Exploring social imaginaries and dynamics of hope in the Norwegian antiracist movement

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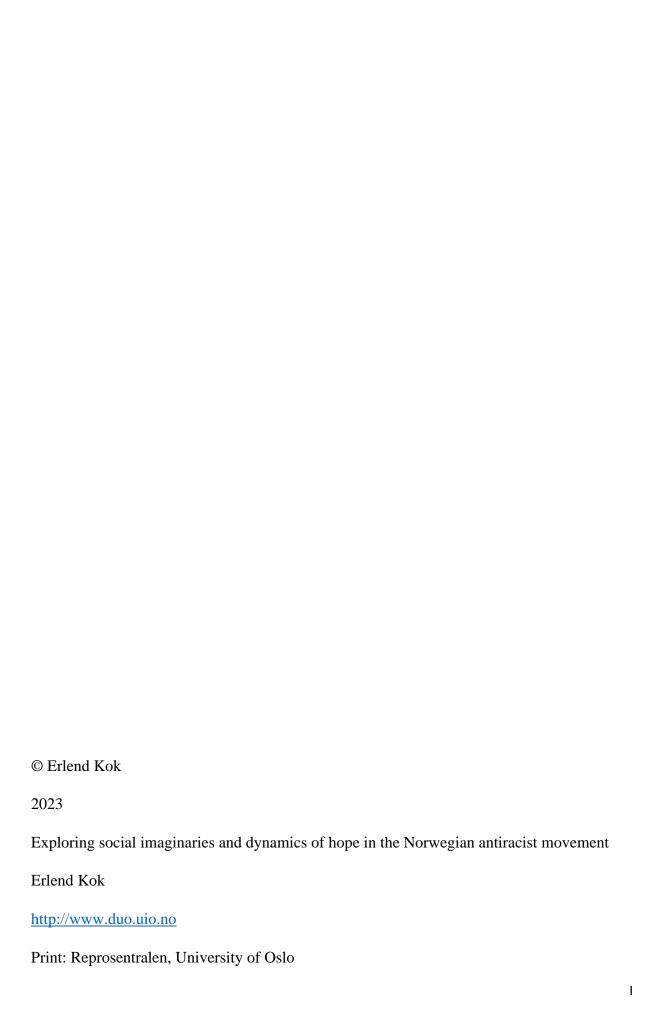
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Summary

Antiracism is a burgeoning field of research in Norway, yet so far, few studies have focused on the antiracist activists themselves. In this thesis, I explore the cultural toolkits of young antiracist activists by analysing and comparing their conceptions of antiracism and the antiracist social movement, as well as their ideas, solidarities, wishes, and strategies.

Building on participatory fieldwork and in-depth interviews with 15 antiracist activists, I discuss the following four research objectives: *Firstly,* I explore the activists' conceptions of antiracism and antiracist activism. *Secondly,* I explore the degree to which the activists communicate with each other. *Thirdly,* I conduct a comparative analysis of the social imaginaries that inform activists' understanding of society, therein themselves and their activism. *Fourthly,* I theorise a framework for analysing hope in social movements along spatial and temporal dimensions. Theoretically, the first three research objectives focus on the antiracist activists and their perceptions and interpretations of social interactions. This approach is a build-up to the fourth research objective, in which I aim to fill a lacuna in the research literature on hope and social movements.

The analysis features two informal antiracist networks, one consisting of racialised activists and the other of predominantly white, radical left activists. While they have similar conceptions of antiracism and of being antiracist – antiracism as an anticapitalistic struggle and being antiracist as requiring not only thought but also action – the two networks' communication with each other is limited. Furthermore, the stance of the networks towards other antiracist actors is one of distrust and suspicion, leading to a disconnect from the general antiracist social movement. In terms of social imaginaries, the two networks differ in all regards: They centre themselves in terms of group identity and exclude each other, they draw on different sources of inspiration, and, not least, they contrast in the change they attempt to engender and their methods of doing so. The networks and their activists also differ in hope. In theorising hope, I first use analytical concepts from the discussion of social imaginaries and then draw on post-World War II literature of hope rather than on contemporary literature. In the framework I then develop, hope is affected by both the concrete utilisation of place and time, and the way in which social movement actors figuratively situate themselves in spatial and temporal dimensions. The spatial dynamics of hope are delineated into the analytical levels of transnational, national, and movement-level space. Temporal dynamics concern visions of the future, their desirability or undesirability,

their specificity, and the perceived trajectory towards them. To exemplify and empirically ground this theoretisation, I analyse the differing experiences of hope amongst the two antiracist networks. This theoretisation of hope along spatial and temporal dimensions contributes to filling a vacant space in social movement studies. By emphasising the perspectives of antiracist activists, this thesis also adds to the growing field of research on Norwegian antiracism.

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1 Introduction

Antiracism is a burgeoning field of research in Norway, but so far, few studies have examined lived antiracist resistance – those *doing* activism under the banner of antiracism (but see Andersson et al., 2012; Ellefsen et al., 2022). Providing grassroots accounts of antiracism enables access to a cultural toolkit that is inaccessible to macro level studies of for instance media discourse and institutions (Aquino, 2016). Situating research at the microlevel, therefore, provides opportunities to understand and theorise the societal change that antiracist actors attempt to engender. Additionally, researchers may challenge racism by promoting the counternarratives of antiracist actors (Bhattacharyya et al., 2020; van Dijk, 1993, p. 19). This study contributes to the call for research on lived antiracist resistance (Aquino, 2020; Kelley, 1994, p. 8; Seikkula, 2022, p. 790) by exploring antiracist activists' perspectives on antiracism itself, the antiracist social movement, and the change to which they aspire.

At its very core, antiracism can be understood as "forms of thought and/or practice that seek to confront, eradicate and/or ameliorate racism" (Bonnett, 2000, p. 4). That said, antiracism is not limited to this minimal definition of simply combatting racism; rather, it comes in various forms (Bonnett, 2000; Lentin, 2004). The heterogeneity of antiracism can be illustrated by the seminal work on antiracism in Norway. In his doctoral thesis, Knut Nydal (Nydal, 2007b) emphasises two dominant and contrasting frameworks in Norwegian antiracism in 1975–1988, namely, the "Marxist–Leninist" framework, which conceptualised antiracism as part of working-class struggles, and the "internationalist" framework, which connected racism to colonialism and imperialism. These examples demonstrate that antiracism is related to struggles over how society is perceived and to the definition of what a desirable society is (Aquino, 2020, p. 220). This thesis conceptualises antiracism accordingly.

Like Nydal, this study approaches antiracism as a social movement. Drawing on the study of social movements unlocks a theoretical and methodological apparatus suitable for illuminating antiracism as a political project. A social movement can be understood as "networks of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organizations, engaged in political or cultural conflict, on the basis of a shared collective identity" (Diani, 1992), a definition that captures the diverse nature of antiracist actors.

Research objectives, strategy, and thesis structure

In studying Norwegian antiracism, I emphasise two antiracist networks. One network consists of racialised activists who draw their legacy back to the internationalists that Nydal describes: They host workshops, discussions, and other events where antiracism and empowerment are discussed. The other group consists of radical leftist activists who are predominantly white. Their antiracism shares commonalities with the Marxist–Leninists whom Nydal describes as well as the more militant antiracism typically associated with activists from the squatted house Blitz or Antifascist Action. Focusing on these two networks can, to a degree, provide a contemporary account of the pioneer groups of early Norwegian antiracist engagement. The networks studied consist primarily of people in their early 20s to early 30s, as is common for activists in social movements (Earl et al., 2017). The two networks, thus, comprise a young part of the antiracist social movement and are compared throughout the thesis.

This thesis builds on 15 interviews and fieldwork spanning from early August 2022 to late December of the same year. The first three research objectives take a phenomenological approach. This entails focusing on meaning-making, perceptions, and interpretations from the perspective of the actors who engage in social interactions (Smart, 2020). In *the first research objective*, the two networks and their perspectives are explored by examining how they conceive of antiracism and antiracist activism. *The second research objective* explores the degree to which the networks communicate with each other. *The third research objective* focuses on the antiracist networks and their understanding of antiracism in a broader sense, namely, their ideals, solidarities, wishes, and strategies. Key to this is the social imaginary concept, whereby two social imaginaries dominant in the data material are explored and compared. *The fourth research objective* is a theoretisation of the spatial and temporal dynamics of hope in social movements. This theoretisation is reliant on analytical concepts and empirical insight from the discussion of the first three research objectives and is, in that way, an extension of the previous parts of the thesis. In summary, the first three research objectives serve as an analysis of antiracism and its actors' perspectives, and the fourth research objective uses these perspectives to theorise hope.

In approaching the third research objective regarding how the two networks see society and antiracism in it, I draw on the social imaginary concept. While recent decades have seen a substantial increase in literature on social imaginaries, a 2002 special issue of *Public Culture* (Issue 14[1]) remains central to my understanding of the concept. In the introduction to this

issue, Gaonkar defines social imaginaries as the "first-person subjectivities" that are "embedded in the habitus of a population" (Gaonkar, 2002, p. 4); in other words, they are ways in which individuals understand the social aspects of life. Therefore, the concept of social imaginaries enables a phenomenological perspective.

The concept of social imaginaries has been adapted to analyse multifaceted social phenomena, such as Andersson and Jacobsen's (2012) study on the political engagement of minority youth during Israel's attacks on Gaza in 2008–2009. In this study, differences in transnational solidarities, values, identities, and the historical embeddedness of political groups made for different social imaginaries. These social imaginaries subsequently mediated the political engagement of minority youth. Inspired by Andersson and Jacobsen, this study uses the social imaginary concept to explore how and why the perspectives of antiracist actors vary.

Turning to the fourth research objective, hope can be seen as a necessary impetus for sustained political action (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998; Goldman, 2010, p. 1; Mische, 2009). This makes hope paramount to social movements. While addressing hope in social movements is not novel (c.f. Cassegård & Thörn, 2018; Castells, 2015; Gross, 2021; Kleres & Wettergren, 2017), to my knowledge, no studies systematically analyse the dynamics of hope in social movements. Seeking to fill this gap in the literature, I first connect hope to the social imaginary concept. Different ways of seeing society are linked to differentials in hope (Kleist & Jansen, 2016; Mische, 2009); in other words, different social imaginaries can make individuals more or less hopeful. Second, I approach hope by examining literature written following World War II: Authors such as Ernst Bloch (1995) (1995) and Erich Fromm (1971) emphasised the social and political aspects of hope and tied hope to achieving societal change through collective actions (Petersen & Wilkinson, 2015, p. 114), a conceptualisation that is suitable for understanding the collective efforts of social movements.

As to the thesis structure, I in chapter 2 contextualise antiracism as a social movement in Norway, which can be said to have a national discourse in which race and racism are perceived as aberrant and external to the country. These preconditions make the study of antiracism in Norway especially interesting. Chapter 3 introduces the theories and concepts used in the analysis, grappling with the concepts of race, racism, and antiracism, the latter as a social movement. I also develop and adapt the social imaginary concept to my study and introduce how one can analyse hope in social movements. In Chapter 4, I discuss the

methodological aspects of the thesis: the challenges and ethics of earning trust and access to secluded political networks as well as data collection from conception to the end of the study.

Chapters 5–7 comprise the analysis, and Chapter 5 lays the descriptive groundwork for subsequent chapters. In it, I fulfil both the first and second research objective by providing a descriptive account of the two networks studied and their conceptions of antiracism and antiracist activism. Furthermore, I discuss the communication between the two networks. The result of this discussion raises the question of whether the networks are part of a collective antiracist movement or not. In Chapter 6, I use the social imaginary concept to explore and categorise the networks' ways of understanding the social before comparing them and discussing the implications thereof. Chapter 7 is more theoretically charged. Using the differences in hope between the two networks as a starting point, I theorise hope in social movements along spatial and temporal dimensions. In Chapter 8, I discuss the empirical and theoretical significance of this study as well as recommendations for further research.

2 Historical and political context

Antiracism has garnered much scholarly attention globally, but the literature in Norway is lacking. I echo what other researchers of antiracism in Norway argue; while antiracism is a transnational issue, antiracist mobilisation should be understood according to the national context in which it unfolds (Ellefsen & Sandberg, 2022; Nydal, 2007b; Stokke, 2018; Svendsen, 2014). To understand the two networks studied in this thesis' historical and political situatedness, I first discuss racism in Norway and the impact of racism on social cohesion. To provide background on antiracist organisations and mobilisation, I delve into past and present research on antiracism.

Racism in Norway: aberrant or prevalent?

Norway's population is closing in on 5.5 million. Amongst these people, 877,227, or 19.9% at the time of writing (Statistics Norway, 2023), are either immigrants or descendants thereof. The top source countries, in descending order, are Poland, Lithuania, Somalia, Syria, Pakistan, Sweden, Ukraine, Iraq, and Eritrea (Statistics Norway, 2023). Based on comparative survey data in Europe, Norway is often considered a country whose population has positive feelings towards minorities (Pew Research Center, 2018). However, this claim is challenged by a substantial amount of research illustrating current and historical ethnic discrimination and racism, as shall soon be illustrated.

While this thesis does not focus on race or racism, a clarification of these terms allows for a better understanding of antiracism. Herein, race is conceptualised as inseparable from racism. Specifically, *race* is seen as inextricably linked to the European colonial project, taking the form of a socially constructed dichotomy of Europeans as white, Christian, developed, and civilised, as opposed to those who are black, heretical, barbaric, and uncivilised (Hesse, 2007, p. 7; Lentin, 2008). This dichotomy makes for *racism*, defined by sociologist Albert Memmi as the practice of assigning people negative characteristics based on "real or imaginary" differences, thus depicting some people as subordinate and using that imagined subordination to legitimise discrimination and hostility towards them (Memmi, 2009, p. 172). This not only occurs at individual levels but also at macro levels where symbols associated with the white side of the dichotomy are privileged (El-Tayeb, 2011; Goldberg, 2009; Moses, 2015). This privileging comes into play by way of hierarchies of social, cultural, and material factors (Essed, 1991; Olivier et al., 2019), a prime example being the legitimation of the occupation, exploitation, slavery, and genocide that define colonialism (Lentin, 2008, p. 494). Since the

early days of colonialism, race has been adapted to various contexts and is found in a myriad of forms.

Norway is no exception, as the country has an extensive past of colonisation, assimilation, and suppression of national minorities (Bangstad, 2015; Keskinen, 2009). Sami, Roma, and Romani peoples have been subject to harassment and repression from the government (Minde, 2003; NOU 2015: 7, 2015), for instance, by way of forced sterilisation (Rosvoll & Bielenberg, 2012). As to the current state of affairs, researchers point to ethnic discrimination and racism in the workplace (Birkelund et al., 2016; Di Stasio & Larsen, 2020; Fangen & Paasche, 2013; Midtbøen & Rogstad, 2012), education (Erdal et al., 2019; Orupabo & Mangset, 2022), healthcare (Hansen et al., 2010), law (Brekke et al., 2019; IMDI, 2019), and ethnic profiling by the police (Solhjell et al., 2019; Sollund, 2006), not to mention quotidian and individual racist encounters (Erdal, 2019; McIntosh, 2015; Statistics Norway, 2018). Additionally, one third of the population expresses prejudice against Muslims (Hellevik, 2020). Scholars disagree on whether the term "structural racism", defined as systematic discrimination from the state, is applicable in Norway but generally agree that racism includes structural aspects (for a discussion of this, see Haugsgjerd & Thorbjørnsrud, 2021; Midtbøen, 2021).

However, the racism described above is rarely labelled as such (Døving, 2020; Erdal, 2021; Helland, 2015). Rather, racism is branded as the unacceptable beliefs of the extreme right, those outspoken about the superiority of a biologically white race over other lesser races (Haugsgjerd & Thorbjørnsrud, 2021; Helland, 2015; Orupabo, 2021). Apart from racism as an issue pertaining to a small group of ideological extremists, scholars identify a general belief that Norway has advanced past racism, and racism is now something external to the country (e.g. Bangstad, 2015; Gullestad, 2004; Strickland, 2012). The conceptualisation of this phenomenon varies, whether it be a "post-racial" discourse (Ikuenobe, 2010), "Nordic Exceptionalism" (Strickland, 2012), or "white innocence" (Seikkula, 2022; Wekker, 2016).

Additionally, scholars argue that racism since the 1980s has taken a "cultural" form, where non-white people – and, in this case, non-Norwegians – are seen as fundamentally different by way of culture and upbringing (Andersson, 2022; Bangstad, 2017; Jenssen, 1994). This is manifested in the category of "ethnicity", implying that while the term "race" itself has fallen out of favour, ethnicity has long been the preferred term for distinguishing white skin tone from non-white skin tone and Norwegians from non-Norwegians (Führer, 2021; Gullestad,

2002). Due to the cultural conception of racism as extreme and aberrant, scholars agree that raising discussions on racism as anything but relating to biological factors is difficult (Bangstad, 2015; Gullestad, 2004; Harlap & Riese, 2022). In that sense, race as a concept lives on in Norway, despite its linguistic absence.

The Norwegian Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests of 2020 caused a discursive shift by introducing terms such as structural racism, racialisation, and white privilege to the public debate (Andersson, 2022, p. 156; Haugsgjerd & Thorbjørnsrud, 2021, p. 78). It would be presumptuous to set aside the long-dominant conception of racism due to this, but it is worth keeping in mind that antiracism as of 2022 and 2023 finds itself in the aftermath of the largest antiracist protest in 20 years. Both the BLM protests and the Norwegian narrative of racism serve as a backdrop to the antiracists in this thesis' opinions on what antiracism is and should be, as well as their imaginings of larger social factors.

Racism as adverse to social cohesion

I wish to accentuate the importance of *trust* in maintaining social cohesion and racism as adverse to that. The anthropologist Vertovec argues that trust and racism are diametric opposites on a scale of "social cohesion" (1999b, chapter 5). This is because racism targets and erodes favourable notions of the societal contributions of immigrants and their descendants, which reduces trust between the national majority and minority. This is similar to Robert Putnam's discussion of trust and political culture. In his book *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (2000), Putnam argues that US political culture has collapsed, largely due to a significant decrease in interpersonal trust. He argues that the consequences of this are less civic engagement and a weaker democracy.

These perspectives also shed light on the Norwegian political context. Similar arguments are made by scholars regarding the effect of immigration on the Norwegian welfare state (c.f. Brochmann & Hagelund, 2010, 2011). Norway is a social–democratic country marked by low levels of corruption, universal rights, and welfare services, and, importantly, high levels of trust between citizens, the state, and institutions (Mjøset, 2021; Rogstad, 2007). Trust can be seen as a societal glue binding the Norwegian welfare state (Brochmann & Seland, 2010, p. 441): The welfare state is reliant on continued tax payments, which are then reliant on a trustful and cooperative population willing to contribute to welfare services. If trust is lessened between the population and the state, the incentive to pay taxes would diminish,

subsequently harming economic stability. In that sense, trust is important for national economics and welfare.

In addition to the importance of trust between people and the state, trust between citizens also affects social cohesion. If there is widespread racism, it will spoil favourable notions of the societal contributions of non-majority citizens and, subsequently, the perceived welfare returns of the majority (Hagelund & Kavli, 2009). In that sense, the solidarity of the majority population with immigrants and their descendants is contingent on them, the majority, trusting the state to sufficiently take care of newcomers and incorporate them into work that contributes to the welfare state. Any perceived insufficiency in this regard would indicate to the majority that their societal contributions – chiefly, tax payments – would be wasted and not returned to them as welfare services. In the literature, this is known as welfare chauvinism (Cappelen et al., 2016).

Upholding trust, therefore, is not only important for the economic stability of the Norwegian state, but also is "a precondition for actions against discrimination, marginalization and rightist moves" (Brochmann & Seland, 2010, p. 441). In other words, racism entails a challenge to the social, institutional, and economic premises on which the Norwegian welfare state rests. Consequently, opposition to racism becomes important to hinder the breakdown of societal structures and societal cohesion, further increasing the relevance of researching antiracism.

Past and present research on antiracism

There is increasing research interest in antiracism in Norway, but the literature remains limited. Therefore, the seminal work of Knut Nydal becomes all the more important. In his doctoral thesis, which covers 1975–1988, Nydal (2007b) argues that Norwegian antiracism started when the first large wave of foreign labourers arrived in the 1970s. Nydal describes antiracist mobilisation as initially being limited to two groups. While they contrasted in many ways, both groups understood racism as a structural phenomenon that extended beyond individual and concrete racist actions, and they subsequently understood antiracism to concern larger cultural struggles.

Firstly, the Marxist–Leninists were, in large part, organised by the communist party (AKP-ml). In line with their party politics, racism was seen as a divisive hindrance to the larger goal of class consciousness and solidarity. Andersson et al. state that this framework continues to

remain relevant in contemporary antiracist mobilisations amongst the political left (2012, p. 85). Secondly, the internationalists emphasised an immigrant-centric approach and connected racism to colonialism and imperialism. Originally associated with the Foreign Students' Association at the University of Oslo, the association relabelled itself as *Immigrantenkollektivet* (The Immigrant Collective) before taking the name *Antirasistisk Senter* (Antiracist Centre) in 1984. During his period of study, Nydal described Antirasistisk Senter as central to the antiracist movement. The organisation Afrikan Youth in Norway (AYIN) was founded in 1995 in the internationalist tradition and was a prominent actor in the field prior to 2010 (Andersson, 2022, p. 158). AYIN was predominantly focused on self-help and empowerment for people subjected to racism, especially individuals of African descent.

Nydal describes the eventual arrival of other antiracist groups: the "Christian ecumenicals", "bourgeois humanists", and "militant antiracists" (Nydal, 2007), the last of which are of special importance in this thesis. Nydal emphasises the squatted Blitz House and its radical leftist milieu in the early 1980s (Nydal, 2007a); those who gathered there were, like other militant antiracist groups, closely related to the radical left. These militant groups are known by that term due to the nature of their antiracist activism: confronting racism and Nazism on the street level, if need be, by violent means. Jan Jämte, a researcher on antiracism in Sweden, calls these groups "radical left liberal" (Jämte et al., 2020) due to their adherence to Marxism, anarchism, anarcho-syndicalism, and other forms of anti-authoritarian and anti-capitalist ideologies. Groups of militant antiracists are present both inside Norway (Fosaas, 2020; Wilkins, 2018) and outside (Fominaya, 2015; Katsiaficas, 2006; Poma & Gravante, 2017).

Nydal describes two especially important events in the latter half of his study, one in 1983 and one in 1987 (2007b). In 1983, a bomb threat was made against the 17th of May celebration at Sagene School, where the national day slogan was "17th of May for all". Following the bomb threat, Nydal argues that antiracist mobilisation truly made its breakthrough, and made it more legitimate to speak of racism. Another important event was the suggestion of a more restrictive immigration law in 1987 and the subsequent march against it, which included 5,000 participants. According to Nydal, this march provided the movement more fuel and internal cohesion, complementing his claim that Norwegian antiracism during his period of study constituted a "collective movement" (Nydal, 2007a, p. 42).

There are no accounts as similarly detailed as Nydal's regarding contemporary antiracism, however, "critical events" can offer an impression. Critical events are events that are especially potent in creating new ways of identification and division, a "before" and an "after" (Andersson & Rogstad, 2018). Critical events after 2000 have been studied primarily by Andersson, Jacobsen, Rogstad, and Vestel (Andersson et al., 2012; Espeland & Rogstad, 2013). In 2001, the racist murder of Benjamin Hermansen prompted 40 000 people to take to the streets. In 2006, the death of Eugene Ejike Obiora at the hands of a police officer sparked nationwide protests, launched the *KrevRespekt* (Demand Respect) network, and placed racist police violence under a microscope. The caricature feuds of the same year also garnered attention in the media and mobilised several thousand people to protest (Stokke, 2018, p. 210). One year later, a bleeding Ali Farah was left unaided by paramedics in a park in Oslo, an incident that sparked media controversy and debate over structural racism (Andersson et al., 2012, p. 48).

Right-wing extremism has also led to counterreactions and expressions of national unity: The attacks on 22 July 2011 marked the gravest acts of terror in Norway since World War II, galvanising several hundred thousand people to take to the streets to demonstrate their opposition to right-wing terrorism. The attack on the al-Noor Mosque in Bærum and the murder of Johanne Zhangjia Ihle Hansen on 10 August 2019 sparked not only debate over Islamophobia but also adoptive practices and racism.

Despite not resulting in legislative or institutional changes (Ellefsen & Sandberg, 2022, p. 3), the BLM protests in 2020 had a marked impact on the public debate concerning racism and antiracism (Andersson, 2022, p. 158; Haugsgjerd & Thorbjørnsrud, 2021, p. 78). From these critical events, one can gather that antiracism to date has a significant potential for discursive power and mobilisation, given specific circumstances. However, focusing on critical events mainly showcases the outcomes of antiracism, not how antiracism is organised. Doing so requires an empirically grounded study of antiracist activists, which this thesis does.

Conclusion

In summary, this chapter has presented racism in Norway as occurring more frequently than the contemporary discourse on racism suggests. Furthermore, studying antiracism is of special relevance to the Norwegian welfare state, as racism can be seen to undermine social cohesion. However, research on antiracism is lacking, though the doctoral thesis of Knut

Nydal and the examinations of critical events comprise a solid foundation. It is in this context that this thesis is situated, providing an account of contemporary antiracist mobilisation.

3 Theoretical approaches

In this chapter, I turn to various literatures to conceptualise antiracism, operationalise social imaginaries, and theorise hope. Following introductory statements about the epistemological situatedness of this study, I discuss antiracism as more than antagonism and as a social movement before delving into social imaginaries and how the concept is used in this study. Lastly, I introduce hope as an object of study in social movements and lay the groundwork for further theoretisation in Chapter 7.

Epistemological standpoint

To outline the point of departure and foundation of this study, I provide an account of the epistemological considerations made. This study is inspired by two complementary approaches: studies that support antiracist counternarratives to racism (such as Bangstad, 2017; Gullestad, 2002; Stokke, 2018) and standpoint theory (Harding, 1992). These perspectives overlap in many ways and, therefore, are explained simultaneously.

In politically charged fields such as antiracism, researchers should be clear on whose perspectives they emphasise. This is a sentiment echoed in both social movement studies (c.f. Cahill et al., 2007; Milan, 2014; Sultana, 2007), and standpoint theory (Haraway, 1988; Harding, 1992). The latter originated in the feminist studies of Sandra Harding, though its insights are valuable to any study of marginalisation, oppression, and privilege (for a discussion of this, see Führer, 2021, p. 39). The key insight of standpoint theory is that society is seen from different perspectives and that some perspectives are better suited to reveal power dynamics (Harding, 1992, p. 442). Harding argues that marginalised individuals possess insight into society that is inaccessible to the privileged and hegemonic majority due to the difference in their lived experiences (p. 338, p. 443). This offers a reason to use a phenomenological approach and to feature marginalised perspectives.

However, this is usually not the case in research on antiracism. The majority of studies are at the macro level (Seikkula, 2022, p. 790), and while a significant number of those studies do question hegemonic perspectives on race and racism, those who practice antiracism and promote alternative perspectives are seldom in focus. There are exceptions to this (e.g. Andersson et al., 2012; Ellefsen et al., 2022; Nydal, 2007b), and Norwegian literature on antiracism has made a promising start in emphasising lived antiracist resistance (for a

discussion on migrant-based perspectives in Norwegian research on political engagement, see Andersson, 2018, p. 68).

Featuring marginalised perspectives is largely a question of research objectives and methodology. To access alternative repertoires, one must make space for an "absent person" who is usually not featured in research (Thomas, 2009, p. 8), in this case, antiracist activists. This means being phenomenologically grounded in antiracists' perspectives. To do this, I conceptualise antiracism in accordance with the empirical data. Furthermore, the social imaginary concept is adaptable to specific groups' and individuals' understandings of social interactions and society, allowing for an empirically grounded analysis.

Antiracism as more than antagonism

> A minimal definition of anti-racism is that it refers to those forms of thought and/or practice that seek to confront, eradicate and/or ameliorate racism. Anti-racism implies the ability to identify a phenomenon – racism – and to do something about it. (Bonnett, 2000, p. 4)

Alastair Bonnett, a human geographer who has studied antiracism in both Western and non-Western societies, proposes the above definition of antiracism. It is not only minimal but also broad: the base of which is being cognisant of racism as problematic and, furthermore, thinking or acting to solve it. However, there are a plethora of different strands of antiracism (c.f. Paradies, 2016, p. 2), even within this initial limitation. In an effort to navigate them, I draw on Jan Jämte.

In his doctoral thesis on antiracism in Sweden, Jämte builds upon Bonnett to identify three pillars of antiracism (Jämte, 2013, p. 30): (1) *acknowledging* racism as problematic – the cognitive aspect; (2) *active opinions* against racism and support for antiracist ideals – a slight but nonetheless meaningful shift from passive to active thought; and (3) *active participation*, either privately or in groups, which looks to "solve" racism by changing society and/or other people's behaviour. The line between the second and third pillars is blurry. If someone voices opinions against racism, is that considered an active opinion, active participation, or perhaps both? Due to this blurriness and the well-explored, but never finalised, discussion of what is talk and what is action (c.f. Jerolmack & Khan, 2014; Mills, 1940), the contribution of Jämte here is to distinguish between the first pillar as passive and the second and third as active.

To further expand on the categories above, one can delineate between being antiracist and being not-racist. Being antiracist means actively attempting to create consensus for antiracist ideas, whereas being not-racist means perceiving oneself as someone void of racist prejudices and, therefore, someone who is not-racist in their actions (Andersson & Kjellman, 2023; Garner, 2014, p. 412; Lentin, 2008). Insofar as actors maintain passivity and do nothing towards antiracist goals – Jämte's first category – they could be labelled as not-racist instead of antiracist. Operating with this conceptualisation of antiracism means only that those actively striving for antiracist goals are antiracist. Effectively, this shifts the focus away from the general public and over to antiracist activists.

If antiracism is equivalent to actively doing "something about it" (Bonnett, 2000, p. 4), "it" being racism, I wish to propose a counterfactual question: Would antiracism be obsolete if no racists were to be found? Ruzza (2013) argues that, as antiracism opposes the diffusion of racist frames and opinions as well as racist movements, it "is therefore a countermovement because it opposes a strong current of opinion" (2013, p. 1). In summary, Ruzza argues that antiracism is defined by antagonism and would disappear if racism disappeared.

Conceptualising antiracism as antagonism contrasts with scholars who argue that there are several forms of antiracism that strive to change more than simply the presence of racism (e.g. Lentin, 2004; O'Brien, 2009; Paradies, 2016). For instance, Bonnett categorises antiracism into multicultural antiracism, radical antiracism, and revolutionary antiracism, to name a few (2000, chapter 3). Here, Bonnett suggests that each of these forms of antiracism extends beyond antagonism to racism. In a later expansion of his minimal definition, Bonnett addresses this by adding to antiracism the description of "ideologies and practices that affirm to seek to enable the equality of races and ethnic groups" (Bonnett, 2006, p. 1099). I concur with this, though I wish to extend the conception of antiracism to include struggles for new ways of navigating social life without an emphasis on races and ethnic groups. With this perspective, antiracism is also a struggle over what society should look like. This argument is similar to that of Aquino, who emphasises that antiracism is "as much about the struggle for *recognition* and *creating new identities* for the oppressed as it is about creating a structural change" (Aquino, 2020, p. 220, emphasis added). Consequently, antiracism in this thesis is not conceptualised as one-dimensional antagonism to racism but as heterogeneous perspectives and practices with their own particular premises.

Antiracism as a social movement

To conceptualise the two networks studied and to enable a discussion of their position in Norwegian antiracism, I approach antiracism as a social movement. Drawing on Diani, one can understand social movements as "*networks of informal interactions* between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organizations, engaged in political or cultural conflict, on the basis of a *shared collective identity*" (Diani, 1992, emphasis added). This conception of a social movement is especially beneficial for two reasons.[1] Firstly, the emphasis on networks and informal interactions captures the fluid and vaguely organised parts of a movement. This creates a solid foundation for the study of the two informal antiracist networks.

Secondly, the emphasis on a collective identity enables a discussion of the commonalities and cohesion of the two networks studied against the larger backdrop of the Norwegian antiracist movement. Diani defines a collective identity as "mutual identification and solidarity" which bonds and holds movement actors together (Diani, 2000, p. 387). This definition is similar to that of other prominent social movement theorists (e.g. Blumer, 1969; Melucci, 1985). Tarrow, for instance, sees social movements as "collective challenges, based on common purposes and social solidarities" (Tarrow, 1998, p. 4).

This does not mean that no internal disagreements can be found between movement actors. Social movements often contain internal contestations of identities and strategies, which may lead to fragmentation and, potentially, the destruction of the movement (Jasper & McGarry, 2015). Contradictions and contrasts within a movement can make one doubt the assumption of a social movement sharing a single collective identity, raising questions about how disaggregated a movement can be before becoming something else.

The Norwegian antiracist movement can be thought to encompass swaths of different movement actors, each with their respective collective identities. As mentioned, Nydal describes a heterogeneous antiracist movement in the 1970s and 1980s consisting of various groups, identities, goals, and actions (Nydal, 2007b, 2007a, p. 43). For instance, the main groups of Marxist–Leninists and internationalists had contrasting ideological frameworks, and there was limited communication between certain actors such as the Christian ecumenicals and the militant antiracists. Despite this, Nydal argues that antiracism in Norway

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[1] There are far more conceptualisations of social movements than what can be covered here, (c.f. Calhoun, 1993; della Porta & Mattoni, 2016; Goodwin & Jasper, 2004). For this study, I deem Diani's definition as most fruitful.

still resembled a "collective movement" due to a shared political project and common reference points (Nydal, 2007a). In that way, Nydal's account can serve as a comparative background for further discussion of movement cohesion in the analysis.

As to what an *antiracist movement* is, the literature varies. I have argued against the strict conceptualisation of it as a *countermovement* and for antiracism as political engagement striving to change facets of society other than racism. In line with Diani's definition of a social movement, I see the antiracist movement as networks of informal interactions that share a collective identity and engage with antiracism as above. This operationalisation of the antiracist movement enables a later discussion on the two networks studied, their communication, and the subsequent implications for movement cohesion.

Social imaginaries

In approaching the third research objective, what social imaginaries inform the antiracists, I use a large part of the remaining chapter to explain the concept of social imaginaries. In the literature, social imaginaries are typically approached as a malleable concept. The concept is supplemented here by other theoretical features, namely, imagined communities, social and historical context, and futurity. This aggregation serves to capture different dimensions and intricacies when using the concept of social imaginaries to study social movements. I adapt the concept in this way because other theories fail to capture what this study attempts to do.

The concept of social imaginaries is often traced to Castoriadis (1987), but it takes many forms (c.f. Andersson & Jacobsen, 2012; Strauss, 2006; Taylor, 2002, 2004). I draw inspiration from a special issue of *Public Culture* on "new imaginaries" from 2002, in which Gaonkar introduces the concept as "ways of understanding the social that become social entities themselves, mediating collective life" (2002, p. 4). This conceptualisation is broad; however, at its core, the concept of social imaginaries is an analytical lens that draws attention to how individuals both understand and create social structures and practices.

To distinguish the concept of social imaginaries from other approaches, I wish to highlight similar yet differing concepts. Conceptually, social imaginaries are similar to habitus (Bourdieu, 2005) and "common sense" (Watts, 2014), in that individuals approach the world pre-reflexively, yet social imaginaries as a concept is less individualised in drawing attention to how social life is constructed, reconstructed, and situated at the group level. Frame analysis is overlapping in identifying what topics and solidarities were mobilised for and

against (c.f. Benford & Snow, 2000; D. Snow et al., 2018), but the social imaginary concept is less bound to specific issues and strategies. Meanwhile, as an analytical lens, social imaginaries relate to the study of diasporas in examining out-groups and symbolic boundaries second to those of the national (c.f. Anthias, 1998, 2001). However, social imaginaries can avoid seeing ethnicity and nationality as main dimensions of solidarity and, rather, observe how identities are mediated in other areas of life by individuals and groups themselves. Lastly, studies of transnationalism are related to research about social imaginaries in identifying social ties across borders (c.f. Remennick, 2007; Vertovec, 1999a).

Returning to the social imaginary concept itself, imaginaries are imaginary in two senses of the word. Firstly, imaginaries exist solely because of their continual representation in a population (Gaonkar, 2002, p. 4). In other words, they are socially constructed and dependent on reconstruction to exist. Secondly, imaginaries themselves are means through which actors perceive and understand themselves and their societal surroundings. This means that the imagination of social life is inextricably linked with that of cultural and political life. A potential change in the imaginary is equivalent to staking a claim on how society is understood – in itself a potentially transformative and, therefore, political act (McCray, 2013, p. 16). In other words, a group can produce new social imaginaries and thereby produce new ways of conceiving society. Subsequently, new pathways of action may emerge from these new ways of seeing social life. At the same time, thought and action are constituted by pre-existing imaginaries, as actions are grounded in ways in which one understands the social. Having explicated the foundation of the social imaginary concept, I now turn to the dimensions I use to operationalise it for study.

Starting with imagined communities, I take inspiration from Andersson and Jacobsen's studies of political engagement amongst minorities in Norway (Andersson, 2010; Andersson & Jacobsen, 2012; Jacobsen, 2011). They incorporate Benedict Anderson's (1996) imagined community concept as an aspect of social imaginaries. An imagined community is a community thought to be larger than what is immediately perceptible. Imagined communities and social imaginaries are complementary concepts because, when imagining social life, relationships and solidarity with people are essential. In that regard, what is *socially* imagined is inherently bound to what is imagined in terms of *community*. Analytically, the concept of imagined communities introduces much-needed social boundaries and power dynamics to the hitherto broad imaginary term by noticing who is in and who is out. This draws attention to how identities are negotiated and what role they play in larger social imaginaries.

Imagined communities influence how one understands society, and I offer two examples here. In "*The Black Atlantic*", Paul Gilroy argues that group solidarity amongst outsiders within white national cultures might be just as prevalent, and more relevant to study, than notions of ethnicity, race, or nationality (Gilroy, 1995, p. 8). This notion of imagined community, that of being an outsider, would inform ways of seeing the social in vastly different ways as compared to, for instance, a national imagined community: In this instance, one would conceive of outsiders as "us", whereas "Norwegians" would be "them". This refers back to the internationalists whom Nydal studies, as well as the Marxist–Leninists (Nydal, 2007b). The latter's imagined community of worker solidarity would inform ways of seeing society differently than the above. As part of this thesis' concept of social imaginaries, imagined communities are an analytical lens applicable to the macro level – as in studying a nation – as well as to the meso and micro levels in studying groups, for example, antiracist ones. The concept of imagined communities does well in drawing attention to the historical and social embeddedness of social groups in that they are often rooted in history and national context, as exemplified above.

Social imaginaries are also historically and socially embedded. Andersson argues that imaginaries are typically slow to change because they are geographically and historically rooted (2010, p. 10). Furthermore, social imaginaries create and recreate social facts by way of ideas and beliefs being shared amongst people (Castoriadis, 1987). Therefore, the social and historical embeddedness of imaginaries is key, serving as foundations for the (re)production of social imaginaries. Concretely, in this case, the antiracist social movement is embedded in the current state of affairs, such as the discourse on racism, the institutional and societal context that enables and limits imaginations of possible actions or ideas, as well as the historical origins and sources of inspiration on which antiracists draw to fuel their political action. Historical and social embeddedness, therefore, are part of the operationalisation of the social imaginary concept.

I have now drawn attention to the past and present, yet there is one crucial aspect missing from this concept of social imaginaries: the future. Perhaps because antiracism is often understood as a *countermovement*, as exclusively antagonistic to racism and not as a struggle *for* other ways of navigating society, it is seldom theorised as future-oriented. This is attempted here by linking antiracism with parts of the literature on futurity in social imaginaries. In doing so, I also attempt to accommodate the wish in social movement

literature to understand how movements prefigure alternative futures (della Porta & Diani, 2020, p. 19).

Sheila Jasanoff and Sang-Hyun Kim's (2009) article on "sociotechnical" imaginaries marked a change in the literature. The early work on social imaginaries predominantly concerned present, and partly past, conditions. Jasanoff and Kim, however, understand imaginaries as inherently future-oriented. In their work on imaginaries of nuclear power in the United States and South Korea, they operationalise sociotechnical imaginaries as how social forms are reflected in the planning and execution of scientific and technological projects. More importantly, they argue that imaginaries "describe attainable futures and prescribe futures that states believe *ought* to be attained" (Jasanoff & Kim, 2009, p. 120, emphasis added). Furthermore, Jasanoff writes that imaginaries envision both what is attainable and "how life ought, or ought not, to be lived" (Jasanoff, 2015, pp. 5–6). Summarising the above, future visions of life and society are seen here as key to social imaginaries.

I argue that the future is of special importance when it comes to antiracism. As a political field, antiracism is guided by potential futures. Manjana Milkoreit, in writing about climate change, states that:

> Explicit visions of desirable (sustainable) and undesirable futures are necessary to motivate and guide any kind of change, but might be particularly important for triggering transformational change – a process of fundamentally altering the structure and character of a given system. (Milkoreit, 2017, p. 1)

In stating this, Milkoreit underlines that envisioning the future is inherently political (see also McCray, 2013). Furthermore, Milkoreit draws attention to the desirability of future visions by arguing that dystopic future visions may motivate political action as much as utopic visions (2017, p. 3), which in the case of antiracism means that future visions of a society with *more* racism may harbour as much political fuel as visions of a society *without* racism.

Drawing on the non-representational theory of Nigel Thrift (2007), one can distinguish between representational and non-representational future visions. This is not representation as the desire for groups to reflect the demographic makeup of a population, as is often the case in political discussion. Rather, representational future visions are mental depictions of the future that have specific referents, an imagining of the future in detail (for representational theory, see Bickhard, 1993; Fodor, 1997). This compares to non-representational visions, which are comparatively more vague but are nevertheless geared towards the future (c.f.

Cook & Cuervo, 2019). To soften this dichotomy, I argue that future visions can be seen on a scale of representational to non-representational, echoing the arguments made by proponents of the "more-than-representational" theory in human geography (Anderson & Harrison, 2010; Lorimer, 2005). As an example, envisioning a future in which social interactions are based on skillsets instead of skin tone is more representative than simply envisioning social interactions without skin tone as a criterion of difference. This analytical dimension helps analyse how future visions function within social imaginaries as well as aid the theorising of hope in Chapter 7.

The last of the dimensions of the social imaginary concept is action. Various social imaginaries have different premises for action. In the literature, social imaginaries are seen as constitutive of collective action (c.f. Gaonkar, 2002; McCray, 2013; Strauss, 2006): both that which institutes society and its hegemonic ways of seeing the social (Castoriadis, 1987) and the engendering of new social imaginaries. Consequently, social imaginaries, imagined communities, historical and social embeddedness, and future visions therein factor into what political action is taken. This is the focal point of Chapter 6.

In summary, I use social imaginaries as an analytical lens, drawing attention to how the social is understood. In addition to explaining the core of the concepts, I have operationalised social imaginaries along four main lines: imagined community, historical and social embeddedness, futurity, and political action. It has not been my goal to expand the literature by defining social imaginaries; rather, I illustrate the adaptability of the concept in categorising and understanding various groups in various social contexts. In this case, the groups are the two antiracist networks, and the social context is Norwegian antiracism. This is analysed by way of social imaginaries in Chapter 6.

Hope

This portion of this chapter is in direct correspondence to Chapter 7, a theoretical chapter seeking to develop a framework for studying hope in social movement studies. Therefore, a large part of the theoretical reasoning on hope is left for later. Here, I first describe the relevance of studying hope in social movement studies and argue that, in doing so, it is beneficial to examine past rather than present conceptualisations of hope. Additionally, I argue that it is beneficial to approach hope along social dimensions and that hope can be socially constructed through "hope labour" (Kuehn & Corrigan, 2013).

Hope is linked to agency in political actions and serves as fuel in attempting to change society (c.f. Emirbayer & Mische, 1998; Milkoreit, 2017; Mische, 2009). Therefore, hope is tied to the ability to create and sustain political action (Goldman, 2010; Wiek & Iwaniec, 2014), which makes hope paramount to social movements whose goal is societal change. While analysing hope in social movements is not novel (c.f. Cassegård & Thörn, 2018; Castells, 2015; Gross, 2021; Kleres & Wettergren, 2017), to my knowledge, no studies systematically analyse why movement actors differ in hope. Thus, I focus here on differentials in hope within a movement. Although it is preliminary and needs further development, this theoretisation of hope helps fill a largely vacant space in social movement studies.

Hope is linked to how society is perceived. Hope is affected not only by perceptions of present-day society but also by how the future is envisioned (Alacovska, 2019; Cook & Cuervo, 2019; Kuehn & Corrigan, 2013). This means that hope is inherently tied to social imaginaries, as in ways of understanding the social. Concretely, the relationship between the perceived state of society and the avenues for improving it affects hope. For antiracism, factors that affect hope can, for instance, be thoughts of how prevalent racism is and what the chances are for lessening it. The following theoretisation, therefore, is an extension of the social imaginary lens used in this thesis.

In the study of hope in social movements, I argue that there is reason to examine past accounts of hope rather than contemporary ones. Although there is no universally accepted definition (c.f. the disparaging uses in the special issue *The Sociology of Hope in Contexts of Health, Medicine and Healthcare*, in Health vol. 19, no.2, March 2015), *present* sociological research on hope often conceives of it as individualised (Petersen & Wilkinson, 2015, p. 115) or, as Thompson & Žižek call it, privatised (2013). This privatised form sees hope as a belief in personal betterment resulting from individual actions. This conception is reflected in the fact that much sociological research on hope concerns how individuals persevere through the uncertainty of their lives (c.f. Alacovska, 2019; Brun, 2015; J. Bryant & Ellard, 2015; Kuehn & Corrigan, 2013), For instance, Mattingly (2010) studies the cultivation of hope amongst African American families whose children have chronic or terminal illnesses. While Mattingly does observe the structural intersections between race, class, and gender, the study is ultimately concerned with how the families attempt to make life worth living on an individual and familial level.

This contemporary approach to hope stands in contrast with that of the socio-political and emancipatory projects that followed World War II (Petersen & Wilkinson, 2015, p. 114). In this literature, hope was largely understood as being linked to social change and the belief in progress through collective actions (c.f. Bloch, 1995; Frankl, 1992; Fromm, 1971). What this approach emphasises is hope as a collective project, and this is the understanding of hope with which I operate. Importantly, it is implicit that hope is achieved in groups by attempting to change the current state of affairs. This means that hope is socially cultivated, or *socially constructed*, in groups that situate themselves between the present and the desired future. Social constructivism further ties hope into the imaginative element of social imaginaries.

I argue that it is fruitful to account for social factors when studying hope in social movements. While social movements draw on social, cultural, and material factors, social factors are available to all movements, including those not materially or culturally privileged. For instance, the Norwegian Black Lives Matter protests were not organised by wealthy organisations well known to the public but by small networks of racialised individuals (Mak, 2021; Velle & Kjernsli, 2020). To sufficiently account for movements such as this, hope may be best theorised with an emphasis on social factors that are available to all.

To operationalise hope as affected by social factors, I employ what Kuehn and Corrigan (2013) call hope labour, a term that refers to how individuals use social resources to cultivate hope (for similar conceptualisations, see Alacovska, 2019; Duffy, 2016; Fast et al., 2016). I adapt the concept to study social movements and to see hope labour as a way in which movement actors use social resources to create hope. Simply put, movement actors can cultivate hope by discussing avenues for change, thus strengthening their belief in progress through collective action. This is in line with literature on ideational power, consensual power, discursive power, and other forms of social power to create and imagine present and future states (c.f. Béland & Cox, 2016; S. Bell, 2012; Reed, 2013). Crucially, this literature indicates that *all* actors theoretically have the capacity to create, imagine, and, thereby, hope. By extension, all movement actors have the power to socially construct hope, regardless of their material and cultural position. Differentials in hope within movements, especially those without significant economic or cultural resources, can be analysed by emphasising social dynamics. The ways in which social dynamics affect hope are left for Chapter 7, where I delve into how hope in social movements is affected by spatial and temporal social factors.

Conclusion

This chapter starts by explicating the epistemological foundations of this thesis. Standpoint theory and supporting antiracist counternarratives were provided as reasons for engaging with everyday antiracist premises and designing the research accordingly. Antiracism is conceptualised as heterogeneous perspectives and practices rather than as a one-dimensional antagonism to racism. In line with this, the Norwegian antiracist social movement is seen as an informal network that engages with antiracism and shares a collective identity. This conceptualisation is most directly linked to Chapter 5, though it is also highly relevant to the other chapters. The concept of social imaginaries is treated here as malleable and is supplemented by the imagined community concept, historical and social embeddedness, futurity, and political action. This operationalisation is used in Chapter 6. Lastly, I have provided an account of how one can approach hope in social movement studies in preparation for further theorising in Chapter 7.

4 Methodological approaches

This chapter delves into methodological choices and practices. The first part of the chapter pays special attention to the ethical considerations made in studying antiracism because of the importance attached to ethics by research participants. Ethics were key to accessing the data material, and, therefore, access is discussed alongside ethics. The remainder of the chapter is ordered accordingly: the recruitment of participants, fieldwork and interviews, and the coding and analysis of data.

For the sake of simplicity, the two main networks of the data material are called "left radical" and "othered" antiracists due to what they emphasise in their activism. They could also be called "militant" and "racialised" or "people of colour", which I discuss in Chapter 5.

Ethical reflections on researching antiracism

In qualitative research, the relationship between the researcher and the research participant is fundamentally unequal. The researcher is the one storing and using sensitive data, not least to portray research participants. Therefore, it is important to recognise and abate this power asymmetry (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 37). To do so, I draw on the literature regarding ethics in social movements. Parts of this literature claims that "there is no such thing as apolitical and/or neutral research" (Fuster Morell, 2009, p. 21) and that ethics are of special importance to recognise and address the political impact of researching politically charged contexts (Sultana, 2007). The social movement literature on ethics is woven into the following discussion.

Earning trust and vying for time

A key word in this study is trust. Social movement scholar Stefania Milan (2014, p. 446) argues that quality in social movement studies is as contingent on the relationship between researcher and research participant as it is on epistemological and ontological questions. This may be especially true when research participants are sensitive subjects who are apprehensive about participating in a study (Tjora, 2017, p. 116).

As a backdrop, most informants in this study were sceptical of academia and research as a whole, viewing it as part of conservative institutions. In their view, participating in research runs the risk of upholding these institutions, or worse, exposing and harming themselves by revealing sensitive information to political opponents. This is similar to the argument that researchers of social movements need to be wary of the risks informants take when

participating in research (e.g. Chesters, 2012; Milan, 2014). This meant that many informants in this study were untrusting at the start, especially so because I was part of a research group and, as such, was required to assure research participants not only of my personal trustworthiness but also that of the research group. While I always strived for clarity and conciseness in explaining the project, the way in which I conveyed research interests was dependent on who I was attempting to recruit.[2] To help informants to put aside their scepticism of academia and participate in the project, I emphasised three ethical criteria: *anonymity, reciprocity,* and *positioning as antiracist.*

Anonymity was paramount to left-radical activists. Bjørgo and Gjelsvik (2015) experienced the same in their studies of radical groups and highlighted the fear of police and state surveillance as a cause for apprehension. Convincing left-radical activists that the transcriptions and recordings of interviews and fieldnotes would not be accessible to anyone other than me and the research group was the most important bar for gaining access to these participants. Furthermore, it was important to informants that I ensured that their identities would be completely anonymised, including name, profession, and skin tone. In some cases, the informants anonymised themselves by stating only their forename or saying they worked in, for instance, manual labour rather than a specific profession. Others were vague about where and when they were willing to meet, preferring to keep the specific time or place secret until our appointment drew near. To accommodate these concerns, I offered to take notes by hand as well as turn off the recorder during interviews if desired. Several informants elected to accept these offers.

Compared to left-radical activists, othered activists were more concerned about *reciprocity*. Othered informants wanted to ensure not only that the research project did not waste their time but also that it contributed to their cause. I was often asked questions such as, "Where does the money come from?", "What is the motivation behind this project?", "Are there any othered researchers?", and "How does this help us?". To remedy the unequal power dynamics and the consumption of the activists' time, Milan (2014, p. 447) advocates offering help as a counterbalance (see also Chesters, 2012). In my case, this came in the form of participating in their activities by shifting tables and preparing coffee for events as well as by offering insight

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[2] No template for invitations to participate in research was used, and therefore, there is no appendix on this. Rather, see the discussion below for how the project was conveyed.

into research on racism and antiracism. Informants were especially interested in past and ongoing research on racialised policing (i.e. Solhjell et al., 2019; Sollund, 2006).

A threshold for trust and access to all informants was to *position myself as antiracist.* Milan writes that movement participants who are highly invested might both expect and demand political alignment from a researcher (Milan, 2014, p. 446), which was the case here. This was made apparent early in the process when an informant sighed exaggeratedly, pretended to wipe sweat from their brow, and commented that they could talk freely after I conceded I strongly disliked racism and, more importantly, had previously been invested in antiracist activism. Such sentiments were met with approval and a marked change in attitude and the flow of information. However, this gesture alone was often insufficient; I still had to prove I was an antiracist.

Proving this came in the form of being tested on how invested I was and had been in antiracism. For instance, an informant had been discussing the increasing number of nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) within antiracism and asked, "That's a problem, right?" When the question was left unanswered, the informant rephrased and asked if I, in particular, regarded it as a problem. Other tests came in the form of knowing specific terms and idioms. Prior to agreeing to an interview, an informant wanted to ask me several questions. Amongst other topics, the informant inquired whether I had attended "June 5th", implicitly referring to the protest following the murder of George Floyd in May 2020. I knew what the date referred to and had attended the protests, and the attitude of the informant towards me subsequently changed.

In the aftermath of interviews, the ensuing conversations often included questions regarding my personal experience with racism and antiracism as well as why I had devised this project. If access was negotiated on these grounds, why not start with these conversations? In addition to the oddity of introducing myself with a description of my political past, I attempted to limit the effect I had on data collection. I now turn to this.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity has become a major strategy of quality and ethical control in qualitative research (Berger, 2015; D'Cruz et al., 2007; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 103). Here, reflexivity is understood as the continual practice of critical self-scrutiny of researcher positionality and, furthermore, the recognition that researcher positionality affects research (Davies, 1999; Guillemin & Gillam, 2004; Sultana, 2007). The key insight is that no research is exempt from

the characteristics of the researcher, whether those be beliefs, personal experiences, or physical characteristics such as skin tone. While "there is no such thing as apolitical and/or neutral research" (Fuster Morell, 2009, p. 21), one can attempt to monitor how researcher characteristics affects research. This means the social identity of the researcher is important, which is why I first explore how I was perceived by informants and, second, how my familiarity with antiracism affected the study.

Beginning with how I was perceived by informants, my descendance from one Norwegian-born white parent and one of Chinese descent was not mentioned to research participants unless it seemed especially relevant, or if I was specifically asked about it. In large part, I was read as "Other" by othered research participants and as majority white by white participants. There were exceptions to this, though this was the general trend. For instance, I was continually called "Chinese" in a workshop by and for othered antiracists. Comparatively, white participants could exclaim their surprise at me being "anything other than Norwegian", and I was often incorporated into the category of white and Norwegian both implicitly by way of being part of "us" and "we", as well as explicitly with comments such as "you fit in" or "as white, you (…)". While this contrast could make for a discussion in itself, I wish to focus on the implications it has for research.

Since the predominantly white informants saw me as white, this qualified me for a one-on-one or "white-on-white" relationship (Best, 2003, p. 906). In such a situation, the power imbalance that would occur between a white person and a person with othered skin tone is absent, creating a more symmetrical space. In specific, it would remove any fear of a white informant offending an othered interviewer. In the same way, I qualified for a similar relationship with othered participants or an "Other-on-Other" relationship with less power asymmetry than if I was perceived as white (Buford May, 2014). As some othered informants were keen to mention, the preponderant factor in their willingness to participate was my name and physical appearance. In that sense, the circumstantial perception of me as white or othered can be seen to have eased access and trust.

Continuing the discussion of reflexivity, I now turn to *familiarity* with the field. Having previously participated in Norwegian antiracism, I was familiar with the Norwegian social movement and the topics concerning it, including the challenges facing othered antiracists. This familiarity is akin to how being an immigrant in the United States helped facilitate Berger's insight into women immigrating to that country (Berger, 2015; Berger & Rosenberg,

2008). I argue that my familiarity made for easier access to the field, as discussed above, and aided in navigating interviews and fieldwork in nuanced ways.

I was aware that discussion of antiracism could be taxing, especially so for othered antiracists who also face racism, which for informants can be a draining topic to talk about (Essed, 1991; Nyheim-Jomisko, 2021). Therefore, I knew the importance of support and emotional breaks. Questions which could trigger negative emotions were prefaced with escape routes, such as "if I may ask" or "this is a tough question; do with it what you will". Additionally, I underlined that it was not problematic to opt out of questions or to delay offering answers. In this way, informed consent was renewed throughout the interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 88). The last question of the interview guide was also intended as a way to end on a positive note: What would the informants do in their idealised future vision? Due to my familiarity with the field, I was able to pre-empt potentially negative experiences.

The familiarity with antiracist linguistics enabled me to understand the language informants used in a nuanced way. I could more easily absorb information both said and unsaid through the denotation and connotation of words as well as via efficient probes of topics. For instance, my familiarity with past and present conflicts in the movement made me perceptive of the cold and cynical tone some participants used when speaking of certain organisations and networks. I was also aware of the discrepancy between the Norwegian and English languages. I was aware that English is preferred by many antiracists in Norway because they favour its terms for othered people, such as "racialised", "black", "people of colour", and "othered". The same words translated into Norwegian do not have the same connotations. As some informants spoke English or frequently used English terms while speaking Norwegian, I was able to notice these nuances and thereby more efficiently explore identity and belonging.

Familiarity also carries several risks. One such risk is blurring the boundaries of personal perceptions and those found in the data material (Berger, 2015, p. 224). For instance, my understanding of the social movement from a subjective point of view could pre-empt that of analytical categorisation. Furthermore, at times I had to make a conscious effort not to foreclose shared experiences. When asked personal questions in interviews, I kept my replies short and consistent and stated that we could talk more after the interview. While I explore the transcription and coding process later in this thesis, I wish to mention that transcription and coding was an important method to validate analysis. The process of talking to

inquisitive and critical colleagues and fellow students about what emotions and associations I had experienced during my fieldwork and the interviews was also a measure of quality. This reflects the usefulness of expanding reflexivity to include other researchers in checking biases and reactions (Horsburgh, 2003, pp. 308–309; Russell & Kelly, 2002).

Another risk was that my familiarity also affected the informants. Some left their sentences unfinished and shortened their accounts because of their assumptions that I knew what would follow. To combat this, I attempted to let them tell their stories without interrupting while still exhibiting interest and prodding, especially at what they might have regarded as obvious. The clearest example of this was an informant who mentioned "reparation" without defining this term. After I inquired about the concept of reparation, a rich account of structural racism and the informant's future visions followed. In summary, using familiarity to study antiracism involved walking a tightrope between gaining access and depth and projecting my own experiences and opinions onto the data material.

Procedural ethics

In addition to the relational ethics above, I also practised procedural ethics to secure the basic rights of research participants. As a foundation, this thesis was reviewed by Sikt, the review board for sensitive data, which ensures adequate consideration and planning of the research participants' confidentiality as well as their privacy, consent, and protection from harm. The high risk of exposing activists to surveillance and repression by placing political dissent in the spotlight was, as mentioned, addressed through anonymity. Additionally, data was stored according to the University of Oslo's red colour classification – that is, data "in confidence" – which, if exposed to a third party, may harm the research participants (University of Oslo, 2022). In practice, this meant that all data was protected in the university's cloud storage.

From conception to end of study: data collection

With the ethics and intricacies of access discussed, this section focuses on recruitment methods and the selection of research participants. It covers the research process and its adaptations chronologically, starting with the conception of the study.

Prior to the study, I was employed as a research assistant tasked with recruiting two antiracist organisations, both of which consisted of othered individuals. Concurrently, I read the doctoral thesis of Nydal (2007b) and saw the need for updated accounts of the Norwegian antiracist social movement. To help address this, I decided to conduct fieldwork and

interviews. The interview process and participatory observation occurred simultaneously in Oslo from early August 2022 to late December of the same year.

I followed what social movement scholar Donatella della Porta calls the criterion of happenstance (della Porta, 2014, p. 241). This criterion for finding research participants involves seeking out platforms where the object of study is likely to occur before recruiting a spread of individuals and attempting to secure outliers. In pursuit of this criterion, I participated in protests, discussions, and other events open to the public. Simultaneously, I began recruiting interviewees. I reached out to the two aforementioned organisations with which I had been in contact as a research assistant as well as antiracist networks with which I had prior experience, most of which were situated on the political left.

Both the initial phases of interviewing and fieldwork led to deepening knowledge of the field and better access to it. Interviewees readily suggested talking to other key actors in the movement and, in many cases, undertook their own outreach efforts before putting me in contact with them. A key moment in early fieldwork was when a research participant offered to introduce me to their activist group, which ultimately provided me access to events that were closed to the general public. This meant that both the initial interviews and fieldwork allowed me to build trust and rapport, ultimately ensuring me privileged access to certain parts of antiracism.

A notable feature of the empirical data at this point was that nearly all informants were young, in their early 20s to early 30s. This is common in social movement studies, as young individuals are often "biographically available", that is, typically less occupied with work life, family, or other commitments (Earl et al., 2017). While the pool of interviewees was expanded to include outliers, the mean age remained largely constant throughout data collection. Thus, the findings in this thesis relate to the young section of the antiracist movement.

During the later months of data collection, the empirical material took the form of two networks that mirror the starting point of the referral chains: othered antiracists and radical left antiracists. What are referred to here as two "networks" are, in reality, several partly overlapping networks: Individuals may not know each other despite being part of what are called the same networks in this thesis. As I spent time with and gained more insight into the research participants, similarities and differences between them emerged as two categories, and, therefore, they are conceptualised as two networks.

However, relying on referral chains to gain more empirical data had its disadvantages. As a bottom line, asking informants who they identified as key actors in the movement often led to similarly oriented people. Additionally, informants at times avoided mentioning actors who could be relevant due to their personal dislike of them. At one point I asked an informant about a specific actor they had not identified, to which they admitted avoiding mention due to strategic differences.

This illustrates the pitfalls of the referral chain method, showcasing the importance of striving for diversity and recruiting outliers if one aims for representativeness (della Porta, 2014, p. 241). I did this by following Della Porta's criterion of happenstance. In seeking out arenas where antiracism was likely to take place, I gained an overview of relevant actors. Furthermore, I sought to recruit outliers, such as informants within NGOs, labour unions, and the media as well as some seasoned and older activists. This spread of informants helped contextualise the main networks studied and increased the validity of the conclusions drawn in this thesis. Another way in which I remedied the disadvantages of referral chains was by following the advice of Biernacki and Waldorf (1981, p. 144) and paying special attention to which informants were at the start of the referral chain. Rather than sending an open inquiry to an entire organisation and taking the voluntary respondents at face value, I elected to ask specific individuals to ensure their eligibility for further referral.

Data collection ended when 2023 approached. Prior to this, I had several opportunities to gather more data but elected not to. One key actor offered to use their social media account for recruitment to the project, estimating that several hundred people would indicate interest. However, I experienced diminishing returns of new knowledge as compared to the time spent, or what Weiss calls saturation of knowledge, the point at which data collection should stop when information becomes redundant or peripheral (Weiss, 1995, p. 21). While I continued to attend events after this period ended, my experiences therein have not been used as primary data material.

Overview of informants

Not counting the participants in my fieldwork, this study consists of 15 informants who participated in interviews. Seven informants define themselves as othered, seven as majority white, and one as "mixed" with a white skin tone. As mentioned earlier, most are in their 20s or 30s. Furthermore, 11 informants define their antiracist activity as voluntary, whereas the remaining four deem it paid work, and those four are the previously mentioned outliers. They

also differ from the norm in terms of age, where two are in their 30s and the two others are in their 40s and 50s, respectively.

The largest differential amongst informants is that of gender. While this study has a small sample of informants, it is worth mentioning that nine identify as female (60%), four as male, and two as non-binary. This is close to what Ellefsen and Sandberg report in their study of the Norwegian BLM protesters, in which 63% identified as female (2022, p. 5). This contrasts to the gender identities in the fieldwork, which were more even, and it also contrasts with women typically being less represented in Norwegian civil society (Enjolras et al., 2012). The overrepresentation of one gender might be due to referral chains and might have consequences for the representativeness of the analysis. That said, analyses of the interviews correspond with those of the fieldwork, suggesting that the gender imbalance did not have a significant impact on results.

Fieldwork, interviews, and interview guide

I used two methods for data collection. The first part of the empirical data was collected by way of *fieldwork* – observing and participating in action as it was happening (Lichterman, 1998). In total, 20 events, some of which were less organised and less formal than others, comprise the bulk of the fieldwork. Internal meetings and discussions of tactics are counted amongst these informal events, whereas the more organised events include panels, debates, seminars, and other discussions, as well as workshops, exhibits, and protests. Fieldnotes and systematising reflections were written on a smartphone, unless research participants wanted them to be taken by hand due to reasons of privacy.

The fieldwork can be divided into two types: participatory observation and *fully* participatory observation. The overarching aim of participatory observation was to observe what people say and do in situations not affected by the researcher (Fangen, 2010, p. 12; Tjora, 2017, p. 53) (Fangen, 2010, p. 12; Tjora, 2017, p. 53). Therefore, I took on the role of a bystander, remaining at the margins of social interaction. This was the case at events open to the public, such as panel debates, museum exhibits, book launches, and protests. Protests in particular are a key arena for social movement research (Crist & McCarthy, 2006; Hutter, 2014) and are a large part of the data material. Protests were regarded as a *mise en scéne*, as a crafted public presentation with overlapping and, at times, contradictory messages. For instance, at a protest on the 30th of October against a Nazi march the day prior, various actors took the stage. Some urged the crowd to be ready for physical, militant action against Nazis, whereas others

advocated ignoring them. In that way, participatory observation was especially useful for dissecting the illusion of homogeneity that social movements often present (Balsiger & Lambelet, 2014, p. 148).

Events closed to the public required a different tactic, that of becoming a "fully participating observer" (Fangen, 2010, p. 75). In fully participating, I assumed the role of a volunteer, as is often the case in social movement research (Balsiger & Lambelet, 2014, p. 161). This allowed me to talk to research participants prior to, during, and after events. That said, I was also aware that my presence as a researcher changed the social dynamics, and I have already discussed familiarity and reflexivity, which also affect fieldwork (Fangen, 2010, p. 117). For instance, my invitation to these events was contingent on my active participation. That meant I was expected to and, at times, directly asked to express my personal opinions. Assuming a reserved position and taking notes without attracting attention was, therefore, difficult. Consequently, I asked the other participants if they were comfortable with my notetaking and, in some cases, I saved this task for a private moment, usually after the event had ended.

The second part of the empirical data is composed of 15 semi-structured interviews, a frequent and often preferred method of data collection in social movement studies (Blee, 2013, p. 603; della Porta, 2014, pp. 228–229). Semi-structured interviews are especially potent due to their potential to ground research where there is a scarcity of other data (Blee & Taylor, 2002, p. 93; della Porta, 2014, p. 229), as with reserved networks in the largely unexplored research field of Norwegian antiracism.

Central to the interviewing process was the interview guide. Predetermined topics were ordered thematically and according to importance, as suggested in the literature (Blee, 2013; della Porta, 2014; Weiss, 1995). Two interview guides were devised, one for participants speaking English and the other for those speaking Norwegian. The two guides were similar in content, but the content within them changed as the research progressed and I adapted the guide to better suit what informants had previously emphasised. In this way, the voices of previous informants affected later interviews, which provided a better perspective of different opinions on topics important in the field.

The guide, the full extent of which is in Appendix A, was ordered this way: To start, I followed McCracken's advice and opened the interview "with a carefully conceived section in which the respondent's anxieties are put to rest" (McCracken, 1988, p. 41). This section emphasised the informants' rights to anonymity and the data, explained that the interview

would be recorded, and detailed how the recording would be used. I also assured informants that I was interested in their personal perspectives. Following introductions and the gathering of basic information about the informant, the topics discussed were (1) conceptualising racism and antiracism, (2) actors in Norwegian antiracism, (3) their opinions on these actors, and (4) their visions of the future and the pathways there. Following Hermanowicz's advice (2002, p. 495), I attempted to end the interview on a positive note by asking about what informants would do in their ideal future.

To test the interview guide, I conducted pilot interviews (Weiss, 1995, p. 53) with two personal acquaintances who have experience with Norwegian antiracism. Their responses are not included in the data material. In these pilot interviews, I gained a notion of what needed to be altered in the interview guide, for instance, its breadth and length. The pilot interviews had covered only half of the original interview guide when 90 minutes had passed. The later interviews, with a honed interview guide, averaged 60–90 minutes, so in this sense I was able to resolve issues before they affected the data.

By far the most impactful factor on the interviews was the setting in which they took place. When contacting informants, I was clear that they should choose a location themselves, preferably without disturbances or background noise. If they had no desired location, I sought to conduct interviews in a private setting such as an enclosed meeting room or at least a semi-public setting such as a cafe or library. Almost half the interviews were in private settings, while the other half took place in semi-public settings.

The setting noticeably affected the interviews. While informants were generally forthcoming, interviews conducted in private spaces provided more in-depth knowledge than those in semi-public spheres. This is akin to what Mangset and Vassenden emphasise in their article on "situationalist interviewing", namely, that different settings make for different imagined audiences – the people residing in the setting, which produce different social desirabilities – things that "ought" to be said (Vassenden & Mangset, 2022). With this lens, a private setting provided the most lucrative information because the imagined audiences were few and familiar to the informants.

This was especially noticeable when the conversation turned to race and whiteness. Othered participants often took the initiative to elaborate on these topics, making it easy to theorise in tandem with them. This was done by confirming and exploring their implicit meanings (as advocated by della Porta, 2014, p. 239), by asking, "It seems to me you are suggesting (…),

is that so?". In this way, I also ensured that subsequent analysis was rooted in the intended meaning of informants. Accommodating white participants on the topics of race and whiteness required more poking, prodding, and using tricks of the trade, such as playing devil's advocate or presenting hypothetical scenarios (see della Porta, 2014, p. 247) by confronting informants with the opposite of their opinions or asking them what an outsider from another social group would say and how they would reply. This approach is advocated by Vassenden and Mangset to combat imagined audiences that limit information flow (2022, p. 23). Additionally, "playing dumb" (della Porta, 2014, p. 236; Hermanowicz, 2002, p. 486) served as a prompt for the informant to explain a concept in detail. Together, these two techniques facilitated generous accounts on topics that majority white informants were initially apprehensive to speak about.

Transcription and coding

Processing the data material occurred in four stages. To start, interviews were transcribed shortly following the interview itself, within a day if possible. The brief period between interview and transcription helped faithfully recreate the meaning of informants (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 204), as the interview was still very much mentally present. To further ensure validity, every sentence and word in the recording was transcribed. This was especially important to hinder bias from my familiarity with the field affecting further data processing. To further combat this, the second phase of coding was inductive. All coding was done using the coding software NVivo.

The second phase of processing the data took the form of sociologist Aksel Tjora's "stepwise–deductive–inductive" method (Tjora, 2017, p. 175), which entails coding data material as detailed as possible, down to the words used, before aggregating codes into analytical categories (2017, p. 234). The first four interviews were coded accordingly, providing an inductive foundation for further coding. However, I found that this method demanded a great deal of time and, as a result, I adapted the coding strategy.

The third phase of coding followed the two-step process of "what was said?" and "what was meant?" (A. Bryant, 2017; della Porta, 2014, p. 252; McCracken, 1988). New interview transcriptions were approached at the level of sentences or paragraphs. They were then coded and interpreted in accordance with previous transcripts and codes before introducing literature into the equation. Notes from the fieldwork were coded similarly before being placed adjacent to codes from interviews and compared. Additionally, codes originating in

the fieldwork were given a special designation, for instance, "optimism" and "optimism (field)".

In the fourth phase, I focused on connecting codes to each other and exposing the clusters of codes to theory. Following Della Porta and McCracken (2014, pp. 251–252; 1988, p. 3), I paid special attention to contradictions by juxtaposing interpretations by transferring codes into a spreadsheet and colour-coding them.

Conclusion

This chapter started by outlining the ethical approaches to data collection and how research participants' desires for anonymity, reciprocity, and positioning myself as antiracist were accommodated. I have discussed how perceptions of my being white or othered depending on the situation favoured data collection and how my familiarity with the field of antiracist activism not only enabled insight into data but also posed challenges. Semi-structured interviews with 15 informants and participatory fieldwork comprise the data. Data was coded by "what was said" and "what was meant" before being categorised and exposed to theory. This forms the base of my analysis, to which I now turn.

5 Mapping the terrain

Angela Davis visited Oslo on 11 August 2022, and a diverse group of antiracists flocked to hear the iconic American Marxist and feminist political activist deliver a lecture. The audience in the theatre consisted of activists from a multitude of networks, including the queer community,[3] human rights activists, and, crucially in this thesis, antiracist activists. Davis' message of continuing the fight for a better world despite it taking much time and effort buzzed throughout the audience after she herself had left the floor. This single event has been cited by antiracists regardless of orientation as a source of inspiration. In that sense, Davis' talk constitutes a shared experience which could serve as a common point of reference, providing unity to the movement. However, once the audience members left the theatre, they quickly returned to their usual networks and, ultimately, dispersed. Most of the antiracists who attended have likely not seen or communicated with each other again.

The aim of this chapter is to map out the terrain studied in this thesis. In doing so, this chapter is divided into two parts, which, respectively, correspond to the first and second research objectives: The first part sketches out how informants conceive of antiracism and antiracist activism, and the second part introduces the two networks studied and their relationship to each other. The topics introduced in this chapter serve as pillars upon which the subsequent chapters build.

The analysis suggests that the two networks share a basic understanding of what antiracism and antiracist activism are, but they differ in terms of who they are and what they do. Furthermore, their relationship to each other leads to a broader discussion of trust and its role in maintaining current links between the networks and other actors.

Conceptions of antiracism

This first part corresponds to the first research objective and asks who the informants deem antiracist and how they conceive of antiracist activism and antiracism. Starting with *who is antiracist,* most informants call themselves so. Those who do not call themselves antiracists do not resist the antiracist label as much as they prefer another. Some informants emphasise human rights activism, while others conceive of their activism as antifascism, such as Kaspar, who says, "I identify primarily as antifascist. I stand for a specific kind of confrontational, if it must, really militant strategy against specific kinds of racists". Despite primarily labelling it

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[3] The term "queer" is used rather than other terms such as LGBTQ+ because informants use the former.

antifascism, informants such as Kaspar agree that their activism is also antiracist. Therefore, all participants are called antiracists.

For many, being an antiracist is not a matter of choice. Othered[4] informants experience being antiracist as something into which they are forced due to racism. Ezra, as an othered antiracist, illustrates that here: "I don't have a choice in being antiracist; I mean, I'm black. There's nothing to do about it. (…) Antiracism becomes a part of me, I guess, because it concerns my own survival". This involuntary identity forced upon othered antiracists stands in contrast to the engagement of white antiracist activists. For them, it is significantly a matter of doing what is right. The different reasons for antiracist engagement follow the categories of "conscience constituents" as opposed to beneficiaries of the movement. The latter stand to personally benefit from the movement's claims – in this case, othered informants experiencing less racism – whereas conscience constituents support the movement's claims despite them not personally benefitting them (Owen, 2019).

The question of who is antiracist is paired with the question of *what antiracist activism is* for the informants. When it comes to putting antiracism into practice, informants generally agree on the difference between being antiracist and being not-racist. For instance, this is underlined several times by Gwen, who says:

> "To me, when I think about whether you call yourself an antiracist, then it goes back to what I said about *working actively against racism*. It isn't enough to educate yourself on it, especially as a white person. It's what you do in everyday life – what is it you do? Yeah, what is it you do in everyday life? That's what makes you an antiracist". (emphasis added)

The definition of antiracism as action is shared by all informants except for three, who are represented here by Martin, who states that "antiracism is a way of thinking, right? It is attitudes that are in your mind". This stands in contrast to most informants, who see the acknowledgement of racism as problematic and antiracism as good as being insufficient to be called antiracist. Andrea speaks to this when she reflects on the relationship between thinking antiracist thoughts and engaging in antiracist actions:

> Andrea: "So being antiracist is really actions".

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[4] The terms "Other" and "othered" are discussed later in the chapter.

I: "It isn't sufficient to think about it?"

Andrea: "That's a very good question … I'm tempted to say no, to be honest … It's probably no, it isn't enough to think. But you know, if you think about it, you talk about it, and then it becomes actions and is kind of yeah".

I: "But being kind-hearted is not enough?"

Andrea, laughing: "No, I really don't think so, to be honest".

Kind-hearted was understood here to be a personality trait rather than a characteristic resulting from kind deeds.[5] These quotations can then be read as the insufficiency to have kind intentions if those intentions do not result in kind, antiracist, actions. Either way, what Andrea ultimately highlights is the distinction between passively acknowledging antiracist ideals but not striving towards them and actively doing so – the difference between being not-racist and being antiracist. Therefore, antiracism is understood in this thesis as *actions* towards antiracist goals.

When asked *what antiracism is*, all 15 informants state that antiracism is something more than simply combatting racism. They use different phrasings and expressions, but all agree upon antiracism being a larger struggle for a society exempt from discrimination based on skin tone or ethnicity. Illustrating these significant struggles, Farah says that:

"For me, antiracism is a part of kind of the large and whole kind of; it is sort of incorporated into all of my values. So I don't necessarily go around and think 'antiracism' kind of, because to me it is part of a *big ideological package*" (emphasis added).

The sentiment of antiracism as part of a larger "package" is echoed by other informants, for instance, Andrea:

"I am a feminist because men and women should have equal rights and opportunities, and an antiracist because all – regardless of skin tone, ethnicity, or whatever I should call it – shall have equal rights. So, it is part of the same, larger struggle".

In that sense, antiracism extends past racism, becoming part of larger political and cultural struggles over who is the imagined community, the "us" and "we" (Anderson, 1996). This is in agreement with the literature that conceives of antiracism as not only antagonism to racism

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[5] This interpretation has been confirmed by Andrea.

(Bonnett, 2006, p. 1099; Lentin, 2004; Paradies, 2016). A key part of this larger struggle is combatting structural racism, and while there are minor disagreements on exactly what enables racism to be as pervasive and entrenched in societal structures as it is perceived to be, the informants generally agree on one key term: capitalism.

"Capitalism. No, I don't want to get there", Ezra said before laughing. Capitalism was a frequent topic in the interviews. After I prodded Ezra for further information on the broad and often vague subject of capitalism, they went into detail about how capitalist systems and states of mind pervade everything from nations to movements, from the media capitalising on the George Floyd protests of May 2020 to Facebook's role in presidential elections. These examples simply skim the top of what informants see as the deep-seated problem of racial capitalism.[6] Othered informant Johanne underlines that capitalism has long roots connecting it to racism:

> "The largest problem we all have is capitalism. And capitalism and racism and white supremacy are all, like, tightly interwoven with each other and are part of each other. And the goal is to dismantle all such institutions and … I feel that we first and foremost must get rid of capitalism".

Othered informants especially draw such parallels in much the same way as racism is discussed in the chapter on political context: race and racism stemming from the European colonial project, which then laid the groundwork for present-day economic inequality. In this way, othered informants differ from radical-left, predominantly white informants. Martin, a manual labourer and a labour union activist, showcases this perspective on capitalism and racism:

> "I think everything is connected. The only people who benefit from racism are, in reality, employers, because they're dividing workers. That leads to people beginning to discriminate [against] others rather than cooperating. And if we cooperate between labourers then it is much easier for us to demand better working and living conditions. And it's important to have, like, a united working class rather than joining in on dividing them".

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[6] There is a large literature on the analytical term *racial capitalism* which I do not delve into. Suffice to say it is a way for activists to reframe capitalism as rooted in racial inequality, such as in the seminal work *Black Marxism: The Making of a Black Radical Tradition* by Cedric Robinson (2021).

Martin's emphasis on the working class begs the question of what the relationship of antiracism to class struggle is for radical-left informants. In many cases, antiracism has been seen as subordinate to class struggle, construed as an issue that is part of uniting a broad working class (Anthias et al., 1992; Bonnett, 2000, pp. 168–172). In Norway, specifically, antiracism has long been central to the political left, as has criticism of capitalism. In the late 1960s and onwards, the Workers' Communist Party (Marxist–Leninists or AKP-ml) incorporated foreign workers and immigrants into the category of the working class, a tradition that lived on in the 1970s and 1980s (Nydal, 2007b). More recently, antiracist mobilisation following the events of Obiora and Farah in 2006 and 2007, respectively, were seen by majority participants as opportunities to be "made big", that is, made into "wider" left-wing political issues such as the class struggle against capitalism (Andersson et al., 2012, p. 85).

Amongst white, radical-left informants, antiracism is intrinsically tied to class struggle. Daniel is especially interesting in this regard, as he can be seen to represent two positions. In this first quote of his, antiracism is seen as secondary to class-struggle: "We have a notion of being part of the workers' movement. And you can say that it is very connected; one can't separate [it]". However, in response to the question of whether or not antiracism is the same struggle as class struggle, Daniel answered "yes, the same or overlapping", leaving room for antiracism to be a separate issue. It is the latter position that most radical-left antiracists share. For instance, the following statement by Kaspar illustrates the perceived overlapping, complementary nature of antiracism and class struggle: "I don't think you can separate them; I don't think there is any point where the labour unions end and antiracism starts. It's all connected". Another perspective comes from Kea, who said that the two struggles "are completely tied, they're like siblings", suggesting that they are familiar and connected while remaining entities of their own. The instrumentality of antiracism in class struggle is also missing, showcasing a difference in the young members of the movement as compared to the studies of Andersson et al. (2012) and Nydal (2007b). In summary, antiracism is seen as linked, but not subordinate or secondary, to class struggle. Nevertheless, this marks a contrast to othered informants who emphasise colonialism and white supremacy.

The few informants who do not speak of capitalism still speak of antiracism as changing an unequal economic system. For example, Gea, an othered woman in her approximate 30s, states that "I just want the same wages as you. Unless your boss can be a black woman and earn more than you … I want reparation". While not necessarily projecting images of an alternative economic system to capitalism, Gea nevertheless wants *reparation* – which she defines as "structural changes" in which othered people earn more than white people as compensation for an unequal past. While this is an interesting political proposal in itself, what Gea highlights here is the history of colonialism and slavery for which she believes othered individuals should be compensated.

Reparation is a term typically situated in a larger context of acknowledgement and compensation for groups who have been discriminated against and oppressed. Perhaps the most explored cases of demanded reparation are those of genocide and colonialism, often in tandem, such as in South Africa (Atuahene, 2011; Colvin, 2006), South America (Cano & Ferreira, 2006; Guembe, 2006; Lira, 2006), and Germany (Colonomos & Armstrong, 2006). By using the term reparation, Gea situates herself and antiracism within this international discourse on injustice, incorporating racism in general as a sufficient reason for reparation. In this case, the desired reparation is economic. While the claims of reparation are within the boundaries of wage labour, they are still radical in framing the experienced racism of past and present othered people as grounds for compensation. The more blunt words of a white activist on the topic of paying othered individuals more than white individuals – "They must get something back; we have just been taking" – showcase the perceived historical injustice warranting reparation. In that sense, the informants who do not talk about capitalism specifically still have a structural and international perspective on what antiracism is and concerns.

Introducing the networks

"Othered" antiracists

The second part of this chapter fulfils research objective two, as it introduces the two networks studied in this thesis and explores the degree to which they communicate with each other. The first network consists of othered antiracists. The term "Other" is taken from a large and diverse literature on otherness. Within this literature, key works such as de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1953), Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (1986), and Spivak's *Can the*

Subaltern Speak? (1988) underline the relational power asymmetry that enables a majority in power over *other* minorities. This *othering* is a process in which the dominant group classifies a dominated group as an out-group, as the Other. The out-group is then coherent only as the result of its opposition to the in-group, as being the Other to "us" or "the self" (Staszak, 2009, p. 25). While using various terms such as "black", "racialised", "ethnic minority", and "Other", all othered informants emphasise being non-white and, subsequently, the Other to both the national and global white majority in power. Therefore, they are called "othered antiracists" in this thesis.

As to what the othered antiracists do, their activities are predominantly oriented towards young (early 20s to early 30s) othered individuals. Activities such as workshops, discussion groups, and book clubs are usually targeted at those already connected to the othered networks. For instance, a discussion group in early December 2022 was promoted on internal channels or social media pages catering to othered individuals. While this group was not closed to the white majority per se, little was done to invite them. What followed from this is that those who participated in the discussion group were not white; they were themselves othered. These activities of othered antiracists and their focus on themselves is similar to the "autonomous spaces" of othered activists whom Keskinen describes in Denmark, Finland, and Sweden (Keskinen, 2022, pp. 64–68). To summarise, the activities of the othered antiracists can be seen as made by and for othered individuals.

Radical left-liberal antiracists

Many of the activists in attendance at Angela Davis' lecture were from what is known in this thesis as the radical left-liberal (RLL) portion of the antiracist movement. RLL is an analytical term used by Jämte, Lundstedt, and Wennerhaug to study the radical left in Sweden (Jämte et al., 2020). They conceive of RLL activism as a movement in itself, not as part of the antiracist movement. However, they also write that the main function of the RLL term is to highlight informal activist networks consisting of radical activists from the ideological left (Jämte et al., 2020, p. 2). I use RLL as such a term. Ideologically, these networks are rooted in libertarian socialist thought and are, in that sense, anti-authoritarian, anti-capitalist, and critical of state power. They are also critical of power relations such as sexism, homophobia, and, most pressingly, racism (for other studies on RLL activists, see for instance: Fominaya, 2007, 2015; Katsiaficas, 2006; Poma & Gravante, 2017). The concern that RLL networks have for such a wide array of issues makes them possible allies for numerous other political

actors, such as antiracist ones. This has been exemplified by previous RLL groups, such as Blitz and other militant antiracists of the 1970s and 1980s (Nydal, 2007b).

As to what contemporary RLL antiracists typically do, the most frequent activity is counterprotests. These events are often aimed at the mobilisation of Nazis or racists, with the goal of driving these groups off the streets or hindering their protest. Most often, this is attempted by making noise and drowning out their message with pots and pans, drums, and megaphones. The general demographic makeup of the dozens to hundreds of participants in attendance at counterprotests is predominantly young and white. Many RLL activists from various networks attend alongside participants from Socialist Youth and Red Youth and, at times, their affiliated political parties, labour unions, and NGOs. Apart from what RLL activist Frida calls a handful of teenage minority boys who "randomly" turn up, there are few othered participants at typical counterprotests. However, this varies: Protests on the east side of Oslo typically include more othered participants, though the most frequent sites of protest are in the city centre, which is where Frida's description of the minority boys who randomly participate is accurate. In summary, RLL antiracists are predominantly white, radical-left activists whose main activity is counterprotests.

Limited communication and the integral role of (dis)trust

The introductory paragraph about the lecture delivered by Angela Davis is illustrative of the relationship between the two antiracist networks as well as their relationship to other antiracist actors. As stated, most of the antiracists who attended likely have not seen or communicated with each other again. This is exemplified by othered antiracists, such as Gwen, who says, "I hope that we can get together to a much greater degree. As per now, there are kind of silos", and by RLL antiracists such as Daniel:

> "It's hard finding out who the antiracists are. There is no one contact network that ties everyone together. … I'm a believer in diversity of tactics. Various different initiatives that have a common understanding [are] very useful. But I don't know if we talk that much together".

What Gwen and Daniel emphasise is a lack of common channels of communication between different antiracist actors, hindering their wish for strategic coordination. This wish for coordination and communication is shared amongst most informants. Not only is there limited communication, but there is also little familiarity between the two networks. In my

fieldwork, no othered antiracists were part of RLL networks, nor the other way around. When asked in interviews, antiracist activists said they were often unaware of antiracist initiatives apart from their own. For instance, othered antiracists were rarely able to name or describe RLL initiatives. While RLL antiracists recognised some names of othered networks, there was rarely any knowledge of what these networks did. To recapitulate, Angela Davis' lecture and the following dispersed crowd symbolise the common interest in antiracism amongst the two networks as well as the limited communication between them. As there is a wish for more communication and coordination, yet no apparent efforts to achieve them, I turn to why this is.

In an interview with Farah, I inquired about the following: "For a naïve observer, why can't you just send a message and start collaborating?" Farah replied by stating the importance of *trust*: "Not everyone trusts each other; I think you need to know each other first. … You know, sending a message saying, "Let's collaborate". … You have to watch out for who you collaborate with".

The question then becomes why one must be so watchful. Several informants emphasise the secretive nature of their networks and activism; for instance, the RLL antiracist Kea states, "There is quite a bit of sensitive things you organise, discuss. There are many who do not wish to be public at all. So, you want to be restrictive in who you let in on it". Othered informants echo this point, stating that discussions of experienced racism and other sensitive subjects are contingent on trust to be successful. The secretive stance of the networks, therefore, is intended to protect their members from the potential harm that unknown actors can cause.

This need for secrecy leads informants to be suspicious of outsiders. For instance, Frida says that "if someone goes over to me on a SIAN demo [a counterprotest], I immediately go: 'Who are you? Don't talk to me now!'" This illustrates that trust, or distrust, is integral to maintaining the limited communication between the two antiracist networks as well as with other antiracist actors.

Informants' opinions on *Antirasistisk Senter* (Antiracist Centre, ARS) make for an illustrative case of how distrust enforces limited communication between the studied networks and other parts of the antiracist movement. ARS is the most frequently cited example by informants when they speak about why trust is paramount. ARS is the largest organisational actor in the

Norwegian antiracist movement and has been central to antiracism since the 1980s (Nydal, 2007b). However, informants express dissatisfaction, questioning ARS' centrality.

In large part, this dissatisfaction revolves around a previous leader who headed ARS for nearly a decade. In the last years of their leadership, they initiated several conflicts and disputes with other antiracist actors, informants said, rather than deliberating with them about the perceived challenges. Informants also claim that the leader prioritised critiquing and dividing the antiracist movement rather than aiding it. Consequently, conversations about ARS in interviews and fieldwork were marked by words such as "sabotage" and "a scandal". Specific examples provided by informants include the leader using ARS' access to the media to undermine the legitimacy and effectiveness of counterprotests and framing various antiracist activities as a health hazard during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, informants view with suspicion not only the previous leader but also ARS as a whole. Importantly, ARS serves as an example to informants as to how other actors can damage their activism and, subsequently, why they must trust the actors with whom they come into contact to prevent such harm. For this reason, ARS and their initiatives are viewed with suspicion and as having dubious intentions.

This suspicion first concerns ARS as attempting to control antiracist discourse and strategy, reflected in the activists' response to a project by the name of *Nasjonalt Antirasistisk Nettverk* (National Antiracist Network, NAN). NAN is led by the ARS. While the stated goal of NAN is to gather different actors to work towards the common goal of a more inclusive Norway, informants perceive it as an attempt to control rather than collaborate. For informants, NAN is not the first attempt at this, which Kea illustrates: "Several such initiatives have come up, and for us who are activist, grassroot, don't have this as a job, who don't do antiracism as a consultant on a centre – they do it to control a narrative or a strategy". If one adopts the lens of the informants and looks for ways in which NAN attempts to control other facets of antiracism in Norway, it is not difficult to find evidence. For instance, when becoming a member of NAN, one must "confirm that I work according to NAN's goals"*, where the asterisk designates it as being obligatory to answer. As the options are either "yes" or "no", with "no" resulting in one not becoming a member, the only "correct" answer is "yes". The activists provide several such examples of what they perceive as attempts to control narratives and strategies; they see this as proof of the danger in reaching out to other networks and organisations for collaboration. In effect, this strengthens the isolation of the networks from other parts of the movement.

Another aspect of informants' suspicion of ARS is one of perceived egoism. Informants believe ARS is experiencing an unjustified sense of ownership and entitlement to the movement. Several activists voiced their scepticism; one of them, a labour union activist, questioned who NAN thinks they are to invite actors to collaborate and coordinate antiracism. He did not see this group as the supposed "centre" of antiracism in Norway, despite ARS being so in name. From the othered antiracists' perspective, Ezra criticised ARS along the same lines, saying that ARS believes they are at the forefront and core of antiracism, but in reality, they are not. Rather, Ezra suggested that if there is an organisation at the centre of the movement, it is OMOD (*Organisasjon Mot Offentllig Diskriminering* or Organisation Against Public Discrimination), who offer their locales as places for activists to meet and organise events. RLL activist Daniel echoes this sentiment by mentioning that ARS has the physical space available for organised activities and suggests that they should "offer infrastructure, not take responsibility for mobilisation", akin to what Ezra praises OMOD for. The egoism that informants see in other antiracist actors, as exemplified by ARS, further adds to the networks' isolation from other parts of the movement.

Lastly, the suspicion described above is reinforced by the view that white antiracists are dubious in their intentions. This notion is explicated in Chapter 6, though it is worth stating that othered antiracists are suspicious of whether white activists participate in antiracism for the "right" reasons. From the point of view of othered antiracists, ARS has confirmed this suspicion, as the previously discussed leader was white. This is subsequently seen by informants as proof that white antiracists are not trustworthy.

This second part of this chapter has illustrated the limited communication between the two networks. Both networks have a need to trust the actors with whom they are in contact, as actors can cause harm to the ways in which the networks organise and mobilise. Therefore, the two networks avoid external actors and view them with suspicion. ARS and the actions of the previous leader are examples that confirm the suspicions and fears of informants regarding the harm that external actors can cause. Nydal describes ARS as being central to the Norwegian antiracist movement in 1975–1988 (2007b), which contrasts with the two networks' current accounts of ARS. However, ARS are only an example for the informants, which reflects the general risk of being in contact with other antiracist actors. ARS and the way in which informants act according to their suspicions are also examples of how communicative distance is maintained between the two networks as well as between other actors.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the first and second research objectives of exploring the two networks' conceptions of antiracism and antiracist activism as well as the communication between them. At its definitional core lies antiracism as an anticapitalistic and active struggle. To informants, being an antiracist is to act; it is not sufficient to only think antiracist thoughts. The notion of antiracism as a broader struggle against an unequal economic system is shared amongst all informants. Othered antiracists emphasise colonial structures and reparation more than RLL antiracists do; the latter, to a greater degree, focus on antiracism and class struggle as complementary movements. Further divergence is indicated by the understanding that, for othered people, antiracism involves them personally, their skin tone, and their identity. As a result, they are forced into being antiracist. RLL participants, who are predominantly white, are more free to be antiracist on the grounds of doing what they perceive as right. These distinctions between othered and RLL participants are the first of what later are demonstrated to be two comparatively dissimilar antiracist networks.

In terms of the relationship between the networks, there is little to no communication between them; they are *disconnected*. This is the reality despite their wish for more contact. The word "disconnected" suggests that there once was a connected whole, and in regard to antiracism as a social movement, that whole existed in the period of 1975–1988, according to Knut Nydal (2007a). Disconnected parts are nothing new in antiracist movements (c.f. Fella & Ruzza, 2013; Jämte, 2013), and in that sense, finding this particular part of the antiracist movement to be disconnected is hardly novel. However, the disconnectedness of the two networks can question the general state and cohesion of Norwegian antiracism. The relevance of this discussion is increased in Chapter 6, and it is fully engaged in Chapter 8.

6 Social imaginaries

This chapter discusses the third research objective: the two antiracist networks' broader understanding of antiracism, and their ideals, solidarities, wishes, and struggles. This is achieved by utilising the social imaginary concept to analyse and compare the networks. The social imaginaries are divided into four distinct categories of analysis: imagined community, historical and social embeddedness, future visions, and political action. These four categories are analysed in relation to othered and radical left-liberal (RLL) antiracists, respectively.

The analysis suggests two dominant and distinct social imaginaries separating the two networks. The differences between othered and RLL antiracists, detailed in the previous chapter, are further discussed here. When compared, the networks differ in all four regards introduced above.

The social imaginary of the Others

Now, I analyse the social imaginary of the othered informants, starting with their *imagined community*. At the core of this social imaginary are the othered activists themselves: They emphasise being something *other* than the white majority, and their activities are by and for othered people. While the networks are composed of diverse individuals who identify as black, brown, African, Asian, or other geographically situated identities outside of majority white counties, they remain united in a collective identity. This became clear at a workshop on resisting discrimination, at which two participants spoke about sharing the identity of the Other:

> "We are all one and the same to the white man, you know. I am black. You are Asian. But to them, we are one and the same; we are alike. No different. My friend is not even that black, but she is far too colourful for them".

> "It is important to know where you come from. My family origins are important to me in understanding who I am and what has affected me in life, what has shaped me. But at the same time, we mustn't let that stand in the way of us being together, right. We all have experiences, but right … they are bound together by what we face".

Such identification and political mobilisation on the basis of a large, shared identity category can be reminiscent of what can be called universal, cosmopolitan, or "post-ethnic" mobilisation, in which particular group identities are set aside to focus on larger, communal identities (El-Tayeb, 2011; Gilroy, 2005; Keskinen, 2022). Akin to how blackness arose as an

umbrella term for all people of colour during the 1970s in the United Kingdom (c.f. Alexander, 2018; Modood, 1994), in this study informants categorise all people of colour under one banner, that of the Other.

Gwen clarifies the transnational dimension of this imagined community by saying that her political activities concern "our own people, the global majority". This means the imagined community involves not only othered people in Norway but also all othered people internationally. In that sense, the othered activists imagine themselves as part of a global group of people, and while they do not necessarily imagine all othered people to be an active part of the antiracist movement, they do suggest that all othered people share the same interest. More specifically, all othered people are believed to have a common interest in antiracism as a way to strengthen their shared position. This can be reminiscent of the Marxian or Fanonian notion of objective class interest, where a diverse group of people are thought to share specific political goals.

There are diverse identities and interests within this large collective of Others, including within the networks studied here. For instance, several research participants subscribe to a Pan-African framework and identify as Pan-Africanists. There is certain ambivalence in scholarly discussions on whether Pan-Africanism and similarly large yet still exclusionary categories are wide or transnational enough to not be called particularistic (c.f. Brubaker & Cooper, 2000; Lawler, 2015, chapter 8), or if such identities are irreconcilable with universalistic identities. However, othered informants look beyond this discussion in both perceiving Pan-Africanism as its own particular struggle, and as part of a universalistic struggle. For example, Ezra, who comes from Africa and is active in an African-inspired organisation, highlights that the struggle for people from Africa is part of global political in that "We're not free until everyone is free". Gwen, who is not African, illustrates both the particularity of Pan-African mobilisation and the fact that it is seen as part of "ourselves" and the community they work for:

> "What we had at that event, for example: Who is it we personally invite to it, who is it we talk to when on stage, what is it we stand for? All of this has melded us to centring *ourselves* in all we do. For instance, … we have Pan-African workshops that only are for the African community, and then, of course, I'm not there, you know. It's

incredibly important to point out. We need to be true to the community we're trying to serve".[7] (emphasis added)

With the social imaginary of the Others emphasising otherness, their relationship to the privileged majority becomes key to understanding the imagined community. Specifically, the emphasis on otherness results in white people being excluded as the opposite of who belongs. Due to limited communication between othered and white networks, there are few attempts at closing the gap or denaturalising this dichotomy of white and othered. The othered antiracists are aware of this, though they have no wish to close the gap. This is because they see white people as largely ignorant of both racism as a societal phenomenon and, more importantly, the experience of being discriminated against. Stated differently, white people are seen as having little insight into the fundamental criterion for membership in the imagined community, that of otherness. For this reason, they are disqualified from the imaginary. Almost as if echoing Sandra Harding regarding those less privileged having access to knowledge the privileged do not (Harding, 1992), Johanne asks: "What does a Norwegian person in Norway know if they don't have that experience?".

Further examining the othered informants' delineation of white people from themselves, there is a distrust of white people who participate in antiracism: "I try to stay clear when it's [antiracism] clearly white, you know. Because there is something that isn't quite right", Farah said in an interview. This harkens back to *Antirasistisk Senter* and the activists' suspicion of the previous white leader and his intentions, as described in the previous chapter. What Farah feels is not "quite right" is the general concern about white people participating in antiracism for the wrong reasons. The wrong reasons can include using activism as social capital and self-promotion, for socioeconomic gain, or as an academic exercise with little to no practical consequences. This view may further strengthen the imagined community's in-group, as Others are taken to stand in direct opposition to white people.

Not only do othered informants see white individuals participating in antiracism as questionable, but they also regard white people in general as hindering antiracist efforts. This is exemplified by the deep distrust some othered informants have of white people. Gwen, for instance, frames white people as plainly dishonest: "I don't think they are genuinely

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[7] The event is simply referred to as "the event" for reasons of anonymity.

concerned about relinquishing power, position, money, to front justice and liberation". This pushes white people even further away from the imagined community.

This begs the question of whether there are any circumstances in which white antiracist activists can be seen as part of the imagined community. The answer is yes, though only under specific circumstances. Ezra described the place of white antiracists by way of a narrative metaphor: "It's my fight, and it's my story – you help me. But you don't take over my story". Building on this metaphor, there are several criteria that white antiracists need to fulfil to be deemed acceptable side characters by the othered antiracists. Firstly, they must understand antiracism as the informants generally do, in both thought and action. Secondly, they must not overstep the boundaries of their role in terms of how knowledge is situated. This entails that white people are not to take positions that require detailed knowledge of racism. Thirdly, white people must not enter physical spaces reserved for othered people. For these reasons, combined with the distrust introduced in the previous paragraph, there is not only an imaginary barrier between white and othered people but also a physical one. Johanne is clear on this:

> "It should almost be uncomfortable for a white person to come here. It is partly the goal, too, because if you feel entitled and that you have the right to walk in that door and sit down, then we've not done a good job".

It is worth noting that, in saying this, Johanne does not shut the door outright. The threshold is high, intended to be uncomfortable to pass through. Once past this barrier, however, a myriad of activities are deemed to be "good" white antiracist activism. Redistributing wealth; putting one's privileged body in the line of media, verbal, or physical fire; educating other white people at the dinner table or at work – these are all mentioned as sensible white antiracist activities. That said, a participant at a workshop made the lines of demarcation clear: "Of course you're welcome if you've already come a long way and you really support our struggle, support what we champion and what this room is for. This room is not built for you". The participant underlines the secondary position of white antiracists in the social imaginary of the Others. They are not part of the fundamental core; that spot is reserved for the Others. Consequently, while it is possible for white antiracists to have a place in the imagined community, that place is secondary. In summary, this cements the divide between the othered and white antiracist networks.

Having explicated how othered antiracists centre themselves in their imaginary, I now turn to the second analytical factor of social imaginaries, namely, *historical and social embeddedness* – that is, how the social imaginary is situated in a social and historical context. The activists within the imaginary are heavily informed by international literature and activism. Part of the community traces its roots to political Afro-American literature, the Black Panther Party, and Pan-Africanism. Authors such as Frantz Fanon, Patrice Lumumba, Malcolm X, and Marcus Garvey feature on bookshelves and in conversation.

By using and identifying with all of these international sources, research participants represent a reflexive transnationalisation. As an analytical concept developed by Andersson et al. (2012, pp. 25, 206), reflexive transnationalisation considers how people who perceive national debates as too narrow orient themselves to transnational sources of inspiration such as literature, films, and critical events. This is especially apparent in how othered informants use social media. Of the accounts they follow and interact with, few are Norwegian. The activists argue that there is a discrepancy between Norwegian and transnational sources of inspiration in general, and that they learn far more from the latter, as Gwen illustrates: "Because I notice how far back we are, in competence and terms, there was so very much that was missing".

A more local source of inspiration is Afrikan Youth In Norway (AYIN), who are hailed as a spiritual ancestor to many othered antiracists. To begin, Othered informants recognise and praise AYIN for being trailblazers. As the one of the first organisations to focus on self-help and empowerment amongst othered youth in Norway, AYIN has opened the political space for activities, such as communal therapy and festive celebrations of heritage (c.f. Jahren, 2006). It is worth noting that the "internationalists" Nydal (2007b) describes can be seen as the predecessors of AYIN, drawing the historical embeddedness back to the 1970s and 1980s. However, the present-day activists mention only AYIN.

I now turn to the third analytical dimension, the *future visions* of the Others' social imaginary. In the Others' social imaginary there are three rough categories of future visions that emerge: *equality* concerning time and space approximate to now, *freedom* as desired individual interactions after equality has been reached, and *independence* as new and distant societal structures that replace those of capitalism and systemic racism.

Equality takes place in the same geographical and institutional space in which the community currently resides. It is seen as a steppingstone to fulfil larger future visions. This step is

placed in the relatable future, by no means immediate, but within a range of 20–100 years. The main difference from current society is that everyone would be treated equally, regardless of skin tone and origin. Institutions, laws, and norms enforcing differential treatment would disappear. Effectively, it would be the end of the Other as an opposite to the white majority "us". Ezra illustrates the desired macro level changes by way of the media:

> "Who is the famous footballer, Carew? That one. There is no mention of his ethnicity when he's doing so well in the media, right. He's just 'Norwegian' Carew 'did this' or 'This Norwegian guy, fantastic'. And then if there's a rape, then that person's ethnicity comes into question, 'Norwegian with Iranian background' or, you know, things like that".

When asked how it should be, Ezra continued by saying: "It would just be 'Norwegian', and even the rapist would just be 'the Norwegian'. Norwegian. Whether you're a rapist or not, if you do have a citizenship as a Norwegian, then it shouldn't matter what background you have".

To the informants, the word *freedom* signifies how desired micro-level interactions would look after equality has been achieved. Fundamentally, what is envisioned is the freedom to celebrate difference on the antiracist activists' own terms. They imagine an existence in which individuals are free to act upon their own differences without being essentialised and judged by group concepts such as race. Rather than perceiving no differences whatsoever, the informants wish to let those inhabiting differences be the ones acting upon them. This is exemplified when Gwen was asked about what freedom means to her:

> "Sometime in the future we don't see colour, you have no differences. I am not there, I don't think that is going to happen. … But I rather hope we get to a point where we can celebrate those differences".

An activist at a celebration of Africa Day on 25 May 2022 further underlined this by saying: "It doesn't matter if I am Pakistani and you're Chinese, what matters is that we can use it, you know; others don't let it matter, but we can". The latter statement is akin to Gilroy's conviviality concept. In a convivial future, difference is acted upon and thought of without essentialising and making judgements of individuals based on group concepts (Gilroy, 2004, 2005; Valluvan, 2016, p. 214). In the ideal world of othered informants, concepts such as ethnicity and race would all but disappear, not only on the societal level but specifically in quotidian interactions.

Independence signifies the next step in societal changes and concerns building institutions and traditions that replace current ones. Informants identify capitalism as the largest obstacle to this future. As capitalism is seen as inextricably tied to racism, white supremacy, imperialism, and colonialism, it is identified as something that needs to fall if antiracism is to succeed. In that sense, the future visions of equality and freedom are not fully complete until there is independence from capitalism. While exactly what systems will replace the current socioeconomic order is unclear, central ideas are an absence of wage labour and ownership of production: "I always try to promote that we shall have ownership of what we produce: ownership of our pictures and texts," Johanne said. "Ownership of our time … but also ownership of us as an organisation".

In contrast to the vision of freedom, the dismantling of capitalist imperialism cannot take the stage only on the local and national level, making for a far more grand and utopic vision – truly illustrating that antiracism is a movement concerned with larger questions of who "we" are, what democracy is, and how a fair society should look. Nevertheless, virtually all othered activists envision a future that sees an absence of economically and culturally constricting structures. When combined with the visions of equality and freedom, the future might resemble what Farah described:

> "Preferably I want everyone to just vibe. My utopia is that I work as a carpenter two times a week, as a cook once a week. … More freedom, that you're in a society where you get it to go 'round without needing to profit from it. And if it is a utopia, there is, like, no racism there".

In conclusion, the othered antiracists' future visions can be said to be *desirable* and, in large part, *representative*. Their visions are wished-for futures, and therefore desirable. While othered antiracists' macro level vision of independence to large part is a diagnosis of a problem rather than a prescription of solutions, and subsequently limited in terms of representativeness, their visions of equality and freedom is more of the latter. Othered antiracists reference specific social relations in this envisioned future, such as convivial social interactions and public figures being deemed Norwegian no matter their skin tone. Therefore, they can be branded as *representative* visions.

The last analytical dimension of the social imaginary of the Others is their *political actions*. Othered research participants' political actions reflect the underlying social imaginary: firstly, mobilisation and organisation of activities are aimed inward at the imagined community. As

previously mentioned, activities such as workshops and discussions are often exclusively created by and for othered individuals. Even regarding the seemingly outward-focused BLM protests on 5 June 2020, the interviewees say that information was first spread amongst othered people before being disseminated into broader arenas.

Another aspect of political action within the social imaginary concerns the future vision of freedom. The activist at Africa Day who argued Othered individuals could utilise their differences but that others could not is especially telling. Not only were they plainly stating their future vision but they were also claiming that, in the present, difference is something that may be used if desired but that it need not be. In this way, they are performing prefigurative politics – planting seeds of ethical and cultural future visions in the present (Leach, 2013). This speaks for a large part of the othered community, where conviviality is not only a desired future vision but also a practice: Events are centred around being the Other, and identities such as ethnicity are typically only invoked when discussing and deconstructing otherness.

As Noronha (2022) indicates regarding their informants, this prefigurative action is performed in spite of racism. In the face of racism, Gayatri Spivak states that invoking essentialised categories such as ethnicity and race could be done as a strategic defence and resource (Spivak, 1988, 2006, p. 214). Elisabeth Eide (2010) has illustrated this in the Norwegian media context, where her informants emphasise their otherness to gain access to media. According to Spivak, deconstruction is the only condition under which strategic essentialism is a legitimate political strategy; otherwise, it strengthens the essentialised identity (A. Bell, 2021). This is exactly what the othered informants do.

Within this political action prefiguring their visions of freedom, the othered informants also discuss visions of independence. While not as easy to prefigure as micro-level interactions, the fact that macro level visions are discussed does, in theory, strengthen the social imaginary and its future visions. Building upon ideational notions of power, the more people who believe in an idea, the more impactful it becomes (Béland & Cox, 2016; Reed, 2013). Thus, the imaginary gains traction when it is talked of, shared with new constituents, and expanded. This prefigurative activity is exemplified by Gwen's description of their immediate, everyday goal:

"We're actually trying to create what we wish society should look like, that is what we're trying to do … That's what I'm trying to do here. That's what we're all trying. We're, simply put, trying to create our utopia".

The social imaginary of the radical-left liberals

Turning now to the RLL social imaginary, starting with its *imagined community*: A key distinction within this imagined community is between those working against ideological racism by countering it in the streets and those not doing so. Only the former are seen as part of the antiracist movement by RLL informants. Kea illustrates this when stating that the antiracist movement is "those working to change public opinion or, like, sabotag[ing] a Nazi conference". The actors who sabotage Nazi conferences are few, and when asked what actors RLL informants recognise as those changing public opinion, only a handful of networks and individuals are mentioned. Those actors are themselves RLL networks and individuals. This is despite the fact that far more actors beyond RLL ones are attempting to change public opinion on antiracism and racism. In this sense, the initially open criteria of working to change public opinion are not applied in practice. As such, there is a discrepancy between what RLL informants say is the movement and who they see as part of it.

Effectively, only RLL actors are conceived of by informants as constituting the antiracist movement, and only RLL actors constitute their imagined community. Actors outside of this core are ordered by terms of proximity to the criteria of the movement, that is, proximity to counterprotests and similar activities: Blitz, parts of the queer movement such as Salaam and *Skeiv Verden* (Queer World), specific labour unions, Red Youth, and Socialist Youth are included at times depending on their activity in protests. However, when these actors return to their usual, non-RLL activities, they are no longer conceived of as part of the movement. It is worth noting that this is despite all of the mentioned actors working to some degree to change public opinion on racism and antiracism. This underlines the dynamics of the RLL imagined community.

The extended community is more lenient and includes all those working against racism. Previously excluded actors, such as institutional ones, come into the picture. This connects the imagined, severely limited core to a larger community of left-wing actors such as labour unions or Attac, NGOs such as Norwegian People's Aid or OMOD, as well as individuals who undertake everyday antiracist actions. This is also the category in which the aforementioned actors – including portions of the queer movement, Blitz, and political parties

– are placed when they are not partaking in RLL activities. The workers' movement is also considered a natural part of this extended community as a result of the previously discussed overlap between class struggle and antiracism. Frida illustrates the broader imagined community, including people they do not know but to whom they feel a connection, when she says:

> "It can be so much. It can be, I don't know, parents at Tøyen or Grorud, majority Norwegians who are super into a football club and call out if there is any racism. It can just be a person in your apartment complex who is inclusive and all right and who scolds people if they hear racist words".

In that regard, the extended imagined community differs little from who is considered antiracist; it is the action that counts. This means there is a stark contrast between the small and restrictive core and the broad and inclusive imagined community at large.

As to the presence of othered individuals in this imagined community, they are not excluded, but neither are they explicitly included. For one, othered activists have rarely been mentioned in fieldwork and interviews with RLL activists, despite the breadth of their extended imagined community. This creates a distance between RLL conceptions of antiracist actors and othered antiracists. This distance is further increased by the way RLL informants speak of othered people and antiracists. In an RLL discussion on strategies for how to counter "cultural" racism, there was no mention of othered people at the outset. When that approach was questioned, othered people were formulated as just "they" with no specific referents. The previously mentioned disconnect between othered and RLL parts of the movement returns here, now in the form of who is conceived as part of the imagined community. If they are not viewed as part of the imagined community, how, then, are othered antiracists perceived?

On the one hand, othered antiracists are seen as wanting safety and recognition by working for institutional change: "They've found their thing, but some are very young and very organised", Frida said, continuing, "Nice signs, going around watching out for each other. I think they want safety and recognition". On the other hand, othered youth participating in, for instance, counterprotests against SIAN [Stop Islamisation of Norway] are viewed as frustrated and, at times, aimless. For example, Nina stated the following:

> "Some, especially young minority youth, feel injustice but can't formulate it and need an outlet for it. They're frustrated, especially the boys. They don't necessarily know

who SIAN are or why they are angry, but they are. Like a gut reaction to being
discriminated against daily, made suspects by police and other people".

Here, young othered boys participating in counterprotests are depicted as irrational because
they are unable to formulate and understand their feelings. Granted, Nina is referring to a
specific group of young boys in a particular and heated situation, yet still, her statement
illustrates a general trend. It is important to note that RLL participants wish to include
othered activists in antiracism, or as Frida says: "I've thought a lot about it, but it's hard to
find a solution. But getting more people of minority backgrounds into the movement [is
important]; it can't just be a movement of people like me".

This statement provides two key insights. Currently, Frida perceives the antiracist movement
as including few "people of minority backgrounds", which means she does not recognise the
various othered antiracist networks present in Norwegian antiracism. Furthermore, as RLL
political action is synonymous with "the movement", recruiting othered individuals into the
movement for RLL informants means recruiting othered people into their activities.

It warrants mentioning that RLL participants do not blame othered youths or activists for not
engaging in RLL activities. RLL informants see engaging in activism as being more harmful
to othered individuals than white individuals, as there is less chance of harassment for white
activists. RLL informants do include othered people in their conceptions of who is antiracist
and certainly would do so in regard to who comprises the movement if they are asked
directly, but they do not include them in the core of the imagined community. This leads to
further boundaries between the othered and the RLL social imaginary.

Turning to *historical and social embeddedness*, the RLL social imaginary is heavily
embedded in the long historical lines of left-wing activism and ideology. For starters, the
radical left-liberal term borrowed from Jämte (2020) highlights the ideological foundation of
this group of activists, whether they are called anarchists, anarcho-communists, libertarian
Marxists, or otherwise. As shall soon be revealed, the activists themselves do not make a
point of delineating and detailing these ideological and political categories. What is important
is that the RLL part of the movement is embedded in the political left.

As is typical within this tradition, class and race are seen as being interconnected. Without re-
entering the discussion on the relationship between class and race from Chapter 5, it should
be noted that research participants largely see the two as overlapping yet separate political

struggles. For instance, all RLL informants mention both the historical and current importance of unions in antiracism.

At the same time, many of the research participants emphasise their antifascist roots. The most reputable Norwegian antifascist network, Antifascist Action, has been present in Oslo since 1994 (Benneche, 2017, p. 38), and the squatted residence of Blitz was present before that. Both of these groups have long roots in the anti-Nazi resistance movement in pre-World War II Germany, as well as other confrontational, militant anti-fascist groups since then (Bonnett, 2000, p. 112). Since the violence and the substantial amount of neo-Nazi activity in the 1990s (Wilkins, 2018), antifascist mobilisation on the street level has decreased but not disappeared (Justis- og beredskapsdepartementet, 2021, p. 12). It is in this tradition of meeting Nazis and racists head-on at the street level in which many RLL research participants situate themselves.

Tightly connected to the historical and social embeddedness of the social imaginary are RLL *visions of the future*, and I now turn to this. The links between past, present, and future is apparent in their first future vision, that of *confrontational antiracism*. Traced back to their antifascist roots, confrontational antiracism involves hindering and countering racism and the growth of racist thought in the public sphere, with a special focus on the street level. The ultimate goal is to prevent racist action in public, where it ideally would be challenged and removed not only by antiracist activists such as themselves but also by institutions and the general public. This is quite concrete, making for a *representative* vision. However, it is also an *undesirable* vision, as it focuses on preventing racist actions, thereby leading to preventing an undesirable future rather than achieving a desired one. In short, the RLL vision is for racists to be uncomfortable to the degree of not acting upon their racism, as Frida exemplifies when stating what her goal is:

> "That it should be so difficult being an active racist and especially a Nazi, you know. That people don't become so. Kind of. Or that it is so difficult being racist because it'll be reacted upon by all kinds of people. That you don't do it, because you can't do anything about people having prejudices".

Frida's final comment is important, as it signals that RLL activists believe removing racism to be unrealistic and expect that there will always be conflicts over differences between individuals. Others, such as Daniel, echo the same sentiment: "You won't get rid of racism … I don't think so". This means RLL activists do not believe racism will disappear, despite their

confrontational efforts. Stated differently, there will always be racist intentions and actions to prevent. With this insight, the RLL confrontational vision can be described formulaically: (1) Racism needs to be hindered, (2) therefore, they protest; (3) Racism never completely subsides, (4) therefore, they protest. The confrontational vision of the RLL is, in this way, *cyclical* and *reactive* in nature.

There is a second, far more desirable, *socioeconomic vision of the future*. As in classic Marxist ideology, the activists envision a path to a less socioeconomically divisive world that goes by way of socialist principles and class consciousness. While this future vision is shared amongst all RLL participants, it is often spoken about implicitly and in offhand ways. Additionally, activists convey displeasure when asked about it and are reluctant to speak, as exemplified here by Kaspar:

> "I think such discussion about what f---ing tulips you wish for in the future … which like micro-cult descriptions of your politics [you have]. Yeah. And if you call it Marxism or call it communism, I don't see that as having much to do with the political questions of today".

The long-term socioeconomic vision of the RLL is rarely imagined more concretely than the above – it is *non-representative*. In the few instances where the vision is more clearly represented, it is often connected and secondary to the confrontational one above. The following statement from Daniel exemplifies this secondary and supportive nature: "If there is a city that has a kind of socialist organising and there suddenly appears racist organising in that city, then it will either be immediately stopped and must shut down, or there will be resistance". This results in the confrontational, *undesirable* future vision having conceptual priority over the *desirable* socioeconomic one.

The last analytical dimension of social imaginaries is *political action,* which in the RLL case is heavily tied to their historical and social embeddedness and future visions. Countering racist and fascist mobilisations, observing, and controlling the actions of right-wing extremists consumes a significant portion of the time and energy of RLL antiracists. This also means their political actions are externally focused, aimed at actors beyond their direct control. This is reflective of their roots in past confrontational antiracism and their confrontational future vision.

The socioeconomic future vision is largely absent from RLL political action. There are exceptions, though these are rare: Firstly, parliamentary politics are at times discussed as a

way to achieve socioeconomic equality. That said, no informants work with parliamentary politics, and the general opinion on them is a critical one. As one protestor said: "Parliament is just a bunch of nonsense".[8] Secondly, labour unions' dual role in integrating immigrants into the economic sphere as well as promoting solidarity with other workers is seen as an avenue towards realising socioeconomic visions. However, few informants are active in labour unions.

In summary, RLL activists in Norway do not draw as much on holistic, traditional ideologies in their future visions as their historical and social embeddedness might incline one to believe. Nor is it strictly correct that they do as Jan Jämte writes that Swedish RLL activists do: "envision a society based on direct or participatory democratic ideals and seek social change through the decentralization of power" (2020, p. 2). While not wrong, these visions are not the ones coming to the fore. For this reason, the socioeconomic vision is regarded as secondary to the confrontational vision going forward (but for more on the socioeconomic visions, see Fominaya, 2007; Jämte et al., 2020, p. 2; Romanos, 2022). Further pursuing a discussion of both social imaginaries, I follow RLL research participants in emphasising the confrontational vision.

The two imaginaries compared

I move now from an empirical focus illuminated by theory to a theoretical analysis of the differences within the social imaginaries in terms of imagined community, historical and social embeddedness, future visions, and political action. Prior to this, it should be stated that the social imaginaries share fundamental characteristics with regard to understanding racism and antiracism, as discussed in Chapter 5. Many agree that antiracism needs to be structural in its critique of capitalism and racism. Furthermore, political action is advanced as the only solution to racism. I now turn to the differences between the two social imaginaries.

The differences in the imagined community are stark. Within the Others' imaginary, white people are excluded by not being the Other. Any white antiracists who seek to join other activities must do so on the Others' premises. It is interesting to note that white activists, whether RLL or not, agree that their role is one that othered activists should decide. The "need to understand their own role" is paramount when white informants are asked about their position in the movement. Nevertheless, RLL informants imagine that those undertaking

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[8] In Norwegian: "Stortinget er bare masse tøv".

RLL political actions are at the centre of the movement. Othered antiracists rarely engage in typical RLL political actions. In that way, the RLL imagined community excludes othered antiracists. Both imaginaries and their communities are, in that way, excluding each other.

In terms of historical and social embeddedness, the social imaginary of the Others is comparatively more transnational than the RLL imaginary. Both imaginaries are rooted in national political pasts, that of AYIN and Blitz, as well as previous confrontational antiracist networks, respectively. However, they differ in reflexive transnationalisation, the orientation towards sources of inspiration outside of national borders. This transnationalisation is not as apparent in the RLL social imaginary, but it is inaccurate to say it is completely missing. The historical embeddedness in left-wing ideologies and antifascism is, in itself, international and by no means unique to Norway. RLL informants mention at times the Scandinavian equivalents of their activist networks; however, they do not draw inspiration from or feature them to the degree that othered antiracists do with their transnational ties.

Differences also exist in the scope, desirability, and representativeness of the future visions. The social imaginary of Others contains desirable visions that are large in scope, detailing three steps or levels of future: *Equality* as changes on the macro level that are approximate in time, *freedom* as the micro-level interaction within the step of equality, and *independence* as a distant alternative to the present structural racism, highlighting macro level factors such as capitalism, imperialism, and colonialism as societal obstacles. In that sense, their visions are, in large part, representative. This is contrasted in the RLL future visions. The predominant, confrontational vision is characterised by attempting to hinder an undesirable future by reacting to repetitive racist mobilisations. This vision is representative in that the immediate goal of hindering racist mobilisation is clear.

The differences between the RLL confrontational vision and the visions of the Others are comparable to what can be called "not-racist" and antiracist practices. The other informants postulate an "a-racist culture" in Ghassan Hage's sense of a society in which race is no longer a criterion of identification (Hage, 2016, p. 125). This is contrasted with what may be called the not-racist visions and practices of the RLL imaginary, in the sense of being passive and not contributing to antiracist goals (Andersson & Kjellman, 2023; Garner, 2014, p. 412; Lentin, 2008). Whether the confrontational future vision is to be called not-racist depends on whether countering racist mobilisation is passively maintaining the status quo rather than actively working towards a better future. On the one hand, having the preventative goal of

hindering something undesirable does not necessarily build a desirable future. It can be seen as a case of working against something bad rather than for something good. A counterargument is that working on obstacles is necessary if one is to achieve a desirable future. From the RLL informants' point of view: if they were to be inactive, racism would become more widespread. If this is true, their confrontational future vision is preventing increasing amounts of racism from infecting society. That said, the vision in itself is not oriented towards a better future, despite looking to contribute to it indirectly. While it is perhaps not a-racist, calling the confrontational vision not-racist would be inexact.

Perhaps the most concrete difference is between political actions. Starting with the imaginary of the Others, political action is directed towards the imaginary's core, the activists themselves. Creating and hosting events for themselves and their communities rather than depending on the availability of others enables planning and continuity. Their conviviality and interactions not based on essentialised identity categories make for a prefigurative path towards their vision of freedom. This compares with RLL political actions, which are contingent mostly on external mobilisation, such as that of racists. This creates a form of political action that must arise abruptly with a short-term goal that repeats seemingly indefinitely. The RLL view of conflict as ever-present hinders any immediate end to this form of action. If the political action of the Others is making progress towards their visions, the RLL actions are caught in an indefinite cycle of counterprotests. This comparison is illustrated in Table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1 The social imaginaries compared

Social imaginary category	Othered	RLL
Imagined community	Othered people	Participants in RLL activism
Social and historical embeddedness	Transnational inspiration AYIN	Left-wing ideology Antifascism
Future visions	Equality (no discrimination) Freedom (conviviality) Independence (new socioeconomic systems)	Confrontational

	Desirable, largely representative	Undesirable, representative
Political action	In-group events	Reactive mobilisation towards external actors

Conclusion

This chapter has explained the differences between the two dominant imaginaries at play: the social imaginaries of the othered and the RLL antiracists. The social imaginary concept has highlighted the ways in which the understanding and navigation of social life in Norwegian antiracism vary according to social factors. The conclusion to the third research objective is the following:

The two antiracist networks have vastly different social imaginaries. The largest discrepancy is that of imagined communities, where both networks exclude each other. Othered antiracists actively refrain from including white antiracists, while RLL antiracists include only those who share their repertoire of political action, which othered antiracists often do not. The networks are also dissimilarly embedded in social and historical contexts. Most prominently, othered antiracists are transnationally oriented, while RLL antiracists, for the most part, are oriented nationally and, at times, in the Scandinavian context. The social imaginary of the Others includes desirable, largely representative visions of micro and macro level futures, as contrasted to the undesirable and short-term representative visions of the RLL imaginary. Lastly, their political actions differ in that othered antiracists have an internal focus on themselves, while RLL antiracists react to external actors. In that sense, only the social imaginary of the Others clearly underlines that antiracism is more than antagonism to racism, as previously argued, while the RLL antiracists, to a greater degree, act with a countermovement character similar to Ruzza's conceptualisation of antiracism (2013). In summary, the differences in social imaginaries add to the disconnectedness between the two networks described in Chapter 5, as they now have contrasting social imaginaries in addition to limited communication and distrust of other actors. While both networks wish for more communication, as discussed in Chapter 5, they make few attempts at including each other in their respective imagined communities, and thereby, few attempts at remedying the limited communication. Once again, this makes relevant the discussion of implications for the state of the general Norwegian antiracist movement, which is discussed in Chapter 8.

7 Spatial and temporal dynamics of hope

Building on Chapters 5 and 6, this chapter fulfils the fourth research objective in theorising the spatial and temporal dynamics of hope in social movements. As previously discussed, addressing hope in social movements is not novel (c.f. Cassegård & Thörn, 2018; Castells, 2015; Gross, 2021; Kleres & Wettergren, 2017), yet to my knowledge, no studies systematically analyse the dynamics of hope in social movements. Seeking to fill this gap in the literature, I theorise hope along spatial and temporal dimensions. The theoretisation relies heavily on previously established analytical concepts and insights into the data material. The first part of this chapter explicates the theoretical background and steppingstones, while the second part introduces the spatial and temporal dynamics of hope. I argue that cultivating hope is contingent on having concrete time and place to do so. I then turn to space and time figuratively, contending that the movement actors' hope is affected by how their actions correspond with the figurative spatial nature of movement grievances. Concretely, I subdivide the spatial dimension into various scales – macro, meso, and micro levels, while the temporal dimension is divided into the representativeness, desirability, and imaginary mobility of future visions. To round this theoretisation out, I emphasise how different levels of space and different aspects of future visions can affect hope. In the last part of the chapter, I apply this theoretisation of the dynamics of hope to the data in this thesis.

Introducing place, space, and time

The foundation of the following theoretisation was introduced in Chapter 3, which discussed theoretical approaches. There, I introduced hope as linked to the ability to create and sustain political action, making hope important for social movements which main goal is change. I conceptualised hope as a belief in progress through collective actions that can be constructed socially through "hope labour" (Kuehn & Corrigan, 2013). I also argued that analyses of hope benefit from accounting for social factors that are available to all social movements. Emphasising spatial and temporal dimensions is especially useful in this regard, as they affect all movement actors.

Creating and imagining ideational constructs such as hope is contingent on having the *concrete time and place* in which to do so (c.f. Béland & Cox, 2016; Reed, 2013). Inspired by human geography, I differentiate space and place in this thesis. While the literature contains contrasting conceptualisations (for an overview, see Campbell, 2018; Marston et al., 2005), I draw on Relph and Tuan in conceptualising space as an abstract notion of a location with no

social connections or ascribed value and meaning, while place is a concrete location filled with terms, objects, meaning, and value – it is inherently relational and social (Relph, 2015; Tuan, 1979).

The cultivation of hope is contingent on having the geographical place in which to do so; in other words, meeting up physically with other like-minded activists allows for various kinds of political activity, from self-help courses to protests. In places where activists experience belonging and care, they can cultivate hope by coordinating their actions to act collectively and "know that our actions matter" (Gross, 2022, p. 451). However, having the physical space to cultivate hope is of little value without the time to do so. Regarding imagination, Milkoreit states that "imagination requires time and space – literally, places where people can interact to think and talk about the future" (2017, p. 10). I argue that the same is applicable to hope. Without sufficient time, movement actors are unable to imagine how their collective actions lead to progress, which is the operating conception of hope in this discussion.

With the above serving as a foundation, I develop a framework for studying hope along *figurative spatial,* and *temporal dimensions.* Specifically, I argue that movement actors' perception of their spatial and temporal position makes for differences in hope. Reduced to its fundamental logic, this claim states that different ways of thinking lead to different hopes. I now delve into the two dimensions.

The spatial dimension of hope

Figuratively, the spatial dimension can be separated into analytical levels of space – macro, meso, and micro levels. I argue that movement actors' perceptions of themselves at these levels create different opportunities for hope. As opposed to the concrete and geographical places already discussed, I emphasise in this discussion the belonging and the position in symbolic spaces. Concretely, movement actors' experience of belonging and support, as well as their perceived opportunities to achieve goals, will affect hope. This will inevitably vary from movement to movement and from actor to actor, and it is difficult to explicate without empirical examples. Therefore, I exemplify this notion using the data material in this thesis after introducing the temporal dimension of hope.

The temporal dimension of hope

Exploring figurative time in relation to hope is in itself nothing new. For instance, Bourdieu studied "temporal dispositions" in colonial Algeria (Bourdieu, 1979, p. 2). In his study, Bourdieu sees the subproletariat of Kabylia as bound for despair, contrasted to workers in the

city's "modern" sector who had better tools with which to reach their goals and in that way were able to situate themselves positively in the future. What I draw from this is Bourdieu's point that time and how one situates oneself in the future are important for the cultivation of hope. This is echoed by contemporary studies such as Pine (2014) on migration and Kleist and Jansen (2016) in their theoretical account and literature overview on hope over time. As future is important to hope, I take from Chapter 6 the concept of future visions and incorporate it into this framework for analysing hope.

Three terms comprise the aspects of future visions as relating to hope, the first two of which were introduced in Chapter 6. *Desirability* relates to the emotions attached to future visions: While undesirable visions may harbour the same potential for action and motivation as desirable ones, the two will affect hope differently. *Representativeness* is how concretely alternative futures are imagined (Kuehn & Corrigan, 2013; Thrift, 2007). When there is no specific future that is being worked towards, hope is non-representational, and when the future has a specific referent – a scenario illustrating future visions – then it is representational. Lastly, *imaginary mobility* is a sense of "*going somewhere*" in life (Hage, 2009). Hage uses the term detached from political action, but it can be just as relevant to illuminate collective political projects and their sense of achievement. Therefore, I shift its meaning from going somewhere in life to a perceived trajectory towards a future vision. As hope in movements is conceptualised as a belief in progress, the relationship between actions and envisioned futures is paramount.

It is also worth noting that a high degree of imaginary mobility is not necessarily conducive to more hope. For instance, Kleres and Wettergren, writing on the topic of climate change, contrast the "hopefulness of northern activists with narratives from the Global South" (2017, p. 515). They argue that the proximity of climate change to the activists' geographical home affects hope. Put differently, activists from the "global south" whose imagined mobility towards climate change is high emphasise hope less and in different ways than activists from the "global north", whose imagined mobility is lower. In the case of climate activism, a high degree of imaginary mobility is arguably not conducive to *more* hope, as the future vision is undesirable – that of increased climate change.

Literature on "racial battle fatigue", that of othered people experiencing physical and psychological impacts of racism on their health, can illustrate these three temporal aspects. For instance, Mary-Frances Winters (2020) writes that black people in the United States

envision an equitable society, a future vision that is desirable. However, it is non-representational, as they struggle to concretise this vision in their present-day conditions. They also experience limited imaginary mobility, as they do not believe their trajectory is improving (for similar accounts, see Smith et al., 2007, 2016).

Empirical analysis

Here, I exemplify how one can analyse the spatial and temporal dynamics of hope in relation to movement actors. To ground the above theoretisation in empirical data, I look to the differential in hope amongst othered and RLL antiracists. Following this, I analyse concrete usage of place and time before delving into the figurative dimensions of space and time.

Starting the empirical description with othered informants, for them, hope can be summarised by the phrase, "There is pain but also hope". This was said by a speaker at the opening of the exhibition "Your breath, your voice: Unfiltered statements about antiracism and the protest the 5th of June 2020"[9] at the Oslo City Museum on 18 October 2022. A common denominator amongst othered informants is an emphasis on pain and anger in the antiracist struggle. However, these negative feelings were simultaneously described as catalysts for hope and, following that, action. Gwen illustrates this here:

> "That's what drives the critical part … there is a lot of *anger* in it. But that's a lot of what drives you. But there is something in *not letting it eat you up either* and being able to see those *specks of light* that exist". (emphasis added)

This can be seen as a cautious notion of optimism and progress – not progress in the sense of linear, ameliorative progress, but slow and winding progress that sometimes turns into regress, or what Du Bois calls "ugly progress" (Davidson, 2021; Du Bois, 1996). For Du Bois, ugly progress is a constant "shuffling between the disappointments of the past and utopian hopes of the future" (Davidson, 2021, p. 383). The prime example for the othered informants is the wave of protests and perceived progress following the murder of George Floyd, for instance the exhibition mentioned above. Johanne exemplifies this ugly progress by stating that they are both pessimistic and optimistic:

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[9]In Norwegian: "Din pust, din stemme: Ufiltrerte ytringer om antirasisme og demonstrasjonen 5.juni 2020".

"Because *I see the changes that antiracism brings about*, and there are steps towards the goal. Things still happen after George Floyd; people are still being killed, but at least that was taken to trial because of how the world reacted to that". (emphasis added)

An aspect of this positivity is that othered informants actively centre their activism around positive emotions. Gwen noted that "there is value in always taking it back a step to 'okay: how are we going to lead these struggles with patience, generosity and love?'" Gwen's sentiment is echoed in my fieldwork, where othered networks hosted events about loving oneself, team building, and consoling doubts and fears.

This careful optimism and hopefulness were also reflected in the informants' answers to the last question of the interview guide. Initially, the open question of how the informant envisioned themselves in their ideal future was developed as a method of ending the interview on a positive note. However, after the responses were coded, it became clear that the majority of othered antiracists answered the question by imagining a pleasant pastime. In general, they imagined themselves doing concrete activities in a scenario where their future visions of *equality, freedom,* and *independence* were fulfilled.

In comparison to othered informants, RLL informants are far more likely to highlight their negative emotions. Kea describes fear and uncertainty in the face of the future: "I am very *scared* that it [stopping racist mobilisation] won't happen before some catastrophe happens. *But even then, it isn't a given.* 22 July, you know, wrong development after that". (emphasis added)

In saying this, Kea suggests that the objective of her antiracism, that of hindering racist actions, may gain traction only after a major racist incident that would direct public attention to antiracism. However, by seeing the 22nd of July as one such major racist incident that did not bolster antiracism, Kea is uncertain whether another major incident would have a positive effect. This indicates that RLL informants are generally more pessimistic than othered participants.

Another key differential is that RLL antiracists have a conflictual and cyclical view of the future as opposed to that of ugly progress. As explained in the future visions of the RLL social imaginary, RLL informants deem stopping racist mobilisation completely as being unrealistic. If they are not there to hinder racism, they imagine that it will grow. That is not to say that RLL informants imagine there will never be any progress made in combatting racism, but they believe there are limits to their antiracist impact. As racism is held by RLL

antiracists to never disappear in its entirety and will grow if left unchecked, they need to constantly organise counterprotests and monitor racist activities. In that way, their notion of the future is cyclical: Racists mobilise, RLL antiracists counter, and despite being beaten back, racists will inevitably mobilise again, starting the cycle anew.

Returning now to the last question in the interview guide, that of how informants envision themselves in their ideal future, I discovered that RLL antiracists responded differently than othered antiracists. As discussed regarding social imaginaries and future visions in the previous chapter, some RLL respondents deemed visions of the future as irrelevant to their activism. Others answered that, in that future, they would devote their time and energy to the next political cause requiring their attention. Whether that political cause concerns the environment, refugees, or class struggle, it became clear that few concrete lifestyles were imagined and little to no mention of pastimes or other forms of enjoyment or relaxation was made. This means there is a large discrepancy between imagined ideal futures.

The question becomes why there is such a disparity in hope between the two networks. I now turn to the dynamics of hope to explain this differential, starting with a concrete place and time.

In terms of *concrete places*, no significant differences exist between othered and RLL antiracists. Both networks have the opportunity to access areas unavailable to the general public, allowing them to cultivate hope within their networks. There is, however, a differential in how the informants spend their *time*: Othered antiracists spend far more time within their own confines on hope labour. Simply put, RLL antiracists spend less time using their available space and do not do as Gwen described in "taking a step back" to refocus on positive emotions.

Turning to the figurative spatial dimension, the transnational, national, and movement-level spaces make for contrasting results for othered and RLL informants. Antiracism is a transnational issue (Gilroy, 2002) and in that sense, it is situated in an international social space. At this transnational level, othered antiracists identify as the Other to the global power majority; however, they also see themselves as a part of the "global majority", that is, the numerical majority. In that sense, their hope may be both positively and negatively affected by their spatial and transnational situatedness. Conversely, RLL antiracists are, in theory, favoured by their dominant position as white, though that is not necessarily as beneficial in a

movement that actively works against the privilege of skin tone. Therefore, the result regarding the hope of RLL antiracists is unclear.

Shifting to the *national* level, I return to the Norwegian political context. At this level, several factors can limit hope for othered informants. They describe racism and othering, seeing themselves as secondary to the majority in terms of power and opportunities. Furthermore, they view the white majority with distrust and as being unwilling to engage with antiracist grievances. The belief in progress amongst othered informants is thusly limited by a perception of them not belonging and not having support or a voice with which to communicate movement grievances, thereby limiting the perceived impact of their collective action. In comparison, the predominantly white RLL activists are initially more favoured, as they belong to the national imagined community.

A shift to the *level of the antiracist movement* allows for a contrasting view of the national level of space. Rather than being on the outskirts, discriminated against, and secondary to the majority, as in Norwegian society, othered antiracists are the very centrepiece of the antiracist movement. This fact in itself does not mean the power dynamics of society at large are absent. Several other studies, such as Case (2012), Jacobs and Taylor (2012), and Salazar (2008), discuss how antiracist activists can assert whiteness within antiracist movements, harming othered activists and movement effectiveness in the process. However, in the networks studied, that dynamic seems to be missing. Rather, othered informants take precedence, have a feeling of belonging, support, and a strong voice. This makes their collective action impactful at the movement level, theoretically increasing hope. This is in comparison to white RLL activists, who can be seen as being pushed to the margins of the movement.

Not only are RLL antiracists not centred but they are also actively *decentred* by othered antiracists. As previously discussed, being white is not a favourable characteristic in the othered networks. Furthermore, othered informants are clear that antiracism is not about white individuals, and, in saying so, they actively take a stance against incorporating white antiracists into their activism. This may further alienate the predominantly white RLL activists and reduce their sense of belonging, support, and voice, and, subsequently, their perceived political impact. Altogether, the spatial dynamics of hope favour othered informants more than RLL informants. To complete this picture, I now turn to the temporal dynamics of hope.

There is a significant difference between the *desirable* visions of the othered imaginary – equality, freedom, and independence – and the *undesirability* of the dominant RLL future vision of confrontation. As previously discussed, RLL antiracists do not emphasise their socioeconomic future vision, and, therefore, it is not highlighted here either. Within the RLL confrontational future vision, racism is seen as a feature of the future that RLL antiracists must prevent from growing. Their future vision, thus, is highly undesirable, one in which they must hinder societal degression. This is contrasted with the othered antiracists, who imagine positive futures at both the macro level and the individual level. Their macro level visions of equality and independence seek to relinquish the control of racism and capitalism on social relations, while their vision of freedom sees interactions as free from judgements based on groups and differences, akin to Gilroy's concept of conviviality (Gilroy, 2002).

In terms of *representativeness*, othered informants are on the high end of the scale. They can see the path forward in the slow and winding "ugly progress" of Du Bois (1996), as previously discussed. Their visions have distinct temporal stages: Equality and freedom are relatively near, and independence is distant. While the macro level visions of equality and independence are not concrete, the ideal of freedom is concretised through prefigurative political action. These prefigurative politics can be seen as hope labour, in that they are collective efforts at making tangible the idealised future of the othered antiracists. RLL informants clearly imagine their confrontational vision: If they do not hinder the racist mobilisations that they usually do, these efforts will be left unchecked, and racism will grow. This specific view of the future makes for a representative vision.

For othered informants, their various political and prefigurative actions are seen as steps in the right direction, a sense of progressing and "going somewhere". A clear example of this is that conviviality is both a goal and an attempted practice amongst othered antiracists. RLL informants have a far more cyclical and conflictual understanding of the future: conflictual in the sense that they believe racism will never be completely eradicated and cyclical in their reactive mobilisation towards ever-present racism. This leaves RLL activists with little to no feeling of actual progress. This imaginary *immobility* can be seen as constituting a lack of hope as compared to the imaginary *mobility* of the othered informants, particularly so in a social movement in which change is the main objective.

Altogether, this case serves to exemplify how spatial situatedness and visions of the future can unequally foster hope. The spatial dimensions of hope lend themselves unequally to

antiracist actors, with the various levels creating contrasting views. Temporally, the ugly progress of the othered antiracists can be seen as promoting hope, while the conflictual and cyclical notion of the future amongst the RLL antiracists can be seen to hinder it.

Conclusion

Corresponding to the fourth research objective, this chapter has theorised hope in social movements along spatial and temporal dimensions. I have showcased the applicability of analysing hope along various spatial levels and as constituted by the previously established concept of future visions and its aspects. Specifically, I connect RLL antiracists expressing less hope than othered antiracists to their secondary position in the movement and their immobility towards a future vision that is undesirable yet representative. In comparison, the hopeful othered antiracists experience belonging in transnational and movement-level spaces, albeit not at the national level. Their future visions are, to a great degree, representative, desirable, and they experience mobility towards them.

8 Concluding discussions

This thesis has contributed to the narrow research field on antiracism in Norway and simultaneously has accommodated the wish for research on lived antiracist resistance (Aquino, 2020; Kelley, 1994, p. 8; Seikkula, 2022, p. 790). In doing so, I have taken a phenomenological approach and emphasised those *doing* antiracism, exploring their perspectives on antiracism, the antiracist movement, and the change to which they aspire. Concretely, I have emphasised two networks of antiracist activists: one of othered antiracists and one of radical left-liberal antiracists (RLL). These networks may offer a contemporary account of what Nydal describes as the "Marxist-Leninist", "militant", and "internationalist" antiracist frameworks during 1975–1988. What follows is a discussion of the first research objective on conceptions of antiracism and antiracist activism, the second research objective on the communication between the networks, as well as the third research objective on the comparative analysis of social imaginaries. The discussion then builds up to the theoretical contributions of the thesis, in which I discuss the fourth research objective. It is here that I explicate the theoretisation of hope and briefly exemplify its usefulness for social movement cases other than antiracism.

Main findings

Active, anticapitalistic antiracism

While their specific reasoning varies, almost all of the activists consider themselves antiracist. Othered informants believe they have no choice in the matter, as they must resist the racism to which they are subjected. The white RLL antiracists consider antiracism as doing what is right. In that sense, white antiracists are conscience constituents (Owen, 2019), participating in a movement of which they are not the direct beneficiaries.

For informants, being an antiracist means taking *actions*: Acknowledging racism as problematic and favourably perceiving antiracism are insufficient for one to be called an antiracist. Rather, being antiracist is understood as taking actions that align with antiracist goals. This distinction between antiracism and not-racism is reminiscent of previous research on antiracism both within and beyond Norway (c.f. Andersson & Kjellman, 2023; Garner, 2014, p. 412; Jämte, 2013, p. 30; Lentin, 2008). Informants in that way underline the minimal definition of antiracism as "the ability to identify a phenomenon – racism – and to do something about it" (Bonnett, 2000, p. 4).

Informants are clear that antiracism is part of larger political struggles, specifically, anticapitalism. This is in agreement with other studies of antiracism (c.f. Bonnett, 2006, p. 1099; Lloyd, 2002; Seikkula, 2019; van Dijk, 2021; Zamalin, 2019) and contrasts with the opinions of scholars who conceive of antiracism as simply combatting racism (e.g. Ruzza, 2013; van Dijk, 1993). Informants emphasise *anticapitalism* as a primary dimension of antiracism but do so through different lenses.

As with similar othered antiracist networks in Scandinavia, othered informants view racism as inextricably tied to imperialism and colonialism (c.f. Keskinen, 2022, p. 36). They mention racial capitalism, drawing attention to what they perceive as an economic system fundamentally rooted in racial inequality. The othered informants who do not explicitly speak of capitalism still emphasise *reparation* as a way to remedy a discriminatory economic system. Reparation refers to the international discourse on injustice where wronged states, nations, and people claim compensation for past crimes (c.f. Atuahene, 2011; Authers, 2006; Cano & Ferreira, 2006). In that sense, othered informants' desire for reparation is a radical claim, framing past and present racism as a sufficient reason to receive economic compensation.

RLL participants connect antiracism to class struggle in a Marxian way. In the perspective of RLL antiracists, racism serves to divide what should be a united working class in their struggle against capitalism. This makes antiracism and working-class struggles intrinsically linked, though they are still separate issues. This perspective on antiracism and working-class struggles as independent marks a contrast to previous literature on left-wing antiracism (Andersson et al., 2012, pp. 67–87; Bonnett, 2000, pp. 168–172; Nydal, 2007b), in which left-wing antiracists conceptualise antiracism as subordinate to class struggle and as a grievance that can be used to mobilise more people to class struggle.

Limited communication

Angela Davis' lecture on 11 August 2022 serves as an illustrative example of the limited communication between the two antiracist networks. Members of both networks were in attendance, but they were seemingly unaware of each other and did not communicate with each other before dispersing. There is a distinct lack of common channels of communication as well as little familiarity between the networks. This is despite the wishes of informants in this study to communicate and coordinate with other antiracist actors.

The main reason informants cite for this lack of communication is distrust. Due to the sensitive nature of their activities, both networks have a need for secrecy and allow only limited access. Only trusted actors are accepted into the networks, and the bar for achieving trust is high. Therefore, trust – or, rather, distrust – is integral to maintaining the disconnect between the two networks as well as their distance from other antiracist actors.

Informants often cited *Antirasistisk Senter* (Antiracist Centre, ARS) as an example that showcases the dangers of trusting external actors. ARS' activities, particularly those of a previous leader, signalled to the participants how communicating and collaborating with other actors can damage their activism. This further led to distrust and suspicion concerning what informants perceive as attempts by ARS to control antiracist discourse and strategy and to use antiracism for egotistical purposes. When compared to Nydal's account of ARS as the centre of the movement in 1975–1988 (2007b), ARS is seen by informants in this thesis as far less vital to current antiracism. The distrust and suspicion with which informants view ARS is not limited to this specific organisation but is an example showcasing the need for caution. Therefore, communication with actors external to the informants' respective networks is limited.

This result is similar to other studies on antiracism, though the key difference is that distrust is seldom seen as the prime reason for limited contact. Lloyd, for instance, highlights scarce resources and strong identities as reasons why protest-oriented and reactive antiracist groups struggle to cooperate with others (Lloyd, 2002, p. 74). Similar to this study, Keskinen highlights that spaces designed for othered people, such as those used by othered informants in this study, limit communication. Nevertheless, Keskinen does not explicitly mention trust in this regard (Keskinen, 2022, pp. 64–68). This hints at the potential gain of studying intra-movement trust as compared to the majority of literature on trust in social movements, which examines the relationship between movement participants and external factors such as the state (c.f. Suh & Reynolds-Stenson, 2018; Toubøl, 2019).

Dissimilar social imaginaries

The concept of social imaginaries – ways in which individuals understand social aspects of life – is divided here into four analytical categories by which the othered and RLL antiracists have been compared. In terms of *imagined community*, both networks place themselves at the centre and exclude each other. The othered antiracists see their community as othered people (akin to the "Other" in Beauvoir, 1953; Fanon, 1986; Spivak, 1988), which results in the

exclusion of those to whom they are the Other: the white majority. Emphasising a minority position is not new (c.f. Gilroy, 2013; Hübinette et al., 2017), although highlighting a common identity of being Others – not concretely Asian, African, et cetera – is less common (but see Keskinen, 2022; for a discussion of "black" as a broad political identity in the United Kingdom in the 1980s, see Modood, 1994). The RLL antiracists also place themselves at the centre. Despite saying that othered antiracists are the core of the antiracist movement, they posit that only those working according to RLL methods are the movement. In this contradictory sense, they exclude othered antiracists from the movement, as few othered antiracists participate in RLL activities.

Historically and socially, both networks are embedded in previous political mobilisation. Othered antiracists trace their origins to Afrikan Youth In Norway and, by extension, to the internationalists whom Nydal describes (2007b). RLL activists trace their origins to Blitz and militant antiracists. A key difference between the two is that othered antiracists are *reflexively transnational* (Andersson et al., 2012, pp. 25, 206) in looking outside national borders for inspiration, while RLL antiracists largely do not.

The *future visions* of the two networks also vary. Othered informants have long-term visions of *equality* in which differential treatment based on race would disappear, *freedom* of acting upon difference akin to conviviality, that is without essentialising, groupist judgements (Gilroy, 2004, 2005b; Valluvan, 2016, p. 214), and lastly, *independence* from racism and capitalism. In contrast, the RLL future vision is confrontational: It visualises an undesirable future in which racism grows rampantly and short-term, reactive activism must occur to stop this from happening.

The antiracist networks' *political action* mirrors their future visions. Othered antiracists predominantly host events by and for themselves. Akin to similar antiracist networks (c.f. Keskinen, 2022, pp. 64–68), white people are typically not invited. In these events, conviviality is practised as prefigurative political action towards their future vision of freedom. RLL political actions, primarily counterprotests, seek to stop racism when it takes to the streets and are similar to militant antiracism of the past and present (c.f. Fosaas, 2020; Jämte et al., 2020; Nydal, 2007b).

Implications of dissimilarity and distrust

The differences between the two networks in terms of social imaginaries combine with their distrust of antiracist actors with whom they are unfamiliar to paint a fragmented picture of this young part of Norwegian antiracism. By extension, the disconnect between these two networks can question the cohesion of the Norwegian antiracist movement as a whole.

On the one hand, this is a theoretical discussion concerning how a social movement is conceptualised and when a movement disaggregates into separate political categories. If one emphasises a collective identity as integral to social movements and conceptualises it as "mutual identification or solidarity" (Diani, 2000, p. 387), then it is challenging to argue that the two antiracist networks studied here belong to the same movement. They differ in most regards, and they exclude each other from their respective imagined communities. This may cater to Jämte et al., who argue that RLL activism is an autonomous movement (2020, p. 2), as well as for conceptualising the networks as "contentious collective action" or "communitarian or organizational modes rather than pure 'social movement' patterns" (Diani & Moffatt, 2016, p. 28) – in essence, autonomous political forces that act similarly to social movements but are not part of them. What the two networks do share, however, is a notion of antiracism as anticapitalism and as requiring action. With this, one can argue that they have a collective identity, but such an argument seems unconvincing given the differences in other characteristics.

Other scholars conceptualise social movements as informal interactions and networks without the need for a clear collective identity (e.g. della Porta & Mattoni, 2016; Jasper et al., 2015). Within this conceptualisation, movements may have diverse and discordant aims (c.f. Gilroy, 2013, p. 147). With this understanding, the two networks can more easily be understood as constituting the same movement. This is in line with the understanding that Nydal argues: that Norwegian antiracism of the 1970s and 1980s was a collective movement despite consisting of heterogeneous actors (Nydal, 2007a, p. 43).

Conversely, the restricted communication and distrust between the networks lead to an empirical discussion regarding the general state of Norwegian antiracism. This question of generalisation is limited by the informants in this thesis, a niche selection of 15 participants that can hardly be generalised to, for instance, political parties, NGOs, or state institutions. This selection may, however, speak for informal and young antiracist networks. If so, the limited communication and distrust of other actors may indicate a divide between this part of

Norwegian antiracism and others. Importantly, this disconnect is not one of active conflict; rather, it is one of avoidance. If the limited communication and distrust held by the two networks studied in this thesis are applicable to other activistic networks of young antiracists, it would signal a divide between antiracist actors and a marked shift away from the collective nature of the movement that Nydal describes (Nydal, 2007b).

Theoretical contributions

A theoretical contribution is the adaptability of the social imaginary concept illustrated in this thesis. This adaptability is a key strength of the concept, allowing researchers to modify it to the specific context of study rather than using fixed ways of understanding social life, such as nationality, religion, or ideology. Other researchers have approached the concept with a similar adaptable stance (c.f. Andersson & Jacobsen, 2012; Chigudu, 2016; Lehtiniemi & Ruckenstein, 2019; Milkoreit, 2017). My goal has not been to develop a novel concept of an imaginary fit for analysing other cases. Rather, my goal has been to empirically ground the theoretisation of antiracism and, in that way, contribute to the growing literature on Norwegian antiracism. To do this, I have approached the imaginary concept as a baseline for further operationalisation: The baseline is how the social is seen by individuals, to which I have added dimensions of special interest. Imaginaries thus serve as a promising analytical concept that can capture both individual thoughts and actions as well as their social context. This approach can lend itself to other social movement studies, whether they be on the dynamics of collective identities, political action repertoires, or an attempt to accommodate the wish in social movement literature to better understand how movements prefigure an alternate future (della Porta & Diani, 2020, p. 19).

The main theoretical contribution of this thesis is that of developing a framework for analysing hope in social movements along spatial and temporal dimensions. Here, I summarise the theory and argue for its usefulness in studying other social movements than the Norwegian antiracist movement. Hope is tied to the ability to create and sustain political action (c.f. Emirbayer & Mische, 1998; Goldman, 2010; Mische, 2009), making it important for social movements. While the coupling of hope and social movements is common (c.f. Cassegård & Thörn, 2018; Castells, 2015; Gross, 2021), to my knowledge, no studies systematically analyse why movement actors differ in hope. Though preliminary and needing further development, this theoretisation of hope fills a vacant space in social movement studies.

In theorising, I have drawn on insights from various literature and adapted them to the study of social movements. Firstly, I have argued that contemporary notions of hope are unfit for the study of social movements as they are individualised (Petersen & Wilkinson, 2015, p. 115) or "privatised" (Thompson & Žižek, 2013). For social movement studies, hope is better conceived as beliefs in change through collective political action (c.f. Bloch, 1995; Frankl, 1992; Fromm, 1971).

Secondly, I utilise the literature on ideational power and "hope labour" (Alacovska, 2019) to explain how actors can create and cultivate hope by being social (see also Béland & Cox, 2016; Duffy, 2016; Reed, 2013). Within parts of this literature, creating ideational power and hope therein is contingent on having the *concrete time and place* to do so (Béland & Cox, 2016; Milkoreit, 2017, p. 10; Reed, 2013).

With the above serving as a foundation, I develop a framework for analysing hope in social movements along *figurative, spatial,* and *temporal dimensions*. Specifically, I argue that movement actors' perception of their spatial and temporal positions creates differences in their hope for possible change through collective action. Reduced to its fundamental logic, this claim states that different ways of thinking lead to different hopes.

Spatially, I argue that how movement actors situate themselves in a social space will make for different notions of change: whether they belong, are supported, or have a prominent voice to change things. This can be analysed at different spatial levels, such as the transnational, national, and movement levels, allowing for light to be shed on how various positions favour and reduce the cultivation of hope.

Temporally, as others have done, I argue that notions of the future affect hope (c.f. Bourdieu, 1979b; Kleist & Jansen, 2016; Pine, 2014). I draw on the concepts of desirability (Alacovska, 2019; Kuehn & Corrigan, 2013), representativeness (Cook & Cuervo, 2019; Thrift, 2007), and imaginary mobility (Hage, 2009) to analyse how future visions may hinder or facilitate hope.

The applicability of this framework has been illustrated with an analysis of the differing amounts of hope in the two antiracist networks in this thesis. To understand the spatial and temporal situatedness of the informants, I draw on the discussion of the preceding research objectives. Chapters 5 reflecting the first and second research objectives, and chapter 6 reflecting the third research objective, are both, in that sense, a build-up to this theoretisation of hope. The hopefulness of othered informants is seen as grounded in their imagination of

favourable spatial positions and the desired, representative future towards which they are headed. This is contrasted with RLL informants, who experience less favourable spatial situatedness and an undesirable, representative, and cyclical view of the future.

It is worth noting that this is only a preliminary theoretisation; however, it indicates promise for analysing hope within movement spaces that are not economically or culturally privileged, as it emphasises social factors. Those social factors need not be studied by way of the social imaginary concept, though it has proved fruitful in situating the dynamics of hope in a larger societal context. Furthermore, the spatial and temporal dimensions should be adapted to the movement studied. Paying special attention to spatial dynamics may be beneficial when studying identitarian or geographically situated struggles such as queer activism or refugees' struggles. Futurity is implicit in all attempts at change (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998; Mische, 2009), but it is likely to affect hope in certain movements to a greater degree than others. For instance, the temporal dynamics of hope would likely affect the environmental movement to a greater degree than movements without an urgent time limit (c.f. Cassegård & Thörn, 2018; Ojala, 2012).

To conclude this discussion of the theoretisation of hope, I wish to briefly illustrate its applicability to the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement, which initially was a cause that was situated nationally (Calhoun, 2013). The US political context constrained its impact (Graeber, 2013, p. 89) and, subsequently, can be seen to have constrained hope. OWS was also transnationally situated, sparking movements and support networks across the globe with similar future visions (Graeber, 2013; Werenskjold, 2011), theoretically increasing hope. The movement level both enabled hope by activists prefiguring their desired future on Wall Street itself (Graeber, 2013, p. 89) and deflated hope when the occupation was removed (Hammond, 2013). In this way, the OWS movement can illustrate the usefulness of theorising and analysing hope through spatial and temporal dynamics.

Concluding remarks and suggestions for further research

In studying antiracism, I have positioned myself alongside studies that support antiracist counternarratives. This has been crucial for this thesis. This approach has grounded analyses in empirical data, using social imaginaries to form a counterpoint to the predominantly macro level studies of antiracism (Seikkula, 2022, p. 790) and, in so doing, emphasised alternatives to hegemonic narratives (van Dijk, 1993, p. 19) and engaged with the "question of resistance" (Bhattacharyya et al., 2020, p. 3). Furthermore, the approach has been key to gaining trust

and vying for research participants' time. If I had not positioned myself as an antiracist, the empirical data would have far less depth. As other scholars also argue (e.g. Cahill et al., 2007; Milan, 2014; Sultana, 2007; Thomas, 2009), this study demonstrates that research on antiracism benefits from being critical of current narratives. Further research on antiracism, therefore, can benefit from engaging with the ethical and political premises of antiracist actors.

In terms of future research, the field of Norwegian antiracism would benefit from more empirically grounded studies, with the cohesion and social movement status of Norwegian antiracism especially warranting further research. The present-day context further actualises this discussion: The percentage of immigrants and descendants thereof in Norway is increasing, now standing at 19.9% (Statistics Norway, 2023). Increasing diversification of the population will further actualise racism and antiracism. Moreover, antiracism is situated in a global civil society (Archibugi, 2012; Flew, 2018), increasing the opportunity for transnational ties and sources of inspiration, which could subsequently diverge identities and goals. Additionally, engaging with this discussion of antiracism as a social movement would enable a better understanding of how Norwegian antiracism has developed from Nydal's account of 1975–1988 (Nydal, 2007b) to the present day.

Another suggestion is to further develop the framework for analysing hope in social movement studies. This thesis offers preliminary theoretisation centred on the antiracist movement, and theoretisation regarding other movements would serve the concept well.

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All sources used in this thesis are referenced above.

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Appendix A: Interview guide (English)

Introduction:

1. Purpose, anonymity, recording.
2. Age, race and ethnicity, family background, upbringing, and entry into politics.

Racism:

1. Conceptualisation.

Antiracism:

1. Conceptualisation – who – why?
    a. Antiracism versus antifascism, social justice, human rights struggles, etc.
2. Why and how they do antiracism.

Norwegian antiracism:

1. Their present and past networks and organisations.
2. What other networks and organisations do they know of?
    a. Thoughts and encounters.
3. How do other networks and organisations differ from yours?
    a. Goals.
    b. Strategies and action.

Other actors within Norwegian antiracism:

1. What is the role of … in Norwegian antiracism?
    a. Other movements (women's, workers', queer, environmental).
    b. State.
    c. International community and relations.
2. How do you recruit and mobilise new participants?
    a. The more, the better?

Future visions:

1. What is your final goal in working with antiracism?
2. In what scope of time do you envision your goal happening?
3. Achievability.

The way there:

1. What are you doing now to achieve this vision?

2. What are the major challenges and hindrances?

3. How do previously mentioned networks fit into your antiracist vision?

   a. Do you think they should change to fit better?

Nationality within future visions:

1. What does it mean to be Norwegian? – is it still a factor?

2. How has the population changed culturally, socially, politically, and economically:

   a. Current white majority.

   b. Current minorities.

Denouement:

1. What do you do in this future vision, personally? Hobbies, past-time, relaxation.

2. Wrapping up, any other questions?

Appendix B: Interview guide (Norwegian)

Introduksjon:

1. Formål, anonymitet, opptak.
2. Alder, etnisitet, familiebakgrunn, oppvekst, inngang til politikk.

Rasisme:

1. Forståelse.

Antirasisme:

1. Forståelse – hvem – hvorfor?
    a. Antirasisme versus antifascisme, social justice, menneskrettighetskamp, etc.
2. Hvorfor og hvordan gjør de antirasisme?

Norsk antirasisme:

1. Nåværende og tidligere nettverk og organisasjoner.
2. Hvilke andre nettverk og organisasjoner kjenner de til?
    a. Tanker og møter.
3. Hvordan andre nettverk og organisasjoner skiller seg fra deres:
    a. Mål.
    b. Strategier og handlinger.

Andre aktører innen Norsk antirasisme:

1. Hva er rollen til … i norsk antirasisme?
    a. Andre bevegelser (kvinne, arbeider, skeiv, miljø).
    b. Staten.
    c. Internasjonale fellesskap og relasjoner.
2. Hvordan rekruttere og mobilisere flere deltakere?
    a. Desto flere desto bedre?

Framtidsvisjoner:

1. Hva er ditt endelige mål når du jobber med antirasisme?
2. Når ser du for deg at du når målet?
3. Er det oppnåelig?

Veien dit:

1. Hva gjør du for å nå denne framtidsvisjonen nå?

2. Hva er de store utfordringene og hindringene?

3. Hvordan passer tidligere nevnte organisasjoner og nettverk inn i visjonen?

    a. Burde de endre seg for å passe bedre?

Nasjonalitet i framtidsvisjonen:

1. Hva betyr det å være norsk – fremdeles relevant?

2. Hvordan har befolkningen endret seg kulturelt, sosialt, politisk og økonomisk:

    a. Nåværende hvite majoritet.

    b. Nåværende minoriteter.

Avrunding:

1. Hva gjør du i denne framtidsvisjonen, personlig? Hobbyer, fritid, avslapning.

2. Oppsummering, andre spørsmål?