations of acts and statements.

Let's dwell on Haifa's statement where she said that the racism and the alienation we encountered in Finland were insignificant, just because they were incomparable to the violence we encountered "in our countries". Her statement highlighted how the injuries in "our countries" are so omnipresent, haunting us, and discounting injuries we experience in the country of refuge. Haifa protested, by accident or design, the politics of complacent gratitude that are not only injurious to people from "our countries" but also damaging community politics, and politics proper, everywhere and every time.

Community and belonging, in the group and throughout the study, figured *not* as a static placeholder of identity. Community turned out to be a site where the singular selfhood was contingent on the embodied life of the collective. That is nonsovereignty in Berlant's sense (2016), to be open and receptive in real time. That is engagement in speaking, analyzing, and mobilizing from within a shared circumstance, rather than abstractions and norms.

How did the queer exile conceptualization and politicization of home and belonging change through the journey of exile?

In conclusion, queer community is an ongoing work that defies conclusiveness. What should never change is the persistence of queer as a realm of change, as refusal of settlement and closure. Change figured in how activism and belonging were never bounded by identity or settled on norms. Change figured in keeping modes of relationality and methods of mobilization lively and mobile to nudge stiff norms of governance and belonging. Change also figured in the unfinished collective imagination and cultivation of a more livable belonging.

A dissertation is the tip of an iceberg. It is a glimpse into a life I lead meanwhile I research and write texts. The fieldwork itself was an act in the big scene of sociopolitics where mourning, warming-up and negotiating modes of connection and communication happened. The fieldwork was one of the quests, among other members' quests, for belonging in a circumstance of exile.

And the stories of a political community never end. They keep happening to challenge oppressive closures, because persistent and vigorous attunement to oppression and injuries is what makes a community or a family (whether nuclear or global) worthy of being pursued unstoppably.

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QUEER VAURIO

SIIRI VILJAKKA, 2024

SARJAKUVA ON TULKINTANI
ALI ALIN LEKTIOSTA "QUEER
CRISIS - TURBULENT
JOURNEYS IN GENDER AND
NATION". SUURKIITOS ALILLE
ANTOISISTA KESKUSTELUISTA.



ODOTUKSISSA ON
MAAILMA VAURION
JÄLKEEN.

KUN KOTOA LÄHTEMINEN TUO
TURMELTUNEEN LEIMAN, LÄHDÖN
SYY EI OLE KEVYT.



UNELMA MAAILMASTA ILMAN
STIGMAA, KIIHKOILUA JA HOMOVIIHAA
TUO TOIVOA.



VAURIO KUITENKIN SEURAA.

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Viljakka



KOTIA JOUTUU ETSIMÄÄN PAIKASTA,
JOSSA KOKEMUS SEKSUAALISESTA
PERVERSIOSTA MUUTTUU
KANSALLISEKSI PERVERSIOKSI.



UNELMA RAUHASTA
JA NORMAALIUDESTA
SÄRKYY.



QUEER MATKA JATKUU,
VAIKKA VAURIO VÄSYTTÄÄ.

VITUTTAA.

SURETTAA.

JÄ SEN KANSSA PITÄÄ ELÄÄ
SILLOINKIN, KUN KIELTEINEN
PÄÄTÖS TURVAPAIKASTA
TIPAHTAA POSTILUUKUSTA
YRITYS TOISENSA JÄLKEEN.

VAIKKA ITSENSÄ OMISTAISI TÄYSIN
TYÖMARKKINOILLE JA UUELLE KOTIMAALLE,
TAKAAKO SE KODIN SAAMISTA?



EPÄTOIVO KASVAA.



SE VOI JOPA RÄJÄHTÄÄ.

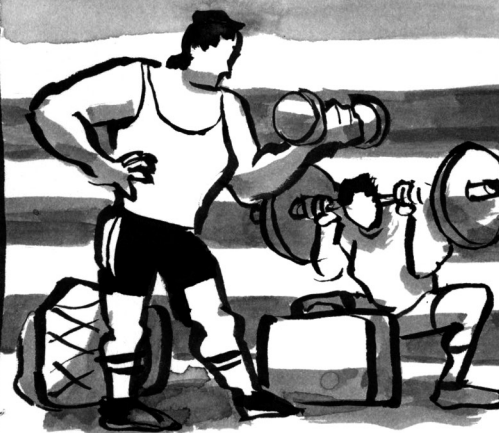
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JÄ VAIKKA TURVAPAIKAN ONNISTUISI
SAAMAAN, MIKSI SE EI VIELÄ KORJAA
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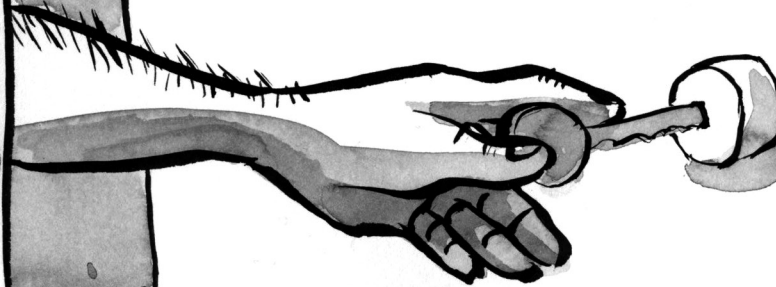
KORJAAKO KUNTOSALI VAURION?



VAURIO PALJASTAA KAIKEN MIELETTÖMYYDEN.



MIELETTÖMYYS TOIMII SEKÄ LIIMANA ETTÄ MYRKKYNÄ IHMISTEN VÄLILLÄ. SE ON ABSURDIA HUUMORIA, VITTUILUA, TUNTEENPURKAUKSIA JA YHTEENKUULUVUUDEN TUNNETTA.



VAURION KANSSA KOTI EI OLE PAIKKA, JOSSA LEVÄTÄÄN, VAAN PAIKKA, JOSSA SAA KOHDATA OMAN LEVOTTOMUUTENSA.



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Dr. Ali Ali is a postdoctoral researcher at Åbo Akademi University, conducting research in queer kinship and politics in exile. In his research, *queer* encompasses all that is deviant from and defiant to injurious norms. In journeys for asylum and belonging, norms of race, gender and nationality figure intensely, necessitating change in our mundane lives and in our methods of research on and politics-making of lived experiences. Dr. Ali's ethnographic work among individuals seeking safety and belonging in Finland and across Europe has explored how ideals and expressions of community evolve, along with the ways in which people forge personal and political connections across differences.

Ali Ali on Åbo Akademin tutkijatohtori, joka tutkii queer-läheissuhteita ja poliittisuutta maanpaossa. Hänen tutkimuksessaan *queer* käsittää kaiken, mikä poikkeaa vallitsevista normeista ja haastaa ne. Alin tutkimus keskittyy siihen, miten rotuun, sukupuoleen ja kansallisuuteen liittyvät normit vaikuttavat turvapaikan ja kuuluvuuden kokemuksiin. Etnografisen työnsä kautta hän tutkii, miten yhteisöt muodostuvat ja sopeutuvat ja miten turvapaikkaa ja kuulumista etsivät ihmiset luovat henkilökohtaisia ja poliittisia siteitä yli erontekojen sekä Suomessa että kaikkialla Euroopassa.

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Gujarat earthquake in India and the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami in Aceh, Indonesia. Dr. Jauhola has authored two monographs: *Post-Tsunami Reconstruction in Indonesia: Negotiating Norms Through Gender Mainstreaming Initiatives in Aceh* (2013) and *Scraps of Hope in Banda Aceh: Gendered Urban Politics in the Aceh Peace Mediation Process* (2020). Both works narrate multiple ways of arranging lives and remembrance, cherishing loved ones and forming care and loving relationships outside the normative notions of nuclear family and home. She is currently PI of “EnVi(r)oCare – Entanglements of Violence and Care: Feminist analysis of commodity frontiers and “living green”” (Research council of Finland, 2023–2027).

PhD Marjaana Jauhola (Tampereen yliopisto) on lähes 20 vuoden kokemus katastrofien jälkeisen jälleenrakennuksen sosiaalista ja taloudellista epätasa-arvoa käsittelevästä tutkimuksesta. Jauholan kiinnostus katastrofien jälkeiseen tutkimukseen heräsi hänen työskennellessään humanitaarisen avun tehtävissä vuoden 2001 Gujaratin maanjäristyksen sekä vuoden 2004 Intian valtameren maanjäristyksen ja tsunamin jälkeen. Jauhola on julkaissut aiheesta kaksi monografiaa: *Post-Tsunami Reconstruction in Indonesia: Negotiating Norms Through Gender Mainstreaming Initiatives in Aceh* (2013) ja *Scraps of Hope in Banda Aceh: Gendered Urban Politics in the Aceh Peace Mediation Process* (2020). Molemmat teokset käsittelevät moninaisia elämän ja muistelun muotoja rakkaiden vaalimiseen sekä välittävien ja rakastavien ihmissuhteiden luomiseen ydinperheen ja kodin normiston ulkopuolella. Jauhola vetää Suomen Akatemian rahoittamaa hanketta ”Väkivallan ja hoivan kietoutumat: hyödykeraja-alueiden ja ”vihreän elämän” feministinen analyysi” (2023–2027).

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Taina Järvenpää, MA, is a doctoral researcher in Finnish language at the University of Jyväskylä. In her dissertation, she examines the public discourse on marriage and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland.

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Mark Maletski, MPhil, is a Doctoral Researcher and PhD candidate at Tampere University, working within Game Research Lab. His dissertation focuses on the relationship between video game mechanics and the processes of gender identity self-discovery. Prior to his current position, he was a teacher of Philosophy at the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University in Ukraine.

Filosofian maisteri Mark Maletski on pelitutkimuksen väitöskirjatutkija Tampereen yliopiston Game Research Lab -yhteisössä. Hänen tutkimuksensa käsittelee videopelien mekaniikkoja ja niihin liittyviä pelaajan oman sukupuoli-identiteetin pohtimisen ja löytämisen prosesseja. Ennen tohtoriopintojensa aloittamista hän opetti filosofiaa ukrainalaisessa Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University -yliopistossa.

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Susi Mikael Nousiainen, BA in Fine Arts; MA in Literature, is working on his PhD research *Diversity-related conflicts in organizations* in the field of Organization studies, using participatory drama as the method. His artistic-academic work includes making collaborative comics with youth at vocational schools, designing digital LARP on social media, and interviewing Finnish Body Positivity activists on their counterspeech strategies.

FM ja kuvataiteilija Susi Nousiainen tekee väitöskirjaa työpaikan monimuotoisuuden liittyvistä konflikteista Lapin yliopiston Johtamisen oppiaineessa käyttäen tutkimusmetodina osallistavaa draamaa. Esimerkkejä hänen taiteellis-akateemisesta työstään ovat osallistava sarjakuva nuorten kanssa, sosiaalisen median vuorovaikutusta käsittelevä LARP ja tutkimus suomalaisten kehopositiivisuusaktivistien vastapuhekäytänteistä.

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Jonna Tolonen is a researcher-artist who combines aesthetic, ethnographic and action research practices through inquiry into embodiments and environments. She studied graphic design and photography in Canberra, education and fine arts in Oulu and received a PhD in Art and Design from the University of Lapland. She has been a visiting researcher in various universities and educational centers such as the University of Complutense Madrid and the Finnish Institute of Athens and has

participated in long-term artistic research projects such as “Floating Peripheries” (2017–2021) and “Artivism on Edges” (2022–2026). Her articles have been published in *Visual Communication* and *Qualitative Research*, among other publications. She has edited several books, including *Figurations of Peripheries Through Arts and Visual Studies* for Routledge. Her recent artistic publication *Domestication of Domestic Violence* (2024), a record published under the moniker Shizukana, focuses on violence in our society.

Jonna Tolonen on taiteilija-tutkija, joka yhdistää esteettisiä, etnografisia ja toimintatutkimuksellisia käytäntöjä ruumiillisuuden ja ympäristöjen tutkimiseen. Hän on opiskellut graafista suunnittelua ja valokuvausta Canberrassa, kasvatustiedettä ja kuvataidetta Oulussa ja hän väitteli taiteen tohtoriksi Lapin yliopistosta. Tolonen on ollut vierailevana tutkijana eri yliopistoissa ja koulutuskeskuksissa, kuten Madridin Complutense-yliopistossa ja Suomen Ateenan instituutissa, ja hän on osallistunut pitkäaikaisiin taiteellisiin tutkimushankkeisiin, kuten Suomen Akatemian ”Floating Peripheries” (2017–2021) ja Koneen säätöön ”Artivism on Edges” (2022–2026) projekteihin. Hänen artikkeleitaan on julkaistu muun muassa *Visual Communication* ja *Qualitative Research* -lehdissä. Tolonen on toimittanut useita kirjoja, muun muassa *Figurations of Peripheries Through Arts and Visual Studies* Routledgelle. Hänen viimeisin taiteellinen julkaisunsa *Domestication of Domestic Violence* (2024) on nimimerkillä Shizukana julkaistu levy, joka keskittyy lähisuhdeväkivaltaan.

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Siiri Viljakka is a comic artist, illustrator, and visual artist. They are currently working on graphic novels and multidisciplinary art projects.

Siiri Viljakka on sarjakuvataiteilija, kuvittaja ja kuvataiteilija. Hän työskentelee parhaillaan sarjakuvaromaanien ja monitaidehankkeiden parissa.

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