The Identity of Sub-Sahara African Christians in Finland

Jean Nubaha Banyanga

Systematic Theology, Åbo Akademi University, Finland

Email: jean.banyanga@abo.fi

Abstract

Finland has become a culturally plural and complex society, with many people of different cultural backgrounds having migrated to the country for various reasons. As of the end of December 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of African foreign residents was approximately 42,408 (Statistic Finland, 2022). Although this proportion is not as large as in other European countries, it shows a constant growth of the foreign population in the relatively traditional and culturally homogeneous society. In a situation of displacement and conflict, the search for a comfort zone and identity is very important. Moreover, the issues of identity and interactions between newcomers and the local populations have become a key concern in every society. This study aims to investigate the identity of sub-Saharan African Christians and its implications for Finnish society. The argument is presented through an analysis of existing literature and documents on the matter. In this study, the term "African Christians" is used to include all Christian people from sub-Saharan Africa who consider themselves black Africans or Afrique Noires, regardless of their cultural or national origin. Moreover, while the terms anglophone and francophone are often used in literature, the term "Pan-African" is used in this study to emphasize relatedness and closeness to Sub-Saharan Africa.

Keywords: identity, Sub-Sahara, Africa, Christians, Finland.

Introduction

The current study aims to investigate the identity of Sub-Saharan African Christians and its implications for Finnish society. In this study, the term "African Christians" is used to include all Christian people from Sub-Saharan Africa who consider themselves black Africans or Afrique Noires, regardless of their cultural or national origin. Moreover, while the terms anglophone and francophone are often used in literature, the term "Pan-African" is used in this study to emphasize relatedness and closeness to sub-Saharan Africa. Sub-Saharan Africa is known as Afrique Noire (black Africa). It is an area located south of the harsh climate and sparsely occupied region

by the Sahara Desert. It is also regarded by some Archaeologists as being the birthplace of humanity, Homo sapiens, especially in Ethiopia (Mendoza, 2022). Sub-Saharan Africa is distinguished from Northern Africa, where there are inhabitants of Arab origin. According to Focus Economics (2022), together with Southeast Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa is regarded as one of the poorest regions in the world where most of the population live below the poverty line of 2$ per day. Sub-Saharan Africa has suffered slavery, the legacy of colonialism, civil war and conflicts, refugee crises, famine resulting from climate change, and the spread of contagious diseases, and requires a significant amount of aid from the international community (Solomon, 2015; Matthews, 2011). It is seen as a region with diversity, as well as potential. However, there are challenges in some sub-Saharan countries such as insufficient transportation, limited education opportunities, environmental concerns, misuse of natural resources, and corruption (Solomon, 2015). In addition, some people regard sub-Saharan Africa as pejorative, a racist geographical marginalization (Ekwe-Ekwe, 2012).

Both identity and sub-Saharan Africa are terms combined with ambiguity and complexity but also considered with curiosity and concern. The term" identity" comes from the French word 'identité' and the Latin word 'idem' which means sameness, similarity, or resemblance. Identity is a major object to distinguish and recognize a certain ethnic group of people in their various contexts. Thus, it has become very important to people's sense of belonging, and their self-understanding (Verkuyten, 2006: 224-225). In addition, identity is a set of individuals who hold a common social identification and view themselves as members of the same category (Stets & Burke, 2000). Individuals perceive themselves through the eyes of others, and their self-understanding is therefore bound by mutual communication (Serpell, 1993).

In the latter half of the twentieth century, Erik H. Erikson the father of the modern concept of identity and humanist psychologist investigated the implication of identity development in the ethnic group (Verkuyten, 2006: 1; Schwartz, 2005). He argued that identity development occurred because of the interplay between biology, psychology, religion, and environment (Sameroff & Chandler, 1975; Ferrer-Wreder, Trost, Lorente, & Mansoory, 2012). Thus, identity is not a new idiom; it has become one of the main concepts in the fields of anthropology, religion, and social science. Turner suggests three characteristics to identify ethnic identity which are: personal identity, social identity, and human identity. He argues that personal identity is the characteristics that make an individual special and unique in the group; social identity is characterized by the various classifications of the person that he/she belongs to, such as ethnicity, race, hometown, occupation, and age; while human identity is the perception of self-image that links a person to the rest of humanity and sets such a person apart from other life forms (Turner, 1987:45). When considering identities in sub-Saharan Africa, consideration should be given to both sameness and difference.

Acculturation of sub-Sahara African Christians in Finland

To be integrated into another group of people, economically, socially, politically, and traditionally takes time. The majority of sub-Saharan Africans in Finland have gained access as refugees or as the reunification of family refugees, students, and only a small part as economic migrants. Acculturation is a process in which an individual adopts and adapts to a new culture. Individuals try to integrate themselves into the new culture by participating in events of other cultures of the host country such as their traditions and religion, but still hold their original cultural values and traditions. Acculturation is a set of changes rather than a single element resulting in assimilation or absorption into a main and predominant culture (Berry, 1990; Liebkind, 1989a). How the cultural minority wishes to relate to the dominant cultural group has been termed acculturation attitudes (Berry et al., 1987).

Researchers have established the two basic elements members of ethnic-cultural minorities have to address which are (a) to maintain their cultural identity and characteristics and (b) to maintain relationships and contact with the dominant group (Berry et al., 1987). The first argument can lead to isolation because of the lack of interaction with people from the majority group. Moreover, some migrants consider themselves to be in the middle - they hold on to their culture and tradition and balance with the culture of their new home country. Based on existing theory, residing in a new cultural environment demands the capacity of being able to apply new communicative codes while simultaneously living in and between two or more "worlds," (Liebkind & Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2000; Sam & Berry, 2010). Thus, integration implies the maintenance of one's own culture as well as having a relationship with the majority group. Studies by Berry et al. (1987) and Sue & Sue (1990) show that maintaining both one's cultural tradition and contact with the majority culture gives the best integrational and psychological outcomes. Furthermore, studies on assimilation have demonstrated that positive assimilation leads to good emotional and physical health, high self-confidence, good work performance, and good grades in school (Liebkind, 2001).

The Institute for Health and Welfare in Finland (THL, 2015) believes that a remarkably large proportion of today's immigrants, especially boys, lack close friends. Immigrant young people who have no close friends also experience poorer health conditions in comparison to others and more symptoms like anxiety. Being without friends is related to other phenomena such as bullying, school well-being, and school fatigue or general fatigue. Among young immigrants, loneliness is common - 23-29% of boys and 10-16% of girls report that they do not have any close friends with whom they could relate and discuss confidential matters. Although loneliness is usually temporary, a lot of loneliness is experienced nowadays, and it weakens people's health (THL, 2015). Generally, loneliness can have serious negative consequences, on both mental and physical health, including depression, suicidal thoughts, aggression, obesity, and cardiovascular disease (Cacioppo et al., 2015).

Loneliness and social isolation are generally linked to an increased risk of early mortality (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2015) while loneliness among immigrants and young people is primarily related to different physical and mental health problems (Heinrich and Gullone, 2006).

Many Finnish people live with long-lasting loneliness. Loneliness has not increased much in recent years - but it has changed its structure and meaning (Junttila, 2018). Loneliness is not only about living far from others, but rarely meeting other people, but it can also mean that you are surrounded by opportunities for networking and social interactivity but have no contacts. Immigrants and refugees are regarded as a vulnerable ethnic group because they both flee traumatic zones and persecution and may face loneliness and discrimination and other stress-related issues in their new home countries (Mölsä et al., 2016). This kind of loneliness awakens feelings of shame and makes one feel like an unwanted person. Rejection, where people are left out, can leave migrants without words everywhere, in the playground, at home, at school, and at the workplace. At the workplace, some migrants silently disappear when others go for lunch or when they feel that someone is not listening to them. This type of neglect can be compared to bullying and abuse because it causes social damage and awakens brain impulses as well as physical pain (Junttila, 2018).

According to studies by Lax & Richard (1981), the lack of positive attitudes toward one's identity may lead to displeasure, dissatisfaction, and feelings of inferiority or unworthiness that may also lead to negative consequences, which include isolation, suicidal thoughts, alcohol abuse, and sometimes joining terrorist groups. According to the World Health Organization report (2016), suicide is a serious public health problem and is the second cause of death among 15-29-year-olds. The report states that about 800,000 individuals take their own life every year which can be related to feelings of hopelessness and isolation. According to Statistics Finland (2018), loneliness and social isolation are on the rise and highlighted as major public concerns. Migrants and young people are groups that are particularly vulnerable to experiences of loneliness. The report mentions that 824 people under 25 years old committed suicide which is higher than the average of other EU countries. The studies show that the significant predictor of loneliness comes from the social environment (Balážová, Gallová, Praško, Šlepecký, 2018).

Solitude is defined as a negative emotional response to the experience regarding a difference between the perceived and the desired quantity or quality of social relations. Since Weiss's theory of solitude in 1973, two basic dimensions have been used to describe it. Weiss (1973) used the terms "loneliness of social isolation" and "loneliness of emotional isolation". Although using different terms, later research has provided support for these two dimensions (Hoza et al., 2002). In Finland, school, the workplace, and church services are important social environments for immigrants, but it can be devastating to those who experience loneliness, bullying, or problematic social relationships. These negative experiences can lead to immigrants disliking

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school and church attendance which in turn can badly affect their motivation, academic success, and well-being (Rönkä et al., 2017). According to studies by Cavanaugh & Buehler (2016) and Elodie et al., (2018), attending Church services, local traditions, and having contact with majority group traditions may reduce loneliness and social anxiety for minority group individuals. In addition, religious belonging is one of the central factors for the formation of social relations in many communities (McGuire, 2002).

People's group identity in their new home country

When considering a sub-Sahara African identity, debates regarding Pan-Africanism are at the forefront. According to Mkhize (2006), sub-Sahara African identity is social which can be reconstructed through social engagement, as well as traditional social and ritual encounters. Africa has been the recipient of imposed influences and cultural milieux by colonial powers. Thus, western academic disciplines such as religion, and psychology have rejected the rich oral African traditions and spirituality (Nsamenang, 2007). Some scholars have argued that the culture of African societies had an impact on the way individuals construct their identities (Adams et al., 2016, Fidzani & Read, 2014). Therefore, identity is a main developmental duty for individuals, and their group identity is very important in influencing their religion as well as their well-being and their mental health issues. This developmental process offers individuals the cultural luggage to view their group positively mostly when they confront prejudice and discrimination by the majority group. Their group identity may, therefore, promote a positive, secure, and stable self-concept, and the resilience to achieve one's goals (Wakefield & Hudley, 2009:147; Edwards & Romero, 2008).

However, minority groups are continuously struggling to balance the values of their cultural heritage with the majority groups. There are many questions to ask about identity and identification. How do people know who others are, and how do individuals from the majority group identify other people in the minority group? How can a minority group come together with a majority group even though there can be different things in different circumstances? To what extent is it possible for people in minority groups to find friends in the majority group? Is it possible for people in a minority group to continue to stick to their religious traditions in their new home country? What does it mean, for example, to be a Pan-African and be integrated into a new culture?

According to Samovar, Porter, McDaniel & Roy (2012:32), social structures help the members of minority groups to organize their lives, establish communication networks (WhatsApp group, Facebook, Instagram, X [formerly Twitter]), and regulate norms of personal, familial, and social conduct. In addition, studies by (Smith, & Silva, 2011; Schwartz, 2005) show that individuals that belong to the same group that shares, religion, and values; their group identity may promote healthy development, depression, and trauma coping. Mental health problems are a major public concern in every country on the planet. People nowadays, especially in developed nations, live in

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an individualized and globalized world which may increase their vulnerability. In this regard, the term ubuntu which is associated with African culture can be emphasized in sub-Sahara African identity- pan-African. Ubuntu emphasizes an absolute interconnection of people. It can also be explained as a general view that is established in an understanding of the context of interrelationships with others (Mkhize, 2006; Pence & Nsamenang, 2008).

However, even though there are many disputes about the term ubuntu, it is regarded as a way of reasoning, understanding, and acting in unity (Mkhize, 2006; Pence & Nsamenang, 2008). Ubuntu is related to cultural rules of honesty, sympathy, kindness, pity, generosity, respect, collaboration, and encouragement of others. In addition, it is also a cornerstone for the basic values that demonstrate themselves in the ways sub-Saharan African people think and act toward each other and everybody else they meet (Mangaliso, 2001; Nsamenang, 2007). Furthermore, ubuntu implies communal connectedness that affirms an individual's humanity by making the human being human. This can be seen in the expression in African cultural identity that "it takes a community to raise a child" which means that every individual in the community is responsible for the well-being, health, and education of the child. The child is for the whole community not for the family alone.

The World Health Organization (2017) defines "health" as a complete physical condition with mental and social well-being and not just the absence of sickness or infirmity. It is a theory that has been utilized for years to clarify a state of well-being (Dolfaman, 1973:491). However, mental health and well-being are two terms that go hand in hand and are often used synonymously in many cultures. For instance, in Japanese religious tradition, Mikao Usui in 1922 suggested that being connected and having a good connection with a community enables a sense of well-being because well-being is expressed and experienced within cultural and environmental contexts (Beeler, 2018). In addition, researchers have demonstrated that group or ethnic identity development is accompanied by psychological well-being (Erikson, 1968; Tajfel, 1981). Some studies have offered the connection between religious group identity and happiness and well-being; they state that in general, people with an advanced sense of religious group identity have a higher quality of life (Yoo & Lee, 2005; Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind & Vedder, 2001; Phinney, 1990). Cultural group identity can also influence the life cycle of society, and it may affect the family structure, patterns of influence among family members, relations with others, role performance and responsibilities, marriage, work, communication patterns, living, and consumption, as well as health and illness behavior (Rwomire, 2001:56–57). Anthropologically and psychologically many studies have shown that group identity is very important to the self-concept and psychological functioning of group members (Gurin & Eppy, 1975; Maldonado, 1975).

Furthermore, Sam & Berry (2010) notice that minority people (migrants) are likely to live simultaneously in and between two or more worlds "Double Jeopardy

Hypothesis" and issues of uniqueness and isolation from the majority culture may play an important part in their identity formation. However, studies have shown that people who are accepted in their social group and who have good social skills do better in school, and at work; by contrast, socially rejected individuals are at high-risk status for physical and mental distress (Asher & Coie, 1990; Hinshaw, 1992; Meleis, 1991). Belonging to minority groups can cause the individual in such group to be at higher risk because sometimes they confront many disappointments resulting from not getting services in their language so that they may understand well. This attitude toward one's ethnic background can lead to psychological malfunctioning in some individuals from a minority group. However, acculturative stress differs depending on the people in question and their acculturative practices (Berry, 1990).

Sub-Sahara African language identities in Finnish culture

Human beings are designed for relationships. In the absence of relationships, people feel depressed and distressed which may lead to isolation, alcoholism, drug abuse, low self-esteem, school dropouts, early pregnancy, depression, and anxiety (Karcher, 2012; Townsend and McWhirter, 2005). The variety, both within and between the various cultures and countries in sub-Saharan Africa, shows that there is an existence of a diversity of identities in that region. In addition to the various nationalities, there is a multitude of ethnolinguistic groupings. For instance, Nigeria can be regarded as one of the most ethnically heterogeneous countries in Africa, with an estimated 370 ethnic groups and over 500 languages. The second is DRC with 260 different ethnic groups and more than 225 languages, followed by Cameroon with an estimated 250 ethnic groups, Zambia with approximately 72, and Kenya with an estimated 42 (Muzuri, 1983:140; Adams et al., 2016). Due to migration movements and the national borders set by the colonial powers in Berlin, Germany 1884, there are no monolingual countries in Africa; languages are scattered across country borders. In addition, to the ethnic languages and their dialects, European languages from former colonial powers (mainly anglophone and francophone) are mainly spoken in sub-Saharan African countries (Quane & Glanz, 2010).

Exposure to severe language harassment and abuse is a common experience for minority ethnic groups worldwide. A minority group can be defined as a group with a corporate identity that holds a common social identification, culture, and language which helps them to view themselves as members of the same group. More specifically defined, a minority group can be distinguished as an inferior group either in numbers, status, and political power because of culture, religion, social status, language, and political ideals. Thus, minority people are significantly more vulnerable due to their language than individuals of the majority group (Deitch, Barsky, Butz, Chan, Brief, & Bradley, 2003). Studies have shown that ethnic harassment and abuse have been assumed as the source of stress for ethnic minorities (Clark, Anderson, Williams, 1999; Williams, Yu, Jackson, & Anderson, 1997).

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Racism, xenophobia, and discrimination

Racism is a complex, challenging, and incomprehensible phenomenon because it is difficult to find a definition that everybody would accept. It has its legacy in Finnish society, and it operates in and outside the national frontiers and worldwide. Researchers have stated that racism was a main feature during the division of Africa among the European powers in Berlin in 1884 (Balibar, 1991, Mignolo, 2009), and, over decades, the false notion that "white" people were naturally intelligent, more capable, and more human than nonwhite people was acknowledged worldwide (Essed & Hoving 2014: 20-21, Memmi 1999:184-185). This classification of people turned into a reason for European colonization to dominate and oppress and consequently led to the enslavement of African people and other individuals from poor countries. Furthermore, in colonial times, the colonizers could not bring enough of their citizens to the colonies; instead, they chose certain African tribes to lead their fellow Africans (Tutu, 1994:3; Uvin, 1998:16–18). The action was contrary to the Christian religion where the words in Col 3:11 were misused and led some Africans into slavery. Moreover, some sub-Saharan Africans were subjected to both monarchical and colonial exploitation and oppression (Destexhe, 1995:39; Sellström & Wohlgemuth, 1995:11).

Therefore, racism is a social matter not a natural issue, and has a broad sense and narrow sense. In a broad sense, the term racism includes and reveals all the elements of dominance and subjugation, aggression and fear, injustice, and defense of privilege which can lead to the social destruction of the victimized people for the benefit of their persecutors and executioners (Fangen, 2010, Verma, 2011). In a narrow sense, racism focuses on certain biological differences, such as skin color, the form of the nose, cranial sizes, odor, hair color, the composition of blood, and even one's posture, one's manner of walking, and appearance (Memmi, 1999:93- 94; Essed & Hoving, 2014). Furthermore, racism is a discriminatory system of domination based on differences in skin color, culture (race, religion, and civilization), prejudices, racist ideologies, and stereotypes (Alemanji & Dervin, 2016:200-201; Van Dijk, 2005). Moreover, the awareness of the concept of racism has developed to include other variables such as socio-economic status, politico-historical categories, gender, sexuality, and religion (Van Dijk,2000, 2005).

In recent times, the world has witnessed ethnic conflict, political instability, wars, genocide, economic depression, unemployment, natural disasters, and widespread poverty that have led to waves of migration from sub-Saharan Africa and from Arab countries to the Western world. Still to this day, the media report about migrants risking their lives to cross the Mediterranean Sea for looking sanctuaries and a better life in the Western world (Schouler-Ocak & Kastrup, 2015; UNHCR, 2017). In 2014, the number of asylum seekers in Finland was 800, but the following year (2015) through the so-called migrant crisis, Finland welcomed more than 30,000 refugees (Migri, 2015). The situation led to the increase of xenophobia, discrimination, racial

violence, and rejection of migrants based on a dream to maintain Finland as a homogeneous country. In some European countries, nationalist-oriented parties gained their support against migration, and the Finns Party (Perussuomalaiset) also enjoyed growing popularity (Taloustutkimus, 2022).

In 2015, an inciting call by a Finns Party member of parliament to fight against multiculturalism was published on his Facebook page. A few days later, representatives of the extremist national socialist Finnish Resistance Movement (Kansallinen Vastarinta), which is part of the largest Nordic neo-Nazi movement, took part in a protest that became violent as they began to attack people of African and Arab descent. Offensive statements about migrants were an everyday phenomenon. Racism and discrimination can cause direct dangers toward ethnic groups and individuals, where equal opportunity in the labor market and service, as well as stereotyping and negative attitudes in the media and public discourse, are widespread. For instance, regarding the Finnish labor market, some studies argued that it is a struggle for sub-Saharan Africans and other people of color to find work in Finland (Oppedal, Roysam, & Heyerdahl, 2005; Ahmad, 2019).

Although there have been some public demonstrations against racism in Finland, the accusations of racism are often followed by a strong defense citing a lack of racist intent and humor (APN Podcast, 2023; Goldberg, 2015; Due, 2011). A remarkable aspect of the increasing racism in Finland is the tendency to refer to the right to express oneself. Therefore, some people argue that racism is a sign of the times we live in, where it is believed that individuals should be able to express themselves publicly in any way they feel (Essed & Hoving, 2014). Alemanji and Mafi (2016) argued that the European policy focuses on multiculturalism rather than anti-racism and that the term anti-racism does not exist in the Finnish education system. This statement brings a critical concern about what should be done to eradicate racism in Finland.

All in all, racism and discrimination in Finland are public concerns. According to the European Agency for Fundamental Rights (2019) which studied the experiences of nearly 6,000 people of African descent concerning perceived racial discrimination, as well as hate speech and gestures among the 12 Western European States, including Ireland, Austria, Luxembourg, Germany, Denmark, Malta, Finland, Sweden, France, Italy, the UK, and Portugal. Finland topped the list with 63 percent of black respondents saying that they had been the victims of racist harassment and physical attacks. Therefore, racism is complicated and apparent in the attitude of Finnish society (Alemanji & Seikkula, 2017). As a result, a countryman who makes a migrant feel that he is nobody, that he is not counted, that he is not worthy, and that his life has no ultimate significance has a negative consequence on his mental health, work, and study performance (Mannila, Castaneda & Jasinskaja-Lahti 2012). Accordingly, to certain individuals, racism may cause them feelings of rejection, oppression, isolation, and harm. Moreover, being refused work because of racial stereotypes can lead to

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suicidal thoughts, or in extreme cases, thoughts such as becoming involved in terrorist groups. According to the Christian faith, work fulfills a God-given calling (Gn.1:27-29 and 2:15). Therefore, for a Christian migrant, the difficulties in finding a job in his or her new home country is not only an economic challenge but also a spiritual dimension (Mölsä et al., 2016). Thus, migration, as viewed from the perspective of work as a calling, is ethically justified. The Finnish academic field is not however spared such discrimination. Even though there are not many black lecturers and professors, many white students prefer white professors as lecturers, because they assume that their teaching is more significant than the teaching done by African lecturers and professors. Thus, some black holders of doctoral degrees have moved to the USA, Canada, the UK, South Africa, and Sweden, and some of them have given up their academic careers because white people consider them academically incompetent (Fereidooni, Thompson & Kessé, 2019). Thus, many black academic talents who want to stay in Finland engage in low-skilled jobs such as cleaning, food delivery, newspaper distribution, and taxi driving (Diaspora Glitz Magazine, 2021). However, the history of Finland would also leave room for another contextual perspective.

Multiculturalism and minority groups are present in every society worldwide. However, racism remains ignored in Finnish society because progressive discussions on race and racism remain limited in post-racial policies (Alemanji & Seikkula, 2017). It has been pointed out that the inclusion of black migrant groups is still insufficient and that there are still cases of racism and racial discrimination (McRae, 2007; Tandfelt & Finnäs, 2007). Thus, this causes misunderstandings and fights between Finnish people and other ethnic groups. Nevertheless, how can a sub-Saran African Christian behave in such a situation where they perceive the existence of the living God as Creator, God, and Redeemer-God, the renewal of the world in Christ, the dynamic work of the Holy Spirit, and the acceptance of Scripture as being normative for Christian life?

Coping strategies used by Sub-Sahara Africans against Racism and discrimination in Finland.

Racism and discrimination can cause direct danger toward ethnic groups and individuals, where equal opportunity in the labor market and service, as well as stereotyping and negative attitudes in the media and public discourse, are rampant. Coping is defined as the process by which an individual attempts to manage and resolve psychologically and behaviorally stressful events (Plummer & Slane, 1996; Lazarus & Folkman 1984). Thus, Individuals develop coping strategies from their close network of people, such as family and their ethnic cultural group (Pearlin, 1993).

Moreover, in a bilingual and an ethnical society, ethnic minority groups struggle for orderly changes at the individual, social, and political levels. At an individual level, ethnic harassment and abuse are experienced verbally, through fighting, and

exclusion. Ethnic minorities with psychological empowerment work hard to increase interpersonal and political influences which should protect or improve their mental health against ethnic harassment and abuse (Molix & Bettencourt, 2010). For people to protect their mental health from chronic exposure to ethnic harassment and abuse, empowerment theory suggests that the harassed victims should choose proactive coping strategies that not only protect their mental health but also attempt to redress the structural nature of such harassment and abuse (Molix & Bettencourt, 2010; Adams et. al., 2016).

Coping is a functionally different cognitive and behavioral process than the defense mechanisms of psychodynamic theory. Researchers have organized coping strategies into different types according to their intended functions such as optimism (Scheier & Carver, 1992), psychological mastery or control (Bandura, 2006), self-esteem (DuBois & Flay, 2004), and social support (Maercker, Schutzwohl, & Zahava, 1999: 215). These are essential psychological resources that would help to manage racism and racial discrimination. In addition, they have pointed out that ethnic identification (Phinney, 1992; Phinney & Ong, 2007) and acculturation (Suinn, 2010) status may be essential factors in predicting mental health outcomes among migrants. There are certain essential concepts to bear in mind. Multicultural ideology indicates the views held by the major group members about how they should adjust to accommodate other groups (Berry et al., 1977). This involves the views that cultural variety is beneficial for a society and its people and that such diversity should be distributed equitably among all groups.

Theoretically, a social identity involves the relationship between ethnic identity and well-being-related racism stress. According to Social identity theories (Tajfel, 1981), several strategies can be utilized to cope with the stress of racism. According to Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) original conceptualization, an individual's coping strategies are bounded by his or her cultural norms, and beliefs. Thus, contemporary studies have demonstrated that culture and religion are cornerstones to help migrants to cope with racism (Wester, Kuo, & Vogel, 2006; Lam & Zane, 2004).

Discussion

Integrating into another group of people takes time. The current world identity involves more than people's roots, and it determines the type of societies they eventually build. However, an individual becomes aware of his identity when he is threatened by other individuals as he reflects through a social mirror from the outside (Sawyer, 2008). At the beginning of Christianity in Acts 11:26, the first Christian identity had two characteristics: unique designation of a group of individuals that was perhaps identified by others, and an indication of a group of people that was accepted as it was named itself. The apostles were different from both the Jewish synagogue and the Gentile communities because of their religion and ways of life. The question is when will African and Western concepts meet? What are the characteristic traits of the Christian identity where racial discrimination and harassment are common?

Some researchers suggest that only Christ alone gives all Christians their unique identity as Christians in everyday life (Akper, 2008; Ackah, Dodson & Smith, 2018:6-7). Identities impact the relationship of individuals with the reset of other creatures. However, sub-Saharan migrants experience high levels of discrimination and racism in Finland, and their contact and friendship with Finns are rare (Jasiskaja-Lahti, Liebkind, & Perhoniemi, 2006). There is a critical concern about argument that some African Christians who are oppressed and marginalized have the potential and even the capacity to act as agents of change and transformation in their own lives and the lives of others (Maluleke & Nadar, 2004: 7-8). In addition, there is a saying in many sub-Saharan African countries that birds of the same color herd together in the same place. The above theory does not fall into Christian identity, it involves more exclusivism than inclusivism. When it comes to an identity of Christian church, which is the body of Christ, how should its members maintain that only Christ is the Lord, today and forever in every place?

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