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Foreign at Home? Coping with Foreigner Objectification

Migration has been an enduring phenomenon throughout recorded history. In the present, international migration is characterized by legal frameworks of citizenship and immigration policies (Brubaker, 2010; Lee et al., 2016). Public opinion and reception of immigrants in Europe, particularly in Austria, is ambivalent (European Commission, 2022; Expert Commission on the Framework Conditions for Integration Potential, 2020) and often underscored by prejudice towards immigrants and their descendants (Dennison & Dražanová, 2018). Prejudicial attitudes towards these marginalized communities are an intersection of specific forms of racism (American Psychological Association, [APA], 2023).

Experiences of discrimination are a typical manifestation of racism and a pervasive experience for individuals who identify with marginalized racial and/or ethnic groups (APA, 2023; European Commission, 2019; Schmitt et al., 2014; Schönherr & Leibetseder, 2021). *Discrimination* can be defined as “unjust and differential treatment of members of different identities” (APA, 2023, p. 4). The discrimination of immigrants and their descendants, as well as people of color, can be subsumed under the term *racial/ethnic discrimination*. This may pertain to characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, immigration status, national origin, religion, or language, among others.

The ramifications of racial/ethnic discrimination extend into negative health outcomes, with empirical evidence indicating that self-reported experiences of discrimination correlate with heightened distress (Goreis et al., 2020; Lewis et al., 2015; Schmitt et al., 2014; Williams et al., 2019), diminished well-being (Schmitt et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2011), and various psychological disorders (Jacob et al., 2022; Lewis et al., 2015), including posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD; Sibrava et al., 2019; Williams, 2020), generalized anxiety disorder (Clark et al., 2015), and depression (English et al., 2020; Huynh, 2012). Furthermore, racial/ethnic discrimination is linked to compromised physical health (Paradies et al., 2015; Williams et al., 2019) and detrimental health behaviors (Hudson et al., 2016; Slopen & Williams, 2014).

Despite this evidence for associations between racial/ethnic discrimination and negative health outcomes, these connections require further research (Goreis et al., 2021). Efforts have been dedicated to identifying other factors that influence these associations such as the perceived pervasiveness of racial/ethnic discrimination, social support, group identification, and coping strategies (Schmitt et al., 2014).

While there exists a burgeoning body of international research on racial/ethnic discrimination (Dixon & Telles, 2017; Freitas et al., 2018), studies have been mainly

conducted in North America (Jacob et al., 2022; Paradies et al., 2015; Williams et al., 2019). It is plausible that experiences of racial/ethnic discrimination differ across countries, due to their specific cultural, historical, and political contexts.

Socially Constructed Categories

Race and ethnicity are social constructs. Their meanings and implications vary across linguistic and cultural contexts and have changed considerably in recent decades (APA, 2023, 2019). There is a consensus that psychological research should clearly distinguish these constructs for accurate operationalization.

Race is defined as “the social construction and categorization of people based on perceived shared physical traits that result in the maintenance of a sociopolitical hierarchy” (APA, 2019, p. 5). Race is not universal and has no biological basis (APA, 2019; Schouler-Ocak et al., 2021). Likewise, the racial categorization of individuals is contingent on time and place. *Ethnicity* is defined as “a characterization of people based on having a shared culture (e.g., language, food, music, dress, values, and beliefs) related to common ancestry and shared history” (APA, 2019, p. 46).

However, researchers have often conflated these constructs (Jacob et al., 2022). Even so, efforts have been made to adapt a shared terminology and establish its reflexive use in conducting and reporting research (APA, 2023, 2019; Baumann et al., 2018; Expert Commission on the Framework Conditions for Integration Potential, 2020; Haeny et al., 2021). Conducting psychological research on racial/ethnic discrimination demands critical awareness of the reproduction of bias, as well as the role of science in promoting the health of marginalized communities (APA, 2019; Haeny et al., 2021).

Migratory background is another socially constructed categorization, commonly used in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland. It denotes individuals as born abroad or as having ancestors of foreign national origin. Again, this categorization is not universal, as it may require at least one parent (Germany, Switzerland) or both parents (Austria) to be born abroad. The use of this term is discouraged, but widespread in public discourse (Expert Commission on the Framework Conditions for Integration Potential, 2020). Instead, these highly diverse communities should be collectively referred to as *immigrants and their direct descendants*. Likewise, *people of color* (POC) serves as a collective reference, encompassing non-White racial and ethnic groups (APA, 2023; Nduka-Agwu & Hornscheidt, 2013).

Racism

Racism can be defined as “a system of power that structures opportunity and assigns value to people based on their ancestry and phenotypic properties (e.g., skin color and hair

texture associated with “race” (...)). Racism is expressed at multiple levels in a given society” (APA, 2023, p. 27). While racial/ethnic discrimination is an integral aspect of racism, it also comprises the dynamic and complex interactions of specific forms of racism that occur across several contexts (Harrell, 2000). Individual, institutional, and cultural racism are three distinct forms that factor into theoretical considerations of racism’s impact on mental health and well-being (Harrell, 2000; Jones, 1972).

Individual Racism

Individual racism comprises beliefs that non-White racial and ethnic groups are inherently inferior (Jones, 1972). Their assumed inferiority may be, for instance, moral, intellectual, physical, or cultural. In either case, the White sociopolitically dominant group’s norms of these qualities are considered as a superior point of reference. Importantly, individual racist beliefs are developed through a process of socialisation that begins during childhood. Such racist socialisation is shaped by socializing agents (e.g., family, neighbourhood adults, peers, and authority figures), contact with other racial and/or ethnic groups (or lack thereof), as well as the individual’s active involvement in this process (e.g., which conclusions they draw from comparative judgements between racial and/or ethnic groups). Furthermore, individual racism includes behaviour that asserts these beliefs in the inferiority of non-White racial and ethnic groups and maintains their marginalization, i.e. racial/ethnic discrimination. More specifically, two styles of discriminatory behaviour may be distinguished: dominant (e.g., overt, hostile) and aversive (e.g., covert, avoidant) racism (Jones, 1972).

Moreover, the concepts denoted by individual racism (Jones, 1972) can also be termed as *interpersonal racism*, which places more emphasis on racial/ethnic discrimination than on the corresponding beliefs (APA, 2021). Similarly, the concept of *personally mediated racism* is congruent with individual or interpersonal racism, but it explicitly acknowledges that racial/ethnic discrimination may be intentional as well as unintentional (Jones, 2000).

Institutional Racism

Racism and, by extension, racial/ethnic discrimination operate beyond interpersonal interactions, at an institutional level (APA, 2023; Jones, 2000; Jones, 1972). *Institutional racism* comprises the practices and policies of societal institutions that systematically disadvantage non-White racial and ethnic groups. This includes educational and financial institutions, federal offices, the criminal justice system, health care, employers, and housing, among others (APA, 2023; Jones, 1972). Institutional racism restricts the opportunities, choices, rights, as well as the access to goods and services for POC, immigrants, and their

descendants (Jones, 2000; Jones, 1972). Thereby, disparities between marginalized communities and the White sociopolitically dominant group are created and perpetuated (APA, 2023).

Institutional racism can be conceptualized as an extension (Jones, 1972) or a broader level (Jones, 2000) of individual racism. Furthermore, both individual and institutional racism may be reflected in intentional (e.g., deliberate creation of inequitable conditions by individually racist policy makers) or unintentional behaviour (e.g., unforeseen byproducts of policies that fail to take existing racial and/or ethnic disparities into account). However, in contrast to individual racism, institutional racism can occur without an identifiable perpetrator (Jones, 2000). Furthermore, institutional racism is sometimes referred to as *institutionalized racism* or *systemic racism* (APA, 2023). The cumulative effect of institutional racism is also referred to as the distinct form of *structural racism*, although these terms are often used interchangeably.

Cultural Racism

Cultural racism can be defined as “the individual and institutional expression of the superiority of one race’s cultural heritage over that of another race” (Jones, 1972, p. 6). By this definition, cultural racism consists of two key components. The first is an alleged superiority, which is grounded in comparative judgements of racial and/or ethnic groups. It proclaims that “White Western-European religion, music, philosophy, law, politics, economics, morality, science, and medicine are all without question considered to be the best in the world” (Jones, 1972, p. 6). The prejudicial attitude at the essence of cultural racism is termed as ethnocentrism.

Ethnocentrism. *Ethnocentrism* can be defined as a tendency to view the culture of one’s in-group as superior and to apply it as a standard against which the culture of an out-group is measured (Berry et al., 2002). Likewise, *Eurocentrism* refers to the perspective that centres European culture and history (Pokhrel, 2011). An ethnocentric judgement may apply to various aspects of culture associated with racial and/or ethnic groups: history, traditions, customs, language, religion, beliefs, values, food, clothing, arts, and crafts (Sue, 2004). Ethnocentrism accentuates differences in these aspects, can foster negative stereotypes (Triandis, 1994), and produce fallacious or distorted perceptions of racial and/or ethnic out-groups (Jones, 1972). Although ethnocentrism is believed to be a universal human phenomenon, empirical evidence indicates that it may assume different forms (Keith, 2019). While it always involves an elevation of one’s in-group, it may occur with or without a corresponding devaluation of out-groups.

Empirical evidence suggests that ethnocentrism is positively associated with opposition to immigration (Banks, 2016; Sniderman & Hagendoorn, 2009; Valentino et al., 2013), authoritarianism (Todosijević & Enyedi, 2002; van Ijzendoorn, 1989), and fundamentalist religious views (McCleary et al., 2011). Furthermore, a sparse body of research indicates that education and intergroup contact negatively correlate with ethnocentrism (Keith, 2019). However, contact with racial and/or ethnic out-groups is theorized to require meaningful relationships and institutional support to demonstrate this association (Keith, 2019).

Imposition of a Worldview. The second component of cultural racism is the power of the White sociopolitically dominant group to assert ethnocentrism on an individual and institutional level (Jones, 1972). Through this power, cultural racism transcends ethnocentrism. The alleged inferiority of non-White racial and ethnic groups is embedded into belief systems, images, and norms of the larger culture (Williams et al., 2019). Like general ethnocentrism, this leads to widespread negative stereotypes and prejudice that devalue, marginalize, and subordinate non-White racial and ethnic groups (Jones, 1972; Williams et al., 2019).

The institutional assertion of cultural racism is exemplified by the presentation of racism-related content in educational materials. Several patterns indicative of cultural racism were identified in a meta-analysis of international research on racism in school textbooks (Fuchs & Yu, 2024), which included studies from Austria (Hintermann et al., 2014; Markom & Weinhäupl, 2007) and Germany (Geuenich, 2015; Marmer, 2015; Marmer & Ziai, 2021).

Firstly, migration is frequently framed as a unidirectional movement into the host country (Fuchs & Yu, 2024). Moreover, immigrants are commonly portrayed as exceptional cases, foreigners, or even as threats. Secondly, in their representation of POC and underrepresented ethnic groups, school textbooks take an ethnocentric view on national identity, while marginalizing the cultural contributions of these groups. Thirdly, discriminatory stereotypes are particularly prominent in representations of Black people. Representations of the African continent are often shaped by hegemonic conceptions and do not connect contemporary inequalities to past colonial oppression. Furthermore, Western nations are commonly contrasted against the rest of the world in a dichotomy of progress versus backwardness.

In a longitudinal study that investigated the impact of portrayals of the African continent in German educational materials, students' perceptions of Africa were found to be consistent with Eurocentric narratives presented in their textbooks (Community Research and

Development Information Service, 2014; Marmer et al., 2011). This finding illustrates how educational materials can serve as a medium for the dissemination of a Eurocentric worldview. Thereby, cultural racism creates a larger ideological environment within which the system of racism can flourish (Williams et al., 2019).

Racism Without Biological Races. The ideology of cultural racism can be contrasted against *classical racism* (Rodat, 2017), also referred to as *scientific racism* (Chua, 2017), which builds on a biological notion of race. Unlike this earlier practice of racism, cultural racism is not justified by alleged genetic distinctions between biological races (Chua, 2017; Rodat, 2017). Rather, cultural racism uses socially constructed distinctions between White and non-White racial and ethnic groups along the lines of nonphysical traits and markers, such as immigrant status, language use, behavioral profiling, fashion aesthetics, social welfare dependency, food consumption, and alleged propensities for criminality and terrorism (Chua, 2017).

However, these distinctions can be allusive and/or purported without factual basis (Chua, 2017). For example, analysis of public discourse demonstrates that migratory background is inconsistently ascribed to certain racial and/or ethnic groups in Austria (Hawlik, 2019) and Germany (Munsch, 2014). In spite of definitions established by demographic statistics, migratory background is predominantly ascribed to groups which are construed as culturally distinct from Austrian or German society (e.g., Turkish immigrants and their descendants; Hawlik, 2019; Munsch, 2014). Meanwhile, immigrants from other Western European countries (e.g., German immigrants and their descendants in Austria, French immigrants and their descendants in Germany) are less perceived as having migratory background (Hawlik, 2019; Munsch, 2014).

Despite the conceptual shift from a biological to a socially constructed notion of race, cultural racism maintains the hierarchization of White and non-White racial and ethnic groups (Chua, 2017). This serves to legitimize the continuation of the forms of racism discussed above. Thus, white ethnocentric judgments can prescribe and serve to justify racial/ethnic discrimination on the individual and institutional level (Jones, 1972). By that means, the ability of marginalized communities to attain success in society (e.g., economical, educational) can be impeded if they do not adhere to norms defined by White ethnocentrism. For example, Black women face biases against their natural hairstyles (i.e., curly, kinky) that can hinder their career progression (Opie & Phillips, 2015). Black women with natural hairstyles were found to be perceived as less competent, less professional, and less likely to be interviewed for a job than both Black women with straightened hair (i.e., conforming to

the White ethnocentric norm) and White women with either straight or curly hair (Koval & Rosette, 2021).

To conclude, cultural racism affects the lives of POC, immigrants, and their descendants by imposing a White ethnocentric worldview upon society. As a result, the White sociopolitically dominant group is able to shape knowledge construction and to define normality and abnormality (Sue, 2004). These dynamics of racism influence people's access to opportunities and shape perceptions of whose culture is considered worthy of promotion and inclusion. Moreover, they may define both what constitutes national identity in a given society and who is perceived as compatible with it.

Racism in context

Individual, institutional, and cultural racism manifest dynamically within four contexts: the interpersonal, collective, cultural-symbolic, and sociopolitical (Harrell, 2000). The interpersonal context comprises direct and vicarious experiences of racism, as well as observations of others' behaviour. Examples include racial/ethnic discrimination in interactions with employers, healthcare professionals, educators, or property representatives (Brondolo et al., 2009; Haeny et al., 2021; Jacob et al., 2022; Jones et al., 2014).

Beyond interactions between individuals, the collective context concerns the impact of racism on large groups, for example, disparities between White and non-White racial and/or ethnic groups in incidence and prevalence rates, treatment within the criminal justice system, or employment rates (Harrell, 2000). Within the cultural-symbolic context, racism is conveyed through the portrayal of non-White racial and/or ethnic groups in media, art, literature, and science. Lastly, the sociopolitical context encompasses the occurrence of racism in public discourse, political debate, law-making processes and institutional practices.

The experience of racism comprises the exposure to its forms across these contexts (Harrell, 2000). This is theorized to have a cumulative impact on individual life experiences, behaviour, internal characteristics, and external circumstances for members of both marginalized communities and the White sociopolitically dominant group.

Stress and Coping in Relation to Racism

The study of the impact of racism on the mental health and well-being of marginalized communities converges with literature on stress and coping (Harrell, 2000). Theories of stress offer a framework for conceptualizing how POC, immigrants, and their descendants perceive, appraise, and respond to experiences of racism, particularly racial/ethnic discrimination. This intersection is relevant not only because of immediate stress responses, but because racism can affect factors that may modulate the effects of stress.

Stress and coping have been prominently conceptualized under the theoretical framework of the transactional model of stress and coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). According to this model, stress emerges from an appraisal of external demands. An individual faced with a potential stressor will subject it to a *primary appraisal* to determine if it is threatening or taxing. If so, then it is appraised as a stressor and a *secondary appraisal* of the actions and resources available for managing it follows. This includes physical, social, psychological, as well as material resources.

The individual then responds to the stressor with *coping*, which can be defined as "constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 141). Lastly, the effectiveness of implemented coping strategies is subjected to evaluation in a feedback loop of re-appraisal. This facilitates learning and the adaptation of coping strategies (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

This general transactional model of stress and coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) was expanded into a biopsychosocial model of perceived racism as a stressor for African Americans (Clark et al., 1999). According to this model, the perception of a stimulus as racist may lead to strong psychological and physical stress responses that influence health outcomes over time. Coping responses follow the appraisal and have been conceptualized as either *general coping responses* or *racism specific coping responses*. Each coping response may differentially buffer the effects of perceived racism on the psychological and physiological stress response (Clark et al., 1999).

Appraisals, stress responses, and the use and availability of coping responses are influenced by three groups of variables: constitutional factors (e.g., phenotypic characteristics), sociodemographic factors (e.g., age, gender, socioeconomic status), and psychological and behavioral factors (e.g., self-esteem, anger expression, health behavior R. Clark et al., 1999). Furthermore, the biopsychosocial model (Clark et al., 1999) emphasizes the importance of the appraisal process, by highlighting that the subjective evaluation of an environmental stimulus as racist is more important for the outcomes than objective demands of the situation.

Finally, the model of racism-related stress and well-being (Harrell, 2000) offers a comprehensive conceptualization by including contextual factors, multiple racism-related sources of stress, sociocultural variables, coping responses and outcomes for multiple facets of well-being.

The Model of Racism-Related Stress and Well-Being

Racism-related stress is a multidimensional construct and can be defined as “the race-related transactions between individuals or groups and their environment that emerge from the dynamics of racism, and that are perceived to tax or exceed existing individual and collective resources or threaten well-being” (Harrell, 2000, p. 44).

Antecedent Variables

The experience and impact of racism-related stress is shaped by several person and socioenvironmental factors (Harrell, 2000). Physical characteristics such as skin color and facial features, as well as language use and accents, may influence the form and frequency of racial/ethnic discrimination, and racism in the broader sense.

Socioenvironmental factors include geographic location (e.g., countries, urban and rural areas), socioeconomic status, and the racial/ethnic composition of contexts (Harrell, 2000). For example, racism-related stress may be experienced differently in predominantly White workplaces, schools, or neighbourhoods than when these contexts are more diverse or comprised primarily of one’s racial and/or ethnic group.

Familial and Socialization Influences

Family is theorized to play a crucial role in shaping an individual’s racial/ethnic identity, as well as related attitudes and values (Harrell, 2000). Moreover, familial influences may shape coping with racism-related stress by affecting an individual’s communication style, approaches to conflict resolution, and social relationships. Additionally, communities (e.g., neighbourhoods, peer groups) and institutions (e.g., religious institutions, schools), as well as media and cultural productions contribute to the racial/ethnic socialization of individuals.

All of these influences may provide positive experiences related to one’s racial and/or ethnic group that can foster resilience and pride (Harrell, 2000). Conversely, they may also be sources of adverse experiences that can compound an individual’s vulnerability to racism-related stress. In either case, familial and socialization influences factor into the individual perceptions of and attitudes towards racism, race, and/or ethnicity.

Racism-Related Stressors

The model of racism-related stress and well-being proposes a taxonomy of six stressors that can elicit racism-related stress in distinct ways (Harrell, 2000). Three of these stressors may be primarily encountered within the interpersonal context: racism related life events, daily racism microstressors, and vicarious racism experiences.

Racism-related life events are impactful, time-limited experiences that may occur infrequently (Harrell, 2000). For example, racial/ethnic discrimination in the search for housing, or harassment by the police. By comparison, *daily racism microstressors* are subtle and often ambiguous experiences of racism. They occur more frequently than racism-related life events and act as persistent reminders that one's racial and/or ethnic identity is a salient and meaningful feature. Daily racism microstressors can feel objectifying, demoralizing, disrespectful, or dehumanizing and can exert cumulative effects. Importantly, they are often more intuitively appraised as racism-related than life events. In contrast to these direct and personal stressors, *vicarious racism experiences* elicit stress in response to witnessing or learning about others' experiences of racism (e.g., reports from friends or relatives, news coverage of Marcus Omofuma's death during his deportation from Austria in 1999 as a result of police brutality).

As opposed to occurrences of racism that affect identifiable individuals, *collective experiences of racism* involve perceptions of racism towards one's racial and/or ethnic group (Harrell, 2000). Consequently, this stressor primarily manifests through an individual's observations of racism within the collective, cultural-symbolic, and sociopolitical contexts. Collective experiences of racism contribute to a sense of shared vulnerability, which may also affect individuals with comparatively fewer personal experience of racism. Furthermore, non-White racial and/or ethnic groups may face life circumstances, environmental, or socioeconomic conditions that are shaped by institutional racism. This acts as a stressor situated within the collective and sociopolitical contexts and can elicit *chronic-contextual stress*. Lastly, *transgenerational transmission* comprises the impact of a racial/ethnic group's history across generations (Harrell, 2000).

It is important to recognize that racism-related stress cannot be solely attributed to discrete experiences of racial/ethnic discrimination (Harrell, 2000). Rather, racism may be appraised as a persistent threat to the mental health and well-being of POC, immigrants, and their descendants.

External Mediators

Interpersonal, structural and community resources may provide support that can mitigate the impact of racism-related stress (Harrell, 2000). The availability and nature of this support is partially determined by antecedent variables and the type of a given racism-related stressor. Support from within one's racial and/or ethnic group can provide understanding and guidance. Community support may foster a broader sense of connectedness to one's racial and/or ethnic group. Intergroup support from allies outside one's racial and/or ethnic group

can provide safety or hope. Additionally, environmental and institutional resources, such as organizational policies, can aid individuals in managing the impact of racism (Harrell, 2000).

Internal Mediators

Internal mediators refer to an array of constructs that are theorized to modulate the association between experiences of racism and racism-related stress (Harrell, 2000). They are conceptualized as internal to the individual and include individual characteristics, sociocultural variables, as well as affective and behavioural responses to stress.

Individual characteristics comprise appraisal processes (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), self-esteem, self-efficacy and attributions related to both causes of experiences of racism and coping with racism-related stress (Harrell, 2000). Causes may be attributed either internally to one's own behavior or personality traits (e.g., as self-blame), as well as externally to forms of racism, coincidence or other forces. Importantly, it may be met with resistance from others when an affected individual expresses their attribution of the cause of an experience to a form of racism. Such resistance challenges the validity of an affected individual's perception and may lead them to doubt their interpretations, replay events, and seek validation (Harrell, 2000).

Sociocultural variables include characteristics that are associated with sociopolitical context, such as racial/ethnic identity, cultural values, worldview, and spirituality (Harrell, 2000). Sociocultural variables also include *racism-related coping styles*, which are conceptualized as stable patterns of specific coping strategies. Racism-related coping styles are shaped by familial and socialization influences, as well as cumulative effects of racism-related stress. Furthermore, they may reflect an individual's worldview and their racial and/or ethnic identity. Examples of racism-related coping styles include intragroup affiliation, antiracism activism, and out-group orientation (Harrell, 2000).

It is suggested that affective responses to racism-related stressors influence which behavioural responses are subsequently implemented (Harrell, 2000). For example, shame may be associated with different coping strategies than anger. In turn, coping strategies affect outcomes and future appraisals of experiences of racism.

A recent systematic review synthesized findings from 26 studies of Black people's coping with racial/ethnic discrimination (Jacob et al., 2022). Coping strategies were classified as functional, ambiguous, or dysfunctional for managing racial/ethnic discrimination as a stressor. Functional coping strategies included activism, identity affirmation, planning, religious practice, seeking social support, and venting. Conversely, dysfunctional coping strategies included avoidance, behavioral disengagement, denial, self-blame, and substance

use. It is hypothesized that denial may provide short-term psychological benefits (Harrell, 2000). Despite that, it may undermine the development of coping strategies that are more functional in the long term, leaving individuals more vulnerable to future experiences of racism (Harrell, 2000).

The remaining coping strategies were classified as ambiguous because their efficacy varied depending on how and by whom they were employed (Jacob et al., 2022). It is important to recognize that the evaluation of functionality also depends on the goal of a coping strategy, whether that is to reduce acute distress in the short term or to stop racism from occurring in the long term. Moreover, the situational context of a racism-related stressor may shape the outcome of behavioural responses (Harrell, 2000). As racism is inherently associated with an imbalance in power, coping strategies, like confronting offenders, may carry significant risks to one's personal safety or career advancement. Conversely, avoidance or behavioural disengagement may serve to reduce harm but potentially have a detrimental impact on well-being (Harrell, 2000; Jacob et al., 2022). Nonetheless, even coping strategies that are evaluated as dysfunctional may serve an important purpose for the individuals that employ them (Jacob et al., 2022).

Lastly, while the model is theorized to apply universally to historically oppressed groups, variations may arise from a marginalized community's particular history, culture, and societal position (Harrell, 2000).

The existing literature demonstrates that racial/ethnic discrimination is a pervasive and multifaceted stressor with acute and cumulative effects that severely challenge the coping capacities of those affected (Brondolo et al., 2009; Jacob et al., 2022; Schouler-Ocak et al., 2021). Consequently, coping with racial/ethnic discrimination demands a diverse repertoire of coping strategies and cognitive flexibility for their context-sensitive application.

Microaggression

As described above, racial/ethnic discrimination operates at different levels. It is important to recognize that racial/ethnic discrimination also occurs in more insidious forms. *Microaggressions* are subtle yet impactful behaviors (Williams, 2020) that can be defined as "brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to certain individuals because of their group membership" (Sue, 2010, p. 24). Conscious intentionality is not a prerequisite for such behaviors (APA, 2023). Microaggressions may manifest with or without a perpetrator's intent or awareness. For a targeted individual, this adds to the complexity of evaluating and reacting to such a situation (Williams, 2020).

Microaggressions can be categorized into three distinct types: microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations (Sue et al., 2007). *Microassaults* involve explicit acts of racial and/or ethnic derogation, often delivered consciously through verbal, nonverbal, or environmental means and with intent to harm their target (e.g., avoidant behavior or name-calling). *Microinsults* also convey degrading messages about racial and/or ethnic groups, but they are typically communicated unconsciously. *Microinvalidations* can be defined as communications that negate the thoughts, feelings, or experience of their target. Microinvalidations in particular can cause distress even if perpetrators mean no harm (Williams, 2020).

Beyond this typology, microaggressions can also be categorized based on their content. These categories represent recurring themes of tokenism, exoticization, assumptions about intelligence, environmental exclusion, and avoidance (Sue, 2010; Sue et al., 2007; Williams, 2020). Another common theme is the assertion that marginalized communities of POC, immigrants, and their descendants are not legitimate citizens or not an important part of society.

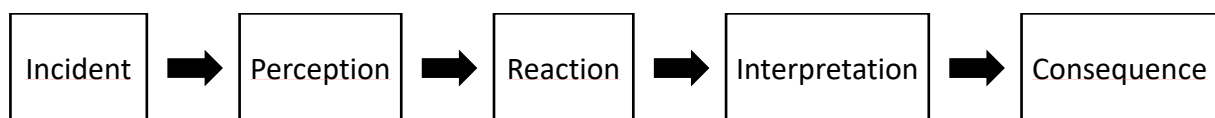
Microaggression Process Model

The *microaggression process model* (MPM; Sue, 2010) delineates a target's evaluation of and reaction to a potential microaggression as a process of five phases (see Figure 1).

The incident where a potential microaggression occurs can be a verbal, nonverbal, or environmental interaction and can contain various themes. In the phase of perception, a target tries to resolve the incident's ambiguity by evaluating whether it was motivated by prejudice towards their racial and/or ethnic group. This evaluation is a taxing experience and has also been termed as *questioning* (Sue, 2010). Questioning considers the target's past experiences, their racial and/or ethnic identity, the incident's thematic content, and contextual factors like their relationship with the perpetrator and its power dynamic.

Figure 1

Microaggression Process Model



Note. Phases of the MPM (Sue, 2010).

Microaggressions may trigger intense reactions. Common reactions include *healthy paranoia*, an increase in suspicion of motives of members of the White sociopolitically dominant group (Sue et al., 2008). Targets may also react with a *sanity check*, meaning validation-seeking from in-group members. *Self-empowerment* is another common reaction, which involves an increased trust in one's own thoughts and feelings about the incident and decreased external orientation. Targets may also react by *rescuing perpetrators*, a well-meaning response towards perpetrators (e.g., excusing their behavior; Sue et al., 2008).

Next, targets construct meaning from microaggressions and their implications for their identity, considering the perpetrator's intentions and related social patterns. This interpretation is conceptualized as a message that perpetrators convey through microaggressions (Sue et al., 2008). Five common messages have been identified from interviews with Black Americans: "You are all the same", "You are abnormal", "You are not trustworthy", "You are intellectually inferior", and "You do not belong" (Sue et al., 2008, p. 333).

Microaggressions may exert psychological effects on cognitive, behavioral, and emotional levels, leaving targets feeling powerless and invisible (Sue et al., 2009). Other possible consequences are feeling pressured to embody a favourable representation of one's racial and/or ethnic group, or to meet standards of the White sociopolitically dominant group. These consequences may entail a perceived loss of integrity (Sue, 2010). Furthermore, microaggressions have been linked to increases in stress and anxiety, diminished performance in work or academic contexts, relationship problems, and general well-being (Sue, 2010; Sue et al., 2009).

In summary, the MPM (Sue, 2010; Sue et al., 2008) delineates the psychological processing of microaggressions as complex and taxing. Individuals exposed to microaggressions contend with ambiguous interactions and onerous tasks of managing their detrimental effects, which may permeate all phases of the MPM. Experiences of racial/ethnic microaggressions have been found to have several adverse associations with mental health (APA, 2023). These include increases of psychological distress (Chae et al., 2011) and depressive symptoms, as well as decreases in life satisfaction (Ayalon & Gum, 2011), heightened suicide ideation (O'Keefe et al., 2015), a higher number of symptoms of PTSD (Nadal et al., 2019), and elevated risk for mood and substance use disorders (Clark et al., 2015).

Foreigner Objectification

Foreigner objectification (FO) can be defined as "being perceived as a foreigner regardless of one's generational status, citizenship, or self-identification" (Juang et al., 2021, p. 82). In the theory of microaggression, FO is conceptualized as a microinvalidation (Sue, 2010; Sue et al., 2007) with the thematic message of being "Not a True Citizen" (Williams, 2020, p. 14) or "Alien in One's Own Land" (Sue, 2010, p. 37).

Furthermore, FO is a manifestation of the *perpetual foreigner stereotype* (Armenta et al., 2013; Juang et al., 2021). This is the belief that marginalized communities of POC, immigrants, and their descendants are inherently foreigners. In an incident of FO, the perpetual foreigner stereotype manifests in behaviour that denies the validity of a target's identity, as, for example, Austrian or European citizen, by challenging or questioning it (Armenta et al., 2013; Juang et al., 2021).

Incidents of FO may be assumptions about an individual's values or beliefs on the ground of their perceived racial and/or ethnic identity, or gestures and comments that otherize them (Armenta et al., 2013; Juang et al., 2021; Sue, 2010; Williams, 2020). A prime example of FO are questions about a person's national origin or ancestry. In a sample of German adolescents, 63% reported they had been asked "Where are you from?" by strangers and that they attributed these experiences to their physical appearance or ostensible cultural heritage (Juang et al., 2021).

According to the MPM (Sue, 2010; Sue et al., 2007), when confronted with an incident, a target will engage in questioning and may consider their relationship with the perpetrator. This may result in different perceptions, reactions, interpretations, and consequences when this question is posed by a familiar person, rather than a stranger (Juang et al., 2021; Williams, 2020).

Like microaggressions, FO was found to be associated with several detrimental effects on mental health. These include increased psychological distress and diminished well-being (Armenta et al., 2013), increased depressive symptoms (Huynh, 2012; Kiang et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2011), negative emotions (Wang et al., 2011), and anger (Huynh, 2012), as well as diminished life satisfaction (Juang et al., 2021) and self-esteem (Kiang et al., 2019).

In conclusion, these findings highlight the importance of recognizing FO as a form of racial/ethnic discrimination and the need for further research on its associations with the health of marginalized communities of POC, immigrants, and their descendants.

Research Question and Hypotheses

The overall aim of this research project was to investigate how marginalized communities of POC, immigrants, and their descendants in Austria experience and react to FO.

Quantitative Phase

The aim of the quantitative phase was to answer the questions of whether there is an association between experiences of FO and perceived stress and whether coping strategies moderate this association.

The following hypotheses will be tested:

1. There is a positive association between exposure to FO and perceived stress.
2. Coping strategies moderate the association between FO and perceived stress, in such a way that
 - 2.1. use of functional strategies is associated with lower perceived stress.
 - 2.2. use of dysfunctional strategies is associated with higher perceived stress.

Qualitative Phase

Due to the exploratory approach of the qualitative phase, no testable hypotheses were devised. The aim is to answer the following research questions:

1. How do POC, immigrants, and their descendants experience FO, and what subjective meanings, sociopolitical contexts, and perceived effects are associated with these experiences?
2. Which coping strategies do participants perceive as functional or dysfunctional in managing FO, and how can these insights inform the interpretation of both qualitative and quantitative?

Methods

Research Design

The research project followed an explanatory sequential design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). This mixed methods research design consisted of three phases. In the first phase, quantitative data was collected and analysed. In the second, qualitative phase, data collection and analysis followed up on quantitative results, to complement and further explain them. Thirdly, quantitative and qualitative results were synthesized in a joint interpretation. Thereby, qualitative results were used to facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of the quantitative results and to devise possible explanations. The following sections separately describe the respective methods of the quantitative and qualitative phase of the research project.

Quantitative Phase

Sample

A convenience sample of $N = 164$ participants was recruited. The participants' ages ranged from 18 to 64 years ($M = 32.96$, $SD = 9.81$). Participants' sociodemographic characteristics are illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1

Sociodemographic Characteristics of Participants

Variable	<i>n</i>	%
Gender identity		
Female	134	81.7
Male	25	15.2
Nonbinary	4	2.4
Declined to answer	1	.6
Highest educational level ^a		
Level 2 lower secondary education	1	.6
Level 3 upper secondary education	47	28.6
Level 4 post-secondary education	10	6.1
Levels 5 to 8 tertiary education	106	64.6
Employment		
Employed, self-employed, or apprentice	110	67.1
Student or in training	42	25.6
Unemployed or seeking work	6	3.7
Managing a household	2	1.2
Retired	1	.6
Occupational disability, invalidity, or incapacity to work	3	1.8
Monthly income ^b		
No income	4	2.4
Less than 250	1	.6
250 to below 500	7	4.3
500 to below 1000	28	17.1

Variable	<i>n</i>	%
1000 to below 1500	31	18.9
1500 to below 2000	31	18.9
2000 to below 2500	29	17.7
2500 to below 3000	18	11
3000 to below 3500	5	3.0
3500 to below 4000	1	.6
4000 or more	4	2.4
Declined to answer	5	3.0

Note. *N* = 164.

^a Participants selected from options of Austrian educational programmes, which were later classified into levels of the ISCED 2011 (OECD et al., 2015).

^b Participants' individual monthly income in euros, independent of household size.

Racial and ethnic characteristics were evaluated according to the recommendations of the German Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency (Baumann et al., 2018). Consequently, questions regarding race and ethnicity were divided into three parts: objective data, subjective self-disclosure, and self-perceived external ascription. Table 2 presents objective data derived from questions about participants' citizenship and generational status. The majority of participants reported holding Austrian citizenship (65.9%) and being born in Austria (56.9%). Meanwhile, the majority indicated that either their mother (69.5%) and/or father (84.2%) was not born in Austria. Therefore, at least 84.2% of participants can be considered to belong to a group of immigrants and their descendants.

Table 2

Participants' Citizenship and Generational Status

Characteristic	Austria		Europe		Rest of the World	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Citizenship	108	65.9	30	18.3	25	15.2
Country of birth	93	56.7	32	19.5	38	23.2
Mother's country of birth	48	29.3	38	23.2	76	46.3
Father's country of birth	23	14	27	16.5	111	67.7

Note. *N* = 164. Participants indicated specific countries. Answers were later categorized.

Subjective self-disclosure was gauged by asking participants to identify with various labels for racial and ethnic groups (see Table 3). Participants were allowed to choose multiple options, and $n = 29$ (18.2%) reported additional terms or spellings and combinations of terms they identified with. The count of selected options ranged from 1 to 5, with participants selecting an average of $M = 1.6$ options ($SD = 0.8$).

Self-perceived external ascription was captured with a single item: „What do you believe is the reason you have been perceived as ‘foreign’ or ‘not White’ before?”. Participants then chose the reasons that applied to them from a list (see Table 4), with the option of selecting multiple reasons and specifying other factors. The number of chosen options ranged from 1 to 6, with participants choosing on average $M = 2.5$ options ($SD = 1.2$). In addition, participants were asked how often they experienced such external ascriptions: “How often are you perceived as ‘foreign’ or ‘not White’ in Austria?” Responses were given on a 5-point scale, of which 67 (40.9%) participants selected the maximum of 5 ([almost] always), 44 (26.8%) opted for 4 (often), 37 (22.6%) indicated 3 (occasionally), 12 (7.3%) 2 (rarely), and 4 (2.4%) the minimum of 1 (never).

Table 3

Subjective Self-Disclosure of Racial and/or Ethnic Identity

Racial or ethnic group	<i>n</i>	%
African Austrian	27	17.0
Arab Austrian	7	4.4
Asian Austrian	12	7.5
Jewish	4	2.5
Latinx	5	3.1
Muslim	28	17.6
Person of Colour	43	27.0
Russian Austrian	2	1.3
Black	30	18.9
Sinti and Roma	3	1.9
Turkish Austrian	17	10.7
White	51	32.1
Declined to answer	5	3.0

Note. $N = 164$. Each row reflects the number and percentage of participants who self-identified with a term for a racial or ethnic group.

Table 4

Self-Perceived Reasons for External Ascription as Foreign or non-White

Characteristic	<i>n</i>	%
Skin colour	68	42.0
Physical appearance	74	45.7
Hair or beard	63	38.9
Name	109	67.3
Clothes	19	11.7
Religious head covering	16	9.9
Accent	48	29.6
Other ^a	12	7.4
Declined to answer	2	1.2

Note. $N = 164$. Each row reflects the number and percentage of participants who selected a characteristic as a reason people perceived them as foreign or non-White.

^a Other reasons included eyes, nose, values, and five elaborations about accents.

In a comparable study, an effect size of $R^2 = .21$ was found (Greer et al., 2015). To detect an effect of this magnitude with 80% power at a significance level of .05, a planned sample size of $N = 96$ was computed using G*Power (Cohen's $f^2 = 0.26$, $\alpha = .05$, $\beta = .8$, and number of predictors = 20; Faul et al., 2007). The final sample size met this requirement.

Recruitment

To aid in recruiting individuals with experiences of FO, 94 organisations working with PO, immigrants, and their descendants in various capacities were contacted. These included sociopolitical initiatives, counselling centres, federal offices, cultural institutions, and online communities. Nineteen organisations agreed to circulate an invitation to the survey and were provided with standardized promotional content for social media and newsletters. Individuals with a current residence in Austria and who were aged at least 18 years were eligible to participate. Participants were not required to be native German speakers. Participants signed informed consent forms, describing the study's purpose, inclusion criteria and risks of participation, as well as terms and conditions of data collection and processing. Participants were required to give their informed consent before they could

participate. No payment or any kind of compensation was offered in exchange for participation.

Data Collection

Data was collected through an online survey, created using SoSci Survey (Leiner, 2023) and made publicly accessible on www.soscisurvey.de from April 25, 2023, to May 14, 2023. Upon completing the survey, participants could leave feedback and an e-mail address in order to be contacted in relation to the research project. Finally, a list of selected federal offices and counselling centres for people affected by racial/ethnic discrimination was provided. The online survey consisted of the following measures.

Measures

Foreigner Objectification. The Foreigner Objectification Scale (FOBS; Pituc et al., 2009, as cited in Armenta et al., 2013) is a short self-report measure of perceived FO. A German version of the FOBS was devised that replaced the terms “ethnicity/race” with “cultural background/appearance” (Juang et al., 2021; see Appendix). The German FOBS consists of five items, for example, “Because of my cultural background/appearance, I was asked ‘Where are you from?’” (Item 3). Participants rate how frequently they encountered the situation over the past year on a 4-point scale: 1 (*never*), 2 (*one or two times*), 3 (*three or four times*), 4 (*five times or more*). The German FOBS was validated in a sample of $N = 809$ German adolescents (13-19 years, $M = 14.75$, $SD = 0.77$; 50% female; Juang et al., 2021). It demonstrated convergent validity (with perceived ethnic denigration), divergent validity (with peer-support), and good reliability ($\omega = .76$, $\alpha = .75$). In the present sample, the German FOBS also showed sufficient internal consistency of $\alpha = .72$.

Coping Strategies. The Brief COPE (Carver, 1997) is a short version of the Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced (COPE; Carver et al., 1989) and is frequently used as a self-report measure of coping strategies (Hanfstingl et al., 2021). As summarized in Table 5, it consists of 14 scales. Each scale contains two items and measures a theoretically identified coping response (Carver, 1997). Each item describes a coping response and asks participants to indicate whether they employ it to cope with stress in their lives on a 4-point scale: 1 (*I haven't been doing this at all*), 2 (*I've been doing this a little bit*), 3 (*I've been doing this a medium amount*), 4 (*I've been doing this a lot*). The German version of the Brief COPE was used (Knoll et al., 2005; see Appendix). Both instructions and items of the Brief COPE may be adapted to a situational context, to assess coping in response to particular stressors (Monzani et al., 2015). In the present research project, the instruction was adapted to ask participants to indicate their use of coping strategies in any of the situations described by the

FOBS items. The FOBS items were listed below the instruction for the Brief COPE.

Additionally, the timeframe in the instruction was modified to “in the past year”.

Most of the 14 scales exhibited good reliability (ranging from $\omega = .70$ to $\omega = .90$; Hanfstingl et al., 2021). Lower reliability was reported for Active Coping, Venting, and Behavioural Disengagement (between $\omega = .37$ and $\omega = .46$). The internal consistencies for all scales are listed in Table 5. The scales Denial, Behavioral Disengagement, Venting, and Planning each had an internal consistency below $\alpha = .70$. All remaining Brief COPE scales had acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha > .70$). To operationalize the use of coping strategies that were identified as either functional or dysfunctional in the context of racial/ethnic discrimination (Jacob et al., 2022), two composite scales were constructed (see Table 5): one for Functional Coping and one for Dysfunctional Coping.

Table 5

Measures of Coping Strategies and their Internal Consistencies

Scale	α
Brief COPE scales	
Self-distraction ^a	.74
Denial ^a	.56
Use of emotional support ^b	.86
Behavioral disengagement ^a	.63
Positive reframing	.87
Humour	.84
Active coping ^b	.71
Substance use ^a	.94
Use of instrumental support ^b	.87
Venting ^b	.64
Planning ^b	.67
Acceptance	.83
Self-blame ^a	.80
Religion ^b	.83
Composite scales	
Functional coping ^b	.85
Dysfunctional coping ^a	.76

Note. $N = 164$.

^a The dysfunctional coping scale is a composite of the Brief COPE scales for self-distraction, denial, behavioral disengagement, substance use, and self-blame.

^b The functional coping scale is a composite of the Brief COPE scales for use of emotional support, active coping, use of instrumental support, venting, planning, and religion.

Perceived Stress. The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS; Cohen et al., 1983) is an established self-report measure of perceived stress. It measures the extent to which an individual appraises their life as uncontrollable, unpredictable, and the degree to which they feel overwhelmed. For each item, participants indicate how frequently they experienced a particular feeling during the past month on a 5-point scale: 1 (*never*), 2 (*almost never*), 3 (*sometimes*), 4 (*fairly often*), 5 (*very often*). For instance, “In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?” (Item 6). In the present research project, the timeframe for all items was changed to “in the past year”.

The scale’s 10-item version (PSS-10; Cohen & Williamson, 1988) demonstrated a reliability of $\alpha = .78$. The German Version of the PSS-10 was used (Schneider et al., 2020; see Appendix). Likewise, in the present sample Cronbach’s alphas suggested high internal consistency for the Perceived Helplessness ($\alpha = .82$) and Perceived Self-Efficacy ($\alpha = .74$) subscales, as well as for the overall PSS-10 ($\alpha = .86$).

Data Analysis

To assess the first hypothesis (H1) of a positive association between perceived stress and exposure to FO, a Pearson correlation between PSS-10 scores and FOBS scores was calculated using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 29). Given the directional hypothesis, the statistical significance of the correlation coefficient was assessed with a one-tailed t-test. The second hypothesis (H2, H2.1, and H2.2), which propose that coping strategies moderate this association, were tested with an additive multiple moderation analysis using PROCESS (Hayes, 2022). Furthermore, a standard multiple linear regression analysis using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 29) was carried out, as it allows for a more detailed examination of potential sources of bias and regression diagnostics.

Qualitative Phase

Sample

A participant group of $N = 6$ was recruited. People aged at least 18 years old and with a current residence in Austria were eligible for participation. Participants were not required to be native German speakers. Although sufficient German language proficiency for giving informed consent and the interview was required.

Recruitment

During the quantitative phase, $N = 97$ participants had agreed to be contacted in relation to the research project and provided their e-mail addresses. Each of them received invitations to participate in the qualitative phase. Initially, 10 people expressed their interest in participating in the qualitative phase. During scheduling of the interview sessions, four people withdrew their participation, leaving a participant group of $N = 6$. No payment or any kind of compensation was offered in exchange for participation. Voluntary, informed consent and agreement to the stated privacy policy were required. Furthermore, written consent to the recording of the interview was obtained from all participants. Participants were informed that their names and personal data would be replaced with pseudonyms in the analysis and report of the study.

Data Collection

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews. For the purpose of this research project an interview guide was devised (see Appendix), based on the model of racism-related stress and well-being (Harrell, 2000). Questions were devised to correspond to each of the model's domains: antecedent variables, familial and socialization influences, racism-related stressors, internal, and external mediators as well as the psychological and social outcomes. Additionally, probing questions were supplemented by prompts that should lead interviewees to the corresponding variables (e.g., a probe for familial and social influences, supplemented by prompts for family characteristics/dynamics and racial socialization). An extensive trial interview was conducted with a volunteer acquainted with the researcher, who identified as biracial and POC. Therein, all interview questions and prompts were discussed. Based on this feedback the interview guide was further refined.

Interviews were conducted from June 15, 2024, to July 26, 2024, either face-to-face in an office in Vienna or online as a video call. In both cases, audio recordings were made for later transcription. The duration of the interviews ranged from approximately 90 minutes to 130 minutes.

Data Analysis

The interview data was analysed through thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) using MAXQDA 24 (VERBI Software, 2023). Shared patterns of meaning were systematically identified, analysed, and interpreted through the generation of codes and themes. The analytic process was structured into six phases.

First, extensive familiarization with the data was achieved through transcription and repeated listening to the recorded interviews. Each transcript was read multiple times and

initial ideas were noted. In the second phase, initial *codes* were generated by identifying significant aspects of the transcripts that were evaluated as relevant to the research questions (see Appendix). Coded data segments from all transcripts were automatically aggregated in MAXQDA 24 (VERBI Software, 2023). In the third phase, codes were clustered into *themes* - patterns of meaning with a shared core idea that “provide a framework for organizing and reporting the researcher’s analytic observations” (Clarke & Braun, 2017, p. 2). In the fourth phase, initial themes were evaluated to ensure internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity. Each theme was evaluated in light of its coded data segments, as well as the whole data set. A *thematic map* was then developed as a visual representation of the analysis. In the fifth phase, themes were defined, named, and continually refined until a comprehensive narrative of the analysis was reached. Finally, in the sixth phase, data extracts were selected as vivid examples of themes and to serve as evidence for the analysis.

Results

Quantitative Phase

Descriptive statistics for all variables included in the analysis are shown in Table 6. Regression diagnostics were used to assess whether the assumptions of normality and linearity had been violated. For the assumption of normality, the distribution of PSS-10 scores was examined through a histogram, P-P plot, and statistics for kurtosis and skewness. No indication of a violation of the assumption of normality was observed.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics for Variables used in Data Analysis

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Minimum	Maximum
Perceived stress	32.03 [31.13, 32.86]	6.01	14.00	48.00
Foreigner objectification	2.41 [2.30, 2.51]	0.78	1.00	4.00
Functional coping	4.44 [1.16, 1.37]	1.26	2.00	7.17
Dysfunctional coping	3.74 [3.59, 3.88]	1.06	2.00	6.80

Note. $N = 164$. Bias corrected and accelerated 95% confidence intervals are reported in square brackets and based on 1000 bootstrap samples.

Additionally, normality was assessed for FOBS, Functional and Dysfunctional Coping scores. FOBS scores deviated from normal distribution with a kurtosis of = -.79. However, it is likely that this negative kurtosis was inflated by the large *SD* of FOBS scores in relation to their mean (see Table 6). Therefore, there was no indication of a problem concerning the

normality of the FOBS score distribution. Similarly, Functional Coping scores were slightly negatively skewed with a kurtosis of $-.71$. However, both a histogram and a P-P plot showed no concerning deviation from normality for Functional Coping scores. Dysfunctional Coping scores were slightly positively skewed with a kurtosis of $.68$, which was also visible in a histogram and P-P plot. Consequently, the distributions of FOBS, Functional Coping, and Dysfunctional Coping scores were each slightly skewed, but not to a problematic degree.

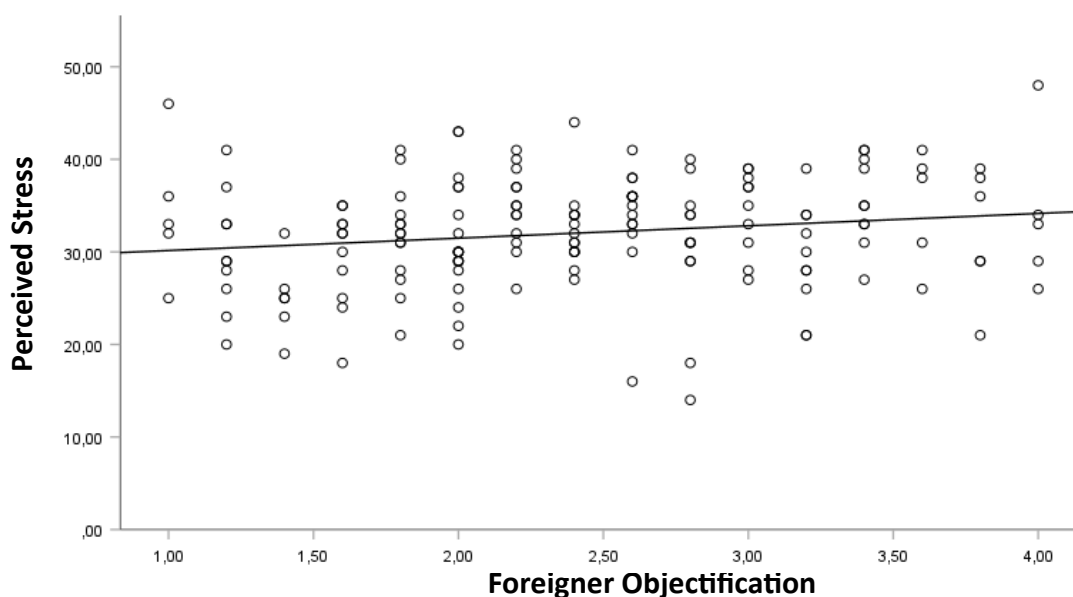
As a preliminary evaluation of linearity and to identify obvious outliers or unusual cases, a matrix scatterplot of the relationships between the mean-centred variables for FOBS, PSS-10, Functional, and Dysfunctional Coping scores was produced. The regression lines indicated that FOBS, as well as both Functional and Dysfunctional Coping scores, each exhibited a positive linear association with PSS-10 scores. The matrix scatterplot also displayed a positive linear relationship between Functional and Dysfunctional Coping scores.

H1: Correlation Analysis

There was a small, significant positive correlation between FOBS and PSS-10 scores, $r = .17$ [.004, .347], $p = .013$ (see Figure 2). Bias-corrected and accelerated 95% confidence intervals are provided in brackets and are based on 1000 bootstrap samples. Thus, the data support the first hypothesis of a positive association between exposure to FO and perceived stress.

Figure 2

Correlation of Foreigner Objectification and Perceived Stress



Note. $N = 164$. Bivariate correlation of foreigner objectification and perceived stress $r = .17$, $p = .013$ with a regression line.

H2: Additive Multiple Moderation Analysis

Linear Model Assumptions and Regression Diagnostic. A correlation matrix of all variables in the model served as a preliminary assessment of multicollinearity. No substantial correlations were observed among FOBS, Functional, or Dysfunctional Coping scores. The highest correlation was between FOBS and Dysfunctional Coping scores, $r = .32$ ($p < .001$). Since the largest correlation was of moderate size, there was no indication of an issue of multicollinearity. Significant positive correlations with PSS-10 scores were found for FOBS ($r = .17$, $p = .01$), Functional ($r = .013$, $p = .04$), and Dysfunctional Coping scores ($r = .28$, $p < .001$). The two interactions between FOBS and each Functional and Dysfunctional Coping scores were significantly intercorrelated ($r = .19$, $p = .007$), but did not correlate with PSS-10 scores.

An examination of multicollinearity revealed no cause for concern. All variance inflation factor (VIF) values were below the benchmark of 10, and all tolerance statistics were above the benchmark of .2. Likewise, the average VIF of 1.15 was near 1, indicating that this linear model assumption was not violated.

To verify whether the assumptions of homoscedasticity and linearity were met, scatterplots of standardized predicted values versus standardized residuals, as well as partial plots for FOBS, Functional, and Dysfunctional Coping scores, were examined. These plots suggested that FOBS and Functional Coping scores did not violate the assumptions of linearity and homoscedasticity. However, the partial plot for Dysfunctional Coping scores suggested heteroscedasticity. Therefore, a heteroscedasticity-consistent standard error and covariance matrix estimator was used (HC4 [Cribari-Neto]; Hayes, 2022).

A histogram and normal probability plot of standardized residuals demonstrated that the assumption of normally distributed residuals was met.

Additionally, standardized residuals were assessed to identify potentially unusual cases and their effects on the model. In principle, 99% of cases are expected to exhibit standardized residuals within ± 2.5 . Four cases (2.43%) fell outside these limits. However, regression diagnostics indicated that none of these cases exerted an undue influence on the model.

Model Summary. The additive multiple moderation model explained 9.3% of the variance in PSS-10 scores, which is considered a small effect size. With $F(5, 158) = 3.27$, $p = .008$, the model predicted PSS-10 scores significantly better than their mean value (i.e., the baseline model that assumes no relationship between the predictors and PSS-10 scores). Table 7 presents the resulting linear model for predictors of perceived stress.

Table 7*Linear model of predictors of perceived stress*

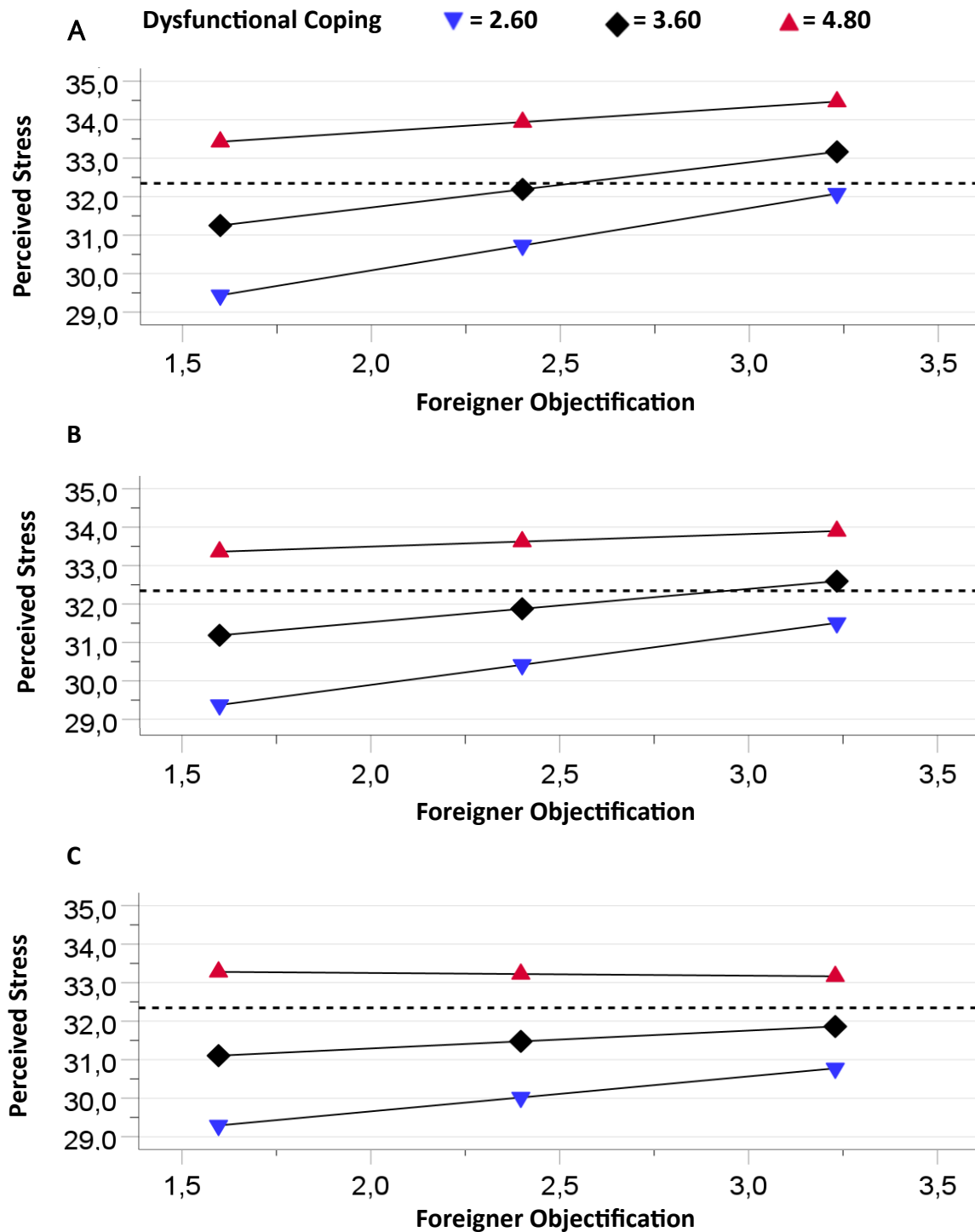
Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	31.97 [30.99, 32.96]	0.50	63.87	$p < .001$
Foreigner objectification (centred)	0.75 [-0.80, 2.31]	0.79	0.96	$p = .340$
Functional coping (centred)	0.19 [-0.65, 1.03]	0.42	0.45	$p = .656$
Foreigner objectification x functional coping	0.53 [-0.87, 1.93]	0.71	0.75	$p = .456$
Dysfunctional coping (centred)	1.41 [0.47, 2.36]	0.48	2.96	$p = .004$
Foreigner objectification x dysfunctional coping	-0.27 [-1.74, 1.20]	0.74	-0.36	$p = .717$

Note. $R^2 = .093$. $N = 164$. 95% confidence intervals are reported in square brackets and based on 1000 bootstrap samples.

The b coefficients and associated t -tests for the two interaction terms indicate that neither the interaction between FO and functional coping nor that between FO and dysfunctional coping reached statistical significance. This is illustrated in Figure 3, as the correlation between FO and perceived stress does not significantly vary when functional and dysfunctional coping are set to different levels (low, medium, and high).

Figure 3

Foreigner Objectification and Perceived Stress as a Function of Coping Strategies



Note. $N = 164$. Conditional effect of foreigner objectification on perceived stress as a function of functional and dysfunctional coping. The relationship between predictor and outcome is shown at high, medium, and low values of both moderators. Panel A: Functional coping = 5.67. Panel B: Functional coping = 4.50. Panel C: Functional coping = 3.00.

Qualitative Phase

In the course of the thematic analysis, four themes were identified across the interviews. The most central theme is the experience of being labelled as abnormal. Building on this fundamental issue, three subthemes were identified, which capture distinct aspects: “gatekeeping Austrianness”, “rejection and oppression”, and “damage control”. This central theme acts as a unifying thread that draws together the three remaining themes of how interviewees cope with their experiences of FO and other forms of racial/ethnic discrimination: “I decide who I am”, “speaking up for myself and others”, and “community support”.

Being Labelled as Abnormal

Each participant told an individual story of life as POC, immigrant, and/or descendant of immigrants in Austria. Some reported being born and raised in Austria, while others had immigrated as adolescents. In their accounts of childhood and/or adolescence, an overarching theme that underpins their experiences of FO was identified: “being labelled as abnormal” in relation to Austrian society. This labelling begins to take shape particularly upon entering school as one participant, Elif, states: “starting from elementary school, unfortunately, I then experienced a lot more unpleasant things, or rather, that one was perceived as a child with flaws”. Participants who grew up in Austria first noticed in school how their physical appearance was highlighted as deviating from a presumed norm. For example, Megan notes: “there were always comments about my hair, that’s when it became extremely clear to me that I was, so to speak, very different from all the other people.” For Megan, these experiences led to a feeling that she needed to alter her physical appearance or behavior in order to fit in, as she states that she “just wanted to be accepted and validated, which is why I often did things I wouldn’t do anymore, for example, always straightening my hair”.

Furthermore, experiences of being labelled as abnormal instilled a sense of shame which in turn reinforced worries about differing from White Austrian peers. This is illustrated as Angelina remembers the sting of being called out at school:

He shouted really loudly across the entire yard that I should shave my beard, because I had like really strong body hair um and the other kids didn’t, because we were all young and almost no one had body hair, only me because I (.) yeah, just have Armenian roots (.) and that just broke my heart . . . all the kids looked, and I was so embarrassed.

Such encounters contributed to an enduring self-doubt that would follow participants into adulthood. As they grew older, participants became increasingly aware that their physical

features set them apart: “I knew as soon as I left the house that I would be stared at, especially when I took the [train line] into the city” (Megan).

Participants also describe how particularly experiences in the education system can undermine one’s sense of belonging “because they just don’t see much representation in such . . . positions of power . . . I can remember that as a teenager I didn’t have a single teacher with a migration background” (Sara). This illustrates that the absence of authority figures who share one’s racial and/or ethnic identity can reinforce the notion that one is an exceptional case. In the wake of such socialization, participants found themselves grappling with the question of what it means to feel at home in a country where they feel like they do not belong.

This sentiment becomes apparent in the question “Where are you from?”, which participants reported encountering repeatedly. Notably, several reported that instances of FO occurred in professional settings, e.g., at the participants’ workplaces or in contact with customers or trainers. For example, Elif felt singled out by being prompted to answer questions about her national origin at a work event:

A participant came up to me and started a conversation, first she asked where I work and so on but then she really asked “So, where are you from?” and I said “From Austria, I was born and raised here” and then she asked “But where are your parents from?” and I said “Well that’s a very personal question for me and I’d rather not answer it” but she didn’t let it go and then she actually said “But one can tell that you’re not from Austria” and for me, that was really, uh it was a truly harsh realization, a very blunt testimony to how people, or at least this person, really think and I think that many people think like that.

Though, the initial question in Elif’s account, may appear benign, this experience illustrates the underlying refusal to accept non-White racial and/or ethnic groups as Austrians. Indeed, Elif’s claim of “[I’m] from Austria” is met with scepticism and follow-up questions seeking a supposedly true place of origin. Over time, the repetition of such questioning amounts to frustration and exhaustion, as it reaffirms the notion that Austrian identity is unattainable for those whose physical features deviate from norms of what is considered Austrian.

Moreover, after describing a similar instance at her workplace, Megan reflected the motivations that may prompt people to ask these questions:

But then I also think that everyone else is kind of thinking, “What is she doing here?” or “Why exactly is she here?” . . . and then I just feel . . . yeah, “out of place” really describes it quite well.

This illustrates how FO can convey the message that the presence of POC, immigrants, and their descendants in professional settings demands special justification. This can in turn erode the legitimacy of one’s presence in these spaces, leaving participants feeling out of place.

Participants reported a range of emotional reactions during and after experiencing FO: “first, I was angry, then I was sad, I felt so singled out, so uncomfortable. It was kind of a traumatic experience for me because afterward, I was just completely drained” (Sara). Notably, participants reflected specifically on anger. Viktor explained how his capacity for anger had changed over time: “in your youth, you know, when you’re angry, when you bottle things up inside when you’re upset, but I think the older you get, the calmer and more relaxed you become”. Nonetheless, Elif, who subscribed to a calm and diplomatic approach for reacting to FO, noted: “if I hadn’t heard that sentence, I wouldn’t have felt even worse I think it pretty much ruined my entire evening”.

Furthermore, Angelina explained how an experience of FO brought back negative emotions associated with her past experiences of being labelled as abnormal:

I think the feelings I had at that moment, those were recurring feelings, I felt them again and again but this time I also got the confirmation because over time it had gotten a bit better . . . and then this man gave me that confirmation again that my shame or those negative feelings were valid and that I should keep feeling them which is kind of sad like you’re doing better and better and then a random and unimportant person comes along and makes a comment that reawakens all those insecurities you’ve always had.

This illustrates how an unsolicited comment unexpectedly caused her to relive intense emotional reactions. FO may transport affected individuals back to their earlier experiences of being labelled as abnormal, which can reactivate longstanding feelings of shame and sadness. Moreover, these emotions might persist well beyond the incident. This exemplifies how FO can disrupt one’s sense of belonging.

When viewed together, these experiences illustrate how POC and immigrants and their descendants are repeatedly labelled as abnormal. What is seen as abnormal is defined in relation to norms of who or what is Austrian. This labelling erodes the sense of belonging of

those affected as their abnormality is framed as incompatible with claiming an Austrian identity. However, participants advocated for an expanded view of Austrian national identity.

Gatekeeping Austrianness. Participants' accounts highlight that a key element of being labelled as abnormal through FO is the practice of pigeonholing POC, immigrants, and their descendants:

In the end it really just comes down to, yeah (.) uhm (.) now I've said it and now they've sorted me into their box, I usually just say my mother's from [Country X] and my father's from [Country Y] without all the additional information, then they put that into their box, it works for them, but in the end you've only confirmed what they wanted to hear (...) something they can ultimately use to file you away again, right? They actually don't want you to be part of society, that's something that's really become even clearer to me now. (Elif)

This emphasizes Elif's awareness that follow-up questions about one's parents' national origin function as a means of extracting concessions about the validity of one's identity. As Elif further explained, this gatekeeping of Austrianness is grounded in a White ethnocentric conception of national identity:

I think it's really an ideological problem that you're basically born into with this concept of a nation-state where there's a certain idea of how Austrians are supposed to look or behave and it's not about what's written in the law but more about what you see in everyday life or habits and routines . . . it's more about this cultural level.

Based on such norm of how Austrians are supposed to look, act and speak, certain people are barred from claiming an Austrian identity, even when they hold citizenship or deep cultural ties to Austria. The meaning that POC and descendants of immigrants who are born and raised in Austria derive from FO is illustrated in the following remark from Megan:

[It's] an extremely unsettling feeling when you're seen as a foreigner in your own homeland because you think where else are you supposed to go? I'm neither at home in Austria nor at home in Lagos so where is my home? Then you just feel misplaced no matter where you are.

This illustrates how FO leads her to question if a sense of belonging is even attainable. Therefore, FO implies that certain physical features and cultural aspects are seen as incompatible with being Austrian.

Rejection and Oppression. Although the interview questions pertained to FO, participants went beyond this scope and reported experiences including other microaggressions, institutional racism and hate crimes. For example, Viktor recalled how

“[he] was constantly insulted as a Gypsy and [residents of a small town in a rural area] even assaulted [him and other Roma people] with umbrellas”. Moreover, Elif “grew up on a main street and um at the doorframe or wall someone . . . had written 'fucking Jew' on the wall”.

Notably, Azar reported a differing experience and perspective of racial/ethnic discrimination in Austria. For example, “I had that in Austria too, the time uhm where I really felt quite bad also like strongly uhm discriminated but (...) I don’t want to say that those were always necessarily racist experiences” (Azar).

Another pattern that was identified across interviews were participants’ worries that certain political agents contributed to a climate that encourages the rejection and oppression of POC, immigrants, and their descendants. For example, Sara recalled the first time she felt concerned about this after immigrating to Austria:

And then I came to Austria and saw this huge FPÖ [far-right Freedom Party of Austria] poster and it said “Daham statt Islam” [At home instead of Islam]. There was a woman with a headscarf on the poster . . . and I thought “Oh my God what does that mean?” I didn’t really understand it as a child, but I thought it must be something bad and then I slowly found out who the FPÖ is and I felt very uncomfortable whenever I saw the election posters, like not welcome.

Participants expressed growing concern about right-wing parties that invoke anti-immigrant rhetoric, challenging their right to belong. Incidents like culturally racist election slogans or right-wing extremist threats on social media raised concerns over being rejected by Austrian society. This is exemplified in Azar’s thoughts on the current political climate in Austria:

So if someone were to say to me now, “You have to leave because you’re a foreigner”, that would really break my heart, because I would say, what is the difference between me and the others? Because I didn’t put in less effort than the others, quite the opposite, very often I even had to try twice or three times as hard (...) we’re in the year two thousand twenty-four but we still see that the majority votes for the right uhm that does set off alarm bells where you then say, yeah, what do I do?

Both past experiences of racism and concerns about a hostile political climate can invoke a sense of a looming threat (e.g., forced displacement, hate crimes). Rather than considering the issue of FO in isolation, participants seemed to contextualize it as part of a history of rejection and oppression.

Damage Control. Participants described several aspects of how they felt about and reacted to being labelled as abnormal. A pervasive pattern was the focus on navigating

existing conditions of marginalization to find ways to avoid further harm, which is reflected in the theme of “damage control”.

Participants’ efforts to avoid harm included attempts to conceal their racial and/or ethnic identity. For example, Angelina remembers distancing herself from her Armenian heritage in the context of her White Austrian peer group:

I somehow avoided or denied my Armenian heritage my whole life outside of my family home, I always avoided the topic, always . . . in my childhood and youth I never talked about it and whenever someone mentioned it, I felt very attacked because I thought, huh, I’m from Austria, why are you talking about this? I don’t know Armenia.

This illustrates that Angelina’s efforts to blend in with her White Austrian peers were associated with identity denial. Participants expressed that denying their identity posed an internal conflict. On the one hand, they wished to blend in to avoid being labelled as abnormal and on the other, they resented having to sacrifice parts of themselves.

Conversely, participants also described feeling an impulse not only to blend in, but to avoid standing out or even being noticed at all. For instance, Megan stated that she “just wanted to withdraw even more” and “didn’t want to stand out by being loud or by somehow taking up too much space or something because [she] didn’t want anyone to pay attention to [her]”. Additionally, Angelina described how the feeling of standing out can be amplified in predominantly White contexts associated with Austrian culture:

I really notice it strongly, I haven’t been to Wiesn [regional folk festival similar to German Oktoberfest] in ages, I think, but at Wiesn I feel it extremely (.) that I think to myself, “Oh, the people”, like, I just look completely different from everyone else, and that definitely stands out, uhm, and (.) yeah, I don’t know if I really feel comfortable.

Likewise, Megan reported that she avoids certain events and spaces where she has come to expect to be labelled as abnormal:

It would really feel like a metaphysical massacre if I were to enter a Viennese pub. For no amount of money in the world would I expose myself to that situation, I mean, that would be absolute suicide. And that’s just crazy as someone who is born and raised in this city, you know?

These statements exemplify how repeated experiences of being labelled as abnormal can lead individuals to become attuned to anticipating such incidents. While this supports the successful avoidance of these adverse experiences, participants’ accounts suggest that it could

also contribute to a heightened vigilance and fear, potentially exacerbating the effects of FO. This is exemplified by Angelina's description of her emotional reaction to an experience of FO:

My first thought was "I hope now the others won't all realize that I am not Austrian" (...) so my first my first impulse was fear because I was afraid that now all the others would also cast me out (...) and shame, a bit of shame too, which is kind of absurd, like, shame just for what I am.

Furthermore, this account underscores the importance of shame as an emotional reaction to FO. Participants' reported that they felt ashamed for physical features for which they were labelled as abnormal in the past. For example, Megan recalled times where she had prayed to be "made White" when she was younger. Likewise, Angelina described how similar feelings of shame continue to affect her in the present:

I still feel that in everyday life every time someone touches me for example I'm like oh what if the person now feels that I'm hairy and then realizes that I'm from a different country you know? So those are the little things in everyday life where I think yeah that's still from my childhood or my youth.

Finally, the theme of "damage control" reflects participants' efforts to prevent or avoid experiences of FO and, more generally, being labelled as abnormal. Identity denial and avoidant behaviour may reduce harm in the short term by lowering the frequency of FO. This is exemplified by Megan's assessment that "the advantage of this withdrawing and making yourself small is (...) that it's simply the most comfortable way sort of for yourself". Despite that participants' accounts suggest that these strategies are insufficient for managing the disruptive impact of FO on their identity and sense of belonging. In contrast to the theme of "damage control", participants also reported that they found ways to question and challenge being labelled as abnormal.

I decide who I am

Participants reported that they actively shape their identities by embracing, learning about, and openly representing the culture of their racial and/or ethnic groups. The overarching pattern that was identified in this regard is the theme of "I decide who I am". This reflects participants' ability to assert their own sense of identity, rather than having it imposed by others.

Several participants expressed that understanding racial and/or ethnic identity as multifaceted was pivotal to the development of their identity. For instance, Sara stated that she identifies as Bosnian and Viennese, as well as European and that "I can have multiple

identities within me and all of that is allowed to exist, I don't have to decide for one (...) I explain it to myself like that." Furthermore, Azar stated that she identifies as Persian and that she made conscious decisions to integrate the culture of both Iran and Austria, rather than feeling torn between competing cultural allegiances: "That's also roughly how I would describe us, (...) that we uhm are hybrid uh [laughs] beings (...) who are a mixture uhm of both cultures, who belong to both at the same time". Likewise, Angelina positively framed her identity as Austrian and descendant of Armenian immigrants as having "the best of both worlds".

However, integrating the facets of one's racial and/or ethnic identity can be a long process that is continually disrupted by FO and other circumstances beyond one's control, such as immigration status:

At first it was really hard, so for me it really took ten around ten years until I slowly could start to identify as Viennese and now, since I have Austrian citizenship, I can say I'm Austrian too, but before that it was difficult for me because I somehow couldn't prove it and it's still a bit more difficult, I have to say honestly, because I feel like I'm not allowed to (...), like, I wasn't born in Austria, I'm not allowed to see myself as Austrian and on the other hand they demand it, there are some who demand it and then there are some who don't [laughs] uhm don't allow it, so you can never do it right, that's why you have to decide for yourself. (Sara)

Different instances of identity affirmation were described, such as hosting cultural events, or expressing affirmative declarations like Viktor's statement: "I was born as what I was born as and I have to stand by that, and that was always my attitude". These acts of affirming one's identity may receive pushback, but they appear to be an essential part of resolving feelings of shame.

Furthermore, participant reported that they consider the racial and/or ethnic composition of their context, when they assert or share aspects of their racial and/or ethnic identity:

I was really happy to show them that, uhm and that's something that for me is just unimaginable in exclusively Austrian circles, which I find really sad (...) for example in friend groups made up only of Austrians, uh, like people who were born in Austria, and in those I would definitely feel a certain uh . . . hesitation to talk about Armenia, uhm, or even to prepare a dish like that, but maybe that's because I don't want to be seen as the only outsider in these all-Austrian circles or friend groups (...) whereas in a more diverse environment you might even feel more like you belong when people

talk about their different cultures (...) like when I talk about Armenia and about Austria (...) like, “Hey I’m different too, just like you, we’re all different”. (Angelina)

This illustrates how Angelina’s concerns about being labelled as abnormal by her peers are attenuated in a diverse context. POC, immigrants, and their descendants may choose not to reveal aspects of their racial and/or ethnic identity in some settings, while confidently affirming those aspects in others.

Finally, there are some intergenerational differences. Participants whose parents were first-generation immigrants, reported that their parents had to overcome more institutional racism and overt racial/ethnic discrimination than themselves. As a consequence their parents may hold different views about belonging to Austrian society.

To summarize, the theme “I decide who I am” comprises acts of self-determination that allow participants to take ownership of their racial and/or ethnic identity and their associated cultural heritage. In contrast to feeling ashamed, Azar refers to this as “the moment when you then find acceptance for yourself”. While participants’ accounts illustrate that this can be a challenging process, it also serves as a means of self-determination, resilience, and personal growth in the face of persistent invalidation through FO.

Speaking up for Myself and Others

Beyond assertions of identity, the theme of “speaking up for myself and others” reflects the overarching pattern of participants’ determination to take measures against FO and racism in a broader sense. Participants emphasized the importance of approaches on an interpersonal level, like challenging microaggressions among friends or acquaintances. For instance:

To work it out directly with the person, like, to have a conversation, uhm “Why do you think that way?” and then possibly reach (.) a . . . a positive conclusion with the actor themselves, because I think what sometimes still leaves you dissatisfied is that you don’t, so often don’t get a second chance uhm (.) to reach common ground with that person (...) to say “Hey, let’s talk about it. Why are you acting this way?” and “Here’s how I see it”, like, so, just to be heard by that person. (Angelina)

This exemplifies how addressing microaggressions can serve to reclaim validation of one’s experiences. However, Megan noted that she experienced it as relatively easier to employ this approach in defence of others, rather than when she is directly affected:

When such things happen to other people (...) I’m much more likely to say something and much more likely to show people that what they’re saying isn’t okay (...) unlike

when it happens to myself because I have the feeling that for yourself, you only really understand afterwards what actually happened.

Furthermore, participants reported that they attempt to educate perpetrators of FO by engaging them in critical dialogue. This is illustrated by Viktor's conviction that this approach can foster understanding and, ideally, initiate behavioral shifts:

I always say, if you can educate someone and they come to that realization (.) I don't judge people, but if they come to understand and I've educated them, then I know, okay, that's one more person who is less prejudiced . . . for me that's important (....) if they come to that recognition then I've won again and I've got one more person who doesn't fuel prejudice and who maybe in turn, in their family or among their circle of friends, can offer a different perspective there and I say that's always a chain reaction. (Viktor)

In this light, attempts to educate perpetrators are evaluated as a meaningful response to FO, as they hold the potential to yield long-term benefits by contributing to the dismantling of underlying assumptions and stereotypes within the broader society. Furthermore, participants specifically referred to asking counterquestions as a means to facilitating critical dialogue. However, Elif emphasized that this approach is commonly met with resistance from perpetrators of FO:

To respond critically to that question, uhm, yeah but that's exactly what doesn't make it any easier, I honestly have to say (...) I've also started to, like, when people aren't satisfied with my answer (.) to question why they want to keep uh pushing like that, uh but then you really often run into a lack of understanding and resistance and (.) uhm, yeah, always this thing of, they mean well, they just want to, they think diversity is great and all [laughs].

Furthermore, participants noted that one could assert the right to refuse to answer questions that pertain to FO: "I also told that lady back then that this question can be very uncomfortable or even hurtful for some people" (Elif). Thereby, one can call attention to the intrusiveness of such questions. Additionally, preparing responses might help affected individuals to challenge future experiences of FO more effectively: "I actually started writing down answers [laughs] uh, like different responses I might give in those kinds of situations, because next time I might want to be better prepared" (Elif).

Participants that reported such strategies consistently described them as effective and empowering. However, participants also noted that challenging or critically addressing FO can feel burdensome and become an additional source of distress:

Because it's also exhausting to keep putting yourself in uncomfortable situations in order to call people out when they've done something that's not okay, that's a microaggression or that's racism, because that's, in the end you're always the one who puts yourself in that uncomfortable, like, why is it on me to always bring myself in that uncomfortable situation and to address that? Like, that's also extremely emotional stress. (Megan)

Moreover, entering into a critical dialogue with perpetrators of FO has the potential to escalate situations. Consequently, participants emphasized the need to pick their battles because "there are just situations where you have to protect yourself, where it's not about being socially critical, rather there simply really are people who can be dangerous" (Elif).

Beyond responses to FO in interpersonal contexts, participants also reported engaging in antiracism within collective contexts. For example, attending "demonstrations and rallies" (Megan), "sign[ing] petitions" (Megan) or promoting antiracism in their professional and academic spheres: "I basically turned it into my profession, that's my coping mechanism [laughs] uhm, I address it, I speak openly about it, I write (...) about this topic" (Sara).

Participants emphasized that it was important to them to take action against the broader rejection and oppression of non-White racial and/or ethnic groups. This is exemplified by Viktor's view of his engagement in antiracism activism as an obligation:

This is my life's mission (...) that I stand up for my ethnic group, that I work for my ethnic group (...) that I speak up, so that one day Roma people can say . . . that they can live in peace.

Conversely, Megan explained why she has come experience antiracism activism as a burden:

That's also the reason why I don't actively engage in activism because this sense of hopelessness is extremely strong for me and, like, the more you engage with this topic the more things you uncover that are still going wrong and the more aware you become of other issues too and get this big complex massive ball of shit that's happening in the world, and I'm the kind of person who gets really dragged down by that, like, it really hits me emotionally to the point where I just can't be happy anymore.

Furthermore, participants highlighted the importance of utilizing institutional resources to support individual measures against racial/ethnic discrimination:

If it's the employer, then the works council, if it's a professor at the university, then inform other professors, leave the seminar or protest (...) speak up, don't accept

everything, then there's, uh, for example ZARA [an anti-discrimination office], there you can also report incidents, uh or the IDB [an initiative against discrimination in the education system]. (Sara; see IDB - Initiative für ein diskriminierungsfreies Bildungswesen, n.d.; ZARA - Zivilcourage und Anti-Rassismus-Arbeit, n.d.)

Although these measures may not lead to immediate improvements for the affected individual, they can still serve an important purpose: "I just think that (...) this demonstration "No, I won't accept this" that it also (.) gets one out of that victim role (...) so you don't feel so powerless" (Sara).

To conclude, the reported strategies are regarded as effective ways of challenging FO and, more broadly, racism. These approaches may also serve an important role by empowering affected individuals. Nonetheless, participants emphasized that such efforts can be taxing. Their accounts further underscore the importance of recognizing that POC, immigrants, and their descendants should not be expected to bear the responsibility for dismantling the conditions that facilitate FO:

I think it's extremely difficult that basically the people who feel alienated are the ones thinking about what they could do (...) when the problem wasn't really created by us (...) I think one should rather ask a counterquestion and just ask "What could you people who make us feel out of place (...), even in our own country, (...) do, so that we don't feel like foreigners?" (...) it's difficult for me to find something for how I could deal with it because (...) why do I have to deal with it? (Megan)

Community Support

Another theme that was identified in participants' reports of how they cope with FO is "community support". Being part of a larger community that can offer validation of shared experiences and supportive resources was repeatedly referred to as essential in dealing with identity-related issues, belonging, and racism in general.

Participants described how they received support from various sources. For example, Elif mentioned being "glad that (...) I've also gained this BIPOC [Black, Indigenous, and People of Color] [community] as kind of a friend group". Azar referred to her husband, who also identifies as Persian, as her main source of support for dealing with experiences of being labelled as abnormal: "We analyse it, we talk about it, it helps us a lot, we talk to each other a lot, it can happen that we talk about this kind of scene for two hours and kind of therapize each other".

Participants particularly valued intragroup support (e.g., from peers from their racial and/or ethnic group) as an important resource in dealing with FO or racial/ethnic

discrimination in general. This is illustrated by Viktor's description of the solidarity he felt with his Roma peers during his school years:

We did stick together, when (...) one of us got insulted we did uh we Roma stood together, it was like that, we supported each other, and we said "We can't just accept that" (...) the solidarity was always there.

Furthermore, several participants mentioned that the support they received from friends with shared experiences was qualitatively different from the support offered by her White Austrian friends:

You just understand each other, like, it's (.) often just the case that a lot of the problems you have, or insecurities or things like that which you have, White people just can't really relate, even if they're my friends, because they're just not inside of me and they don't experience life as me, or experience life as someone who looks [like they might be a foreigner], which is completely obvious, that they just don't get a lot of things, and then compared to other half Black people, for example, you just share so many experiences and there's this kind of unspoken understanding. (Megan)

This illustrates that participants recognized a key difference in the support they received. People who are not directly affected by racism may struggle to provide support that is as effective as intragroup support, due to their limited experience with the impact of being labelled as abnormal or with racial/ethnic discrimination in general.

Despite that, participants also noted that White Austrian friends who try to emphasize with their struggles can be a source of community support. For example Azar stated that, in addition to speaking to her husband, they would seek validation from White Austrians:

We talk to our Austrian friends and then uh we see how they react but (...) most of the time you get the validation from them (.) or you get sympathy, or "yeah, no, that's really not okay" or something like that, uh, so when you hear something like that, [it] also feels [good].

Sources of community support offer safe spaces where people can exchange and validate their experiences, reflect on coping strategies for FO and other racial/ethnic discrimination. This is also exemplified by the following report from Elif:

Until then I just knew that the question "Where are you from?" is uncomfortable, but I hadn't really reflected before on whether I should even be [asked] that question or whether I should even give an answer to it, and that was interesting because in this (...) community building workshop there were a lot of participants who then shared their experiences or their responses.

In summary, the reported themes trace an arc from the core experience of being labelled as abnormal to a range of responses. Strategies of damage control may serve to avoid harm. In contrast, efforts to assert one's identity and to challenge FO and racism may help mitigate the impact of being labelled as abnormal, while also offering feasible ways to reduce the incidence of such experiences in the long term. Furthermore, community support can foster a sense of belonging and offer validation through shared experiences, opportunities for reflection, as well as support in coping with racial/ethnic discrimination.

Discussion

The aim of this research project was to investigate how marginalized communities of POC, immigrants, and their descendants in Austria experience and cope with FO, a subtle yet impactful form of racial/ethnic discrimination. By employing a mixed methods design, adverse effects associated with FO and the role of different coping strategies were assessed.

In the quantitative phase, specific hypotheses regarding the associations between FO, perceived stress, and coping strategies were tested. In the qualitative phase, participants' accounts were analysed to gain deeper insights into their experiences of FO, including the subjective meanings, perceived effects, and sociopolitical context, as well as the coping strategies they view as functional or dysfunctional. The integration of these results offers a nuanced understanding of FO in the context of Austrian society.

Quantitative Results

The reported quantitative results support the hypothesis of a positive association between FO and perceived stress ($r = .17$ [.004, .347], $p = .013$; see Figure 2). Participants who had encountered more instances of FO within the previous year also reported significantly higher levels of perceived stress during that same time frame. This finding contributes to a growing body of research that indicates that FO is linked to heightened distress (Armenta et al., 2013; Juang et al., 2021). Additionally, the present research project provides the first report of a significant association between FO and perceived stress in an Austrian sample.

Furthermore, this result aligns with the outcomes anticipated by the MPM (Sue, 2010). Within the microaggression taxonomy, FO is classified as a form of microinvalidation, which is defined as "communications that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality" (Sue, 2010, p. 29) of targeted individuals. Even without an intention to do harm, this can cause considerable distress to its targets (Williams, 2020). Accordingly, a positive relationship between FO and perceived stress can be expected.

Since the reported result aligns with this prediction, it indicates that the MPM (Sue, 2010) may be applicable to the experiences of affected individuals in Austria.

According to established guidelines for interpreting correlation coefficients (Cohen, 1988), the observed relationship ($r = .17$) constitutes a small effect. However, given that the sample included participants who identified with a range of racial and ethnic groups (see Table 3) and gave various reasons for feeling perceived as foreigners in Austria (see Table 4), this diversity suggests that a considerable share of the population may be affected by these adverse experiences. Consequently, a correlation of $r = .17$ should be regarded as an effect with meaningful implications.

In contrast, the results do not support the hypotheses about moderating effects of coping strategies on the association between FO and perceived stress, neither that of functional (H2.1) nor dysfunctional coping (H2.2). Furthermore, in contrast to the correlation analysis, the relationship between perceived stress and FO was no longer significant in the additive multiple moderation analysis. Only dysfunctional coping was found to be a statistically significant predictor of perceived stress. Therefore the quantitative results do not support the predictions that were based on existing empirical evidence for the functionality of coping with racial/ethnic discrimination (Jacob et al., 2022). Several possible explanations for this are suggested.

Firstly, the intended sample size of $N = 96$ was based on an anticipated medium effect size of $R^2 = .21$ (Greer et al., 2015), while the observed effect size of $R^2 = .093$ in the additive multiple moderation analysis was small. Thus, with a sample of $N = 164$, it may have lacked sufficient statistical power to detect potential moderating effects of coping strategies.

Secondly, the Brief COPE used for quantitative data collection did not assess all coping strategies that are identified as functional in the literature (Jacob et al., 2022). Specifically, this concerns identity affirmation and activism. Despite that, the Brief COPE was used because it comprises ten out of twelve coping strategies relevant to the current research questions within a single questionnaire.

Lastly, the empirical evidence for both the functionality of coping (Jacob et al., 2022) and the effect size used in the power analysis (Greer et al., 2015) were derived from studies examining coping within a broader context of racial/ethnic discrimination. Both of these aspects may not be generalizable to the quantitative phase of the present research project, which focused exclusively on the self-reported frequency of FO.

Qualitative Results

The results of the qualitative phase offer a comprehensive assessment of FO, the subjective meanings affected individuals derive from it, as well as the measures they take to cope with its impact. Each participant openly shared an in-depth account of their adverse experiences that contributed to an insightful narrative about being perceived as a foreigner in Austria.

FO is characterized by being labelled as abnormal, a pervasive experience that affects POC, immigrants, and their descendants from childhood and adolescence into adulthood. Participants reported how this labelling erodes their sense of belonging by contrasting their identities, physical features, language use, and cultural heritage against a narrow conception of Austrian national identity. This illustrates how FO is facilitated and perpetuated by underlying norms and images shaped by cultural racism (Jones, 1972). Furthermore, participants' accounts appear to align with the theoretical claim that "[FO] is primarily the result of cognitive (i.e., stereotypes) rather than emotional (e.g., anger, hate) mechanisms" (Armenta et al., 2013, p. 3).

Participants discussed experiences of FO in the context of their individual personality development, social environment, histories of rejection and oppression, as well as the current political climate in Austria. The invalidations of participants' identification with Austria occurred within the interpersonal context (Harrell, 2000) and were mostly expressed in subtle ways, as defined by the concepts of microaggressions (Sue, 2010) and daily racism microstressors (Harrell, 2000). For example, through seemingly benign comments or questions about participants' national origin. In line with predictions derived from the MPM (Sue, 2010) and theoretical assumptions suggesting that FO is associated with negative emotions (Armenta et al., 2013), participants reported emotional reactions including shame, fear, sadness, frustration, and anger.

In order to manage the detrimental effects of being labelled as abnormal on their well-being, participants reported adopting a range of coping strategies. The theme of "damage control" addresses how certain coping strategies fulfil the function of avoiding further harm. This involved efforts to blend in with White Austrian peers, as well as the avoidance of spaces where one anticipates being labelled as abnormal. Efforts to blend in appeared to be motivated by emotions of fear and shame. Consistent with the literature on microaggression (Sue, 2010), these efforts also seemed to be associated with a sense of lost integrity. Participants' reports conveyed a sense that denying or concealing parts of one's racial and/or

ethnic identity may obstruct the development of positive attitudes towards it, and further, sustain feelings of shame and fear of rejection.

Furthermore, participants' accounts illustrate how these strategies do not aim to address the underlying issues of FO and other forms of racial/ethnic discrimination. Moreover, they prove to be inadequate for coping with FO in the long term. Despite that, the theme of "damage control" also reflects the recognition that even the most dysfunctional coping strategies may serve an important purpose for affected individuals (Jacob et al., 2022).

Participants' account suggest they developed relatively stable racism-related coping styles (e.g., avoiding vs. challenging FO; Harrell, 2000). Some participants contrasted their behavioural reactions during childhood and adolescence against the strategies they employed as adults. This could suggest that maturation or personality development coincides with a shift in racism-related coping styles.

Participants also reported assertions of self-determination and identity affirmation. The acts reflected in the theme of "I decide who I am" appear to be informed by an awareness of the prevailing norms about who or what is Austrian, as well as the refusal let others define one's identity. Several participants stated that they integrated multiple identities (e.g., Bosnian and Austrian, Armenian and Austrian), even when prevailing norms implied that they were mutually exclusive. Participants regarded identity affirmation as pivotal in the development of a sense of belonging. However, participants noted that this is a long process that may be continually disrupted by FO and other external circumstances.

Furthermore, the theme of "speaking up for myself and others" illustrates how participants take active measures in response to FO, as well as racism in general. Participants described how challenging FO and its underlying stereotypes can serve as a means of reclaiming the validity of their identity and their experiences. Participants further noted that it can feel more feasible to intervene on behalf of friends than when they were directly affected. This suggests that there may be important differences in behavioural responses to vicarious racism experiences (Harrell, 2000). Moreover, participants emphasized that actively addressing racial/ethnic discrimination has the potential to dismantle it in the long term, by educating perpetrators and contributing to wider changes in society.

Importantly, Activism was regarded as a taxing but meaningful way of working towards a better future. Participants expressed feeling an obligation to contribute to dismantling the conditions that facilitate their adverse experiences of being labelled as abnormal. Activism can offer a satisfying experience of coping with racism that leads to beneficial outcomes in the long term (Jacob et al., 2022).

However, participants noted that commitment to active and critical approaches like antiracist activism can lead to additional distress. This exemplifies that even the use of coping strategies that are regarded as functional can have limitations. While actively challenging FO and racism may yield long-term benefits, it also requires individuals to expose themselves to additional sources of stress, in order to address problems they did not create. Therefore, discussions of coping with racial/ethnic discrimination need to acknowledge that marginalized communities of POC, immigrants, and their descendants should not be expected to solely bear the responsibility to challenge and dismantle these adverse experiences.

Lastly, communal spaces, like BIPOC networks or Roma associations, were reported as a source of validation and solidarity, as well as a forum for the exchange of strategies. These connections can serve as a safe space for in-depth reflections of adverse experiences, or for venting frustration. Furthermore, the support from people who share participants' experiences of being labelled as abnormal was regarded as particularly helpful. Participants' accounts illustrate the important contributions of community support to their efforts to cope with FO and racial/ethnic discrimination. This result aligns with empirical evidence that receiving affirmative support proves highly beneficial for effective coping with racism (Jacob et al., 2022).

Integration of Quantitative, and Qualitative Results

The joint consideration of quantitative and qualitative results provides a nuanced assessment of the associations between FO, stress, and coping. As discussed above, the quantitative results provide empirical evidence for the positive correlation of the racism-related stressor FO and the outcome of perceived stress. In turn, the qualitative results explain this association as a product of the multifaceted experience of racism-related stress.

Within the theoretical framework of the MPM's five phases (Sue, 2010), the quantitative phase assessed FO (incident), its self-reported frequency (perception), and perceived stress (consequence). In addition, the hypothesized moderating effects of coping strategies (reaction) were assessed. The message that affected individuals construct from a microaggression (interpretation) was specified by FO.

The qualitative phase expanded on this by providing an in-depth assessment of participants' experiences of racism-related stress in response to FO. To achieve this, participants answered questions pertaining to each dimension of the larger theoretical framework of the model of racism-related stress and well-being (Harrell, 2000), as well as each phase of the MPM (Sue, 2010). As an integrated result, the qualitative data offers a

possible explanation for the absence of the hypothesized moderation effects in the additive multiple moderation analysis.

Participants emphasized that while challenging FO and racial/ethnic discrimination can have long-term benefits by contributing to aims of antiracism, the execution of these active coping strategies may be experienced as taxing. Although such strategies are evaluated as functional for coping with racism (Jacob et al., 2022), they may contribute to the short-term experience of distress. Conversely, reported efforts to avoid further harm correspond to coping strategies that are evaluated as dysfunctional in the literature (Jacob et al., 2022). Although these strategies prove ineffective in the long-term, they may serve to mitigate distress in the short-term. This suggests that the direction of the hypothesized moderation effects may align with the long-term outcomes of these coping strategies, while diverging from their short-term outcomes. Participants in the quantitative phase were asked to report experiences within the relatively long timeframe of “in the past year”. Nonetheless, this misalignment between hypothesized effects and the dynamic nature of coping strategies may have contributed to the absence of the expected moderation.

Moreover, the qualitative results highlight that coping with FO is multifaceted and context sensitive. Participants, for instance, reported weighing potential risks and their capacity to engage in critical dialogue. Therefore, the additive multiple moderation model’s binary categorization of coping as either functional or dysfunctional may have failed to account for the complexity of coping with FO.

In light of these complex dynamics, the cross-sectional design of the quantitative phase may be unfit for assessing the hypothesized moderation effects. Similarly, the qualitative results emphasize that the benefits to coping with FO gained from community support can vary depending on whether support is given by people with or without racism-related experiences. However, quantitative data collection measured social support using the Brief COPE, which does not differentiate between identity-related sources of support. As a result, important aspects of how community support can mitigate racism-related stress may have been overlooked, which could have contributed to the absence of significant moderation effects.

Limitations

The following section outlines considerations that limit the scope and generalizability of the present results. Firstly, the qualitative results emphasize the importance of identity affirmation and activism as central to coping with FO and other forms of racial/ethnic discrimination. The circumstance that these strategies were not assessed in the quantitative

phase poses a limitation on the generalizability of the quantitative results. However, the qualitative results offered meaningful insight into these gaps as participants' accounts illustrate how actively shaping and affirming one's ethnic and/or racial identity may yield long-term benefits, such as empowerment and a more robust sense of belonging.

Secondly, the findings referenced for sample size calculation (Greer et al., 2015) coping with racism (Jacob et al., 2022) were found in samples of Black and African American participants. In contrast, the present quantitative sample comprised Austrian participants who identified with various racial and/or ethnic groups. For instance, 18.9% identified as Black and 17.0% as African Austrian, alongside other racial and ethnic identifications (see Table 3). The lived experiences of racial and ethnic groups in North America and Austria are shaped by distinct sociopolitical, cultural, and historical contexts. As a result, coping strategies that are effective in one context may be ineffective, ambiguous, or even maladaptive in another. Cultural differences may also influence the types of coping strategies members of different racial and ethnic groups choose to adopt.

Thirdly, in addition to the concerns about the quantitative sample size discussed above, the size of the participant group in the qualitative phase ($N = 6$) may also limit the generalizability of the results. Although the integrated results provide meaningful insights, the reported themes were identified across a relatively small number of interviews. Participants in the quantitative phase identified with a wide range of racial and ethnic groups that could not feasibly be fully represented in the qualitative participant group. As diverse racial and ethnic groups may experience racial/ethnic discrimination in distinct ways, it remains possible that important aspects of FO were not captured by the reported themes.

Lastly, the explanatory sequential design of the present research project offered a meaningful expansion of the quantitative results, including several possible limitations. In light of the integrated results, it appears that several of the reported limitations could have been pre-emptively considered in an exploratory sequential, i.e. reversed, research design.

Nonetheless, the reported results provide a detailed account of why particular coping strategies might not demonstrate the hypothesized moderation effects. Furthermore, the integration of quantitative and qualitative methodology allowed for a comprehensive assessment of the associations of FO, stress, and the ways affected individuals find to cope.

Implications

In conclusion, the present research project underscores the importance of recognizing FO as a form of racial/ethnic discrimination with a measurable impact on the mental health and well-being of POC, immigrants, and their descendants in Austria. While the quantitative

results affirm a small, significant, and meaningful, correlation with perceived stress, the qualitative findings offer a deeper understanding of how individuals cope with FO. The reported themes and associated coping strategies emphasize that coping with racism-related stress is a complex process. Coping strategies may serve different purposes and may have both strengths and limitations. Furthermore, whether an approach may be regarded as functional is also shaped by the specific context and the individual's capacities and resources. In light of these qualitative findings, the absence of significant moderation effects in the quantitative data suggests the need employ culturally attuned measures that are better suited to assess the experiences of marginalized communities affected by racism.

This offers important implications for psychological research. Future studies should prioritize culturally sensitive frameworks that account for identity-based and community-centred coping strategies, such as identity affirmation or activism. In terms of research design, longitudinal and cross-cultural studies could make significant contributions to understanding how coping with racism develops and manifests in different sociopolitical contexts. Such research could further illuminate whether certain coping strategies provide immediate relief, long-term resilience, or lead to unintended strain. Including assessments of variables like generational status, language proficiency, or duration of residence may also clarify why individuals experience and respond to FO differently.

Furthermore, the findings bear relevance for clinical practice. Clinicians and institutions working with individuals affected by FO and racism should consider the complexity of their adverse experiences, validate the short-term purposes of certain coping strategies, and guide individuals towards sustainable practices that yield long-term benefits.

The qualitative data highlights the emotional burden carried by those who actively challenge FO and other forms of racial/ethnic discrimination. While speaking up can serve as a meaningful coping strategy, it also involves significant emotional labour. In addition to facilitating empowerment and providing knowledge about institutional resources and communication skills, interventions that aim to foster resilience to racism-related stress should also include skills for managing the psychological strain that results from actively engaging with racism, such as self-care practices.

Crucially, the responsibility for dismantling the sociopolitical conditions that perpetuate FO must not lie solely with those who are affected by it. Institutional efforts like anti-racism training, inclusive policies, and clear protocols for addressing racial/ethnic discrimination are essential for reducing the incidence of FO at its source. In doing so, the

burden on individuals to continually adapt, cope, and educate others may be lessened, which may in turn contribute to a more equitable society.

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Appendix

Measures

Perceived Stress Scale 10 German

Instruction

Die folgenden Fragen beschäftigen sich mit Ihren Gedanken und Gefühlen während des letzten Jahres.

Bitte geben Sie für jede Frage an, wie oft Sie in entsprechender Art und Weise gedacht oder gefühlt haben.

Rating Scale

1. nie
2. fast nie
3. manchmal
4. ziemlich oft
5. sehr oft

Items

1. Wie oft waren Sie im letzten Jahr aufgewühlt, weil etwas unerwartet passiert ist?
2. Wie oft hatten Sie im letzten Jahr das Gefühl, nicht in der Lage zu sein, die wichtigen Dinge in Ihrem Leben kontrollieren zu können?
3. Wie oft haben Sie sich im letzten Jahr nervös und gestresst gefühlt?
4. Wie oft waren Sie im letzten Jahr zuversichtlich, dass Sie fähig sind, Ihre persönlichen Probleme zu bewältigen?
5. Wie oft hatten Sie im letzten Jahr das Gefühl, dass sich die Dinge zu Ihren Gunsten entwickeln?
6. Wie oft hatten Sie im letzten Jahr den Eindruck, nicht all Ihren anstehenden Aufgaben gewachsen zu sein?
7. Wie oft waren Sie im letzten Jahr in der Lage, ärgerliche Situationen in Ihrem Leben zu beeinflussen?
8. Wie oft hatten Sie im letzten Jahr das Gefühl, alles im Griff zu haben?
9. Wie oft haben Sie sich im letzten Jahr über Dinge geärgert, über die Sie keine Kontrolle hatten?
10. Wie oft hatten Sie im letzten Jahr das Gefühl, dass sich so viele Schwierigkeiten angehäuft haben, dass Sie diese nicht überwinden konnten?

Subscales

- Perceived Helplessness (PH) subscale: The PH subscale is computed by summing up Items 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, and 10.
- Perceived Self-Efficacy (PSE): The PSE subscale is computed by summing up items 4, 5, 7, and 8. Items 4, 5, 7, and 8 are reverse scored for the total score.
- The total score is the sum of all PH and reversed PSE items. Higher scores reflect greater levels of stress.

German Foreigner Objectification Scale

Instruktion

Die folgenden Fragen beschreiben bestimmte Situationen.

Bitte geben Sie an, wie oft Sie diese Situationen im letzten Jahr erlebt haben.

Wie oft haben Sie im letzten Jahr die folgenden Situationen erlebt?

Rating Scale

1. nie
2. ein- oder zweimal
3. drei- oder viermal
4. fünfmal oder mehr

Items

1. Meine österreichische Staatsbürgerschaft oder mein Aufenthaltstitel wurden angezweifelt.
2. Andere Leute waren überrascht oder sprachen mich auf meine Deutschkenntnisse an.
3. Ich wurde wegen meines Aussehens gefragt, wo ich herkomme.
4. Andere Leute haben mit mir auf unnötig langsame oder laute Weise gesprochen.
5. Ich wurde als Ausländer*in bezeichnet.

Brief COPE German

Instruction

Beurteilen Sie jetzt bitte, inwiefern die folgenden Aussagen auf Ihr Denken und Handeln in unangenehmen oder schwierigen Situationen im letzten Jahr zutreffen.

Bitte machen Sie für jede Aussage eine Angabe.

Denken Sie dabei an die Situationen aus dem vorigen Abschnitt:

- "Meine österreichische Staatsbürgerschaft oder mein Aufenthaltstitel wurden angezweifelt."
- "Andere Leute waren überrascht oder sprachen mich auf meine Deutschkenntnisse an."
- "Ich wurde wegen meines Aussehens gefragt, wo ich herkomme."
- "Andere Leute haben mit mir auf unnötig langsame oder laute Weise gesprochen."
- "Ich wurde als Ausländer*in bezeichnet."

Rating Scale

1. überhaupt nicht
2. ein bisschen
3. ziemlich
4. sehr

Items

1. Ich habe mich mit Arbeit oder anderen Sachen beschäftigt, um auf andere Gedanken zu kommen.
2. Ich habe mich darauf konzentriert, etwas an meiner Situation zu verändern.
3. Ich habe mir eingeredet, dass das alles nicht wahr ist.
4. Ich habe Alkohol oder andere Mittel zu mir genommen, um mich besser zu fühlen.
5. Ich habe aufmunternde Unterstützung von anderen erhalten.
6. Ich habe es aufgegeben, mich damit zu beschäftigen.
7. Ich habe aktiv gehandelt, um die Situation zu verbessern.
8. Ich wollte einfach nicht glauben, dass mir das passiert.
9. Ich habe meinen Gefühlen freien Lauf gelassen.
10. Ich habe andere Menschen um Hilfe und Rat gebeten.
11. Um das durchzustehen, habe ich mich mit Alkohol oder anderen Mitteln besänftigt.
12. Ich habe versucht, die Dinge von einer positiveren Seite zu betrachten.
13. Ich habe mich selbst kritisiert und mir Vorwürfe gemacht.
14. Ich habe versucht, mir einen Plan zu überlegen, was ich tun kann.

15. Jemand hat mich getröstet und mir Verständnis entgegengebracht.
16. Ich habe gar nicht mehr versucht, die Situation in den Griff zu kriegen.
17. Ich habe versucht, etwas Gutes in dem zu finden, was mir passiert ist.
18. Ich habe Witze darüber gemacht.
19. Ich habe etwas unternommen, um mich abzulenken.
20. Ich habe mich damit abgefunden, dass es passiert ist.
21. Ich habe offen gezeigt, wie schlecht ich mich fühle.
22. Ich habe versucht, Halt in meinem Glauben zu finden.
23. Ich habe versucht, von anderen Menschen Rat oder Hilfe einzuholen.
24. Ich habe gelernt, damit zu leben.
25. Ich habe mir viele Gedanken darüber gemacht, was hier das Richtige wäre.
26. Ich habe mir für die Dinge, die mir widerfahren sind, selbst die Schuld gegeben.
27. Ich habe gebetet oder meditiert.
28. Ich habe alles mit Humor genommen.

Scales

1. Ablenkung: 1, 19
2. Verleugnung: 3, 8
3. Emotionale Unterstützung: 5, 15
4. Verhaltensrückzug: 6, 16
5. Positive Umdeutung: 12, 17
6. Humor: 18, 28
7. Aktive Bewältigung: 2, 7
8. Alkohol/Drogen: 4, 11
9. Instrumentelle Unterstützung: 10, 23
10. Ausleben von Emotionen: 9, 21
11. Planung: 14, 25
12. Akzeptanz: 20, 24
13. Selbstbeschuldigung: 13, 26
14. Religion: 22, 27

Interview Guide

Vorläufer-Variablen

Zuerst möchte ich dich nur nach einigen grundlegenden Informationen fragen, um sicherzustellen, dass die Informationen, die ich habe, korrekt sind.

- 1) Dein voller Name ist ____, ist das richtig?
- 2) In welchem Jahr bist du geboren?
- 3) Was ist dein Familienstand?
- 4) Leben in deinem Haushalt noch andere Personen?
 - i. *PROBE* Sind das alle?
- 5) Was machst du zurzeit hauptsächlich?
 - i. *PROBE* Bist du z.B. Schüler*in, Student*in, Haushaltsführend, in Pension, arbeitslos, arbeitssuchend, in Karenz, Pflegezeit, erwerbstätig, oder anderes?
 - ii. *PROBE* Welche Ausbildung ist/war das?
 - iii. *PROBE* Was ist/war zuletzt dein Beruf? Wie viele Stunden pro Woche etwa?
 - a. *WENN KARENZ/PFLEGE/HAUSHALT* Für wen sorgst du?
 - b. *WENN ARBEITSLOS/-SUCHEND* Was würdest du gerne machen?
- 6) Was ist dein höchster Bildungsabschluss?
- 7) Abgesehen von Deutsch, sprichst du noch weitere Sprachen und wenn ja, welche?
 - i. *PROBE* Wie würdest du deine Kenntnisse in Deutsch/diesen Sprachen einschätzen
 - b. *WENN ANDERE SPRACHEN* Mit welchen Sprachen bist du aufgewachsen?
- 8) Wie würdest du dein(e) Geschlecht(-sidentität) bezeichnen?
- 9) Wie würdest du am ehesten deine sexuelle Orientierung beschreiben?
- 10) Hast du eine langfristige, körperliche Beeinträchtigung?
 - a. *WENN BEEINTRÄCHTIGUNG* Kann ____ von anderen Personen leicht wahrgenommen werden? z.B. eine Mobilitätshilfe
- 11) Wie würdest du deinen Lebensstandard beurteilen?
- 12) Gehörst du einer Religionsgemeinschaft an und, wenn ja, welcher?
- 13) Welche Staatsbürgerschaft hast du?
- 14) In welchem Land wurdest du geboren?

Ich interessiere mich dafür mit welcher/n Ethnie(n) und mit welcher "race" Personen sich identifizieren. Das sind soziale Kategorien, für die es viele unterschiedliche Bezeichnungen gibt.

15) Kannst du mir in deinen Worten sagen mit welcher Ethnie und/oder "race" du dich am ehesten identifizierst?

Ich würde gerne mehr über dein Umfeld erfahren.

16) In welcher Gegend in Österreich lebst du aktuell? (z.B. Großstadt, Vorort, Kleinstadt, Dorf)

- i. PROBE Wo hast du in deiner Kindheit gelebt?
- ii. PROBE An welchen Orten verbringst du noch deine Zeit?

17) Mit wem verbringst du deine Zeit?

a. FOLLOW UP Wenn du an diese Personen in deinem Umfeld denkst, welche Ethnie(n) und/oder „race“ würdest du ihnen jeweils zuschreiben?

- i. PROBE Gibt es in deinem Umfeld Personen, die sich auch als ____ identifizieren?

Familiäre und Sozialisierungseinflüsse

18) Kannst du mir etwas über deine Familie erzählen?

- i. PROBE Ich würde gerne mehr über die Herkunft deiner Familie erfahren. Darf ich fragen in welchem Land bzw. Ländern deine Eltern geboren wurden?
- ii. PROBE Kannst du mir sagen in welchem Land bzw. Ländern deine Großeltern geboren wurden?
- iii. PROBE Was sind die höchsten Bildungsabschlüsse deiner Eltern?
- iv. PROBE Wenn du auf deine Kindheit und Jugend zurückblickst, wie würdest du den Lebensstandard deiner Familie beurteilen?

19) Wenn du so weit zurückdenkst, wie du dich erinnern kannst, kannst du mir erzählen was du durch deine Familie über (deine Identität als) ____ mitbekommen hast?

ALTERNATIV was du von deiner Familie darüber mitbekommen hast, was es heißt ____ zu sein?

- i. PROBE Wenn du dir euer Zuhause in deiner Kindheit/Jugend vorstellst, woran hätte man dort erkennen können, dass (ein Teil) deine(r) Familie / Eltern(teil) (aus) ____ ist?
- ii. PROBE Welche Aktivitäten habt ihr unternommen, die spezifisch für ____ sind? (z.B. Ausflüge, Bräuche, Feiertage, Veranstaltungen, etc.)

- iii. PROBE Mit wem aus deiner Familie hast du schonmal über (deine Identität als) ____ gesprochen?
- iv. WENN MIT NIEMANDEM Von wem hättest du dir das (am ehesten) erwartet?
- v. FOLLOW UP Hast du (von Person X) irgendwelche Erwartungen oder Überzeugungen über das Leben als ____ in Österreich mitbekommen?

20) Du hast gesagt du hast früher in Ort X gelebt. Wie war es für dich dort aufzuwachsen?

ALTERNATIV Wie war es dort als Kind aus einer ____-Familie aufzuwachsen?

- i. PROBE Wie hast du dich in deiner Nachbarschaft gefühlt?
- ii. PROBE Gab es dort noch andere ____-Personen?
- iii. PROBE Wie war deine Kindheit/Jugend dort im Vergleich zu der Kindheit/Jugend von Gleichaltrigen / Weißen / Christen / deren Eltern (beide) in Österreich geboren wurden / mit deutschsprachigen Eltern / mit österreichischer Staatsbürgerschaft?

21) Hattest du damals je das Gefühl, dass Leute außerhalb deiner Familie dich als ____ anders behandeln?

- i. PROBE Wo hast du diese Erfahrungen gemacht? z.B. in der Schule / deiner Glaubensgemeinschaft (Kirche/Moschee/Synagoge) / Medien (Bücher, Filme, Nachrichten) / Autoritätspersonen (Lehrpersonen, medizinisches Fachpersonal, Polizei, Beamte)
 - ii. PROBE Wie alt warst du damals?
 - iii. PROBE Hast du damals mit jemandem über diese Erfahrung(en) gesprochen?
- b. FOLLOW UP Was würdest du sagen, wie diese Erfahrung(en) dich damals beeinflusst hat/haben?
- i. PROBE Hattest du eine Vorstellung davon wie Personen dich wahrnehmen, die dich nicht kennen?
 - ii. PROBE Wie stand das im Vergleich dazu was du damals von deinen Eltern/deiner Familie über (deine Identität als) ____ mitbekommen hast?

22) Hast du damals darüber nachgedacht, wie du dich selbst identifizierst?

z.B. mehr oder weniger als ____ oder Österreicher*in, beides zu gleichen Teilen, nichts davon oder je nach Situation etwas anderes

Erfahrungen mit Ausländer*innen-Objektifizierung

Okay, nachdem wir über dein Umfeld und deine Vergangenheit gesprochen haben, würde ich gerne mehr über dein alltägliches Leben erfahren.

- 23) Wenn du an deinen Alltag in Österreich denkst, wann hast du das Gefühl, dass deine Ethnie/race/Identität als ____ eine Rolle spielt?

FÜR JEDE 24-28 SITUATION FOLLOW UPS UND JE NACH BEDARF

PROBES

- 24) Kannst du mir von einer Situation erzählen, in der du das Gefühl hattest, dass jemand dich als / Ausländer*in / Fremde*r / Eingewanderte*r / nicht als Österreicher*in wahrnimmt?

- i. PROBE Hast du schonmal erlebt, dass jemand angezweifelt / hinterfragt / geleugnet hat, dass du Österreicher*in bist?
ALTERNATIV ... jemand hinterfragt hast, ob du in Österreich geboren wurdest? ... jemand deine Staatsbürgerschaft/deinen Aufenthaltstitel angezweifelt hat?
 - ii. PROBE Wurdest du schonmal gefragt wo du herkommst?
 - iii. PROBE Kam es schonmal vor, dass jemand etwas über deine Deutschkenntnisse gesagt hat?
ALTERNATIV ...dich auf deine Deutschkenntnisse angesprochen hat
 - iv. PROBE Hast du schonmal erlebt, dass jemand davon ausging, dass du kein oder wenig Deutsch sprichst?
- b. FOLLOW UP Was ist passiert? / Was wurde zu dir gesagt? / Was hast du beobachtet oder gehört?
 - c. FOLLOW UP Wie lange ist das her?
 - d. FOLLOW UP Wo war das?
 - e. FOLLOW UP Wer war(en) diese Person(en)? Kanntest du sie zu diesem Zeitpunkt? WENN JA Wie standet ihr zueinander?
 - f. FOLLOW UP Wenn du jetzt versuchst dich in diese Situation zurückzusetzen, was hast du in diesem Moment vermutet, hat diese Person(en) motiviert das zu sagen / tun / sich dir gegenüber so zu verhalten?
 - i. PROBE Was dachtest du, welches Merkmal oder welche Eigenschaft an dir diese Person zum Anlass dafür genommen hat (das zu tun/sagen/sich so zu verhalten)?
 - ii. PROBE Wie bist du zu diesem Schluss gekommen?

- iii. PROBE Hattest du zu diesem Zeitpunkt schon etwas Vergleichbares erlebt?
- g. FOLLOW UP Wie hast du darauf reagiert?
 - i. PROBE Wie hast du dich in diesem Moment gefühlt?
 - ii. PROBE Woran hast du gedacht?

ALTERNATIV

Was ging dir durch den Kopf? / Hattest du bestimmte Gedanken?

- iii. PROBE Wie ging die Situation weiter?
- h. FOLLOW UP Was würdest du sagen hat diese Situation damals für dich bedeutet?
 - i. PROBE Wie hast du dich nach dieser Situation gefühlt?
 - ii. PROBE Wo stand diese Erfahrung in Vergleich zu deinem Selbstbild?
- i. FOLLOW UP Wenn du heute darauf zurückblickst, wie würdest du sagen, dass diese Erfahrung dich beeinflusst hat?
 - i. PROBE In welchen Momenten denkst du an diese Situation zurück?
 - ii. PROBE Wenn du jetzt darauf zurückblickst, was denkst du über diese Situation?
 - iii. PROBE Unterscheidet sich deine Sichtweise heute von der, die du damals hattest?

25) Wie fühlst du dich, wenn du an diese Situationen zurückdenkst?

Interne und Externe Mediatoren

Danke, dass du deine Erfahrungen mit mir geteilt hast. Als nächstes würde ich gerne darüber sprechen, wie du mit damit umgehst.

Rassismus-bezogene Bewältigungsstrategien

- 26) Kannst du beschreiben, wie du bisher damit umgegangen bist, wenn Leute dich als / Ausländer*in / Fremde*r / nicht als Österreicher*in wahrgenommen haben?
- i. PROBE Wie hast du dich ggü. den Personen verhalten, die dich so wahrgenommen haben?
 - ii. PROBE Was hast du nach solchen Situationen gemacht?
 - iii. PROBE Wie bist du mit deinen Gefühlen umgegangen?
 - iv. FOLLOW UP
 - b. FOLLOW UP Hast du das immer so gemacht, oder hat sich dein Umgang damit verändert? (Wann geändert? Seit wann gleichgeblieben? Was hat dich dazu gebracht zu ändern/nicht zu ändern?)
 - c. FOLLOW UP Was sind die Hauptgründe, warum du das auf diese Art machst?

- d. FOLLOW UP Was würdest du sagen sind Vor- und Nachteile daran?
 - e. FOLLOW UP Wann hattest du das Gefühl, dass du mit so einer Situation wirklich gut umgegangen bist? Wann nicht?
 - i. PROBE Was war dabei ausschlaggebend?
 - f. FOLLOW UP Was würdest du gerne stattdessen tun?
- 27) Wie denkst du könnte man noch damit umgehen, wenn man in Österreich als /
Ausländer*in / Fremde*r / nicht als Österreicher*in wahrgenommen wird?

***GEHE IN FLEXIBLER REIHENFOLGE AUF DIE FOLGENDEN BEREICHE
EIN***

Externe Ressourcen

- 28) Mit wem hast du bisher über diese Erfahrungen gesprochen?
- i. PROBE Kannst du mir von einem Mal erzählen, als du mit Person X darüber gesprochen hast?
 - ii. PROBE Wie hast du dich nach diesem Gespräch gefühlt?
- b. FOLLOW UP Worauf legst du Wert wenn du entscheidest, wem du von solchen Erfahrungen erzählst?
- i. PROBE Wann ist das für dich wichtig und wann nicht?
- 29) Im Allgemeinen, wo suchst du dir Unterstützung?
- i. PROBE Was denkst du wer dich unterstützen könnte?
 - ii. PROBE Gibt es bestimmte Orte und Räume, in denen dich unterstützt fühlst?
- 30) Wenn du an Situationen denkst, in denen du als / Fremde*r / Ausländer*in /
Eingewanderte*r / nicht als Österreicher*in wahrgenommen wirst, wie könnten andere
Personen dich idealerweise dabei unterstützen damit umzugehen?

Aktivismus

- 31) Hast du schonmal an einer Form von Aktivismus zu den Themen Anti-Rassismus,
Migration(-spolitik), oder Fremdenfeindlichkeit teilgenommen?
- i. PROBE Worum hat es sich dabei gehandelt? z.B. einer Demonstration, Protest, Streik, Boykott, (Online)-Kampagne, Petition, zivilem Ungehorsam, Kunst als Protest?
 - ii. PROBE Wie kam es dazu?
- b. FOLLOW UP Wie hast du dich dabei gefühlt?
- c. FOLLOW UP Hast du daraus etwas mitgenommen?
- i. PROBE Wie hat es dich beeinflusst?

- ii. PROBE Wolltest du Dinge auf die gleiche Weise oder anders machen? In welchen Bereichen?

Spiritualität

- 32) Was würdest du dazu aus Sicht deines/r Glaubens / Spiritualität sagen?
- i. PROBE Aus dieser Perspektive, wie meinst du sollte man handeln?
 - b. FOLLOW UP Wie würdest du sagen, beeinflusst dich dein/e Glaube / Spiritualität, wie du darüber denkst, oder fühlst, was du tust und wie du dich selbst siehst?

Racial/Ethnic Identity

- 33) Wie hast du bisher über (deine Identität als) ____ erfahren?
- 34) Ist Deine Selbstbezeichnung abhängig vom Kontext, indem Du Dich befindest?
- i. PROBE Könntest Du mir das anhand einer Situation verdeutlichen?
- 35) Wie denkst du generell über deine Identität als ____ ?
- a. FOLLOW UP Kannst du beschreiben, was deine ethnische Zugehörigkeit für dich persönlich bedeutet?
 - b. FOLLOW UP Wie zufrieden bist du mit deiner Identität als ____ ?

Outcomes

- 36) Vor dem Hintergrund deiner Erfahrungen, über die wir gesprochen haben, wie fühlst du dich in Österreich?
- 37) Was bedeutet es für dich ____ in Österreich zu sein?
- i. PROBE Hattest du Erwartungen oder Hoffnungen, die mit deiner Identität als ____ zu tun hatten?
 - b. FOLLOW UP Hast du das immer so gesehen, oder hat sich deine Ansicht mit der Zeit geändert?
 - i. PROBE Wann glaubst du, hat sich deine Sicht darauf geändert?
 - ii. PROBE Was hat dich dazu gebracht, deine Meinung zu ändern?
- 38) Was bedeutet es für dich, wenn du in Österreich als Ausländer*in / Fremde*r / Eingewanderte*r / nicht als Österreicher*in wahrgenommen wirst?
- a. FOLLOW UP Was bedeutet das für deine Beziehungen zu anderen ____ (- Personen) ?
 - b. FOLLOW UP Was bedeutet das für deine Beziehungen zu *Weiß*en / Christen / Personen deren Eltern (beide) in Österreich geboren wurden / mit österreichischer Staatsbürgerschaft?
- 39) Was würdest du anderen Leuten empfehlen, die ähnliche Erfahrungen machen?
- 40) Wie siehst du dbzgl. die Zukunft? Welche Wünsche und Sorgen hast du?

- 41) Was sollte deiner Meinung nach in Österreich passieren, um etwas zu verändern? Wie können Personen unterstützt und geschützt werden?

Codebook

System of Codes Developed in Qualitative Data Analysis

Codes	Frequency
Transformative meaning	3
Opening old wounds	10
What it's like in Austria	
Feeling out of place / Alienated	28
Uncertainty about belonging	4
Citizenship	10
Community based racial socialization	6
Composition of contexts	27
Mostly White spaces	3
Assumption of little diversity in Austria	8
Few spaces where you can actually talk about this	2
Elections	6
Invisible default of being "Austrian"	2
Beauty Ideals	8
Romantic relationships	6
Experiences from abroad	12
Family based racial socialization	26
Frequency of Discrimination	12
Intersection with Gender	4
Institutional racial socialization	21
Marginalisation	3
Denied chances	9
Immigrants/POC have to work multiple times as hard to make it	2
Having it worse due to physical appearance	7
Bureaucracy hassle	3
Positive Racism	3
Openly racist discrimination / violence	20
Otherized as a child	20
Progressive bubble	4
Realizing that I'm different	5
Seen as less than due to ethnic identity	5
Urban vs Rural	9
Socioeconomic Status confounds	1
This is my country	8
Who is Austrian and who isn't?	14
My physical appearance deviates from the norm	22

Codes	Frequency
They don't want us to be a part of Austria	10
Right wing of Political Spectrum doesn't want me here	10
My ethnic and/or racial identity	21
Internalised "I am not what you would call Austrian"	11
I decide who and what I am	13
Children don't reflect about this	14
Learning History	5
Using ethnic and/or racial identity as a resource	2
Personal theory of ethnic identity	5
Context modifies what you identity yourself as	5
Differences between 1st and 2nd Generation of Immigrants	14
Migrating makes you reflect about identity	6
I am a hybrid / mix of multiple ethnic and/or racial identities	26
Ethnic identity is not tied to physical appearance	4
Instances of foreigner objectification	14
Because name	3
Because physical appearance	11
Discrimination of friends and family (Witnessed or heard about)	13
Environmental Microaggression / Racism	2
Generational Differences in Awareness / Discrimination	7
Marked as a foreigner	12
Fear of being exposed	10
No matter what I do, I can't escape it	10
Reduced to racial and/or ethnic identity	6
Overstepping my personal boundaries	5
Strange looks	8
Sum of it weighs heavy	1
"Where are you from?" I get this question a lot	23
How to do it better	2
They refuse to accept my answer	5
It's different among Immigrants and their descendants / POC	5

Codes	Frequency
Meaning of the Question	2
White people can't relate	6
Dismissive reactions from others	13
Work Context	14
Assumptions about motivations	
Exoticization	4
Anger	1
Angst vor dem Fremden	9
Hatred	2
Inconsideration	2
Language / Accent	8
Provoke	4
Meant no harm	5
Schubladendenken	12
White Curiosity	9
How it makes me feel	
Acceptance / Just a part of life	6
Anger	16
Anticipation of discomfort	3
Ashamed	6
Draining	6
Hopeless	4
Humiliated	1
Ignore	4
Powerless	5
Pressure to represent group well	5
Sadness	4
Shock	3
Unbothered	4
Coping Strategies	
Emotion-focused strategies	4
Reframing as a chance work against racism	4
Stay calm	8
Racism/Discrimination in general	34
Avoidance	5
Avoid drawing attention	8
Disengage	5
Blending in to belong	19
Loss of Integrity	5
Don't want to cause trouble	7
Pretend it's all good	2
Downplay or deny	4
Empowered	7
Forget about it	4
Identity Denial	15
Humor	7
Healthy Paranoia	9

Codes	Frequency
Identity Affirmation	15
Proudly presenting ethnicity/race	7
Questioning	4
Serious enough to speak up?	2
Perpetrator is small and unimportant	3
Problem-focused strategies	7
Counter-Question to reveal absurdity of FO	6
Speaking up against injustice	26
Dare to be critical	2
Worse off if you say something	3
Escalation	2
Informing myself	14
Prepare	4
Refusing the question	4
Working to reduce discrimination	12
Activism	21
Educating perpetrators	33
Fostering Connection	14
Refusal to accept as a part of life	6
Who's responsibility is it to change things for the better?	11
Professional or academic work with discrimination, migration, identity	15
Religion	9
preoccupied with FO after Incident	5
Self-Blame / I could have done more	2
Worry about other affected people	2
Social Support	18
Want for appreciation	6
Talking to others	29
Institutional resources	19
Community	16
Future	
Becoming bitter	1
Don't fuel prejudice	1
Mutual respect	4
Options for supporting affected individuals	6
Worry about the future	3
Worry about loved ones	6

Abstract

The aim of this mixed methods research project was to investigate how people of color, immigrants, and their descendants in Austria cope with foreigner objectification - a subtle yet impactful form of racial/ethnic discrimination. In the quantitative phase ($N = 164$), associations between foreigner objectification and perceived stress, as well as the potential moderating role of coping strategies, were examined. Foreigner objectification was significantly associated with higher perceived stress ($r = .17, p = .013$), indicating a small but meaningful effect. However, no significant moderation effects were found for either functional or dysfunctional coping strategies, as measured by the Brief COPE.

In the qualitative phase ($N = 6$), thematic analysis was used to explore participants' experiences of foreigner objectification and their evaluations of various coping strategies. Participants described foreigner objectification as an emotionally distressing invalidation of their sense of belonging to Austrian society. Coping responses included avoidance and identity denial, which were perceived to offer short-term benefits but were associated with feelings of shame and a loss of integrity. Other strategies involved identity affirmation and activism, which fostered self-determination and active resistance to foreigner objectification. Additionally, participants emphasized the value of community support as a resource for mutual validation and empowerment.

These findings underscore the negative effects of foreigner objectification on mental health and well-being and highlight the importance of recognizing it as a form of racial/ethnic discrimination. They also point to the need for culturally sensitive measures and interventions that reflect the context-specific dynamics of coping with racism-related stress.

German Abstract

Ziel dieses Mixed-Methods-Forschungsprojekts war es zu untersuchen, wie People of Color, Eingewanderte und deren Nachkommen in Österreich mit Ausländer*innen-Objektifizierung umgehen - einer subtilen Form rassistischer/ethnischer Diskriminierung mit spürbaren Folgen. In der quantitativen Phase ($N = 164$) wurden Zusammenhänge zwischen Ausländer*innen-Objektifizierung und wahrgenommenem Stress, sowie mögliche Moderationseffekte von Bewältigungsstrategien untersucht. Dabei zeigte sich ein signifikanter positiver Zusammenhang zwischen Ausländer*innen-Objektifizierung und erhöhtem Stresserleben ($r = .17, p = .013$), was einen kleinen, aber bedeutsamen Effekt darstellt. Für funktionale oder dysfunktionale Bewältigungsstrategien, erhoben mit dem Brief COPE, wurden jedoch keine signifikanten Moderationseffekte gefunden.

In der qualitativen Phase ($N = 6$) wurde mit einer thematischen Analyse untersucht, wie Betroffene Ausländer*innen-Objektifizierung erleben und welche Bewältigungsstrategien sie als funktional oder dysfunktional bewerten. Ausländer*innen-Objektifizierung wurde als emotional belastende Invalidierung der eigenen Zugehörigkeit zur österreichischen Gesellschaft beschrieben. Die berichteten Bewältigungsstrategien umfassten Vermeidungsverhalten und die Verleugnung der eigenen Identität, was kurzfristig als vorteilhaft erlebt wurde, jedoch mit Schamgefühlen und einem Verlust von Integrität einhergehen konnte. Weitere Strategien beinhalteten Identitätsaffirmation und Aktivismus, welche Selbstbestimmung und aktiven Widerstand gegen Ausländer*innen-Objektifizierung förderten. Darüber hinaus wurde der Wert von gemeinschaftlicher Unterstützung als Ressource für gegenseitige Validierung und Ermächtigung hervorgehoben.

Diese Ergebnisse unterstreichen die negativen Auswirkungen von Ausländer*innen-Objektifizierung auf die psychische Gesundheit und das Wohlbefinden von Betroffenen sowie die Notwendigkeit, Ausländer*innen-Objektifizierung als Form rassistischer/ethnischer Diskriminierung anzuerkennen. Zudem weisen sie auf den Bedarf nach kultursensiblen Messinstrumenten und Interventionen hin, die der kontextspezifischen Dynamik von rassismusbezogenem Coping gerecht werden.