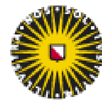
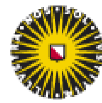


Bachelor Project
Cultural Anthropology
2017-2018

In and Out

Negotiating Ethnicity and Whiteness in Berlin Lesbian and Gay Communities

Roxane Kroon
&
Stefanie Meijers

 Universiteit Utrecht

Bachelor Thesis

In and Out

Negotiating Ethnicity and Whiteness in Berlin Lesbian and Gay Communities

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Cultural Anthropology and Developmental Sociology

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“I must distance myself from this complicity with racism, including anti-Muslim racism.”

Judith Butler refusing the Christopher Street Day Courage Award

June 19th, 2010[1].

[1] http://sxpolitics.org/around-the-world-115/4711

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From the end of January 2018, until the end of April 2018, we conducted extensive anthropological fieldwork in Berlin, Germany. During this time, we met a lot of amazing people who all helped our research. We would like to thank everyone who contributed to this research by allowing us an insight in their personal lives.

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Introduction

> In Berlin rainbow flags are part of the cityscape. Schöneberg's metro station lights up with the six colors during the night, to show the embeddedness of the LGBTQ+ communities in the city. During my [Stefanie] fieldwork in Berlin there was one time I saw a different rainbow flag, on the window of a fancy LGBTQ+ bar in Neukölln. Two extra colors were added: brown and black. I knew this flag was introduced to embrace inclusivity in LGBTQ+ communities. I entered the bar and asked the bar owner, a white gay man, why he choose for this flag instead of the 'normal' rainbow flag. He put down the whiskey bottle, looked at me and said: "Because not only white cis-men belong in the LGBTQ+ community.[2]"

The addition to the rainbow flag was introduced on the gay pride in Berlin 2017, with the slogan 'Showing up for racial justice'. The two stripes aim to recognize non-white LGBTQ+ communities and individuals. Proponents of the additional two stripes argue that non-white LGBTQ+ people are often left out of non-heterosexual discourses. Does everyone agree on this matter? Mandy, a non-white lesbian informant disagrees, and underscores that the addition of the two stripes is irrelevant because she already felt as she belongs to LGBTQ+ communities. In her own words, the addition of the two stripes racializes LGBTQ+ communities, something she was not keen on[3]. The addition highlights a greater need to discuss belonging related to social identities and communities. In Germany notions of both sexuality, and race are often points of discussion in public discourse concerning national identity (Müller, 2011; see also Tiβberger 2005). This is mainly played out in the capital Berlin. On the one hand, Berlin is known for its open-mindedness and 'anything goes' mentality (Petzen, 2004:21). On the other hand, in June, 2017, Chancellor Angela Merkel voted 'no' in the parliamentary vote for same sex marriage. The same ambivalent discussion concerns ethnicity and race. Germany has welcomed millions of refugees. However, racial others are frequently excluded from the national identity, which is perceived as white (Müller, 2011:623).

The aim of this complementary research is to understand experiences of ethnicity, whiteness and sexuality in the lives of people who identify as lesbian and gay in Berlin. The research question of this thesis is: "*How is ethnicity, and specifically whiteness, constructed by people who identify as lesbian and gay, and how is this related to experiences of in- and exclusion in Berlin lesbian and gay communities"*. In order to answer this research question, this thesis focuses on the following topics: 1) *'Differentiating tactics related to in and exclusion;* 2) *'Racialized (and gendered) ethnicities and*

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[2] Bar owner, informal talk, April 4, 2018.
[3] Mandy, interviewed by Roxane Kroon, February 22, 2018.

whiteness'; 3) '*Racialized sexuality and sexualized racism'.* The experiences of lesbian and gay people in relation to heteronormativity has been discussed extensively by anthropological scholars. Also, ethnicity is frequently taken into account in academia, focusing on alleged differences between the ethnic 'Other' in comparison to LGBTQ+ people (Kosnick, 2015; Preser, 2017; Haritaworn, 2010). However, whiteness as a meaning making factor, is often left out in studies focusing on ethnicity in combination with sexuality. By taking whiteness as an ethnicity into account, this research not only comprehends complex lived realities of lesbian and gay people, but also contributes to theorizations on ethnicity in lesbian and gay communities in anthropological debates.

In line with Wekker (2016) and Hall (2000) this thesis argues that ethnicity cannot be theorized without taking notions of race into account. Therefore, in this study, ethnicity is theorized as a racialized ethnicity, in order to capture lived experiences of all people, not only the ethnic 'Other'. Furthermore, lived experiences of ethnicity are constructed in the intersection with gender and sexuality. In this intersection, powerful social hierarchies are created in which dominant categorizations like masculinity and whiteness function as social norms (Wekker, 2016; Hunter, 2010). This results in an us-them-divide which is reflected in processes of racialized sexuality and sexualized racism. In lesbian and gay communities, the us-them-divide produces notions of in- and exclusion based on ethnicity. However, this discourse does not play out in a static manner, but as we argue, some lesbian and gay people are 'included differently' in communities (Puwar, 2004). Additionally, this thesis emphasizes that the acronym LGBTQ+ is often used as a homogeneous umbrella term, which does not echo individual identifications nor lived experiences. Throughout this thesis the term LGBTQ+ is used to discuss communities based on sexuality in relation to the broader heteronormative society, as informants used the label as well. When addressing individual informants, they are specified as gay or lesbian.

The main methods used in this research are informal and (semi) structured interviews, and participant observation. By using informal and (semi) structured interviews, we aim to get to know informants' understandings of ethnicity, whiteness and sexuality. Participant observation is used to comprehend lived experiences of informants in regard to in- and exclusion, and how they implicitly communicate social norms. This research has also used 'mapping out the scene' as data gathering method, in order to understand the image of Berlin, with its specific districts and their significant differences. We asked our informants to describe different LGBTQ+ areas, or to visit the areas with us. However, our positions as researchers and differences between our research populations, caused our methods to vary.

Roxane identifies as a lesbian woman and Stefanie as a heterosexual woman, which caused a difference in access to the research populations. Bell hooks, alongside other feminist scholars, argues that true rapport and gaining close-enough access to research groups can only occur when the

researcher corresponds social identities with the informants (hooks, 1990:1989 in DeWalt and DeWalt, 2011:100). This argument is evident in the closer access and rapport Roxane had to the lesbian research population, caused by matching social identities. Stefanie had close-enough access, overcoming differences in social identities. Therefore, we dismiss the idea that matching social identities is the *only* way the gain close-enough access. Consequentyl, this meant that Roxane collected more data from participant observation techniques and informal interviews and Stefanie more from semi-structured interviews.

It is our point of view that one needs to take responsibility for one's own position in research (Rich in Lewis and Mills, 2003:29-42). Therefore, this study also mirrors our own experiences taking our position as white women and sexual beings into account. This is evident in chapter two, which opens with a vignette of Roxane's experience of feeling unsafe as a lesbian woman in a heteronormative, masculine world. Stefanie's experiences being rejected from some research sites like gay bars, due to her non-matching social identities like gender and sexuality. These experiences contribute to a deeper understanding of what it *could* be to be included but differently. Hence, we argue that this thesis demonstrates social discourses concerning in- and exclusion and social hierarchies, without losing sight of the lived experiences of our informants and ourselves.

This thesis will start with a theoretical framework which will focus on the main concepts of this research, which are ethnicity, whiteness and sexuality from an anthropological perspective. Second, sexuality and gender are connected to whiteness and ethnicity within an intersectional framework which leads to the contemplation of racialized sexualities and sexualized racism. Third, the LGBTQ+ as one community is problematized, by questioning differences within and between identifiers in the acronym. Lastly, notions of in- and exclusion are discussed, in which it is emphasized how non-white ethnicities are 'included differently' within LGBTQ+ communities. Chapter two, the context, focuses on Berlin as the research location. Here, we argue that the ambivalent role of ethnicity causes districts in Berlin to be both viewed differently and viewed alongside relational social hierarchies. The empirical chapters argue that the constructions of ethnicity and whiteness are highly interrelated and closely linked to notions of being included but differently in lesbian and gay communities. Lastly, chapter five emphasizes that representations of ethnicity, whiteness and sexuality are strongly related to stereotypes and objectifications based on racialized ethnicities, which form us-them-divides. These divides are played out differently within and between lesbian and gay communities in Berlin, however these divides are constructed alongside dominant broader social hierarchies.

Theoretical Framework

The Concepts of Ethnicity, Whiteness and Race

Stefanie Meijers

To understand how men and women in the Berlin LGBTQ+ communities define ethnicity and social constructions connected to it, it is important to explore the concept of 'ethnicity'. Ethnicity is a key concept in anthropology. However, it is almost impossible to define ethnicity without the concept of race. Anthropological scholars define ethnicity and race as two different concepts. Within anthropology, ethnicity on the one hand is understood as the differences between groups that "consider themselves, and are regarded by others, as being culturally distinctive" (Eriksen, 2010:5). Ethnicity, in other words, is a concept that is ascribed by and to communities. It takes in regard a common language, religion, history and thus a common 'culture' (Wekker, 2016:22). These communities, which recall the same ethnicity, are imagined, in the way that Benedict Anderson defined it: the members of the community feel that they share their history, and belong together, even if it members will never see all members belonging to the same community (Anderson, 2006:6). Race, on the other hand, is based on assumptions of 'biological' differences in people. We need to emphasize that 'race' is not a biological scientific term, but a social construct used to assign cultural differences and hierarchies to 'visible signifiers' like skin color (Banks, 2005:10; Eriksen, 2010:5; Hall, 2000:22). In this way, the concept of race classifies groups of people and maintains power relations and hierarchies.

Some scholars, like Stuart Hall and Gloria Wekker, argue that discussing ethnicity and race as different or overarching concepts is too simplistic (Hall, 2000:223). Rather, they are in juxtaposition: the concepts merge into a "more natural and biological understanding of race with a cultural view" (Wekker, 2010:24). In this light, the connection between the two is significant is, emphasizing an overlap between the concepts, with ethnicity overarching race (Banks, 2005:51; Eriksen, 2010:9). Hereby racialized cultural differences are connected to bodily signifiers like skin color. Although Eriksen at first defines ethnicity and race as two different concepts, he shows the significant connection between the two: "Members of a presumed race cannot change their assumed inherited traits, while ethnic groups can change their culture and, ultimately, become assimilated into a dominant group." (Eriksen, 2010:9). He further argues that it is not necessary that members of the same race have the same

culture, but it is assumed that members of the same ethnicity share the same origins, as well as the same culture (Eriksen, 2010:9). In other words, it is not possible to regard ethnicity as an isolated concept, since notions of race and social hierarchies attached to it are always at play when addressing ethnicity. To highlight the co-construct of the two concepts, we use the term 'racialized ethnicities'. Herein, we show the importance of intersectionality, which will be assessed later on. The relevance of the co-construction of ethnicity and race is captured within 'racialized ethnicities' and the power relations they evoke are also apparent in lived experiences of people. In this light, the lived consequences of classifying and 'racializing' people, can be considered as one of the components of the broad concept 'ethnicity'. This can be seen in the way informants respond to the question: 'What does ethnicity mean to you?' in chapter three and four. When discussing ethnicity, notions of race are often assumed as well.

The use of ethnicity and the racial imaginary inflicted with it, is also a mechanism in which a divide is made between the Self and the Other (Said, 1993 in Wekker, 2016:2). The term 'ethnic' in society has a connotation of cultural signifiers which are 'different' or 'not us'; and therefore, are quickly linked to material values like food or clothes. This will be apparent in chapter three and four. Like Dyer puts it, the divide between the Self and the Other, or 'us' versus 'them', is generally made in regard to white and non-white people (Dyer, 2017:1) He argues that "… race is not only attributable to people who are not white, nor is imagery of non-white people the only racial imagery" (Dyer, 2017:1). Hereby, whiteness as a race is barely seen as such or questioned; non-white people become 'ethnic people', while all people have an ethnicity and a racial imaginary connected to it. In other words, because white ethnicity is dominantly visible in media and academia, the construction of whiteness is barely questioned, which produces the idea of whiteness as a norm (Dyer, 2017; Wekker, 2016; Nayak, 2007). Nayak underscores this point as well, arguing that whiteness as a racialized ethnicity goes with unspoken privileges (Nayak, 2007:738). In that way, white only varies on other social identities like gender, class and sexual orientation, but is not questioned as a race. Thus, by representing themselves as whites, as the norm, people only differ through social identities like gender and class. Therefore, racial representation is something not addressed to white, but only to the 'Other' (Dyer, 2017:3). Whiteness is not only a discourse that plays out in phenotypes, but also holds power, which is often referred to as white privilege. White privilege is discussed as a system of (re)producing material benefits and sociocultural factors

as social norms which are defined by the privileged group's characteristics (Logie & Rwigema, 2014:175). By including whiteness in the discourse of ethnicity as we aim to do in this research, we question how privileged identities built up by different social identities contribute to the lived experiences of social reality.

Dominant literature on ethnicity within anthropology, like the works of Eriksen, focus on the United States. However, in Europe the dominant way of thinking about race is 'color-blindness': race presumably does not matter to people, all the while the hierarchies connected to race are still at play, according to Wekker (2016:2). Goldberg even states that race is something that is 'erased' from contemporary meaning-making, and therefore 'taboo' (2006:334). The way the word 'race' is perceived in Europe, is too heavily inflicted with relations of power and the bitter history of World War II (Goldberg, 2006:334). Race and racializing ethnicity are concepts that are 'invented' in Europe, but nowadays are seen as non-European (Wekker, 2016:4), while the historic connotation is something that is deeply rooted inside Europe and still works through in contemporary European societies. The concept of race has been 'buried' in Europe, but as Goldberg argues, "it is buried alive" (2006:338), meaning that notions of race are always at play when discussing ethnicity in the lived experience, but often implicitly and invisible.

To conclude, we have shown that ethnicity cannot be seen as an isolated concept. It is important to take notions of race into account, as the power relations related to it are apparent in contemporary societies. To address the importance of lived experiences of racializing processes in the concept ethnicity, we use the term 'racialized ethnicities'. Lived experiences entail more than just one social reality. How racialized ethnicities (and thus whiteness) are related to other social identities, will be discussed below.

Ethnicity, Gender and Sexuality Within an Intersectional Framework

Roxane Kroon

As discussed above, Wekker (2016) argues that an us-them-divide is created by projecting ethnicity onto Others which forms the white Self as 'us.' The dividing process Wekker (2016) refers to is also visible in the construction of gender and sexuality in society. By this, social hierarchies with strong power relations are created wherein, according to Wekker (2016:23), the "more powerful member of a binary pair" is installed as the social norm. Thus, within society, femininity and women are also seen as 'the Other'. In addition to this, ethnicity as a

social identity does not gain meaning by itself but always intersects with other identities like gender and sexuality. This process of intersectionality is what categories of ‘us’ and ‘them’ give meaning, in which the powerful members are the dominant social norms.
In this section we will discuss the intersectionality of ethnicity, gender and sexuality and show that they co-construct lived experiences. Furthermore, within the intersection of these social identities, we argue alongside others, that the existence of a binary pair creates racialized and gendered “social hierarchies of importance” (Hunter, 2010; Wekker, 2016) which helps to identify the Other in order to imply the Self (Said 1993 in Wekker 2016:2; Teunis, 2007). First, we will elaborate on the way these social hierarchies are formed and gain meaning. Second, we will demonstrate that social hierarchies produce notions of racialized sexualities and sexualized racism. Finally, we will illustrate how everyday practices of stereotyping and objectifications reinforce those notions and the reproduction of social norms, arguing that together they form constructions of ethnicity, and specifically whiteness, in lesbian and gay communities.

Social identities like ethnicity, sexuality and gender gain meaning in relation to each other (Wekker, 2016). This idea, theory and approach is also known as “intersectionality” as it was first coined by Kimberley Crenshaw (Crenshaw, 1989). Intersectionality addresses identity questions in which multiple social identities are taken into account. This means that the symbolic meaning of social differences such as gender, but also race and sexuality, is important in the identification of the Self and the Other (Wekker, 2016:21). The entanglement of representations of different social identities shape lived experiences, but also operates alongside relational hierarchies (Wekker, 2016:32). Hunter (2010:88) illustrates the importance of researching the links between race and sexuality in gay communities: identification as a minority is highly dependent on the construction of a majority as norm (2010:87). Thus, for example, identity formation as a non-white female lesbian is directly linked to heterosexism and racism. So, through the process of identifying the Other, the Self is not only implied but also placed within a racialized and gendered hierarchy. Hunter (2010) goes further by arguing that social hierarchies are formed by a perception of importance. He illustrates this by arguing that black gay men can experience their blackness as more important in perception of the Self opposite to sexuality (Hunter, 2010:88). We disagree with the implied obligation to choose between social identities in processes of meaning making. Instead, we argue that some social identities like ethnicity, can be more dominant in

constructing the Other outside the Self. A consequence is that people sometimes have a hard time experiencing privilege and oppression at the same time, as illustrated in chapter three and four.

Although conceptions of Self and Other are visible in every layer of society, we argue that within and between LGBTQ+ communities, social hierarchies are the most significant. To illustrate this, Wekker (2016:124-125) argues that white gay men are not named as such, they are 'just' gay, while gay people of color are explicitly named, in other words racially identified. Identifications like the latter cause dominant categorizations like masculinity and whiteness to be kept intact. However, we also emphasize in line with Nash (2008), that intersectionality cannot only be used to understand marginalized identities but needs to be taken into account addressing all lived experiences. With this study, we want to emphasize that whiteness needs to be approached intersectionally in meaning making processes as well. Thus, ethnicities are constructed alongside notions of gender and sexuality, which co-construct social hierarchies that are characterized by power structures and social norms.

Racialized Sexualities and Sexualized Racism

Sexualizing and racializing processes are important in the construction of social hierarchies as discussed above. Logie & Rwigema among others, argue that white privilege is central to LGBTQ+ communities and excludes LGBTQ+ people of color from white-normative identities (Logie & Rwigema, 2014:175; Wekker, 2016:117). What is important in this contemplation is that for the public eye, gays are white (Wekker, 2016:117; El-Tayeb, 2013:307). Because non-heterosexuality is perceived as white, we argue that sexualities are racialized. The lived experiences of LGBTQ+ people of color heavily depend on how white LGBTQ+ people understand them in terms of ethnicity and sexuality. Notions of gay as white become internalized widely, which reinforces white privilege as a meaning making factor within LGBTQ+ communities. Consequently, LGBTQ+ people of color do not necessarily fit the normative LGBTQ+ identity, which is constantly stressed through processes of Othering. For example, chapter three shows how non-white lesbians often need to prove their sexuality because white LGBTQ+ people do not believe them. In other words, non-heterosexuality is perceived as white, therefore racialized, but the construction of this norm is through processes of sexualized racism.

Sexualized racism can occur as being sexually objectified, masculinized, feminized, or making categories which are sexually undesirable, all inflicted with notions of race (Logie & Rwigema, 2014: 175). The main daily life experience of sexualized racism is through 'sexual objectifications' as discussed by Teunis (2007). Sexualized objectification refers to the idea of dehumanizing people into things or commodities (Nusbaum, 1999 in Teunis, 2007:267). In this sense, a person is reduced to a specific part like genitals or skin color. Within LGBTQ+ communities this can result in fetishized sexualized stereotypes, linked to images of non-white people in society (Ro et al. 2013:843). For instance, Asian women are believed to be permissive and subservient to the desires of white men, and black women are conceived as too liberated regarding their sexuality (Ibid, 2013:843; Wekker, 2016:32). Sexualized objectification does not automatically imply rejection, it can also function as exotization of the Other. What is evident is that sexualized ethnicities are a result of racialized and gendered social hierarchies, as LGBTQ+ people of color are dislocated as people and voices, from main representations of LGBT communities as white (Wekker, 2016; Hunter, 2010; Logie & Rwigema, 2014). To conclude, we argue that the interplay of racialized ethnicities and sexuality form stereotypes that originate from binary oppositions. These stereotypes reinforce dominant hierarchical structures, in which LGBTQ+ people of color are placed outside the norm. For that reason, us-them-divides are created and form the core of how ethnicity is constructed in lesbian and gay communities.

Problematizing Gay, Lesbian and LGBTQ+ Communities

Roxane Kroon

The acronym LGBTQ+ has become an umbrella term for all people that do not identify with heterosexual and gender norms. Barber and Schwartz (2010:1) emphasize that the sexual minorities formerly known as 'gay' and 'lesbian' are now expanded with B for bisexual, T for transgender and Q for queer. Nowadays, some refer to the community as: LGBTQQAi2S (Barber & Schwartz, 2010:1); expanding to even more positions opposing hetero- and gender conformity. The acronym is mainly used by activists, organizations and, increasingly, policy documents (Knight & Wilson, 2016:12). However, the categories under this umbrella are in no way the same. Although the term LGBTQ+ implies a united community, and is sometimes used as such, this cannot be said. Every letter of LGBTQ stands for an identity or a position opposing

different norms, and even within each identity or position you will find different communities. Taking this into account, we focus our research on people who identify as gay and lesbian.

As we will show in chapter four, a lot of gay men can also identify as queer feminists because they do not identify with their perception of mainstream gay men. Queer means any form of sexual activity of identification which falls outside of normative categories (Knight and Wilson, 2016:27). However, the term queer can, as many other social identifications, be broadly interpreted and therefore can mean something different each time it is used. Queer as categorization has become more popular over the last decade. The main point here is that queer, like other identifications, gains meaning through other social identities like gender, and ethnicity. The latter observation also applies to other sexuality identifications. In other words, there is not only a variety between the meaning of gender and sexuality categories in social terms, but also a variety within the different identifications. For example, Eliason and Morgan (1998) observe that different women who identify as lesbian construct their 'lesbianism' differently between each other and within a lifetime. They argue that the experience of lesbians is far too complex, to categorize them all in the concept 'lesbian' (1998:61). This variety within the category as Eliason and Morgan (1998) discuss, does not only apply to lesbians, but to every (non-)heterosexual person. Differences are also visible between categories, for example between gay men and lesbian women. Lesbian women tend to experience forms of double discrimination due to gender inequality and discrimination regarding sexuality. As we will discuss more in depth in chapter three and four, experiences like the latter can result in an urge to differentiate from other communities within the acronym or within an apparent cohesive community. From this perspective it is not strange that the acronym expands and changes rapidly, people want to fit in.

Most studies on LGBTQ+ communities focus on shared struggles within heteronormative societies but lack the questioning of differences between lived experiences of for instance lesbian and gay people (Sullivan & Losberg, 2003). Also, when studying LGBTQ+ communities, gay males are the most often studied according to Sullivan and Losberg (2003:157), and most of the time the was not conceptually defined (ibid, 2003:159). Nevertheless, the study of Sullivan and Losberg (2003) concerning sampling techniques in LGBTQ+ research, is one of the few studies who addresses these issues. Also, regarding excluding discourses most research we found focused on differences between heterosexuals and non-heterosexuals, hereby overlooking to contemplate discrimination within non-

heterosexual communities, or between non-heterosexual communities. Our position is that LGBTQ+ categories need to be questioned, regarding both the representation of the individual identifications and their socially constructed meanings. However, when discussing communities based on sexuality in relation to the broader heteronormative society, we will use the term LGBTQ+ as our informants often did as well. When addressing individuals, we will specify as gay or lesbian taking the above-mentioned contemplation in mind.

Included but Differently: Negotiating Social Identities

Stefanie Meijers

Social identities are often categorized in social hierarchies, as stated in previous paragraphs. In this way, sexuality and ethnicity are two different social identities which are negotiated continuously in lived experiences. As shown, the mainstream LGBTQ+ communities are regarded as dominantly white (Kosnick, 2015:689; Ro et. al., 2013:840; Wekker, 2016:111). It was emphasized that by this, non-white people have to redefine their non-heterosexual identities, while white people do not. This however, makes it hard for non-white non-heterosexual people to feel completely included in either communities, LGBTQ+ or the ethnic community (Bell & Binnie, 2004:1810; Kosnick, 2015:694). In this regard, one's ethnic identity is troubled by the sexual identity, and vice versa. The need to negotiate one's identity is rooted in several phenomena.

First of all, the patterns of exclusion in the broader society, replicate in mainstream gay communities (Ro et al., 2013:840). The same holds true for the discourse of sexualized race as shown earlier. Presumptions and stereotypes of racialized ethnicities in contemporary societies are reflected on lesbian and gay people as well within their communities. For an example, Ro et al., argue that the way in which Asian Americans are seen as 'competent but socially undesirable' in American society, reflects how they are perceived in LGBTQ+ communities as well: they are ignored for being sexually undesirable (Ibid, 2013:840).

Second, expectations from within ethnic communities about being a member of the community, do sometimes clash with expected norms of belonging to LGBTQ+ communities. For instance, Cornelius (2016:40-45) shows how masculinity in speech and behavior is expected from African American men. This denies more feminine gay men from fitting into norms of the African American community. In the same time, with queer being seen as white, they are not completely included in LGBTQ+ communities either. A similar discourse is seen in

chapter four, with Israeli men who are presumed as 'hairy and angry from the army', and therefore masculine[4]. The result of these presumptions a constant negotiation between communities (Cornelius, 2016:40-45). This is in line with what Bacchetta et al. (2015:769) state: contemporary societies presume from non-white communities to be straight and cis. Moreover, they add that it is expected from Europeans to be white. Thus, queers of color in Europa do not fit in both of these assumptions; thus, the need to negotiate between their identities is evident.

Third, 'coming out' is viewed somewhat differently in some white and non-white ethnicities. Gloria Wekker argues that projections of coming out are pjocted by from white lesbians and gays onto non-white gay and lesbians. However, she states, these expectations do sometimes clash with "cultural behavioral understandings" (Wekker, 2016:119). Logie & Rwigema, 2014:175) accordingly show that notions of white privilege are projected onto all people in LGBTQ+ communities, while as stated in previous paragraphs, the LGBTQ+ communities cannot be seen as one; either racialized or sexualized.

Lastly, with political involvement, commodification and mainstreaming in gay scenes, it becomes even harder for non-whites to be included in the LGBTQ+ communities. Bell and Binnie state an example of Gay Prides being broadcasted to a broad public and tourists, make whiteness even more the norm audiences (2004:1810).

Going beyond the paradoxical relation between the need to negotiate between social identities and inclusion within a community, Nirmal Puwar argues that in- and exclusion are not in juxtaposition. Rather, notions of inclusion (and thus exclusion) are in hierarchy. One can be included 'but differently' within a community (Puwar, 2004:23). In this way, someone is included in the community, while distinct hierarchies and us-them-divides are kept intact. One of the example of identities being included but differently in mainstream LGBTQ+ communities are Islamic homosexual men in The Netherlands. They are "embraced, because they need to be protected against their barbaric, aggressive hetero brothers" (Wekker, 2016:118). In this case, ethnicity, including religion, of a non-white group is used by the dominant LGBTQ+ group, to make a statement against discrimination from outside the LGBTQ+ community. Herein, racialized ethnicity is used as a tool for in- and exclusion and belonging; although they are only included within the community, because the dominant

[4] Marcus, interviewed by Stefanie Meijers, April 12, 2018

group has accepted them. To really conform to the 'European' LGBTQ+ community, they have to 'hide' their ethnic (and religious) identity behind over time (El Tayeb, 2012:80).

“Berlin, a Combo of Glamour and Grit”[5]

> It is late. Sue[6] and I had dinner at Kubi, a nice restaurant not far from my home in Wedding, Berlin. When I first came to live here friends were saying to me that I live in an ‘upcoming’ neighborhood: diverse, multi-cultural, becoming hip and happening, just a few years behind *Moabit* in the gentrification process. Sue and I are walking back on the *Triftstraβe* to my home. Talking about the dinner and having a small talk, I look at her while I stroke her arm, on a whim, I kiss her. Sue gasps for air and looks a bit flustered at me, then focusses straight ahead again. I follow her eyes and see a man a few feet in front of us who obviously saw the kiss and stared while walking towards us. He passes by while keeping eye contact, after which I apologize to Sue. Still self-conscious she says, “Wow I did not know you were going to do that”. “I am so sorry, I did not see him coming” I explain.

Roxane Kroon

This vignette is part of Roxane’s experience as a lesbian in Berlin. The man in the story was non-white, middle aged and minded his own business after passing-by. When I was preparing my first trip to Berlin, most Dutch friends emphasized the open-mindedness of the city and underscored their idea of Berlin ‘being a city which you [Roxane] will love’. In that specific moment, in that neighborhood, Sue and myself did not feel the safety to be open with our sexuality. Often informants would emphasize the multi-culturalism of *Wedding*, and the absence of LGBT visibility. A narrative of felling unsafe was often underscored by different, mostly white, lesbian women I spoke to. The narrative was mainly focused on areas like *Neukölln* and *Warschauerstraβe*. These areas are similar to Wedding; known for their diverse and multi-cultural populations. Did the latter image influence the reaction of Sue and myself? It amazes me how I got confronted with both the internalized idea of the open-minded image of Berlin, and at the same time made a divide between the man as potential homophobic and ourselves as innocent lesbians. Does this encounter mirror a more realistic experience of Berlin?

[5] One-liner inspired by https://www.lonelyplanet.com/germany/berlin.
[6] Sue is not an informant.

This chapter questions the contemporary open-minded and accepting image of Berlin by emphasizing that lived realities often contradict this image. We argue that the ambivalent role of ethnicity causes districts in Berlin to be both viewed differently and viewed alongside relational hierarchies. The meanings of ethnicity, sexuality and gender play a considerable role in the image of Berlin as open-minded and accepting. The historical role of ethnicity in Germany and Berlin causes the open-minded image to be mainly formed relating to sexuality and gender. In other words, geographical space is divided, and districts of Berlin are being viewed differently conforming social hierarchies as discussed in chapter one. First, we will discuss the historical embeddedness of the open-minded image of Berlin which has a positive connotation regarding sexual freedom and LGBT right, and negative connotation concerning ethnicity. Second, we show that the open-minded image does not always reflect present day ideas of inclusivity as whiteness remains undiscussed and reproduced as norm. Finally, we demonstrate that the ambivalent role of ethnicity in the idea of inclusivity causes districts to be viewed differently, which reflects a relational geographical and social hierarchy.

The history of LGBTQ+ communities in Germany and specifically Berlin is one of major ups- and downs. Under the leadership of Hitler in the Second World War thousands of LGBTQ+ people were targeted and branded with the well-known triangle for deportation. Petzen (2012:291) argues that the LGBTQ+ history in Berlin causes an awareness concerning sexuality, which overshadows "critical positions concerning race" in recent years. In other words, the LGBTQ+ history causes sexuality to be the main focus point in acceptance and diversity debates, causing other social signifiers like race to be left out of the discussing of acceptance and tolerance. Chapter three and four underscore that due to the Second World War, notions of ethnicity and race have become so political that most people do not want to use the terms when discussing ethnicity related topics. The underlying thought in Germany is that "racism is a problem of a few disturbed neo-Nazis living in the countryside" (Petzen, 2012:291). Consequently, race-related issues are generally replaced by other terms like *Südlander*, which is portrayed as more politically neutral.

After the Second World War, the Berlin-wall led to different LGBTQ+ communities in East and West Berlin with their own struggles (Jörgens, 2007). Nils, the chief editor of one of the most popular LGBTQ+ magazines in Berlin addresses these struggles by pointing to the decentralization of LGBTQ+ scenes as a result of the Berlin-wall. Before 1989, the LGBTQ+ scene in East Berlin was less vibrant than the scene in West Berlin. Most bars and clubs were

located in Western Berlin, areas like Schöneberg[7] (see also Jörgens, 2007:119-120). Nowadays, Schöneberg is still seen as the most vibrant gay area in Berlin according to travel guides like Lonely Planet, although it has changed over recent years to be 'men only' and unpopular for the younger crowd. In other words, travel guides reproduce an old image of gay Berlin which does not fit present day discourses anymore. With the reunification of Berlin, LGBTQ+ night life decentralized even more, spreading to Neukölln and Kreuzberg where clubs and parties differentiated from each other, focusing more on social identifications and sub-groups. For example, Neukölln is more politically themed, queer feminist and hosts alternative parties, opposite to Schöneberg which is more male leather orientated. This also meant that parties arose centered around Arabic themes. So, due to historical divides in Berlin, LGBTQ+ nightlife became decentralized and divided alongside identifications within the acronym, causing differences between identifications to be more emphasized. The differences which are emphasized has often to do with gender, sexuality and ethnicity, as there are specific male parties, lesbian parties and ethnic themed parties which are often quite strict in their door policies.

Stefanie Meijers

As shown, LGBTQ+ scenes of Berlin are decentralized in the city. The mainstreaming of LGBTQ+ events like happens with the pride in Schöneberg, as stated before, keeps this image of 'gay Schöneberg' intact, while most of LGBTQ+ night life has moved to different parts of the city. Thus, mainly caused by historical divides in Berlin, LGBTQ+ nightlife became decentralized and divided alongside identifications within the acronym, causing differences between identifications to be more emphasized. The move of LGBTQ+ events to areas like Kreuzberg and Neukölln results social hierarchies as well: not everyone feels safe to go to these 'new' areas. Bacchetta et al (2015:773) argue that Kreuzberg is perceived as 'queerphobic'; something that lesbian women in our research experienced similarly in Neukölln. Kreuzberg and Neukölln are 'degenerate' areas, with high 'racialized' population, resulting in clashes between queer gentrification and the inhabitants of the areas (ibid, 2015:773). Both queer left and gay right in Berlin have made calls to 'reclaim' these areas for queer nightlife (ibid, 2015:773). By reclaiming these areas, non-white populations are criminalized as homophobic.

[7] Nils, interviewed by Stefanie Meijers, March 9, 2018.

This is also a problem for queer people of color, living in these neighborhoods; their double identity forces them to negotiate between their LGBTQ+ identity and ethnic identity in these areas and cause troubles with door policies at LGBTQ+ clubs in Kreuzberg and Neukölln[8]. The position of non-white LGBTQ+ people in Germany becomes harder as they are positioned as not fully belonging to LGBTQ+ communities due to the representation of queer as white (Wekker, 2016:117). This however, does not mean that there is no visibility at all. For example, there are monthly LGBTQ+ parties organized with an Arabic theme. Those parties are dominated by non-white people.

Consequently, racial characteristics like skin color are tight to ideas of other cultures and ethnicity, which also enforces links of ethnicity to Others, associating whiteness with the German national identity (Müller, 2011). Thus, the historical embeddedness of fighting for sexual freedom described above, make Berlin geographically a sexual and racial archive which influence contemporary lived realities of ethnicity, whiteness and sexuality in Berlin LGBTQ+ communities. However, the image of Berlin does not always match present day lived realities of different people. Nowadays, people use the image to emphasize an inclusive narrative which plays out on specific social identities and in explicit places, groups and districts. These narratives play out differently between lesbian and gay people in Berlin. For gay men, areas like Neukölln are identified as the place to be; renowned clubs and parties are to be found there[9]. The multicultural image of the area, makes it 'edgy' and distinguished for them. For lesbians, multicultural and upcoming areas like Neukölln and Wedding are also a place for going out, but as Roxane's vignette shows, are also places that are identified as unsafe during nighttime. This contrast in conceptions of Berlin areas, shows the intersection of gender, sexuality and ethnicity. It is not as safe for lesbians as for gay men due to a difference which is played out on signifiers like gender and sexuality.

Taking all above into account, imaging Berlin as an open-minded and tolerant city goes along side similar processes of negotiating social identities like ethnicity, gender and sexuality. In the intersection of these identities, a social hierarchy can be found: white and masculine as dominant. If we look at the different areas in Berlin, a social hierarchy can be identified as well. As stated before, the way Neukölln is perceived differently by men and women, non-

[8] Christian, informal talk, March 3, 2018.
[9] Nils and Jason, interviewed by Stefanie Meijers, March 9, 2018.

white and white people reflect a hierarchy in which the area is safest for white (gay) men. Therefore, not only social identities are related to in- and exclusion, but geographical space as well.

"In the Lesbian Scene, Skin Color Does Not Matter"

Paradoxes of Ethnicity and Whiteness in Lesbian Communities

> "Most of the time in the lesbian community people are also anti-racism, and feminists. So, it is kind of impossible to meet a lesbian who tells you I do not want to date a black girl, because it is really seen as the most horrible thing to say."[10]

Roxane Kroon

Maria[11] and Julie are sitting in front of me, two women who identify as lesbian, and appear non-white. We are talking for almost an hour about inclusivity in lesbian communities in Berlin. Both women experience the lesbian scene as inclusive, tolerant and open-minded, a narrative all my informants underscore. Especially when it comes to sexual freedom, my informants praise Berlin for its (seeming) acceptance of differences regarding sexuality. At bars, parties and other lesbian venues, where this research mainly took place, Berlin's reputation was often mentioned as a motive to move to the capital. At the same time, I encountered remarkably little ethnic diversity in LGBTQ+ places. It struck me that the majority of the people at lesbian places are white and young. In our conversation, Maria and Julie also emphasized this fact by telling me that very recently, a well-known LGBT club was called out in the media for having racist door policies[12]. How is it possible that lesbian communities in Berlin are perceived and experienced by lesbians as open-minded and tolerant, when they also get critique for excluding policies, discriminatory practices and lack of ethnic diversity? In which way do the implicit constructions of ethnicity and specifically whiteness shape that inclusive, open-minded narrative in lesbian communities? This chapter mirrors the experiences of white and non-white informants of various ages and reflect on my own participation as a white lesbian in Berlin. I observed that there are two seemingly contradictory narratives: 1) a broadly celebrated inclusivity in lesbian communities in Berlin, and 2) structural discrimination regarding ethnicity. I argue that these two narratives co-

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[10] Maria, interview by Roxane Kroon, April 5, 2018.
[11] All names are pseudonyms.
[12] https://missy-magazine.de/blog/2017/07/26/schwuz-we-have-a-problem/

construct each other and are products of tacit knowledge of social hierarchies and power structures that shape everyday experiences while reproducing hegemonic discourses. Because of the research sites, this chapter pays less attention to lesbian women who do not go out frequently. Although this is a gap in my research, this chapter does reflect on broader social discourses because lesbian interaction and building communities, mainly takes place at the bars, parties and other venues where I conducted my research. As I identify as a lesbian myself, my access to these places and building rapport was relatively easy. Thus, this chapter mirrors valid information and analysis, taking the above mentioned nuance in mind.

Differentiating as Tactic for Inclusivity

I noticed that the idea of an inclusive lesbian community is constructed through two narratives. First, inclusivity in reaction to ideas about gay men communities, and secondly inclusivity in relation to the reputation of Berlin as an open-minded, 'anything goes' city boasting sexual freedom. Both narratives are products of a will to be seen differently in comparison to others: lesbians being different to gay men, and Berlin being different in comparison to the rest of Germany and even Europe. White and non-white informants emphasized these differences often, which results in a dominant narrative of inclusivity reproduced in lesbian communities. In reaction to this discourse, excluding practices are not named, nor recognized as such. Excluding practices, centered around ethnicity do not necessarily mean exclusion from communities in a static manner, but rather is experienced by non-white lesbians as included but differently as discussed by Puwar (2004) in chapter one. Through this distinction, notions of inclusivity are reinforced.

All lesbians I talked to are critical about discrimination in gay communities of which they hear and see. Referring to excluding expressions based on ethnicity on gay apps like Grindr, my informants could not understand the superficiality of gay men when it comes to sexuality. Lesbian informants interpreted these practices as gay men being racist within their own groups. But also, sexist towards women in general and lesbians specifically, drawing on their own experiences as women and lesbian. As Hester explained to me:

H: Gay men are way more sexist than straight men.

R: Why?

H: Yeah, because if you don't like dicks at all, they just don't want you.[13]

Hester, a white mid aged informant, expressed her criticism about gay men regularly when we talked about racism and sexism in general. Especially when we talked about sexism she related misogyny among gay men to entanglements of gender and sexuality. Sexuality is important in sexism for Hester as she argued that in her opinion gay men "often look more down on women than straight people do"[14]. Hester implied the idea of a social hierarchy in which men are the most dominant, but mainly used this example to underscore in which way lesbians are different from gay men. Lesbian communities, in her opinion, do their best to include as many lesbians as possible within lesbian communities, but also other genders or sexualities were more than welcome she said[15]. Evident is Hester's construction of her own social identities alongside relational hierarchies of mainly gender and sexuality, which can be related to Wekker's (2016:22-23) contemplation in chapter one. The more powerful member of the binary gender pair, being male, in this example is used to make the difference in relation to the 'subordinate' female Self. In this case, the hierarchic positioning is used to differentiate lesbians as including opposite to discriminatory gay men. Being a woman is the shared denominator of feeling an underdog in society in general. She argues that it is important in the lived experience of inclusivity of lesbians because it defines oneself. Lin explained the difference between lesbians and gay men when it comes to inclusivity:

> "Maybe because we as women really needed to fight for our rights and we want to be equal and we suffer a bit more."[16]

The majority of my informants argued that being an underdog affects the fight for lesbian rights. Because of gender inequality in society, my informants felt that there is no space yet

[13] Field notes informal interview Hester, March 31, 2018.
[14] Hester, interview by Roxane Kroon, February 14, 2018.
[15] Hester, interview by Roxane Kroon, February 14, 2018.
[16] Lin, interview by Roxane Kroon, February 13, 2018.

to fight for lesbian rights. This is opposed to gay men who fought successfully for gay men rights thanks to their privileged position as men.

The intersection of gender and sexuality in this experience is of more important in the perception of lesbian positioning in the social hierarchy opposite to gay men. Every time both white and non-white informants talked to me about the absence of lesbian rights I noticed a mixture of envy projected on gay men. Notions of inclusivity on this matter seem to be broadly emphasized by both non-white as white lesbians. Differentiating from the gay community, is one of the reasons why it is too simplistic to talk about LGBTQ+ as one community that experiences constructions of gender and sexuality in the same way (Eliason & Morgan 1998; Barber and Schwartz, 2010:1). Entanglements of gender and sexuality can be used deliberately to differentiate oneself from the more dominant other communities in the acronym.

One of the consequences of differentiating on the basis of gender, is that excluding practices based on ethnicity in lesbian communities are little discussed and, in their opinion, cannot compared with all the gendered discrimination women have to face in general. Hence, there seems to be an absence of space for a critical dialogue. The way critical reflection of excluding practices concerning ethnicity and racism is being shut down is illustrated by Hester in one of our conversations about lesbian communities, especially in comparison with gay men, she said:

> "[…] But I think if a white woman would be really, really racist, a lot of others would tell her to shut up. A few would maybe silently agree, but a lot of them would say piss off! What are you doing, you know you can't do that. But, I think partly because being a minority yourself, for my own experience, maybe I'm idealistic, but I think girls are taught much more empathy."[17]

The reaction of Hester not only evokes an unlikeliness for (white) women to be racist, it also shows that she, like many other informants, thinks that there is no space for racist opinions to exist. However, within lesbian communities, when ethnicity comes into play in identification, non-white lesbians are included concerning their sexuality, but not regarding their ethnicity. In other words, non-white lesbians are included but differently as discussed by

[17] Hester, interview by Roxane Kroon, February 14, 2018.

Puwar (2004) in chapter one. Although women may feel racially discriminated, they cannot express it in public spaces. Therefore, the absence of critical narratives concerning ethnic discrimination create the idea that discriminatory practices, based on ethnicity are exceptions.

The second narrative addresses the idea of Berlin as an open-minded and tolerant city. Germany is known for being a country with high acceptance of homosexuality as discussed in chapter two. Berlin has many 'gay-friendly' areas, underscoring the open-mindedness and tolerance of the city when it comes to sexuality. Similar to what Bachetta et al. (2015:773) argue, the reputation of Berlin does not only shape the image of the these 'gay-friendly' areas, but also areas which to avoid. Areas to avoid, such as Neukölln, are often known for their multi-cultural populations. Vera underscored this by explaining that some areas are "different," as she called it, in comparison to, Kreuzberg and Schöneberg and which are known to be gay-friendly. When I asked her which areas are different and why they are different she answered:

> "Warschauer Brücke, Hallesches Tor and Neukölln areas. Yeah that is because of the *Südlandisches* men, they are most of the time there and they don't take no for an answer. Especially when you're holding hands with another woman."[18]

In this way, the framing of certain 'no-go' areas by night as a (lesbian) show that geographical space is also inflicted with representations of ethnicity: being non-white, gender: male, and sexuality: heterosexual. Identifying the Other alongside racialized and gendered social hierarchies is also projected onto geographical space, which creates a literal us-them-divide.

So, all my informants emphasized a narrative of inclusivity in lesbian communities in Berlin. On the one hand this is based upon the idea that lesbian women know what it is to be confronted with gender and sexuality discrimination. On the other hand, the image of Berlin is often used in the idea of inclusivity in comparison to the rest of Germany. However, both narratives highlight one part of the story. My informants focus on inclusivity as the main way lesbians interact with each other which undercuts differences in inclusion that are often based on ethnic representations.

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[18] Vera, interview by Roxane Kroon, April 10, 2018.

Gendered and Racialized Ethnicities

When I began my fieldwork, I noticed that my informants had a hard time answering the question: 'What does ethnicity mean to you?' The inability to answer this question lies at the core of how ethnicity is experienced and gains meaning. To illustrate this, I will first demonstrate how ethnicity is understood and how it is used in daily life, through using different labels and how they gain meaning. I will show that ethnicity gains meaning by creating a literal divide in labels used for ethnic Others, in comparison to the white normative German Self. Secondly, I will contemplate the meaning of whiteness as a norm. Finally, I will discuss privileges related to whiteness and how this connects to ethnicity both by white and non-white informants.

My informants had different understandings of ethnicity, but were most of the time linked to culture, country of origin and skin color. These characteristics were almost all the time discussed in relation to Others, who were identified as ethnic. Identifying the Other as ethnic implies the Self as white as discussed in chapter one. For example, Julie explained her perception on ethnicity, closely tight to race:

> R: So, do I understand you correctly that ethnicity as a term is not really used but skin color and country of origin is…?
>
> J: Yes, and race. But you won't see it in the newspapers because it has a negative connotation.[19]

The linkage between ethnicity and skin color underscores the complexity of ethnicity, which is why we discuss it here as racialized ethnicity. The blurred line between race and ethnicity also shows the ambiguous relation the German context has with ethnicity, resulting in a discourse in which ethnicity as a term is often not used (Müller, 2011; Tiβberger, 2005). My informants underscored that both terms 'ethnicity' and 'race' are often not used in discussions due to the local historical meaning of the words. As discussed in chapter two, racism or *Rassismus* is mainly seen as a problem of Neo-Nazis (Petzen, 2012:291) and closely linked to Second World War rhetoric. In combination with the image of Berlin as tolerant and open-minded, my informants often praised the absence of the term ethnicity instead of questioning

[19] Julie, interview by Roxane Kroon, April 5, 2018.

it. Drawing on Gloria Wekker (2016:2), who argues that in Europe the dominant way of thinking about race is a 'color-blindness', I want to argue that conceptions of ethnicity and race still matters in gendered and racialized social hierarchies in Berlin.

In my research I identified nine different terms which are used to label ethnic Others. Examples of these terms are: *Südlandisches Aussehen,* Turkish, Arabic, *NAFRI* (North African, often male), *Farbig* (colored) and *Dunkelhäutig* (dark skinned). The term which is mostly known and often used in media and conversations is *Südlandisch*, which latterly means 'from the South'. This term is mainly used to address Muslim, Arabic and African men and perceived as politically neutral by my informants, as Jara explained:

> "It is a more politically correct label for Arab people and refugees". She explains to me that it is also used in Berlin to show how open and tolerant they are. The term itself in her opinion is neutral, so by using it you avoid terms like ethnicity or race which have negative connotations."[20]

The usage of nine different terms to identify the Other opposite to one to identify white people underscores Tiβberger's (2005) contemplation that by constructing the Other outside the Self, a specific position is assigned in the field of dominance and power. '*Südlander'* as term is not much different from the Dutch word *allochtoon* on which Gloria Wekker (2016) argues that it is a constructed reality which appears to be transparent but is in fact not and is part of a binary explanation which inflicts racializing processes (Wekker, 2016:23). These racializing processes lay in the core of social hierarchies of importance as discussed by Hunter (2010) in chapter one. In other words, the word '*Südlander'* creates an indication of whites and others who are not associated with Germany and Germans, underscoring and us-them-divide which reinforces uneven power relations. The negative connotation comes to light as *Südlander* is mainly used discussing crime, misogynic experiences and LGBT violence. However, the meaning is not static, as Jara explained that Turkish people are often not meant when talking about *Südlandisches* men because they have lived in Germany for a long time and are "integrated"[21]. The ambivalent use shows that the term can be used to refer

[20] Jara, interview by Roxane Kroon, March 9, 2018.
[21] Jara, interview by Roxane Kroon, March 9, 2018.

negatively to groups in general, but whenever it is convenient individuals can be constructed out of the term. Vera made this also clear when discussing certain no-go areas in Berlin like Neukölln as discussed above[22].

Addressing men with the term *Südlander* shows a gendered aspect, because women are not referred to with the term. I observed that the gendered aspect helped differentiate my informants as white 'innocent' lesbian Self from aggressive male ethnic Others (Wekker, 2016). The gendered and racialized positioning of *Südlander* by white lesbian informants, results in a conflicted position of experiencing ethnic privileges and gender oppression at the same time. I argue that the meaning and usage of *Südlander* is one of the direct results of social hierarchies of importance in which gender and racialized ethnicity are the most important in the construction of the Other. The following example comes from my field notes of an informal interview with Vera, a white mid-aged lesbian who has already been living in Berlin for some time.

> "If I were a man I would be privileged." I asked her why only as a man, and she tells me that there is so much gender inequality that she thinks that although she is white, she is not privileged. She underscores that besides the fact that she lives in Berlin which gives her privileges regarding housing and money, she says "That is just the basics, I think that my black German friends are as privileged." She goes further by saying that in her opinion it does not matter which skin color you have, as a man you are always more privileged than women in general, including white women."[23]

So, ethnicity gains meaning intersectionally: in relation to sexuality and gender as discussed in chapter one. By identifying the Other, lesbian informants make use of binary oppositions (Wekker, 2016:23) in which the Self is identified as gendered and sexually subordinate: women, and non-heterosexual, opposite to dominant men. Not only does this identification influences the identification of the Other, it is also projected onto different areas in Berlin both in order to make a hierarch divide. To conclude, the subordinate position causes other white privileges to be out of the scope of experiences and therefore reinforce the social norm

[22] Vera, interview by Roxane Kroon, April 10, 2018
[23] Vera, interview by Roxane Kroon, April 10, 2018.

of queer as white (Wekker, 2016). However, portraying queer as white has consequences for non-white lesbians, as they are included but differently (Puwer, 2006), and reproduce notions of whiteness as well.

Whiteness in Lesbian Communities

Whiteness is not seen as an ethnicity and therefore functions as the norm as discussed by Dyer (2017; see also Wekker, 2016; Nayak, 2008). Hence, whiteness comes with a great deal of undiscussed white privilege as defined in chapter one. Almost no language is used to address white people, how is whiteness understood in lesbian communities in Berlin? The white German Self is identified through the creation of at least nine different ways to identify the Other. The construction of this social norm links to the argument of Müller (2011:623) that non-Europeans and Other Germans are lumped into one category, lower in the social hierarchy than white Germans. One of my informants underscored this by explaining that being black and German is implicitly seen as a contradiction. In other words, white privilege is evident through not having to question one's ethnicity. Hester's perceives her own whiteness as follows:

> "I don't feel that white inside, I do not. So, that is why I had to live in different countries. My longest relationships have been with other ethnicities."[24]

This example illustrates the absence of whiteness in the experience of ethnicity. Dyer (2017) argues similarly that race is often assigned to non-white people to the extent that whiteness is barely questioned. The Othering principle of ethnicity is visible in the way non-white informants like Camille explains her definition of ethnicity:

> "Oh god… I would say that is means… being an outcast to a new place… to me. That is what I would say. You are like an outcast, and you are having your own culture, background and different life style and something like that. And thinking also, thinking mentality is different. That is my understanding."[25]

[24] Hester, interview by Roxane Kroon, February 14, 2018.
[25] Camille, interview by Roxane Kroon, March 28, 2018.

I argue that by defining ethnicity as "being an outcast", shows that the idea of ethnicity gets entangled with personal, emotional experiences, something white informants did not demonstrate. Although the experiences of Hester and Camille are seemingly different, they arise from the same racializing discourse of ethnicity. Both understandings show the construction of Otherness. The first example in the absence of ethnicity and in the second one because Camille seems to internalize the identification of the Other in herself. She does this by emphasizing that she feels like an 'outcast' and that her thinking mentality is different from the white mentality as she later in our interview underscored. I recognized this Internalization of the identification with the Other in many of my non-white informants. In the experience of being the Other, Camille developed a sense of duty to adjust and work hard to be accepted. When I asked Camille to explain this she said:

> "I just want to say that the problem is with us you know. […] I have to mingle with these [white] people to get to know them better. […] I mean the European race can accept us, only if we want to mingle with them."[26]

Camille describes a form of adjusting herself in order to get into contact and mingle with white people. This adjustment is so drastic in her experience that she later mentions a need to "change her skin color, to be accepted". What she meant by changing her skin color had more to do with how she walks, talks and dresses. She explained that when she just moved to Berlin and went to parties, she was used to go dressed up in nice clothes. She soon learned that her "dressing was disturbing them [white lesbians]"[27], because it was too feminine. Being 'too' feminine is an expression of sexualized racism on which I will elaborate more in the following part. The point is that all such expressions are daily life experiences of us-them-dividing discourses which not only gives ethnicity meaning, but also reproduce whiteness as the norm. In this way, I argue that the experiences of both Hester and Camille are two sides of the same coin, that helps ethnicity gain meaning. The normative white ethnicity on the one side, and the racialized Other ethnicities on the other side, both inflicted with ideas of lesbian

[26] Camille, interview by Roxane Kroon, March 28, 2018.
[27] Camille, interview by Roxane Kroon, March 28, 2018.

femininity. Another practice which allows whiteness to be reinforced as the norm was explained by Lin when I asked her how whiteness is named or discussed:

> "You could use white… but most of the time it is not discussed because it is only white people who talk. So, they just talk about other people like black people."[28]

Lin underscores the dominance of whiteness. White people are the only ones who 'talk', consequently whiteness as the norm is reproduced. To merely state that whiteness is mainly, or solely, carried out by white people is a misunderstanding of the complexity and the experience of whiteness by both white and non-white informants. Because white people are the main ones 'who talk', whiteness as the norm is not questioned nor discussed. To conclude, discourses of racialized ethnicities construct an internalized Otherness opposite to the white Self. The Self is however also gendered and positioned in a relational hierarchy with sexuality. Lesbian informants position themselves as subordinate in the social hierarchy of importance which is mainly drawn on sexuality and gender. This is the core reason why whiteness is not discussed as such: white lesbians feel as oppressed underdogs, consequently privileged positions like whiteness is constructed out of the experience. Therefore, both narratives: 1) whiteness reproduced as norm and 2) the internalization of an identification as Other, produce a discourse of 'included but differently' (Puwar, 2004) based on sexualized racism and sexual objectification (Logie & Rwigema, 2014:175; Teunis, 2007).

Racialized Sexuality and Sexualized Racism

In this part I will discuss how abstract notions of social hierarchies caused by conceptions of ethnicity are reflected in daily life: through racialized sexualities and sexualized racism. I argue that through strong stereotypes linked to images of non-white people in society (Ro et al. 2013:843), non-white lesbians are included differently (Puwar, 2004) opposite to white lesbians. This is played out in sexual attraction and sexual interaction. Sexual interactions and attraction are formed by stereotypes and sexual objectifications (Teunis, 2007).

[28] Lin, interview by Roxane Kroon, March 10, 2018.

Stereotypes are not only used towards ethnic others, but, I argue, they are the most perverse. For example, in lesbian communities, non-white informants emphasized experiences of sexualized objectifications as argued by Teunis (2007:267). My informants call this objectification instead of discrimination, because they experience lesbian communities as open-minded and tolerant as well. It seems that in their experience, inclusivity and discrimination cannot co-exist in the same magnitude. Arising from this experience I argue that implicitly non-white lesbians are forced to choose between taking up comments negatively as discrimination, or positively as jokes/objectifications. As Mandy explained:

> M: Yeah, people will only see me as my ethnicity… like this girl I dated, I felt sometimes she is only with me because I'm black, and something like that. Or very disgusting pick-up lines like 'oh yeah can I taste some of that chocolate' and stuff… like wow how original (laughter) yeah… these kinds of things. And they really annoy me.
>
> R: Do you experience those kind of things, the objectification, as discrimination?
>
> M: In some kind of way definitely, because it only reduces me to my skin color. I mean I'm sure they meant it like a compliment but yeah if you really think about it, it's just stupid.[29]

This battle between coping mechanisms cause discriminatory narratives to be downgraded in terms of importance. In other words, it seems that internally, sexuality and the idea of sexual freedom is chosen as more important in the construction of the Self, opposite to racial identity (Hunter 2010:88). However, this does not mean that racial identification in the example of Mandy is absent. The experience is formed intersectionally and shapes Mandy's perception on being sexually objectified. However, as argued in chapter one, Mandy demonstrates having a hard time experiencing oppression in the example. This is due to the identification of her as ethnic Other, which is in sexual interaction more meaningful than sexuality. Objectifications reduce non-white lesbians to their skin color, which is expressed in exoticizing ways, or by rejecting them. The expression of objectifications is produced through the idea of femininity and masculinity which are sexualized and racialized. Logie & Rwigema (2014:180) discuss a similar process in which they argue that LGBT spaces are represented as white and that 'real'

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[29] Mandy, interviewed by Roxane Kroon, February 22, 2018.

women match this representation. As an illustration, Camille told me a story where she wanted to go to a lesbian bar, and a white lesbian thought she was transgender, being from male to female. Camille looks very feminine, in combinations with her skin color, her femininity was perceived as contra-normative. This results in sexualizing and racializing her in order to make a divide between Camille as non-white and the dominant "white representations of sexuality" (Wekker, 2016). Camille who was dressed up at that moment, non-white and in a lesbian bar, contradicts all hegemonic discourses of lesbians for the specific white woman who called her out. This incident is not isolated. Mandy also emphasized how she repeatedly needs to 'prove' her sexuality because people do not believe her[30]. In other words, racialized sexuality is expressed through sexualized racism. White women can be lesbians, but as a non-white lesbian you need to prove your sexuality, not only to get accepted, but literally to get into a bar.

Both white and non-white informants underscore that white lesbians do not mingle that much. In my own experience at a party called *GirlsTown* this observation was confirmed. I experienced the often-mentioned narrative of seemingly impenetrable small groups of white lesbians. As one of my informants described her experience:

> "If you go by yourself, you will be standing there for almost three hours… nobody… and if you say 'hi' to someone they just say 'hi' back and that is it. They [white lesbians] are not interested. So that is why I am saying they are not willing to accept new people."[31]

Indeed, I experienced that it is hard to make contact when going out in lesbian bars in general, but also that both white as non-white tend to stick to their own groups that seem to reflect on skin color. The apparent closed image of the lesbian scene is not experienced as such due to the unchallenged dominant narrative of inclusivity. In other words, I argue that in these discourses lesbian scenes lack the ability to critically reflect on their excluding practice. In mixed relationships a similar process is visible. Although almost invisible, women who are in mixed relationships experience a lot of negative reactions:

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[30] Mandy, interviewed by Roxane Kroon, February 22, 2018.
[31] Janice, interview by Roxane Kroon, March 3, 2018.

> “At times it has a negative effect on your partner, because some of them will ask why they are with a black girl. Most of the time it is not even about that question. What I realized is when I walk with my [white] girlfriend, when we are going shopping or somewhere. You see that they have looked, meaning that this is not something that is supposed to be going on. […] The moment we enter, the both of us, you feel that cold air, that is as if… you see that everybody is moving with you which they don’t do with other couples when they come in. Meaning that there is an abnormality, you understand? Because most of the time they don’t see white and black and if… maybe they would want to know why she is with a black girl, or why I date a white girl… I don’t know. But it really has a negative effect.”[32]

The example above shows the relational structuring of sexuality entangled with racialized ethnicities. The nonverbal confrontation with a dominant narrative of being abnormal is similar to Wekker’s (2016:32) discussion about the normativity of white sexuality and relational structuring of sexualities from women other than white. The relational structuring is based on identifying ethnicity over sexuality in a hierarchy of importance, in which a mixed lesbian couple is confronted with stereotypes concerning ethnicity before any notions on inclusivity regarding sexuality can occur. Stereotypes that reduce non-white women to their skin color, are not isolated incidents, but rather outings of broader social discourses. Examples like the one mentioned above underscore the public rejection of being in a mixed relationship, partly because ‘queer’ is represented as ‘white’ (Wekker, 2016; Logie & Rwigema, 2014).

When it comes to ethnic diversity and sexuality, the norm is white and rejecting non-white others is dismissed as having certain sexual ‘preferences’. Talking about sexual interaction, the majority of my white informants said that everyone has preferences and that it has nothing to do with discrimination or racism. These preferences concern hair and other phenotypes, however I observed that the categorizations made are also racialized and reflect stereotypes. Mandy illustrated stereotypes in her story about the white girl she dated who expressed a fetish for Mandy’s skin color as discussed above[33]. She also emphasized that her

[32] Camille, interview by Roxane, March 28, 2018.
[33] Mandy, interview by Roxane, February 22, 2018.

experience is an exception in Berlin. However, a white informant experienced her preference in the following way:

> "Well I dated a black girl, okay not really dated but you know… So, she was really beautiful and stuff but when we got a bit further, I noticed that I just don't like the smell and taste. This is really personal, but it just was so different. I like my vanilla."[34]

Vera added later in our conversation that this experience only has to do with having sexual preferences. Categorizing sexual attraction and interaction as 'preferences' match the way discrimination and objectification are portrayed as 'exceptions'. They both underscore dominant social hierarchies and undermine critical dialogues about inequality and power relations.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown that the dominant narrative within Berlin lesbian communities is one of open-mindedness. Regardless of skin color or cultural background, all of my informants agree on this matter. This is however one side of the story. The first narrative concerns the inclusive idea of lesbian communities which is produced by differentiating themselves as lesbians from both gay men as from the rest of Germany. The second narrative this chapter discusses concerns structural discrimination as a result of giving ethnicity and specifically whiteness meaning. I argued that through the entanglements of gender and sexuality, white lesbians feel subordinated positioned, as the underdog, which is reflected on broader social hierarchies in society. This results in a discourse in which ethnicity as a signifier in identity making is placed out of the experience of white lesbian informants. Consequently, the white norm is reproduced, and non-white lesbians are included differently in comparison to white lesbians. In daily life experiences the white norm and hierarchic power structures are visible in practices of racialized sexualities and sexualized racism. Through these notions, divides are made, and experiences are formed. Being 'out' does not necessarily mean that you are in.

[34] Vera, interview by Roxane, April 10, 2018.

“We are all Gay, in my Opinion”[35]

Negotiating ethnicity, whiteness and sexuality in Berlin gay communities[36]

Stefanie Meijers

One of the first days in Berlin, I stumbled upon a LGBTQ+ magazine in the *Schwules Museum**. When I open the magazine, I see ‘This confrontation is damaging to gay and lesbian alliances’ highlighted on the first page. The article surrounding this quote, is written by the magazine’s editor in chief. I start to read. Apparently one of the board members of the *Schwules Museum** criticized an exhibition, for showing only the visual and conceptual male hegemony in the LGBTQ+ world and leaving marginalized and discriminated positions behind[37]. When I read the article, the dominant reaction by the Berlin LGBTQ community to this criticism was: “If there aren’t any lesbian exhibitions, it’s because lesbians don’t create them”. The editor in chief emphasizes that: ‘We [the LGBTQ+ community] can’t let [this] happen: pitting gay and lesbian interests against each other’[38]. Other marginalized positions, like non-white people, are left behind in the article.

This was the first time I noticed that something outside our research question was so important for notions of in- and exclusion. During my fieldwork and in conversations with Roxane, the differentiating processes of in- and exclusion were not only focused on ethnicity, but on notions of sexuality as well. As the title of this chapter shows, a common idea in Berlin gay communities is ‘We are all gay[39]’, because ‘Berlin is already gay’[40]. In this chapter, I will emphasize how social hierarchies of importance, as discussed in the theoretical framework, shape dominant identities like whiteness and masculinity. This reinforces dominant stereotypes based on ethnicity, whereby non-white gay men are included, but differently. First, different narratives of inclusion within the gay communities are explained. Second, I show how different the concept of ethnicity is constructed by white informants and non-white

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[35] Marcus, interviewed by Stefanie Meijers, April 12, 2018.
[36] **All names in this chapter are pseudonyms.**
[37] https://www.siegessaeule.de/no_cache/newscomments/article/3715-zu-weiss-zu-maennlich-zu-schwul-wie-das-schwule-museum-sein-fundament-entsorgt.html
[38] Siegessäule Magazine, February 2018, p. 5.
[39] Marcus, interviewed by Stefanie Meijers, April 12, 2018.
[40] Massoud, interviewed by Stefanie Meijers, Februari 20, 2018; Marcus, interviewed by Stefanie Meijers, April 12, 2018.

informants; to later discuss the concept of whiteness. Lastly, the intersection of ethnicity, whiteness and sexuality is pointed out, with lived experiences of racialized sexuality and sexualized racism.

Differentiating Narratives of Inclusion

When talking with gay informants about their communities, I noticed how notions of inclusivity were linked to the 'sexual freedom' image of Berlin. Furthermore, informants identified themselves as 'queer feminist', and opposed this identity to the 'mainstream' gay communities. The idea of an open community, similarly to the openness of Berlin, is narrated foremost by white gay men. According to Petzen, the 'anything goes' mentality of Berlin is one of the big shapers of the LGBTQ+ communities in the city (2004). With a vibrant LGBTQ+ scene connected to areas like Schöneberg, as stated in the context, there are a lot of places to go to for LGBTQ'ers in Berlin. When asking my informants about gay areas in Berlin, most of them answered that Berlin 'is already gay'[41], most of the bars and clubs in Berlin are gay friendly. However, this results in a specification of parties and clubs focused on the gay scene: they are targeted on specific communities (mainly men) within the gay communities, like the 'bears' (very hairy men). When discussing this subject with Marcus, a Dutch gay man living in Berlin for a couple of years, he immediately compared the Berlin LGBTQ+ and gay scene to the Amsterdam LGBTQ+ and gay scene, to show me the difference. To him, the communities in Amsterdam are much stronger connected, in comparison to the Berlin communities. This, because everything in Berlin is already gay, resulting in a widespread community. For instance, when organizing a LGBTQ+ party in Amsterdam, a lot of different non-heteresexual people show up; these parties are not specifically targeted on smaller communities, like in Berlin. This widespread community in Berlin also results in more than one LGBTQ+ pride on the same day (Christopher Street Day, named after the Stonewall Riots[42]). The first one is the so called 'mainstream' pride, as Christian tells me. Christian is Dutch as well and organized the first gay pride in Prague. On this mainstream pride, companies and big communities have a car in the festival. The second pride is the 'alternative' pride in Kreuzberg, a pride that another

[41] Massoud, interviewed by Stefanie Meijers, Februari 20, 2018; Marcus, interviewed by Stefanie Meijers, April 12, 2018.
[42] https://www.berlin.de/en/events/2096878-2842498-csd-christopher-street-day.en.html

informant calls: “always a melting pot of people from different ethnic communities”[43]. Lastly, as Christopers states, “there is this Dyke Pride, for ‘*Boze Potten’*, ‘Angry Lesbians’”[44]. The variety of prides in Berlin, each attracting different communities reflects how hard it is to find connections between different LGBTQ+ communities in Berlin. Nils, editor in chief of the biggest LGBTQ+ magazine in Berlin, underscores this argument:

> “People are not willing to build alliances with others within the community. So, when you go the smaller cities in Germany, when there’s a Christophers Street, everyone is going. Every part of the community. And in Berlin, we have so many people who say: ‘No, I am not going, I am not interested in this mainstream shit’. It’s harder, when it comes to certain basic LGBT rights, to get everyone together. Because everyone is like: ‘I don’t have anything in common with this gay guy over there because the fact that he’s gay and I’m gay, that doesn’t mean we are the same’. Which is of course true, but on the other hand it makes it harder when it comes to the question if they will go to a demo or whatever.”[45]

When reading this statement of Nils, it becomes clear that being ‘mainstream’ is something gay men turn their back to. For example, by not going to the ‘mainstream pride’, which is regarded as normative white, compared to the ‘alternative, melting pot, pride’. With ‘mainstream shit’ Nils also refers to the gay scene of Schöneberg. Schöneberg is an area in which a lot of ‘men only’ and cruising bars are located. These cruising bars are focused on sexual intercourse, and often specified to a certain fetishism like leather. Fascinating is how my informants do not identify with this mainstream, historical, gay area, while it is pointed out by tourists as the gay spot in Berlin, as we have shown in the theoretical context. When I asked my informants with which community they identify, some of them[46] answered ‘queer feminist’. This is a broad community, overlapping with lesbian and non-binary identities as well. The queer feminist community is considered more tolerant and diverse than the Berlin gay scene, as Jason (another editor of the biggest LGBTQ+ magazine in Berlin) notes:

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[43] Nils, interviewed by Stefanie Meijers, March 9, 2018.
[44] Christian, informal talk, translated from Dutch, March 12, 2018.
[45] Nils, interviewed by Stefanie Meijers, March 9, 2018.
[46] Jason, Nils, Marcus and Pilar.

> "Berlin has a queer feminist scene, which I definitely identify with more than with the men only, more macho, gay scene. And I think for the queer feminist scene there's a lot more awareness of other forms of social injustice and racism. There are a lot of intersectional approaches. Like at a queer party instead of a gay party, you are more likely to see signs or posters saying: 'We don't tolerate racism or homophobia or sexism'. I think you are less likely to see that in a gay-only club or party."[47]

Striking is how Jason compares the queer feminist scene to the 'men only, more macho, gay scene'. Later, he notes that there are posters with 'no homophobia or sexism'. What lacks in Jason's answer about the queer feminist community is the fact that he is not talking about women, non-binary people. His perspective of an open community is the perspective of a white, homosexual man. Even though he is talking about the queer feminist community as being more open and tolerant, he neglects other LGBTQ+ identities, while these are also included within the queer feminist scene, as shown in experiences of Roxane's informants. Nonetheless, Jason emphasizes the important of awareness of social injustice and racism. This narrative of inclusivity is opposed to the 'mainstream' community, which is regarded as discriminative and white. By identifying with the queer feminist communities and identifying the mainstream communities as exclusionary, gay informants differentiate narratives of inclusivity. In comparison lesbian women in chapter three who differentiate with other communities (gay communities), gay communities in Berlin differentiate in their own communities, mirroring social hierarchies.

The lack of interaction between different communities within broader LGBTQ+ communities in Berlin, and specifically between gays and lesbian, is a phenomenon that was not a main topic in our research in the first place. During the fieldwork, I noticed that my informants barely spoke about women, when discussing the LGBTQ+ community in general, while Roxane's informants were pointing out the differences between gays and lesbians quite a lot. I started asking questions about the differences between the gay and lesbian communities. My informants came with rather elusive answers. Marcus, a Dutch man

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[47] Jason, interviewed by Stefanie Meijers, March 9, 2018.

wondered: “Sometimes I think: where are all the lesbians? I don’t see them at parties … I mean, on a gay party, everyone is welcome. We are all gay, in my opinion. But maybe they believe that gay means ‘men only’.[48]” Marcus’ remark ‘We are all gay, in my opinion’, reflects the social hierarchies I indicated previously. As stated in the theoretical framework, the existence of binary pairs create racialized and gendered ‘social hierarchies of importance’ (Hunter, 2010; Wekker, 2016). Marcus is a white gay man. His perspective of broader LGBTQ+ communities is inflicted by dominant positions of binary pairs: white and masculine. In this way, his understandings of ‘being gay’ are generalized for broader communities. Marcus’ wonderment ‘where are all the lesbians’, can be connected to what we call in line with Puwar (2004:23) ‘being included but differently’. For Marcus, lesbians are ‘also gay’: they are included by him, but because of social hierarchies of importance, the lived experiences of gay men and lesbians are different when it comes to narratives of inclusion.

All my informants were cis gay men, except for one. I contemplated a long time whether to use statements of Pilar. Pilar identifies as non-binary; therefore, I will refer to Pilar with the pronoun ‘they’. This research focuses on gay men and lesbian women. However, Pilar’s experience with gay communities in Berlin underscores the title of this chapter: “We are all gay, in my opinion”, and therefore the normative narrative of inclusion in the gay community. Pilar does not feel included in the gay community, simply because they is not seen by gay communities as a man or as masculine enough[49]. What is masculine or not, is influenced as well by stereotypes, mostly based on ethnic stereotypes. I will further emphasize this in the last paragraph. Although ‘Berlin is a place for everyone’, this image is largely shaped by the normative narrative of LGBTQ+ Berlin: white gay men.

Racialized Ethnicities

> “**Q: So, would you say actually that in Berlin there’s a place for everyone? And maybe it’s not mixed all together, but everyone can find a place on their own?**
> A(Nils): In a way, yeah.
> A(Jason): From specific gay perspective, probably yes. (…) But I mean, I am thinking now also in terms of ethnicity and, so for us, yes probably. But I don’t know if

[48] Marcus, interviewed by Stefanie Meijers, April 12, 2018.
[49] Pilar, interviewed by Stefanie Meijers, March 14, 2018.

> everyone from other ‘ethnic backgrounds’ has the same access. Even if, you know, there probably is places and groups that are welcoming. Being able to find a way to them is probably much more challenging.”[50]

When talking about ethnicity with Jason and Nils, editors of the biggest LGBTQ+ magazine in Berlin, the atmosphere became uncomfortable. As Jason tells me in the quote above, he is not sure the image of open Berlin is true for all gay people in Berlin. When he questioned if it was the same for “everyone from other ‘ethnic backgrounds’”, he made quotation marks around the words ‘ethnic background’. In other words, Jason felt uncomfortable discussing ethnicity and linked it to the ‘ethnic Other’. Jason was certainly not the only one feeling this discomfort: all German and Dutch informants did not know what to answer when I asked them to construct ethnicity. I asked Nils why he felt uncomfortable discussing the topic:

> “I mean … I really can’t explain. I don’t know, maybe I am not familiar to use it, because it is … I don’t know how it is in Holland, but in Germany, ethnic is linked to a certain … like all this ‘ethno-style’: people dressed like things from other cultures and a bit funny impersonation of people. And this is what is in my head linked to ethnic. And it’s like: ‘Oh wow, look at this, she is dressed in ethno/ethnic style!’. For me it’s kinda negative, but I can’t really explain why.”[51]

Nils links his uncomfortable feeling towards ethnicity to language. In German language ‘ethnicity’ is linked to ‘ethnic’, to the Other. Jason shows that, in Germany and in German language, ethnicity is connected to non-white people. Jason, being white himself, has a hard time defining ethnicity as a concept. He even questions the concept of ethnicity in general:

> “And I don’t know… But the thing is like, if ethnicity exists, then everyone has one, right? So, you can’t be like: ‘Ethnic is people who are not us’. It’s somehow used in this way.”[52]

[50] Nils and Jason, interviewed by Stefanie Meijers, 9/3/2018
[51] Nils, interviewed by Stefanie Meijers, March 9, 2018.
[52] Jason, interviewed by Stefanie Meijers, March 9, 2018.

The uncomfortable experience when contemplating about ethnicity, is something all white informants have. For them, constructing ethnicity is somewhat undoable. This uncomfortable feeling while talking about ethnicity, is backed up by Jason in the same interview:

> **Q: No, no. But that's interesting actually, what is this feeling?**
> A (Jason): I mean, it sounds like it's similar to English as to German, when you talk about it. If a white person is describing something as exotic and ethnic, that's just reinforcing the whiteness as the default. And that reminds me of going to the supermarket as a kid [in the United States], and there was this one aisle that said: 'Ethnic Food'. And I asked: 'Mommy, what does ethnic mean?' and I don't remember exactly what she said, but something like: 'Oh you know, like food from other countries and stuff that's different'. And I don't know …" [53]

"I think, for me, [ethnicity is] a quite general term. That we don't use …"[54] says Nils. During a book presentation in a gay bar[55], it became clear that the German language does not contain a lot of words to talk about ethnicity and racism. While listening to a discussion about discrimination in Berlin LGBTQ+ communities, I noticed that the word '*rassismus*' was also used for discrimination based on gender and age. In the bar were only German speaking people. This does however not mean that this happens in all of Germany and Berlin. Nonetheless, it was a clear example that language plays a substantial role when talking about ethnicity, influenced by the bitter history around race and ethnicity of World War II.

When trying to address ethnicity as a concept, most informants relate it to 'racialized ethnicity', taking the power relations of race in co-construction with ethnicity into account. For some informants this happens implicitly, others divide ethnicity and notions of race explicitly. Another non-white informant, Massoud (a biologist) explicitly divides race from ethnicity:

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[53] Nils and Jason, interviewed by Stefanie Meijers, March 9, 2018.
[54] Nils, interviewed by Stefanie Meijers, March 9, 2018.
[55] Book Presentation 'Hetero's Fragen, Homo's Antworten', April 4, 2018.

> "Yeah, I mean, ethnicity is something different. On this concept. The term ethnicity describes the language that you speak, the culture that you belong to, the country that you come from.
> **Q: This all together.**
> A: Exactly. But race? No. There is no such thing."[56]

For Lou, a Vietnamese Canadian living in Berlin, ethnicity is something that is deeply rooted inside someone, and is not something that can be changed over time. He has been confronted with ethnicity from an early age.

> "You cannot change. So, if it becomes so important to you, and you exclude others that are not part of your ethnicity, like the in and out groups, it makes it very difficult to interact with other people. And there are cultural blenders that everyone does: eating habits or drinking habits or whatever habits that ... Like when I was growing up, I had to navigate early on: 'Why is it like this in my household? Why like this in other households?' So, I think early on I knew about ethnicity.
> **Q: Yeah. Were you like aware of it? That everyone had an ethnicity? Or was it just something…**
> A: We were aware of it. Because we were asked like 'What's your background?'"[57]

Lou identifies several understandings of ethnicity. First, he names material notions of ethnicities, like eating and drinking habits. Second, he divides ethnicities in the Self and the Other and thereby making an us-them-divide (Dyer, 2017:1), when he opposes his household to 'other' households. Third, more implicitly, he addresses notions of race. He tells me he was asked what his background was, because he did not conform to the white norm in Western countries like Canada. Racial signifiers like skin color are a part of Lou's notion of ethnicity, although it is implicit to him. Later in the interview I asked him if he still gets these background

[56] Massoud, interviewed by Stefanie Meijers, Februari 20, 2018.
[57] Lou, interviewed by Stefanie Meijers, April 6, 2018.

questions in Berlin. He noted that when he was a kid, he did not mind the questions, but as an adult in Berlin, he notices that stereotypes connected to his Vietnamese-Canadian ethnicity are taken into account by others. According to Lou, the 'framing' of ethnicity happens in in first interactions[58]. This can be explained as racializing and othering. Ethnicity is seen as something that is non-white, and questions about ethnicity are asked when someone does not look 'white' or 'German'. I will later connect this to racialized sexualities and sexualized racism.

Whereas white gay men were hesitant in answering questions about ethnicity, non-white informants were clear in their constructions of ethnicity. Sometimes race was implicitly connected to the concept of race, as happened with Lou. A space where white gay men as well as non-white gay men explicitly link visible signifiers like skin color (and thus race) is Grindr. This American dating app for gay and bisexual men is used a lot in Berlin gay communities. When launching a new user profile, it is possible to choose an ethnicity, as Marcus shows me: "You can choose from: Asian, Black, Latino, Middle-Eastern, Mixed, Native American, White, South Asian and Other"[59]. While ethnicity is mainly constructed by informants as a mix of culture, language, upbringing, skin color and religion, on Grindr there is only one thing: race. Certainly, both constructions of racialized ethnicity are co-constructions of ethnicity and race. However, on Grindr race and skin color are explicitly focused on; while in offline Berlin gay communities, racialized ethnicities are more implicit.

Whiteness in Berlin Gay Communities

As seen in the previous paragraph, ethnicity within the Berlin gay community is mostly used to frame 'The Other'; the non-white. Nevertheless, whiteness is an ethnicity as well. After the book presentation of '*Hetero's Fragen, Homo's Antworten'* where I noticed the versatile use of '*rassismus*', I went to talk to the writers of the book. When I asked them about ethnicity in the Berlin LGBTQ+ communities, they responded: "You should talk with POC [People of Color] about that, not with us [white people]"[60]. Like Dyer and Wekker argue, by ascribing racialized ethnicities to non-white ethnicities, whiteness functions as the default and 'human norm' in

[58] Lou, interviewed by Stefanie Meijers, April 6, 2018.
[59] Marcus, interviewed by Stefanie Meijers, April 12, 2018.
[60] Writer during Book Presentation 'Hetero's Fragen, Homo's Antworten', April 4, 2018.

society (Dyer, 2017:1; Wekker, 2016:22). This white norm is also present in Berlin gay communities. However, most informants connect 'the norm' to numbers. Nils, is aware of this norm 'in numbers' and the representations in his LGBTQ+ magazine:

> "Most of the things that we report, are about the Berlin community. Like most of the time it is about white people, of course. And so sometimes, it is hard, when we take relevant topics … Sometimes means it is not possible to say: 'Okay we have like these three relevant topics and it is all about white people, so let's keep one of the relevant topics out, just to have another representation'."[61]

When Nils talks about topics, he refers to articles about people in the LGBTQ+ communities. In this passage he shows how in his magazine sometimes there are more 'relevant' topics about white people, even emphasizing the norm by saying 'of course'. He links it to a certain number, instead of elaborating on power relations that function as the norm and therefore being more 'relevant'. This tendency is something that I noticed with more informants. Lou even said it explicitly:

> "**Q: Would you say that in the German gay community, whiteness is the norm?**
> A: Yeah, I think just by the numbers there's definitely more Germans."[62]

Striking is the fact that when Lou answers a question about whiteness, he refers to whiteness with 'Germans'. He connects being German to being white and whiteness to one single ethnicity. The writers of '*Hetero's Fragen, Homo's Antworten'* indicated a white norm within the Berlin LGBTQ+ communities as well. They named that the LGBTQ+ community in Berlin was mainly white, but 'more ethnicities'-white, referring to French, Spanish and Italian whiteness[63]. Again, whiteness is linked to different ethnicities and therefore named in numbers. The racialized ethnicity of whiteness is seen as something that can be counted, instead of a set of power relations. In line with Wekker and Goldberg, what I call the 'numbering of ethnicities', can be seen in the light of the bitter history around race of World

[61] Nils, interviewed by Stefanie Meijers, March 9, 2018.
[62] Lou, interviewed by Stefanie Meijers, April 6, 2018.
[63] Book Presentation 'Hetero's Fragen, Homo's Antworten', April 4, 2018.

War II, causing a certain color-blindness in Europe and Germany (Wekker, 2016:2; Goldberg, 2006:334). The white norm is hereby seen as a logical result, because 'the most people are white'. In this way, Lou also connects ethnicity to nationality, emphasizing being 'German' as 'being white'. Linking it back to the lack of words for racialized ethnicity, when contemplating whiteness, a presumed 'white' nationality is named by Lou:

> "In Europe … it is, you know, you are ethnically German.
> **Q: It is not white, but more like: 'You are German'.**
> A: Because there isn't a lot of history of mixed European traits. It is little bit more now. If I meet someone German, they lived in that town for a very long time.
> **Q: So maybe then it is more nationality?**
> A: If you grew up with inclusion and exclusion groups in small towns, like the outskirts of Berlin. And all your friends and family were German. The extreme is you're always in the in-group."[64]

As Lou argues, the connection of whiteness and 'being ethnically German' causes in and out groups. Hereby, the 'in-group', is linked to whiteness, this can be linked to the white Self versus the non-white Other (Dyer, 2017:1). When discussing whiteness with white informants, this being 'in' also came up. Where Lou relates whiteness to a nationality; Christian and Marcus (both white, Dutch men) see 'being white' mere as a given, connecting it to privilege and thus to power relations:

> "Of course, it is a privilege. It is difficult, because I can't do anything more than not acting on it. It's like being tall: that is also an advantage that I didn't personally choose."[65]
>
> He knows he is a white man, of course. And he knows that he is 'on top of the food chain'. But he didn't achieve this himself, he didn't have to do anything for it, so he can't take pride in it. He tells me that it is probably easier to construct ethnicity

[64] Lou, interviewed by Stefanie Meijers, April 6, 2018.
[65] Christian, informal talk, translated from Dutch, March 12, 2018.

when one is not white. In that case, you are already continuously confronted with ethnicity.[66]

Marcus remark is noteworthy: he thinks it is easier to answer: 'What is ethnicity to you?', when one is not-white. This can be seen as white privilege; he is barely confronted with this question and thereby not forced to think about the concept. His ethnicity, whiteness, is the norm in his community. This way of thinking is also seen in explicit remarks on Grindr. On this dating app, it is very common to 'exclude' ethnicities. One sentence that pops up in a lot of profiles is: 'No fats, no fems (feminine gays), no Asians'[67]. These exclusive lines on Grindr profiles are foremost about non-white ethnicities. "When I would see 'no whites' on a Grindr profile, I don't think I would feel offended", says Marcus. "But then again, I am not confronted with it outside of Grindr."[68] For Marcus it is easy not to care about such remarks: he carries his white privilege with him.

Concluding, whiteness is barely constructed as an ethnicity in the Berlin Gay communities. Certainly, some informants see it as a privileged position or a visible signifier, however not as an identity that defines people. Note that these statements are mostly addressed by white men. When Marcus was asked which identity shapes him, he answers: "North European"[69]. This ethnicity is not linked to a skin color, while this does happen when addressing non-white ethnicities. Being 'North European' or 'being German' (both European nationalities) is implicitly 'being white'; while 'being white' it is not connected to an ethnicity itself.

Racialized Sexuality and Sexualized Racism

"In the Berlin gay community, it is different.

Q: Different from German society?

A: Different from German society. Because what happens, now there is sex involved, right?"[70]

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[66] Marcus, informal talk, translated from Dutch, April 10, 2018.
[67] Marcus, informal talk, March 26, 2018; Nils, interviewed by Stefanie Meijers, March 9, 2018.
[68] Marcus, informal talk, April 10, 2018.
[69] Marcus, informal talk, April 10, 2018.
[70] Lou, interviewed by Stefanie Meijers, April 6, 2018.

I asked Lou how notions of ethnicity differ in gay communities from broader Berlin society. He directly linked sexuality to notions of ethnicity and whiteness. According to him, ethnicity is not something that distinguishes people in the city of Berlin. Along with other informants, he notes that in the Berlin Gay Community it is common to express sexual preferences based on ethnicity very explicitly, as showed before, mostly on dating apps like Grindr and GayRomeo. These preferences are based on stereotypes of masculinity of an ethnicity. Lou explains in more detail how, according to him, this tendency is created:

> "Like with the gay male community; when you meet someone there's always like that … 'are we going to have sex?' And so, what that means when bringing in the element of different ethnicities: I think gay men tend to have the need for novelty. It could be anything, right? Like food, music, clothes. Different partners. And sometimes that pushes some men in to thinking: 'Oh well, I don't want to have sex with someone that looks like me, because …'
> **Q: Like… they already know?**
> A: It's like with a man and a woman of the same ethnic background, there's still a different gender. While if you have two gay men of the same ethnic background, it's like the sex … For some people, they like it, it's comforting, but for some… I think for gay men it has to be something that is a little bit different from my own body, otherwise it's kind of boring. So, this means that sometimes we are looking for something that is not our own."[71]

With Lou arguing that the need for novelty is why gay men explicitly choose their sexual partners on ethnicity, gender and sexuality are entangled in experiences of ethnicity and whiteness. As shown in the first paragraph of this chapter, differences in gay communities are constructed through notions of ethnicity. Notions of gender and sexuality are at play as well in the 'need for novelty', but more invisible. Invisible for gay men, because they take dominant, privileged, positions in social hierarchies. Marcus also notes that he prefers a partner with a different ethnicity than his own, 'Dutch ethnicity': "With Dutch guys I always think: 'I know your family, I know where you come from.'" I asked him if he is okay with

[71] Lou, interviewed by Stefanie Meijers, April 6, 2018.

partners from Europe, and for a moment he is quiet. Then: “Hmm, yeah I think that’s also fine with me. I had a boyfriend from Malta, and I found him and his background interesting as well. Maybe it has to be something exotic, for me.” This quest for something exotic, is displayed by other informants as well. Massoud is being sexualized often as ‘*Südlander*’ himself, meaning that his seen as stereotypically ‘Arabian’. He sees this trend a lot, however he does not experience it as discriminating himself. He thinks it is more likely a social hierarchy in the gay scene, with the most masculine men on top. This classifying of masculinity, is formed by stereotypes of manliness, ethnicity and racialization. The role a man fulfills during sexual encounters is also relevant for his place in the hierarchy, as Massoud explains in detail:

> “Yes. Those hierarchies also exist here, actually. Because the more masculine you are, the more valuable you are as well. For example, the hierarchy goes like this: if you are top … you know what top is?
>
> **Q: Yes.**
>
> A: So, if you are top, you are more valuable. If you are versatile, you are a bit less. If you are bottom, well … And I am quite surprised when my more masculine friends, I would say, make fun of those who are feminine.”[72]

Ethnicity in combination with nationality also plays a part in stereotypes within the social hierarchy of the gay community. “There are a lot of Israeli men [in Berlin], who are seen as ‘hairy and angry from the army’, and in that way as sexual attractive”, says Marcus[73]. In this case, sexual attraction is linked to a certain nationalism; in which men are regarded as hypermasculine within the army. The men are sexualized based on their ethnicity, as also happens to Asian women being regarded ad sexually submissive, according to Wekker (2016:32). Desexualizing of Asian ethnicities happens as well with men, in a way that they are regarded as ‘bottom’ and thus submissive, or even as non-sexual. As shown before; on Grindr, a common tagline in profiles is: ‘No fats, no fems, no Asians’. The story that affected me the most during my fieldwork, comes from Lou. With his Canadian-Asian ethnicity, he told me about an experience concerning this sexualization of Asian ethnicities:

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[72] Massoud, interviewed by Stefanie Meijers, February 20, 2018.
[73] Marcus, interviewed by Stefanie Meijers, April 12, 2018.

"I had a boyfriend. I was the first Asian guy he was with, right?

And then he was … he was such a bottom! You know, I kinda liked that. And then we broke up; I noticed that he was going to trips to Taiwan etc. And then a few years later, we hooked up again and then he started like doing these things … Saying things like: 'Do you like my big white cock?'

Q: He said that?! But he was … black, right?

A: No! He was German! Yeah, so face that: A German guy who only dated only German guys for a few years; we dated for a little bit, he started liking Asians, and then we had sex afterwards, and then he behaved like …

Q: Almost like a colonizer or something …

A: Like, you know; 'Gay Asian, you supposed to be a bottom, and I should be the top'.

Q: And before that, it was completely different?

A: The other way around!

Q: Wauw. That's really, really intense… Did you say something?

A: Yeah, like: 'Stop, this is not going to work'." [74]

In Lou's experience, stereotypes of ethnicities are confirmed. The so-called preferences of gay men in Berlin are based on stereotypes of a whole ethnicity. Massoud experienced the opposite, however still based on stereotypical racialized sexuality. He is told often that he is 'not like other Turkish men', meaning he is not the stereotype '*Südlander'* and therefore a 'good Turkish guy'. While my informants did not name these experiences directly as discrimination; they are clear examples of racialized sexualities and objectifications.

[74] Lou, interviewed by Stefanie Meijers, 6/4/2018

Conclusion

Roxane Kroon & Stefanie Meijers

This research discussed the entanglements of ethnicity, whiteness and sexuality, resulting in a discourse of non-white people being included differently in lesbian and gay Berlin communities. This thesis argues that ethnicity and therefore whiteness as well, is constructed through identifying the Other as 'ethnic' and the Self implicitly as white. The categories 'us' and 'them' gain meaning through intersections of ethnicity, gender and sexuality. This us-them-categorization is inflicted with social hierarchies, associating 'us' with social norms: masculinity and whiteness. However, being categorized in a subordinate position as 'them' can create a strong sense of belonging and inclusivity and therefore seen as powerful as well. The construction of ethnicity and whiteness has a lot of similarities between lesbian and gay communities, as this construction is also part of German national identity building. Furthermore, this research has shown that processes of in- and exclusion based on ethnicity, are played out differently between lesbian and gay communities in Berlin. In- and exclusion are not static categorizations, this thesis has shown that some people are included, but differently alongside gendered and racial hierarchies. The most visible way in which these gendered and racial hierarchies come into play in lived experiences is through processes of racialized sexualities and sexualized racism. We argue, that through practices of sexual objectification and stereotyping, people who fit the dominant social norm create us-them-divides which highlight social hierarchies.

In this chapter, we discuss parallels and differences between the research populations, drawing on both empirical data and theory. First, we will discuss the relation between ethnicity, whiteness and sexuality, how these social identities gain meaning and co-construct each other. Second, we demonstrate how the intersection result in some lesbian and gay people to be included within communities but differently, similar to Puwar (2004). Third, we demonstrate how these lived realities are shaped but notions of so-called preferences and sexual objectifications. The latter are examples of lived experiences of racialized sexualities and sexualized racism.

Chapter three and four both show notions of Othering and racializing when discussing the construction of ethnicity. However, how these notions shape lived experiences differ significantly between lesbian women and gay men. Chapter three argues that ethnicity is both

racialized: through emphasizing phenotypes like skin color, and gendered: by portraying the Other often as male. Most of the time lesbian informants discuss ethnicity in relation to crime, misogyny and sexuality. This is evident in the usage of nine different labels to identify the ethnic Other, through which the white female Self is implied. These labels are perceived as politically neutral, but the meaning and usage show a negative racialized connotation which is interlinked with whiteness. A similarity with gay men informants can be seen in the racializing principle of Othering. Ethnicity, or 'ethnic' is often understood as food, clothing and skin color instead of part of identification. Constructing whiteness out of notions of ethnicity links to the contemplation of Wekker (2016) among others, arguing that queer is represented as white (Wekker, 2016:117; Logie & Rwigema, 2014). Whiteness as an ethnicity is often not experienced by white informants, both gay and lesbian. However, whiteness as the norm (Dyer, 2017) has considerable implications for non-white informants, as they are included within the communities, but differently. Regarding their sexuality, non-white lesbian and gay people conform the social norm. However, when ethnicity comes into play they are identified as Other. In both research populations whiteness is associated with privileged positions. This however, does not mean that whiteness does not occur as an axis of meaning making for our informants.

With this study we have shown that also whiteness needs to be studied intersectionally, as it is a considerable aspect in the creation of an us-them-divide. Processes of Othering are played out alongside racialized and gendered hierarchies and projected by our informants onto non-white ethnicities, in and outside of lesbian and gay communities. These hierarchies gain meaning through social norms like whiteness and masculinity. However, identifications of 'us' and 'them' differ between lesbian and gay informants. This has mainly to do with the lesbian experience of having a subordinate position in the gendered aspect of the hierarchies. In other words, the intersection of ethnicity, whiteness and sexuality is important in the creation of social hierarchies for both lesbian and gay informants. But, as the lived experiences of positions differ between the two groups, notions of 'us' and 'them' differ as well. Despite differences regarding the gendered aspect, social hierarchies are also racialized. Both research populations demonstrate whiteness as undiscussed social norm from which the Other is seen as ethnic. On this matter, similarities in the process of racializing discourses are visible between lesbian and gay informants. Taking all the above into account, this thesis has shown that social hierarchies gain meaning through intersectional relations

between ethnicity, sexuality and gender. Social hierarchies result in dividing categorizations which are experienced differently between the research populations. Therefore, we also argue that the usage the acronym LGBTQ+ in theorizing ethnicity and sexuality in broader heteronormative society, undermines lived experiences of individual identifications within and between the LGBTQ+ acronym. In addition to this contemplation, we recommend that this approach is not only applied on sexual minorities, but all experiences regarding sexual identification. In which way do the categorization of social identities relate to notions of in- and exclusion?

Both gay and lesbian communities create an inclusive narrative, by differentiating themselves from others. Lesbians differentiate themselves from gay men communities, whereas gay men differentiate themselves within gay communities by opposing against ideas about the mainstream. Chapter three showed how women emphasize gender differences in order to distinguish themselves from gay men. Lesbian informants identify themselves as underdogs in a gendered social hierarchy, portraying themselves as including opposite to the 'racist and sexist' gay men. Chapter four shows that gay informants differentiate themselves within gay communities, opposing dominant ideas about Berlin mainstream gay scene. In this way, both lesbian and gay operate alongside the same gendered social hierarchy, in which the masculinity is dominant. Therefore, gay informants differentiate within their own communities, instead of opposing other communities. In other words, lesbian as well as gay informants use process of differentiation in order to label oneself as open, accepting and tolerant.

Furthermore, both lesbian and gay informants underscore the importance of Berlin as geographical influence on the perception of inclusivity. Chapters three and four underscore the importance of the international and national image of Berlin as a city where "anything goes", similar to the contemplation of Petzen (2004). Processes of differentiating in combination with the image of Berlin as open minded and accepting, create dominant narratives of inclusivity within lesbian and gay communities, focused on sexual freedom. Areas like Neukölln, which are identified by gay informants as 'the place to go', are regarded by lesbian informants as unsafe due to the multi-cultural populations (Bacchetta et al., 2015:773). Gay informants emphasize the open character of Berlin by stating that the city is 'already gay'. Hereby, gay informants reproduce a dominant position by excluding different

lived realities of for example lesbians. This is also evident in how our informants experience different 'gay areas' in Berlin. LGBTQ+ parties in for example Neukölln are for gay men as well as for lesbians, but lesbian informants do feel less safe in these areas. In this light, social hierarchies are highlighted in regard to different areas in Berlin. Where Neukölln is nowadays one of the LGBTQ+ hotspots, for both lesbians and gays, differences in gender and ethnicity shape discourses of inclusivity.

Processes of in- and exclusion are played out on the basis of categorizations of that gain meaning through the intersection of social identities like ethnicity and sexuality. A person can be included on a social identity like sexuality, while being excluded on another identity, like ethnicity. In this way, people are never strictly included nor excluded from communities. Therefore, we argue in line with Puwar (2004:23) that people can be included but differently.

The most evident way in which entanglements of ethnicity, whiteness and sexuality are played out is in processes of sexualizing ethnicity and racializing sexuality. In both communities, stereotypes and sexual objectification are apparent, as discussed by Teunis (2007:267). In lesbian communities, sexualized objectifications were racially inflicted, and linked to images of non-white people in society (Ro et al. 2013:843). However, objectification were not experienced as discrimination by non-white lesbian informants, because the dominant narrative is that lesbian communities are inclusive. This causes an internal conflict, in which non-white lesbians implicitly are forced to downgrade discrimination based on stereotypes by reproducing dominant narratives of inclusivity. Again, the dominant idea of queer as white is reproduced (Wekker, 2016:117). In the gay community, sexuality and ethnicity are entangled strongly in experiences of partner choice, mainly focused on intercourse, enhanced by explicit dating apps like 'Grindr'. Within gay communities, a strong feeling for variety based on racialized ethnicities was emphasized when selecting sexual partners. As a result, in both lesbians and gay communities, non-white LGBTQ+ people are exoticized and rejected. These sexual objectifications are legitimized by both gay and lesbian informants through the idea of having certain 'preferences' for sexual partner choice. However, there is a difference between lesbian and gay informants in the ways the preferences are played out. Gay men informants seem to care less about the negative racializing connotation of the preferences because 'everyone does it'; opposite to white and non-white lesbians who state that sexual objectification is an exception.

To conclude, this thesis has shown that ethnicity is constructed outside the Self, through racializing and Othering processes as discussed above. Lesbian informants emphasized a gendered aspect which creates a sense of inclusivity because of the subordinate position that comes with it. The importance of gender as meaning making aspect underscores the relevance of researching intersectionally, because different social identities shape lived experiences. This is also evident in the absence of gender in the experiences of gay male informants. Therefore, we argue that one cannot theorize ethnicity and whiteness outside the scope of sexuality and gender. Additionally, we underscore the contemplation of Eliason and Morgan (1998) that experiences of sexual minorities are too complex to categorize them all in one category. This however, does not only apply to diversity concerning sexuality but also all other (intersectional) social identities. With this research we have aimed to contribute to a dialogue about similarities and differences in the experience of the entanglements of ethnicity, whiteness and sexuality and its relation to in- and exclusion. Adding two stripes to the rainbow flag can be seen as an act of inclusivity, but when social norms are not critically assessed, dominant discourses are kept intact.

Discussion

After concluding how notions of in- and exclusion are shaped by social identities like ethnicity, whiteness and sexuality, we would like to give recommendations for further research on this topic. In this research we used the acronym LGBTQ+ to discuss discourses opposite to broader heteronormative society. Moreover, in the conclusion we argued that using this acronym undermines lived experiences of individuals in LGBTQ+ communities. By focusing on two different communities within the acronym we aimed to demonstrate that theorizing ethnicity and specifically whiteness needs to be approached intersectionally. However, this research shows that even on subjects like sexuality there is much difference between the perceptions and experiences of power structures within and between different sexualities. We suggest that in further research on sexuality and gender, lived experiences of sexuality need to be taken into account and question how these individual realities shape lived experiences.

We used the term ‘racialized ethnicities’ to include all ethnicities. As discussed regularly throughout this thesis, whiteness is a racialized ethnicity as well, which needs more attention when discussing discourses of ethnicity. Although there is much written about whiteness as an ethnicity (Dyer, 2017; see also Wekker 2016), we argue that most research on whiteness is

focused on white privilege. Privilege is one of the ways how whiteness is performed, but certainly not the only one as shown in this research. In which way can we understand these kinds of lived realities and link it to broader social structures that reproduce racialized and gendered hierarchies? More research needs to be conducted taking the process of racialized and gendered hierarchies into account, when contemplating community building and power structured within and between communities.

Throughout this thesis we often linked notions of in- and exclusion to viewing geographical space differently. We underscored that this process is similar to social hierarchies. Therefore, in which way does the intersection of different social identities shape lived experiences of public spaces? Also, in which way are different geographical spaces associated with different communities? Our research showed that ideas and images of geographical space are important in ideas of inclusivity. However, we could not fully research these implications on identity building, due to limited time. We recommend that this important matter should be a center point of attention in further research concerning social identity building.

In the introduction we emphasized the importance of questioning one's own position when discussing lived realities (Rich in Lewis and Mills, 2003:29-42). As two white women with different sexualities, lesbian and heterosexual, our position needs to be taken into account throughout this research. Chapter three is a product of a researcher who immediately gained access caused by matching social identities. Implications for this role are both positive and helpful as conflicting. Helpful because matching social identities helps in understanding tacit knowledge better. The role was also conflicting due to possible blind spots caused by knowledge about group specific struggles. However, matching social identities do not mean matching lived experiences. It does however influence used methods and gaining rapport. Chapter four shows the other side: a researcher who did not gain access easily, because of different sexual identities and different genders. Even though blind spots are less likely to occur here, is it possible to fully understand an informants point of view about issues which the researcher herself will never experience? As stated in the introduction, we dismiss the idea that matching social identities with informants is needed to gain close-enough access; the access of the second researcher was close 'enough', but nonetheless not as close as a researcher with matching social identities.

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Appendix

Abstract

The aim of this complementary research is to understand experiences of ethnicity, whiteness and sexuality in the lives of people who identify as lesbian and gay in Berlin. The research question of this thesis is: "*How is ethnicity, and specifically whiteness, constructed by people who identify as lesbian and gay, and how is this related to experiences of in- and exclusion in Berlin lesbian and gay communities"*. Based on three months of extensive anthropological fieldwork in Berlin this thesis focuses on the following topics in order to answer the research question: 1) *'Differentiating tactics related to in and exclusion;* 2) *'Racialized (and gendered) ethnicities and whiteness';* 3) '*Racialized sexuality and sexualized racism'.* This thesis argues that ethnicity and therefore whiteness as well, is constructed through identifying the Other as 'ethnic' and the Self implicitly as white. The categories 'us' and 'them' gain meaning through intersections of ethnicity, gender and sexuality. The us-them-categorization is inflicted with social hierarchies, associating 'us' with social norms: masculinity, whiteness and occasionally heterosexuality. However, the social hierarchies are not only a top down construction, as a subordinate position can be used in order to create a sense of belonging and inclusivity. The construction of ethnicity and whiteness has a lot of similarities between lesbian and gay communities, as this construction is also part of German national identity building. Furthermore, this research has shown that processes of in- and exclusion based on ethnicity, are played out differently between lesbian and gay communities in Berlin. In- and exclusion are not static categorizations, this thesis has shown that some people are included, but differently alongside gendered and racial hierarchies. In short, thesis shows how representations of ethnicity, whiteness and sexuality are strongly related to stereotypes and objectifications based on racialized ethnicities, which form us-them-divides. These divides are played out differently within and between lesbian and gay communities in Berlin, however the divides are constructed alongside dominant broader social hierarchies.

In this study, ethnicity is theorized as a racialized ethnicity in order to capture lived experiences of all people, not only ethnic 'Others'. By taking whiteness as an ethnicity into account, this research not only comprehends complex lived realities of lesbian and gay people, but also contributes to theorizations on ethnicity in lesbian and gay communities in

anthropological debates. In Germany notions of both sexuality, and race are often points of discussion in public discourse and concerning national identity (Müller, 2011; see also Tiβberger 2005). This is mainly played out in the capital Berlin. On the one hand, Berlin is known for its open-mindedness and 'anything goes' mentality (Petzen, 2004:21). However, racial others are frequently excluded from the national identity, which is perceived as white (Müller, 2011:623). The city itself is often indicated as 'different than the rest of Germany', and as the gay capital of Europe. The ambivalent character of Berlin, open-minded versus excluding racial others, makes Berlin an interesting city for this research.

The main methods used in this research are informal and (semi) structured interviews, and participant observation. Additionally, this research has used 'mapping out the scene' as data gathering method in order to understand the image of Berlin, with its specific districts and their significant differences. This study also mirrors our own experiences taking our position as white women and sexual beings into account. From this postmodern approach, our different positions as researchers, along with differences between research populations, caused our methods to vary. In short, this meant that Roxane collected more data from participant observation techniques and informal interviews and Stefanie more from semi-structured interviews. Lastly, this thesis demonstrates that the use of the acronym LGBTQ+ in academia should be critically questioned. Lesbian and gay people differ significantly in lived experiences concerning sexuality, and other social identities. To lump non-heterosexual people all together in one acronym, dismisses these important differences.