



Turning a Colour-Blind Eye

A content analysis of social media comments on the Black Lives Matter-movement in the Netherlands

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Abstract

During the summer of 2020, several protests and actions for BLM were visible in the media. Due to this media coverage, the discussion of racism was prominent in the Netherlands on social media. This thesis is a qualitative content analysis for Facebook comments on articles reporting the Black Lives Matter-movement. This way, I researched how the comments fit in the existing theories of racism. These theories came from the works of Bonilla-Silva (2018), Wekker (2016), McIntosh (1989) and Essed and Hoving (2014). After researching 163 comments, I found two themes: ‘us vs them’, in which commenters drew a distinct line between the Dutch and non-Dutch, and ‘speaking out’ in which the user spoke out against the racism in the Netherlands. Additionally, I found separate themes which weren’t supported by the literature: accusations of racism, present innocence and (dis)credit to race. These themes are contemporary and/or specific for the Netherlands.

Keywords: social media, content analysis, Black Lives Matter, racism, the Netherlands.

List of Contents

1. Introduction	4.
2. Theoretical framework	6.
2.1 Racism	6.
2.1.1 White innocence and white privilege	6.
2.1.2 Colour-blind racism	7.
2.1.3 Colour-mute racism	8.
2.1.4 Entitlement racism	8.
2.3 Social Media	8.
3. Material and methods	10.
3.1 Internet-based research and ethical issues	10.
3.2 Material: news articles	10.
3.3 Procedures	11.
4. Results	13.
4.1 Findings	13.
5. Analysis	15.
5.1 Us vs them	
5.1.1 Entitlement racism	15.
5.1.2 Colour-blind racism	17.
5.1.3 Colour-mute racism	19.
5.1.4 White innocence	21.
5.1.5 Black Lives Matter causes division	24.
5.1.6 (Dis)credit to your race	26.
5.1.7 Social media	27.
5.2 Speaking out	28.
6. Discussion and conclusion	31.
Appendix A: code tree	33.
Appendix B: articles	36.
Appendix C: Ethics	38
Bibliography	46.

1. Introduction

Each year on December 5th, the Dutch celebrate the annual holiday of Sinterklaas. Sinterklaas is a saint who brings presents to good children on his birthday, the 5th of December. According to the Dutch tradition, Sinterklaas has a helper named ‘Zwarte Piet’ or *Black Pete*, who gives the toys and candy to the children. However, this helper has been a controversial part of the tradition in recent years due to the racist nature of the caricature. Black Pete is often played by a white person whose face is painted black, wears an afro and has bright red lipstick on. This controversy sparked a debate, to which the Dutch refer to as ‘de Zwarte Pieten-discussie’ or *the Black Pete-discussion*. This discussion returns every year, and supporters and opponents argue whether Black Pete can be considered ‘racist’ (AD, 2019). On one side, the opponents state that the forms of blackface and colonial appearance of the helper are hurtful to minority groups in the Netherlands. Yet, the supporters argue that Black Pete is a Dutch tradition and should not be changed since it isn’t intended to be racist (AD, 2019).

This example shows how the Black Pete-discussion is the most common racial discussion in the Netherlands, since it indicates how hesitant people are to discuss it or actively change it. In the book *White Innocence*, Gloria Wekker (2016) states that:

“With the title *White Innocence*, I am invoking an important and apparently satisfying way of being in the world. It encapsulates a dominant way in which the Dutch think of themselves, as being a small, but just, ethical nation; colour-blind, thus free of racism; as being inherently on the moral and ethical high ground, thus a guiding light to other folks and nations.” (Wekker, 2016. p. 2)

Thus, the Dutch believe the Netherlands to be ‘free of racism’. But in the summer of 2020, the Black Lives Matter-movement took the world by storm and urged more people to acknowledge the problems of everyday racism. Even though the movement originally began in 2013, the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter went viral in May 2020 on social media (Black Lives Matter, 2021). While it originated in the United States, the Netherlands soon followed the movement (AD, 2020) and it forced more people to confront the fact that institutionalised racism is a very urgent topic.

My main question for this thesis is: *How do Facebook comments on news articles discussing Black Lives Matter in the Netherlands fit into the theories of racism?* To answer this question, I conducted a content analysis on Facebook to analyse Dutch comments on news articles about the Black Lives Matter-movement. While this movement isn’t new, it received

the most media attention in the Netherlands during the summer of 2020 (Black Lives Matter, 2021). I am intrigued to further examine the interesting paradox presented in the Netherlands regarding racism. In a country where race and racism is ‘hidden’, it is interesting to research what happens when the Black Lives Matter-movement makes these problems explicit. Moreover, since the discussion started on social media, it is useful to research how online discourse shapes the conversations about racism.

2. Theoretical framework

To better understand the concepts of this thesis, I divided this theoretical framework into different sections to explain the most important theories and definitions.

2.1 Racism

Bonilla-Silva (1997) has examined racism by extending it to actions which can occur in everyday life. He states that when people view racism as an individual prejudice, you deny the fact that racism is embedded in the social structures of a country (Bonilla-Silva, 1997). By ignoring the embedded forms of racism, it is easier to deny that racism is a problem. The definition of racism which is used in this thesis aligns with Bonilla-Silva's definition of racialized social systems. Bonilla-Silva (2001) defines these system as: "Societies in which economic, political, social and ideological levels are partially structures by the placements of actors in racial categories or races." (p. 37).

Since racism is the main focus of my thesis, I use the Critical Race Theory (CRT) as my framework to analyse my data. This theory originated in the 1970's in the United States when writers, like Bell, Freeman and Delgado, formed the new theories when they saw the need to combat the subtler forms of racism in everyday life (Delgado, Stefancic & Harris, 2007). Sijpenhof (2019) argues in her work that CRT "tackles the complexities of race and more specifically how narratives normalize racism." (p. 134). Thus, this power of the dominant racial group – white people – allows for upholding their privilege by maintaining the inequality in society (Weiner, 2012). This inequality is maintained through social practices and discourses, which in turn manifest as a form of neo-liberal colour-blindness. The fact that racism is embedded in every institution and narrative of society is an important tenet of CRT. As I mentioned before, this 'normalization' is part of this thesis and below, I offer explanations of how deeply rooted racism is. Since prior approaches did not think of race as the centre, CRT broadened the research with this approach. For my research the main theories I use are extensions of CRT since this was vital to building the contemporary theories about the different forms of racism.

2.1.1 White Innocence and white privilege

According to Sijpenhof (2019), the importance of how racism is perceived depends on the dominant narrative in a country. Her research shows that when marginalized experiences aren't taken into the narrative, this creates a distortion. This can be seen in the Netherlands for

minority groups: Omitting other experiences from the dominant view creates a one-sided narrative. Nevertheless, this dominant narrative is often framed as being race-neutral, but these limitations cause the distortion which allows the dominant group to maintain their privileged position in the hierarchical society (Sijpenhof, 2019; Wekker, 2016). This ‘distortion of narrative’ is one of the things that allows for a normalization of racism in Dutch society or as Wekker (2016) described in her work: ‘white innocence’. This feeling of the Dutch that the Netherlands are tolerant and free of racism is essentially an extension of the dominant white narrative. Additionally, this gives white people in the Netherlands ‘white privilege’ (McIntosh, 1989): a concept where people with a white skin colour are privileged in their position in society with benefits that are denied for people of colour. This can vary from being seen as representative for your entire race to being the only person of colour in your workplace.

2.1.2 Colour-blind racism

To understand the concept of racism in the Netherlands, one must first examine how racism is perceived. As mentioned before, Gloria Wekker (2016) challenges the idea of the Dutch as a ‘racism-free nation’. In her research, she used the concept of colour-blindness to uncover the postcolonial legacy of race and its role in shaping the white Dutch self, presenting the contested, persistent legacy of racism in the Netherlands. She does this by combining this colour-blind theory with the ‘white innocence’ she found in the Netherlands. The concept of colour-blind racism is important, since only the most blatant forms of racism are acknowledged, while the subtler microaggressions are often ignored (Bonilla-Silva, 2018). Additionally, colour-blind racism shows that there still is a case of racial inequality even though claims have been made that racism is something from the past (Bonilla-Silva, 2001)

Based on the work of Bonilla-Silva (2018), Sijpenhof (2020) describes ‘colour-blind’ racism as a phenomenon that is predominant in the Netherlands. She found that the narrative of racialization is maintained by ideologies of colour-blindness and as a result, this marginalizes the experiences of racism as “race is hardly accepted as a signifier of difference.” (Sijpenhof, 2019. p. 132). Furthermore, Hondius (2014) researches why the concept of racism is so intensely contested in Dutch society. One of the reasons she gives is: “Colour is defined as unimportant, the presence or absence of black people, *people* of colour, as human beings with identities and experiences because of their colour, are considered ‘irrelevant’ as well, as are their experiences of racism.” (Hondius, 2014, p. 273).

2.1.3 Colour-mute racism

The Netherlands, unlike the United States, don't use a specific separation of 'race'. This is another indicator that discussing racism is a subject which is mostly avoided in the public debate. American anthropologist Pollock theorised this form of '*colour-muteness*' as a policy that creates silences in order to avoid public race language. Consequently, this leads to the hesitancy to discuss racial inequalities and thus acknowledge the problem (Pollock, 2004). For such hesitancy, Hondius (2014) states that "[In the Netherlands] it is better not to talk about colour differences, not to mention 'race' at all, presumably of what has happened in the past." (Hondius, 2014, p. 273). 'The past' Hondius (2014) is referring to isn't the history of slavery or colonialism, but the Holocaust. The Holocaust caused the discomfort with the use of 'race' in the Netherlands since it could be associated with Nazism. Since people didn't want to be perceived as such, this led to a consensus about not mentioning skin colour or other racial issues.

2.1.4 Entitlement racism

Another form of racism which can be found in the Netherlands is *entitlement racism*. Essed and Hoving (2014) gathered different articles to unravel the legacy of racism in the Netherlands and their former colonies. In this work, they argue that, contrary to common sense beliefs, it appears that old-fashioned biological notions of 'race' never disappeared. Additionally, they argue that *entitlement racism* is an important factor in everyday racism: "Entitlement racism is a sign of the times we live in, where it is believed that you should be able to express yourself publicly in whichever way you feel like." (Essed & Hoving, 2014. p. 14). Thus, freedom of expression is a new form of racism which evolved into the idea that everyone has the right to offend or humiliate others in the Netherlands.

2.2 Social media

Along with racism, the concept of social media is an important factor in this research. According to Rogers (2019): "In today's world, social media is an ever-present facet of life that surrounds us." (p. 5022). While she states that the content of social media offers unique forms of doing research, one must take into account that social media is regulated with algorithms to show the content based on your preferences (Rogers, 2013). Thus, while social media is a public space, Gillespie (2013) states that new forms of public are found on these platforms, called *calculated publics*. For this, algorithms are important for the formation of the new 'calculated

'publics', since the structuring and ordering of data of individuals will result in the personalised content that is shown to them. Rogers (2013) argues that by examining the shared content of social media, patterns can be found for the new 'demographics'. Moreover, individuals on online platforms can create a 'public sense of self' due to these algorithms (Gillespie, 2013). On Facebook, this can lead to more people seeing the same content – among which news articles about Black Lives Matter (BLM) - based on their use of data. As a result, similar patterns in the comments can emerge due to the fact that similar 'publics' view the content.

Since the rise of social media, discussions about morally loaded topics have seen the use of highly emotional and inflammatory language (Whiting, Dansby Olufuwote, Cravens-Pickens & Banford Witting, 2019). The term 'cyber-racism' was introduced by Les Back (2002) to describe the rise of white supremacy on digital media. Especially in Europe and North America, there is an emergence of expressing 'whiteness' over the digital boundaries onto international sites. Bluic, Faulkner and McGarty (2018) systematically reviewed a decade of research on cyber-racism as perpetrated by groups and individuals. Overall, the cyber-racism research reviewed shows that racist groups and individuals use different communication channels, are driven by different goals, adopt different strategies, and have distinctive effects to their communication. Additionally, the internet has a way of 'othering' in cases such as the BLM-movement. Lumsen and Harmer (2019) developed the concept of 'online othering' as a tool through which to analyse and make sense of the harmful behaviours which are being created through, or perpetuated via, the use of social media.

3. Material and methods

To answer my research question, I conduct a content analysis similar to the work of Whiting, Dansby Olufuwote, Cravens-Pickens and Banford Witting (2019). They conducted a research on social media comments regarding victim blaming online and the effects of online discourse on this. The setup of my research is also similar to the content analysis described by Riffe, Lacy, Watson and Fico (2019), where on social media a multitude of factors are observed, such as different comments, on a particular content variable of interest. In this case of BLM, it is useful to research how the online conversation shapes the topic of racism. Below, I will elaborate on the methods that were used to answer the research question.

3.1 Internet-based research and ethical issues

This research is conducted with passive content analysis, which means that by assembling the data, I never interacted in the comments and none of the users were aware that their comments were used for my research (Atkinson & Delamont, 2011). Additionally, for my research I don't use names or any other form of identification as a measure of privacy protection (Appendix C).

3.2 Material: news articles

When a news source, like NOS or AD, publishes an online article on their social media platform, it is possible for users to leave comments. Since this is so widely used, I have chosen to research the comments on Facebook-posts. I chose Facebook as a social media platform because of the amount of users in the Netherlands. Around 10,4 million people in the Netherlands have a Facebook-account. It is the second largest platform, only next to WhatsApp (MarktVizier, 2020). Since WhatsApp is private, this can't be used without violating privacy. Facebook, on the other hand, is a more public domain which is why I selected this platform.

To follow the mainstream Dutch media trends, there were four Facebook pages selected from different news sources based on the number of followers. The first is NOS with 1.131.860 followers, then RTL Nieuws with 792.649 followers, Nu.nl with 716.275 followers and lastly AD.nl with 549.345 followers. To select which comments I needed to research to find general patterns, I looked at the amount of likes that the comment had.¹ With this, a selection of 163 comments was made from the news articles shared on the Facebook-page of the four news sites.

¹ To be selected, a comment needed to have at least 10 likes.

While the news articles were not the main focus of this study, it was important to use relevant articles. Therefore, I selected thirteen articles (Appendix B) about the BLM-movement in the Netherlands. All the articles were published between May 2020 and September 2020. After reading multiple articles, I found three recurring themes. The first was about the forms of racism in the Netherlands. These are, for example, articles about statues of colonial figures in the Netherlands for which people advocate to remove them. The second theme was about individuals speaking about racism or the forms of racism they encounter in their everyday life. The last theme was about the protests in the Netherlands. These protests were widely reported in the media, like those in Rotterdam and The Hague. The articles were all from the aforementioned news sources on Facebook. Furthermore, they concern the three recurring themes as well. This helps find the patterns and recurring themes in the comments to answer the research question.

Lastly, it needs to be clarified that I am not looking at the concept of race for this thesis, but at the larger structures of racism and whiteness in Dutch society. Therefore, two things were important when selecting the comments. The first is the reaction is written in Dutch, to signal that the person is fluent in the native language of the Netherlands. Second, since I wish to keep the identity of the individuals on the social media platforms anonymous, I look at the place of birth or the current place where they live instead of using their names. On Facebook this is accessible, which helps in the effort to keep the people who are used in this research anonymous. For this research project, ‘Dutch’ does not signal ‘white’. However, I acknowledge that in common discussions in the Netherlands the word ‘Dutch’ is often used in place of ‘white’. For the purpose of this study, this was not the case and I examined whiteness that lives outside of any official body, as is described by Wekker (2016).

3.3 Procedures

The sample was analysed by using a qualitative content analysis. With this, I used the theoretical framework to analyse whether the reactions fit into the forms of racism that were discussed. For my coding process, I use the program Atlas.ti to code the Dutch comments. I analysed the comments in Dutch but translated them whenever I quoted one of the comments in this thesis to argue or illustrate a point.

The goal was to examine what the general Dutch comments are about, which is done by *coding up*. I use open and inductive coding so I can form my results based on the different themes and patterns that emerge. However, I use some deductive strategies as well to see if the

theories from the literature can be included in the data (Van Staa & Evers, 2010). With these methods, I could both research new themes as well as the existing theories I mentioned in my theoretical framework since I expected to find reactions which indicate forms of *white innocence*, *colour-blind racism*, *colour-mute racism*, and *entitlement racism*.

I am aware of the limitations of this research on social media. Even though I use the four largest platforms for Dutch news, with at least 500.000 followers, this can lead to a slightly distorted view of the population. Nevertheless, this is the best way to give an average view of the Dutch population. The second limitation is ‘internet-trolls’. These ‘trolls’ are individuals who comment in a deliberately aggressive or antagonistic manner in order to provoke angry responses (Philips, 2015). This could distort my data, since provoking comments could garner more attention (or likes) which would make this a ‘top-comment’. However, according to Barnes (2018) incivility and hostile behaviour online are often associated with anonymity. Therefore, If I looked at the person’s Facebook-page and it doesn’t have a location, I assumed that this person could be considered a ‘troll’ and could thus be excluded from the data. Of course, this is not always the case but it did help in limiting the distortion of data. Moreover, my research can be limited due to the strict regulations I add for researching the comments. But by selecting a platform with a large number of users, the chance to gather more data is larger than when I use a less popular platform. Additionally, this relates more to the mainstream public discourse as opposed to platforms with less users.

4. Results

After analysing the data (Appendix A), I found that there were two major themes that could best be used to explain the trend in the comments. I do acknowledge that racism takes on many forms and that these forms are interconnected. I understand that I cannot split it up into several themes, but I do this to organise my findings for a more coherent analysis.

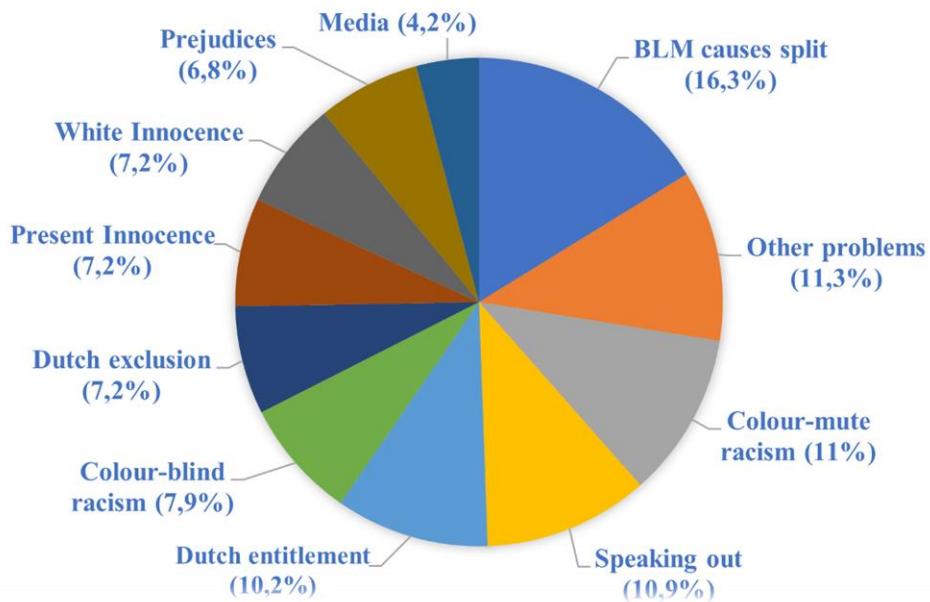
I found one overarching theme that best describes the main trend of my data. I label this theme '*us vs them*', since it mainly is a way of expressing the division in society regarding the BLM movement. In the comments, I saw a pattern which expressed the dissatisfaction about the movement, from an insider (white/Dutch) and outsider (person of colour/not Dutch) positionality. To narrow down this theme, I have divided my findings into four subcategories: '*entitlement racism*', '*colour-blind and colour-mute racism*', '*white innocence*' and '*BLM causes division*'. Below, I further explain the themes and the subcategories, along with the theories and findings in the data.

One other important theme is labelled '*speaking out*'. This is made up of outliers who engaged in the discussion about racism, which didn't fit in with the '*us vs them*'. These are the comments that are actively discussing and countering the '*white innocence*' and the '*selective framing*' of the other users. Additionally, these are the comments which are supporting the demonstrations and the active need for change in society, as opposed to denying that racism is a thing in the Netherlands.

4.1 Findings

After selecting 163 comments I coded my data with Atlas.ti. With this, I have 66 different categories in the codes. Since one comment can have multiple codes, my results ended up in a total of 265 codes, divided over 11 categories.

FIGURE 1: FREQUENCY OF THEMES



5. Analysis

5.1 Us vs them

I found that most of the codes can be shared under the theme of ‘*us vs them*’. This apparent battle between insider-outsiders and the BLM-movements takes place in all the comment sections. To illustrate this ‘*us vs them*’-theme, I will further explain the different ways it was used.

5.1.1 Entitlement racism

The first category I will explain is ‘Dutch Entitlement’. For this, I used Essed and Hoving’s (2014) theory of *entitlement racism*. This theory explains the idea of native inhabitants, which in this case are Dutch citizens, claiming the right to offend ethnic minorities. They also explains that this form of entitlement is tied together with the freedom of expression:

“Freedom of expression, though an individual right, is quintessentially a relational phenomenon. The expresser wants his or her opinion to be heard or seen. Followers, those who applaud, and even those whose silence is read as approval, can become partial in the enactment of entitlement racism.” (Essed & Hoving, 2014, p. 14)

In the comments, I found multiple forms of entitlement racism. The most prominent one was the claim that if something was not to the satisfaction of the BLM-protesters, that they had selected the “wrong country to live in” or that “they can leave if they don’t approve”. These arguments are especially visible when discussing the history of the Netherlands. One comment tries to justify the existence of the statues of slave trader by stating that:

“If you live in the Netherlands, are born in the Netherlands or moved to the Netherlands, then this is what it is.” (RTL, 2020)

By using the argument that the history of the Netherlands is part of the country and you have to accept that if you want to live here, the other arguments someone can bring up if they want to discuss the situation are actively silenced. This disregards the history and the consequences of the Dutch colonial past.

Other comments that used the same kind of logic actively asked why the Dutch needed to change in order to accommodate people who weren’t native to the country:

“Do we suddenly have to adapt ourselves to all those people who think that it needs to be different?” (RTL, 2020)

This unwillingness to adapt is consistent with Goldberg's (2009) findings. He states that the portrayal of identity – in this case, the Dutch identity - is completely consistent with the emergence of other identities, which are deemed uncivilized. In this case, the comments show that the BLM-supporters are the ‘uncivilized’ people, who open the discussion on something that is part of the Dutch history and identity.

More than once, the example of Black Pete is given to illustrate this point. One user even wrote a long statement protesting the idea that the Dutch are racists, because:

“We, the racists, traded Black Pete for Soot Pete (...) We the racists adapt to others instead of the other way around.” (AD, 2020)

With this, he actively opposed the idea that a country should change practices - such as the ‘blackface’ with Black Pete - simply because a country should not adapt to any ‘uncivilized’ others. Some even go a step further and use the death of George Floyd as a comparison to the fact that historic figures in the Netherlands are removed.

“But eternalising a criminal is allowed in this time? Statues are removed because they have been wrong in the past. Then, in the future they should remove all images of Floyd because he did some bad things as well but now he is put on a pedestal, just like our statues!!” (RTL, 2020)

Thus, it can be summarised by the idea that the commenters see the Netherlands as *their* country where people of colour are allowed to live, but only *if* they do it on their terms:

“You can live, work, eat your own food, and exercise your traditions and beliefs in the Netherlands, but don’t start telling us how we should live. Then you should go back to your own country if everything there is so much better.” (Nu.nl, 2020)

Any form of criticism of the Dutch system or history can be argued with the fact that it isn’t *their* country, so they shouldn’t be complaining. By attacking this, non-Dutch people immediately are excluded from the collective ‘us’ and referred to as ‘them’, since it shows that one cannot be considered ‘Dutch’ when they don’t accept what is part of the traditions. Moreover, the ‘*us vs them*’-theme is shown by the fact that the phrase ‘All lives matter’ is used. In the comments, people justify using this phrase by arguing that *all* lives are meaningful, not only *black* lives. This misunderstanding of the movement seems to cause the feeling of exclusion in the comments, which urges Dutch people to react that *they* matter too.

5.1.2 Colour-blind racism

For the second category of colour-blind racism I work with Bonilla-Silva's (2018) theory, since he was one of the first to coin the term 'colour-blind racism'. He divided it in four separate frames, each with its own distinct forms of racism in society. The first one – and according to Bonilla-Silva the most important one – is 'abstract liberalism'. This frame involves:

"using ideas associated with political liberalism (e.g., "equal opportunity," the idea that force should not be used to achieve social policy) and economic liberalism (e.g., choice, individualism) in an abstract manner to explain racial matters." (Bonilla-Silva, 2018, p. 56.)

With this frame the idea is that whites are reasonable in objecting to blatant racial practices, such as segregation, but simultaneously oppose the approaches to deal with the racial inequality in society. One user states that it doesn't make any sense, since racism shall never end:

"Ok, I'm not right winged, but the timing is extremely thoughtless. (...) And why, so that tomorrow all discrimination ends? Welcome to reality, protesting in this way and in this time... It only backfires." (NOS, 2020)

The second frame is 'cultural racism': this frame is mostly used in cases in which minorities are reduced to a cultural stereotype. As Bonilla-Silva (2018) states:

"Cultural racism is a frame that relies on culturally based arguments such as "Mexicans do not put much emphasis on education" or "blacks have too many babies" to explain the standing of minorities in society." (p. 56).

I have found comments that suggest that the protests with BLM were due to the prejudices people express. For example, one user used this cultural racism very obviously in his comment:

"For the girl with the sign: Black&Female etc, If you study, you have the same chances as everybody else. Look at the advocate who was on Veronica Inside. But if you guys leave school at sixteen because you don't feel like continuing your education, then you don't get anything. But this is the case for all skin colours, not just black pfff." (NOS, 2020)

In this one comment, the whole essence of cultural racism is displayed. First, he argues that in the Netherlands, anybody can become anything by pointing out one black person who is successful. Then, he expresses the stereotype of 'lazy black people' who are unwilling to work,

while finishing with the statement that it is the same for all skin colours that if you don't work, you'll never succeed. While distancing from the idea of racism, the Facebook comment argues whether the struggles of BLM are *Dutch* problems. This is emphasised by the idea that there is no racism in the Netherlands since 'Everybody can be anything, if they only apply themselves.' In this comment, you can also see the 'generalisation' with the veiled prejudice: 'people of colour protest because they aren't willing to work hard and apply themselves to achieve something'.

The second part is of this comment ties in with the third theme of Bonilla-Silva, namely 'minimization of racism':

"Minimization of racism is a frame that suggest discrimination is no longer a central factor affecting minorities' life chances ("It's better now than in the past" or "There is no discrimination, but there are plenty of jobs out there")" (Bonilla-Silva, 2018, p. 57)

Multiple users expressed the fact that racism isn't a factor in today's society anymore, since in the Netherlands anyone can work:

"We have a normal society and country, where there is no distinction in race and everyone can become what he or she wants. That is our country. This small group makes it seem like we have race discrimination but that's not true, here black and white can always find a job." (NOS, 2020)

This is an interesting finding, which seems to combine the colour-blind narrative with the neoliberalism idea of a free market. According to Davis (2007) there is a connection between the two concepts, since neoliberalism and the idea of the open economy is to let go of the former racial barriers which prevented people of colour from working. Therefore, "formerly racialized "others" can be fully incorporated as consumptive citizens with no racial barrier to their participation in the economy." (p. 350) While his theory was based on the situation in the United States, we find that it is applicable to the Netherlands as well.

The minimization of racism also came up when users argued that the amount of white people in the protests are proof that racism isn't a problem anymore. One even called it a 'nice gesture' of white people:

"It's OK, racism in the Netherlands. I see that 90 percent of the BLM-protesters are WHITE. Nice gesture." (Nu.nl, 2020)

The last frame is ‘naturalization’, which is mainly used to “allow whites to explain away racial phenomena by suggesting they are natural occurrences.” (Bonilla-Silva, 2018, p. 56). While I haven’t found any comment that directly linked the problems of race to biology or science, I did find one that tried to justify the police violence:

“What stands out to me is that all over the world people protest against police violence, but the question is why does police violence occur and I don’t see anybody asking that question. I don’t agree with what sometimes happens, but yes, sometimes you need to use violence to take someone into custody if they don’t cooperate.” (Nu.nl, 2020)

The ‘natural occurrence’ is thus that people can prevent a run in with the police if they simply behave. Ergo, people of colour, who protest racist violence, are the cause of the police violence. While this comment doesn’t completely align with Bonilla-Silva’s (2018) theory, it does fit the description of ‘deflecting racism’ by Davis (2007). This is a form of muted racism, which serves to deflect charges of racism. In this case, the argument serves to blame the victims of police violence for the lack of cooperation or the fact that they didn’t obey the law.

5.1.3 Colour-mute racism

In continuation of the theory of Davis (2007), the other subcategory for the ‘*us vs them*’ are the forms of colour-mute racism. This category was quite difficult to examine, since this form of racism is about avoiding racial discussions (Pollock, 2004). The most obvious comments for this were the ones which indicated that the discussion needed to stop:

“Shall we just stop with this? Let’s drink a beer, have a bitterbal and then Monday back to work!” (Nu.nl, 2020)

This comment indicates that if you just get back to your normal life, everything would be fine. This effectively ignores the fact that discrimination is part of everyday life for a lot of people. Just as the comments show, Pollock (2004) states that brushing off the subject as something that is blown out of proportion is a way of dealing with the anxiety of the subject of race. The negligence to discuss or even acknowledge the problems of racism in society is what makes racism such a delicate subject. Moreover, if it is something that isn’t experienced by people on a day-to-day basis it is often overlooked (Pollock, 2004). This disregard is shown in more comments, especially the ones which state that ‘they get the problem.’ However, this is often

followed by the fact that the user is tired of hearing about the problems and even diminishes it as petty:

“Stop this now. We’ve heard enough. We know. Let it go. Stop being petty. I know a few other examples. Done with it.” (NOS, 2020)

DiAngelo and Dyson (2018) expand on this discussion by elaborating on continuous presence of racist narratives and frames. Nevertheless, the main reaction of white people is that there is only one form of racism: the blatant prejudices and exclusion, only committed by immoral people. Therefore, the problems can be solved if everyone simply respects one another (DiAngelo & Dyson, 2018). This idea of ‘respecting each other’ or ‘treat anyone as you liked to be treated yourself’ recurs in multiple comments.

“Nowadays, everyone tries to force their opinions on others. Live and let live, respect each other and quit whining!” (NOS, 2020)

Just as before, it is often followed by a disregard for the racial problems BLM tries to get acknowledged. In several cases, the movement is snubbed as ‘immature’ or ‘whining’.

“When are we going to discuss this in a mature way without destruction and vandalization? And especially with respect for each other.” (AD, 2020)

This comment is a classic example of years of avoiding talking about racism. The user shows that he immediately connects BLM with destruction of statues and instead suggests opening the discussion in a mature way. The fact that the BLM-movement is using peaceful protests to gather attention and start the discussion about police violence and institutionalised racism isn’t what is perceived, but only the disruption of the protests.

Another finding that connects to colour-mute racism is the fact that users reacted to news articles about BLM with the message that there are *more pressing problems* which need to be dealt with first. The most prominent is, of course, the Covid-19 pandemic and its consequences. Most users actively denounce the importance of the protests and actions - even when the news article specifically mentioned that the protesters kept their distance from one another - because of the problems of Covid-19. Other problems, like slavery in Qatar or child slavery in other countries, are also mentioned as more pressing problems. Moreover, these problems are used to reduce the importance of BLM. By giving examples of problems in the world – like modern-

day slavery -, users argue that BLM is used purely for self gain and that they don't care about the *real* problems in the world. The following comment is an example:

“There is hunger in many parts of the world, slavery because everyone (yellow, white, black, purple, blue) wants the newest phones and gadgets from China and other countries where slavery is normal. (...) take a look at yourself. AMEN.” (AD, 2020)

The thing that stood out in these comments is that it is either about problems in the Netherlands or problems in foreign countries. The ‘Dutch’ problems that were mentioned most often were: the lockdown, the loneliness of the elderly, the problems in the hospitality industry, the ‘farmers protests’ and the pressure on the hospitals and the nurses.

“They listen to such a group [as BLM], but not to the nurses. I thought corona was important.” (NOS, 2020)

By saying this, the user implies that racial problems aren’t as pressing as the current situation in the Netherlands.

“If the hospitality industry or the farmers protest against those protocols, I understand. Racism, we have discussed it enough.” (AD, 2020)

While it wasn’t a part of Bonilla-Silva’s (2018) original themes, this avoidance of the problem of racism fits well into the concept of colour-muteness. The active avoidance of discussing the problem by comparing it to other problems causes a redirection of the conversation, which again stirs the discussion away from racism.

5.1.4 White Innocence

The category of ‘*white innocence*’ is mainly used to justify the racist forms in society, as well as for arguing that Dutch people are discriminated against too. By looking at the Dutch history, Wekker (2016) found that imperial history was mostly used to glorify the nation and justify its past. This is part of the curriculum in schools, which can lead to a one-sided view of history. This is evident in the comments, mainly in those discussing the role of the Netherlands during the Golden Age. When the question was asked whether statues from Jan Pieterszoon Coen should remain standing – despite his crimes -, almost all users said yes. The main argument for this was: “You cannot erase history.”

The codes which I labelled ‘Present Innocence’ are used to describe the relation of racism and the past in the Netherlands. These codes were especially present in the articles about the colonial past. The idea that you cannot change history seems to be the main argument to urge people to ‘live and let live’. In the comments, this is mainly visible for the discussions about the history of slavery and colonialization.

“Holding current generations accountable for the mistakes of the past doesn’t help. It creates incomprehension and division. Judge people on how there are NOW.” (NOS, 2020)

What is fascinating about this, is that people aren’t actively denouncing the mistakes of the past. Rather, they ask others to let it go since it isn’t ‘who they are anymore’. Additionally, Dutch people argue that they let go of problems of the past as well:

“So much whining about something that happened hundreds of years ago and we never even experienced ourselves. We talk to our eastern neighbour as well despite what happened 75 years ago. We hold Remembrance Day, of course, but we don’t fight the current generation of Germans and we don’t hold them responsible for what happened then.” (RTL, 2020)

By actively avoiding facing the problematic past, it is similar to ‘innocence’ as described by Wekker (2016). While it is still a discussion about race, this form enforces the idea that *past* generations were racist while current generations aren’t. Independently from each other, comments stated: “Look forward, not back.”

Something that goes even further than denying history is the acknowledgements of the wrongs of the past, but trying to justify it by showing the good it brought to the Netherlands.

“Pfff, because of these men Holland is what we are now.. Rich and prosperous.. If that didn’t happen, and believe that it wasn’t right what they did, then maybe we wouldn’t have been so prosperous and would we be walking around with a loincloth and I don’t know what more. It is part of our history...” (AD, 2020)

However, others take it a step further and argue that the colonial past is, in fact, beneficial to people of colour. One user even stated that:

“We have a colonial past (like many other countries), which has given people of colour the chance to come live with us.” (AD, 2020)

This glorification can be seen as another form of ‘present innocence’: Dutch people now haven’t actively contributed to colonialism or slavery, but reap the benefits from it to this day. However, it isn’t their fault since it happened before their time:

“A lot of whining for nothing, you cannot erase history, that was made a long time ago! So #justbenormal.” (Nu.nl, 2020)

Another interesting finding is the idea of ‘racism against whites’ which returns multiple times in the comments to counter the ‘accusations’ of racism in the Netherlands. In short, this is the idea that white people - which are in this case Dutch people - are discriminated against in favour of people of colour. The following comment is a great example of this:

“Where are the people of White Lives Matter?? In the mean time, we are the ones who are discriminated against.” (AD, 2020)

I found that in the data, there were several comments that expressed their dissatisfaction with the growing support of the BLM-movement due to the fact that they felt discriminated against. According to Ansell (2013), these forms of perceived ‘reversed racism’ are ways to explain the diminishing of white supremacy in society. This diminished form is often the reason that people deny any privilege or supremacy by arguing that they are victims as well.

“I wonder who the racists are here. BLM don’t speak a word about other groups, while I think it should be ‘All lives matter!'” (Nu.nl, 2020)

Ansell (2013) states that there is little evidence to suggest that reverse racism actually exists. Her ideas are drawn from the theory of Wellman (1993), where he dissects the claims of reverse racism. In his work, he concludes that it is a reaction on white people losing ground in the debate, but they aren’t losing the advantage (Ansell, 2013).

Lastly, the exclusion of the Dutch plays another role in this discussion. The exclusion of ‘whites’ is mainly used to argue the slogan ‘BLM’. The idea of BLM – and thus, the use of the slogan – is that black people want to be treated the same as white people in predominantly white countries, such as the Netherlands (Dave et al, 2020). Nevertheless, this is contested several times by users trying to illustrate that everyone’s life is important by using a different slogan like ‘All Lives Matter’. This user felt the need to include herself in the discussion because she couldn’t find any form of representation in the slogan:

“Nobody said ‘Black Lives don’t matter. (..) Change the name to Black&White. This makes the message more direct, more clear and more balanced.” (AD, 2020)

The combination of feeling left out, the cry for ‘all lives matter’ and the fact that they claim that there is white racism makes the aforementioned comments classic examples of the problems with white fragility. DiAngelo’s (2016) theory about this states that “white fragility is a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves.” (p. 247) The trigger in this case was the slogan ‘Black Lives Matter’, which opened the racial debate but seemed to exclude white people from the discussion.

5.1.5 Black Lives Matter causes division

For this subcategory, I use the multiple theories I already discussed since they returned in various ways. The most extreme reactions – as well as the most prominent – are the comments which blame BLM for the division in the society:

“The only thing that’ll be achieved is a permanent split between white and coloured and that definite hate ensues and several political sides get a lot of voters.” (RTL, 2020)

This accusation of causing the split is something that DiAngelo (2016) describes as the discourse of racial discussion which often result in self-defence:

“In this discourse, whites position themselves as victimized, slammed, blamed, attacked, and being used as a ‘punching bag’.” (p. 249)

These defensive motions are outed in accusations directed at the protesters. The combination of fear and anger are present, as well as the argument as to why BLM is to blame for the unrest in society.

“Thickly laying on ‘colour’. Clear distinction of ‘black’ & ‘white’... I see people, no colour. It is the whining that makes you think that certain skin colours are crying ‘discrimination!’ A shame, because this tiny group of whiners are the ones that discriminate against skin colour.” (NOS, 2020)

Another user claims that the BLM-movement is a way for people of colour to enforce respect by pushing their agenda:

“You need to earn respect, not enforce it! (...) This way you spread fear, anger and division. That can’t be the goal?” (Nu.nl, 2020)

The second comment even acknowledges the fact that he feels anger and fear due to the protests, but again he deflects it by saying this isn’t the way to achieve equal rights. This is one of the basic tenets of ‘white fragility’ (DiAngelo, 2016): the user immediately defends himself by saying that this isn’t the way to take action, since he feels threatened by the active protests.

What is fascinating is the paradox that the comments pose: one side argues that racism wasn’t present in the Netherlands before the protests, while the other side argues that racism only worsened due to the protests:

“Now you only get hate and irritation.. does not get any better. Just accept people as they are... When all is said and done, nothing’s changed. I think racism only got worse because of this.” (RTL, 2020)

It is interesting to see that most users seem to agree that racism is *justified* now because of the BLM-movement. This aligns with Essed and Hoving’s (2014) theory that Dutch people have the right to discriminate, since minorities are the ones disrupting the ‘peaceful’ and ‘tolerant’ country with their protest.

According to Wekker (2016), one of the main aspects of white innocence is denying that racism is a problem in society. As mentioned before, this is mainly expressed in defending racial statements or denying them since the Netherlands are ‘free of racism’ (Wekker, 2016). However, my data showed that it is not only a case of *defending* the accusations, but that there were also active *accusations* of racism towards BLM-protesters. What is evident is the idea that BLM is the cause of the major struggles in today’s society. The comments almost all state that racism wasn’t a problem before BLM, but after the movement this idea of discrimination took over ‘everything’.

“Which group has polarised the racism debate, again? Oh right, they did it themselves. They keep pushing people in boxes. (white = racist, police = racist, black = repressed) and they keep saying that they’re different. They keep emphasizing on people’s colour. This whole protest only worsens the polarisation.” (NOS, 2020)

But, interestingly, the other side of this argument is that “They make everything about racism.” According to this comment, the protesters force this concept of racism in society and

divide it in the process. Additionally, one user tries to justify the fact that white people are discriminated against too:

“What a lot of nonsense, white people are discriminated against too based on age, chronic illness, their intelligence, red hair and especially the elderly, stop it and accept people as they are.” (NOS, 2020)

While it is true that society discriminates on more than skin colour, this user seems to forget that people of colour deal with all these forms of discrimination too: age, illness, being elderly on top of the fact that they are discriminated because of their race. This proves that people are reflexively obscuring the power dynamics and systemic racism at play.

5.1.6 *(Dis)credit to race*

Another important factor which can be attributed to ‘white privilege’ is the strong connection with ‘bad figures’ that seem to resonate throughout the whole BLM-movement. Peggy McIntosh (1989) wrote in her essay about white privilege that people of colour experience the concept she calls ‘credit to your race.’ By doing something exceptional, white people assume that a person of colour can be an example for others of their race due to the fact that they are successful. However, some comments seem to flip this idea and use Akwasi as a discredit to BLM. Because of his statements regarding Black Pete and the backlash it created, some users use Akwasi as a representation for everything that is wrong with BLM in the Netherlands.

“[Kick Out Zwarte Piet] and almost all BLM fanatics are the biggest racists. They accuse white people of everything. What Derksen says, is hurtful. What Akwasi says about violence, they think it’s good. Oh how terrible white Holland is in their eyes.” (NOS, 2020)

In this comment, the user describes the two statements of two Dutch celebrities. The first one, Akwasi, argued that Black Pete was racist and that he ‘would punch him in the face if he saw him again’. Later, he stated that this was figure of speech and that it wasn’t his intention to provoke any form of violence (Het Parool, 2020). Derksen, on the other hand, purposefully compared Black Pete to Akwasi on live television and he stated that he wouldn’t apologize for this statement (Het Parool, 2020). Both men made controversial statements, but only Akwasi is actively criticized for his statement by Facebook users. One of the comments even states:

“It is strange. Johan Derksen makes a wrong joke and needs to adjust, and [Akwasi] urges people to use violence and he gets an award. It’s getting crazier every time!” (AD, 2020)

For his statement, Akwasi has become a sort of symbol about everything that is wrong with BLM. He was even referred to as “that instable Black Lives figure” (AD, 2020) by a commenter. Another article was about the singer Typhoon, who asked for attention for BLM. Even though Akwasi wasn’t even part of this discussion, a user felt the need to involve him in his comment:

“Judge on talent instead on playing victim. People like Akwasi and this piece of trash are just pathetic and that is all about character and not about colour!” (RTL, 2020)

Thus, Akwasi is synonymously used with everything that seems to be wrong with BLM.

5.1.7 Social media

According to Daniels (2009), it is the rise of ‘cloaked websites’ that leads to blatant forms of racism online. These ‘cloaked websites’ are sites “that conceal authorship or feign legitimacy in order to deliberately disguise a hidden political agenda” (p. 661). Stormfront is a good example of such a website in the Netherlands. Daniels (2009) argues here that the anonymity on these sites is the main reason for the racist statements. However, Facebook isn’t considered a ‘cloaked website’ because the identity of people is visible, with both names and photos. Jakubowicz (2017) offers a more nuanced form of this by stating that social media has the problem of ‘trolls’, but again presses the idea of the ‘anonymity’ as the main factor of the blatant forms of racism. However, the data shows that using your own name or picture doesn’t discourage cyber-racism. The following two comments regarding BLM protestors and protests are examples of this:

“Withdraw the benefits for this bunch of freeloaders and kick them back to where they came from it has to stop with those people.” (AD, 2020)

“It’s going to be a disaster. Shop owners, close your stores otherwise you’ll get robbed.”
(Nu.nl, 2020)

These two comments display two stereotypical ideas in the Netherlands: non-Dutch people live off the social system due to their unwillingness to work and they are aggressive towards hardworking people (Wekker, 2016). Moreover, some user state that BLM and the open forms

of protest against racism in society are the reason Dutch people are becoming racists. One user wrote:

“I never had any problems with colour, race or sexuality or anything but I am going to get it now.” (RTL, 2020)

It is interesting to see that these blatant outings of racism aren’t behind the safety of cloaked ‘troll accounts’ (Jakubowicz, 2017; Daniels, 2009), since I filtered out these as much as possible. These users have their current location public on their Facebook-page, which tells us that it is most likely a real account.

5.2 *Speaking out*

There were also users who spoke out against the majority of the responses and against the majority of the data. The most common reaction is pointing out the framing of other responses, but what stood out was the fact that the comments followed the same subcategories.

The first thing that was apparent in these comments was that the users tried to make the ‘invisible’ forms of racism visible. Sue et al. (2018) describe this goal of pointing out racism as a way to battle naiveté and innocence of offenders in their biases. This is mainly seen in the comments by the way the perceived innocence is countered. For this, I found that the users applied the concepts which were discussed by Wekker (2016):

“The heart of the whole problem is that the Netherlands always had the image of a tolerant nation. THAT image is currently under fire due to the things that surface now. Dutch AREN’T tolerant at all! So... how are you going to deal with it?” (NOS, 2020)

This user asked the relevant question: how are you going to deal with the fact that the country you presumed is free of racism has institutionalised forms of racism, which is experienced by any person of colour but invisible to white people? By unfolding this blind spot, the discussion is reopened and made visible, which can lead to possible future awareness.

Additionally, this followed the line of the colour-mute racism by showing how everyone seems to agree that racism is something bad, but that it isn’t something that is preferred to be discussed. The concept of colour-muteness is something that was, as mentioned before, harder to point out but is still visible in the comments on Facebook. One of the users showed it by sketching the situation in a very simple way:

“‘Yes, very nice that you are against racism, but does it have to be that loud? And do you really want us to do anything about it? That kind of crosses a line.’ This is how the critics sound to me.” (NOS, 2020)

This user makes the hypocrisy in society visible by dissecting the way most people react in the comments as a result of the discussion.

The tactic of making the invisible biases visible is applicable to comments which showed the basic tenets of white innocence and colour-mute racism. This makes sense, since all these theories have at the core that racism is something that is preferably pushed away in an effort to ignore the problem.

Another approach was the effort to educate the other users about the issues of racism. Sue et al. (2018) describes the following approach:

“These [approaches] include appealing to the offender’s values and principles, pointing out the commonalities, increasing the awareness of professional and societal benefits, and promoting empathy.” (p.138-139).

Appealing to offender’s values and principles was something I found in the concept of entitlement racism and this was pointed out by several users, especially in regard to the statement of ‘freedom of speech’. As a reaction on the much-used argument ‘there is freedom of speech’, some user countered this logic:

“Quite contrary if you claim the right of freedom of speech to censor someone else. This club wants to say when someone is practicing freedom of speech and when they aren’t. Unbelievable!” (NOS, 2020)

As Essed and Hoving (2014) stated, entitlement racism has at its core that you are allowed to be racist since you should be able to express yourself publicly in whichever way you feel like it. Indeed, several users used the freedom of speech as an excuse to state their biased remarks but refused to listen to people of colour asking attention for the BLM-movement. This is one of the aspects which aligns with the idea of ‘white fragility’ (DiAngelo, 2016) and ‘colour-blind racism’ (Bonilla-Silva, 2018) as well.

“I get the feeling that (alt-) right wants some sort of monopoly on freedom of speech. They always proclaim that freedom of speech needs to be absolute and that you can say

everything, and I mean everything, but as soon as minorities or left makes use of freedom of speech or disagrees with a right opinion, than they all shout: ‘you can’t say anything anymore’.” (NOS, 2020)

I found another example in comments that explained how looking at the narrative of BLM can change the perception. The following comment is an example of how the blame is wrongfully put on BLM and argues that the split in society is not caused by the movement, but that the movement is a result of the already existing split:

“The bad apples of society created the division. The action groups are battling this. And who gets the blame? The action groups of course....” (NOS, 2020)

Explaining why the BLM-movement needs to ask for attention is a way of taking back the narrative, which again can lead to more awareness about issues white people don’t experience in everyday life.

“What? It should not get any crazier! So the ones who address the existing split in society and discuss it, are the ones that are blamed by the ‘prominent’ figures as the cause of this deplorable situation? Don’t shoot the messenger!” (NOS, 2020)

6. Discussion and Conclusion

For this thesis, I researched online discourse to find out how Dutch Facebook users react to news of BLM and the racial discussion it is associated with. To answer my research question: '*How do Facebook comments on news articles discussing Black Lives Matter fit into the theories of racism in the Netherlands?*', I found evidence to support the theories of Bonilla-Silva (2018), Wekker (2016), Pollock (2004), McIntosh (1989) and Essed and Hoving (2014).

I found that the idea of tolerance and openness was prevalent in Dutch users and that contentedness with this image led to avoidance of racial discussions. However, BLM urged to discuss the racial problems which leads to a challenge to the positive image of the Netherlands – and by extension, the Dutch people – as ‘free of racism’. This led to the creation of the first theme in the comments ‘*us vs them*’, where Dutch people actively distanced themselves from the people who fought this image. Essed and Hoving’s (2014) theory of entitlement racism was mainly found in comments which were often based on the idea of a tolerant country, where others were welcome if they adapt to the Dutch norms. By extension, this led to the intersectionality with white innocence (Wekker, 2016) and white privilege (McIntosh, 1989) where users were offended if BLM suggested that racism is deeply rooted in Dutch society. This led to defensive comments where the discussion was moved away from the original problem of racism and aimed towards other problems. The challenge to the idea of a tolerant country was seen as well in colour-mute racism (Pollock, 2004), where users argued that there was only discrimination because BLM brought it up. In addition, the claim that BLM ‘caused’ racism is comparable to Bonilla-Silva’s (2018) theory of colour-blind racism, where the users stated that they don’t see colour, but only look at character.

What was interesting was that the comments didn’t only have a polarising effect, but they can also serve as a way to counter the image of a ‘racist-free’ nation. The category of ‘*speaking out*’ pointed at the inconsistencies of the other comments, which followed the earlier discussed theories. Several users pointed out that racism isn’t something exclusively for narrowminded people, but that it is present in every layer of society. Thus, they explained these issues by making the invisible forms of racism more visible and educating other users on the framing and narratives that have been dominant in the Netherlands.

While the beforementioned themes were first seen in the literature, there are several findings that weren’t as developed in the literature while they were very prominent in my findings. Especially in regard with the deflection of racism to other problems, such as the

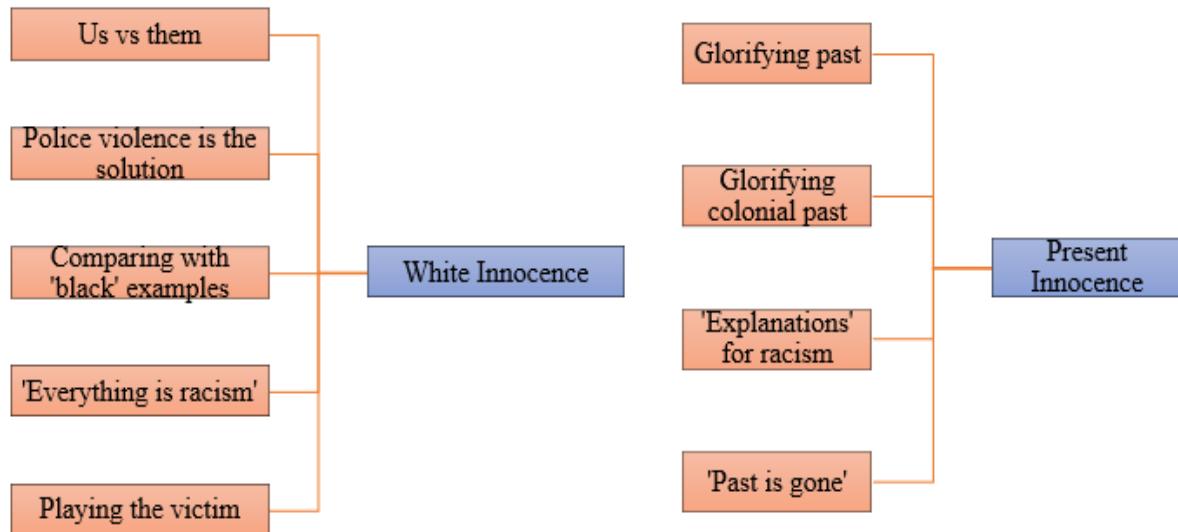
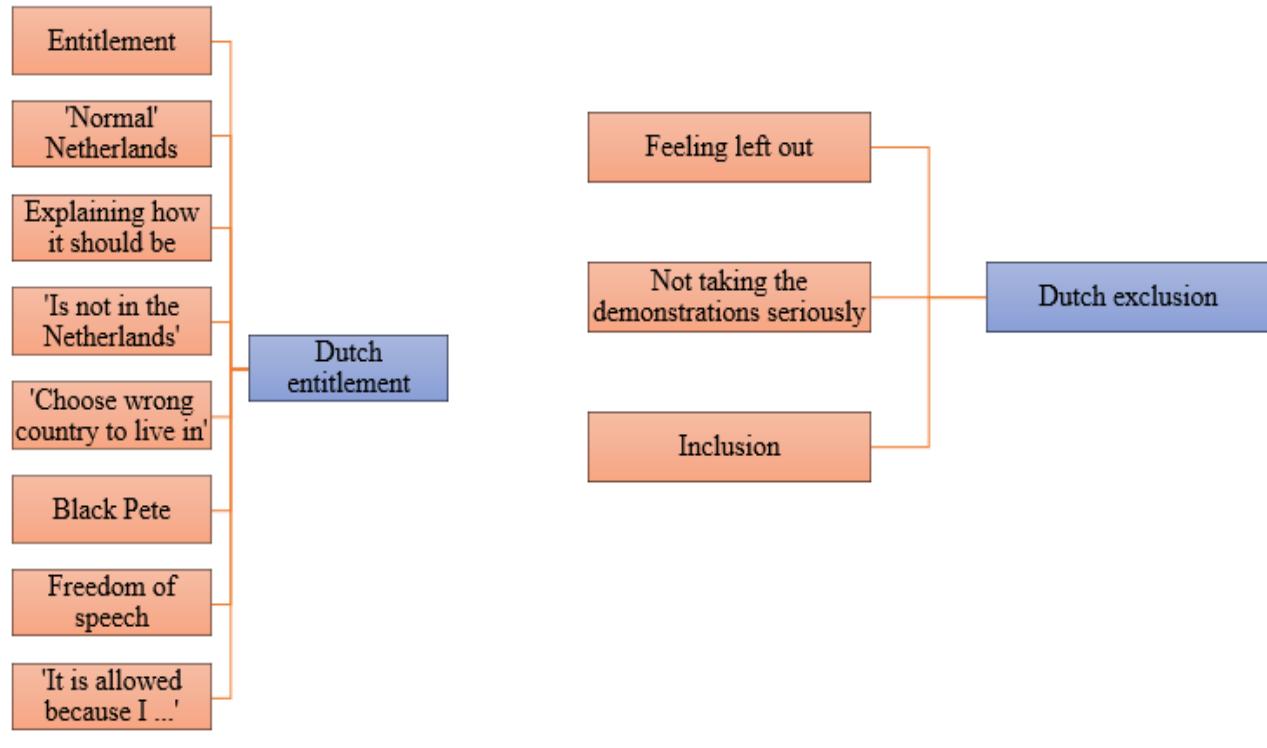
Covid-19 pandemic, discussions started which again steered the conversation away from racism. Another finding was the fact that users defended the Dutch colonial past by stating that this is what made it possible for people of colour to enjoy the wealth of the Netherlands. The last finding was that the Dutch rapper Akwasi was often mentioned in negative way in the comments. His name became synonymous with all that is wrong with BLM in the Netherlands and was used to discredit the movement in several comments.

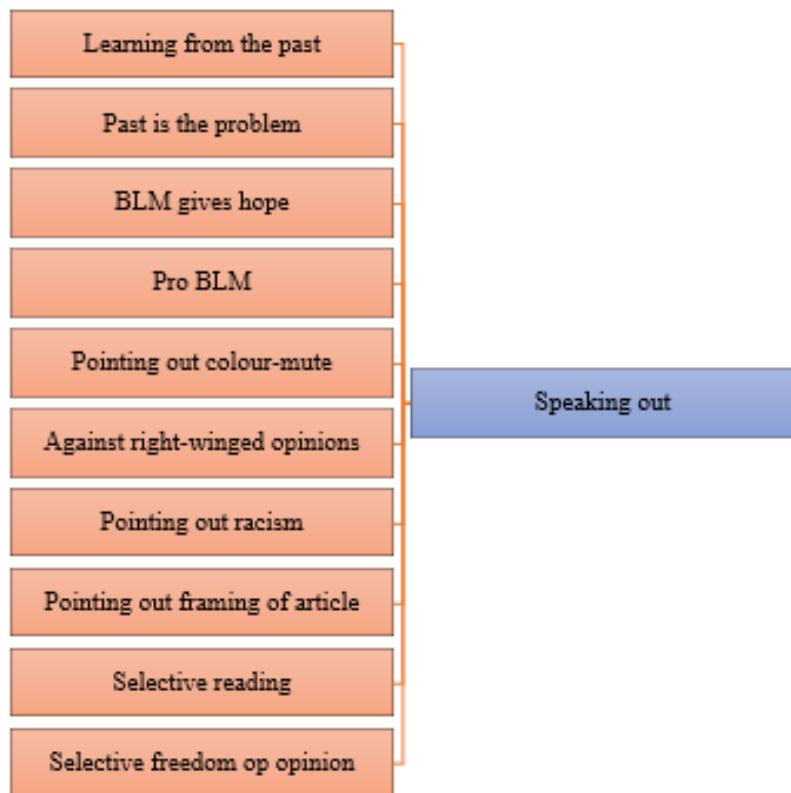
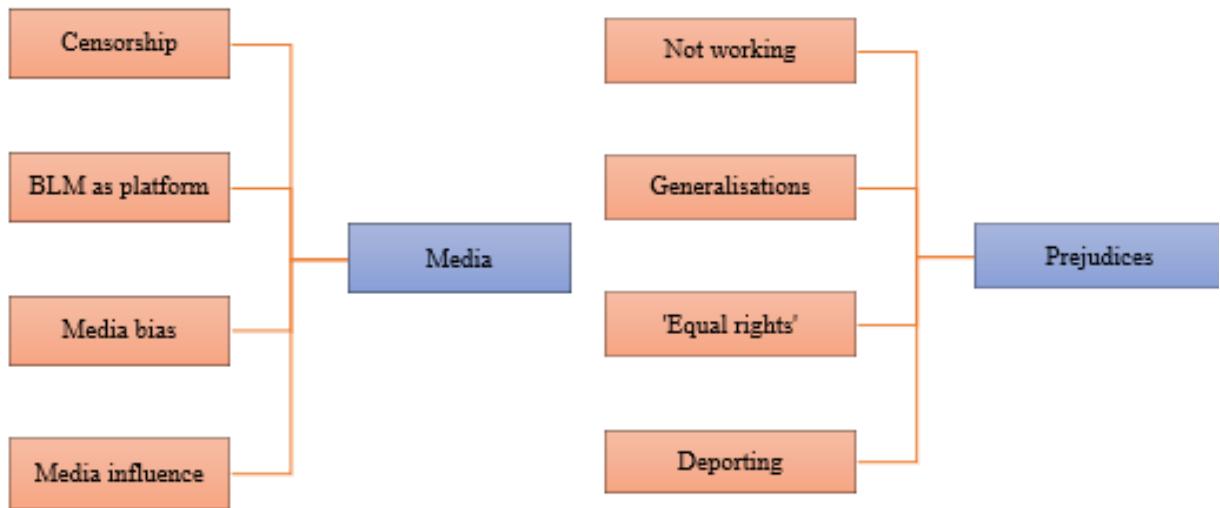
Thus, I can conclude that the problems which weren't as present in the literature were issues that were contemporary and/or specific to the Netherlands. In further studies it can be interesting to research whether there have been similar problems in the past or in other countries. Moreover, the downside of this research is that it only selected one social media platform for the data so it might be interesting as well to look at multiple social media platforms to see if the pattern of comments is universally applicable.

By taking a deeper look into the social media discourse of racism during the time of BLM, I contributed with this thesis to the expanding literature of online research. Even though content analysis has been done before on social media comments, there is very few research like this on the topic of BLM in the Netherlands. By taking a very topical issue and researching it on an online platform, this thesis has the relevance that is important in the academic world.

Appendix A: Code tree







Appendix B: Articles

Source	Title	Date	Author
AD	Bekladders van beelden slaan toen in Rotterdam, kunstinstelling laat smurrie bewust zitten	12-06- 2020	Lex Bezemer
AD	Black Lives Matter- betogenen door het land rustig verlopen	13-06- 2020	Binnenlandredactie
AD	Akwasi ontvangt FunX Award voor strijd tegen racisme	17-09- 2020	Maxime Segers
NOS	Black Lives Matter- demonstraties in Zwolle en Maastricht	07-06- 2020	NOS Nieuws
NOS	Black Lives Matter- betogers spreken Rutte, hoofdrolspelers ontbreken	24-06- 2020	NOS Nieuws
NOS	Nederlandse wetenschappers en prominenten ondertekenen manifest tegen ‘afrekencultuur’	16-07- 2020	NOS Nieuws
Nu.nl	Amsterdam maakt zich op voor tweede Black Lives Matter- demonstratie	06-06- 2020	Redactie
Nu.nl	Honderden Black Lives Matter-demonstranten op Malieveld in Den Haag	20-06- 2020	Redactie

Nu.nl	Luizenmoeder-actrice Meral Polat spreekt zich door Black Lives Matter uit	29-08- 2020	Redactie
Nu.nl	De drie grootste misverstanden over Black Lives Matter op NUjij	13-06- 2020	Redactie
RTL Nieuws	Omstreden standbeelden onder vuur: ook bij ons een beeldenstorm?	10-06- 2020	Redactie
RTL Nieuws	Typhoon emotioneel bij Zomergasten: 'Beoordeel op karakter in plaats van kleur'	20-07- 2020	Redactie
RTL Nieuws	Nog amper Black Lives Matter in je tijdlijn? 'Stilte voor de storm'	05-08- 2020	Redactie

Appendix C: Checklist ethical and privacy aspects of research



CHECKLIST ETHICAL AND PRIVACY ASPECTS OF RESEARCH

INSTRUCTION

This checklist should be completed for every research study that is conducted at the Department of Public Administration and Sociology (DPAS). This checklist should be completed *before* commencing with data collection or approaching participants. Students can complete this checklist with help of their supervisor.

This checklist is a mandatory part of the empirical master's thesis and has to be uploaded along with the research proposal.

The guideline for ethical aspects of research of the Dutch Sociological Association (NSV) can be found on their website (http://www.nsv-sociologie.nl/?page_id=17). If you have doubts about ethical or privacy aspects of your research study, discuss and resolve the matter with your EUR supervisor. If needed and if advised to do so by your supervisor, you can also consult Dr. Jennifer A. Holland, coordinator of the Sociology Master's Thesis program.

PART I: GENERAL INFORMATION

Project title: Black Lives Matters in the Netherlands

Name, email of student: E.M. Visser, 546859ev@eur.nl

Name, email of supervisor: Dr. B. French, french@essb.eur.nl

Start date and duration: 21-3-2021

Is the research study conducted within DPAS

YES - NO

If 'NO': at or for what institute or organization will the study be conducted?
(e.g. internship organization)

PART II: HUMAN SUBJECTS

1. Does your research involve human participants. **YES - NO**

If 'NO': skip to part V.

If 'YES': does the study involve medical or physical research? **YES -**

NO

Research that falls under the Medical Research Involving Human Subjects Act ([WMO](#)) must first be submitted to [an accredited medical research ethics committee](#) or the Central Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects ([CCMO](#)).

2. Does your research involve field observations without manipulations

that will not involve identification of participants.
YES -
NO

If 'YES': skip to part IV.

3. Research involving completely anonymous data files (secondary data that has been anonymized by someone else). **YES - NO**

If 'YES': skip to part IV.

PART III: PARTICIPANTS

1. Will information about the nature of the study and about what participants can expect during the study be withheld from them? YES -
NO
2. Will any of the participants not be asked for verbal or written 'informed consent,' whereby they agree to participate in the study? YES -
NO
3. Will information about the possibility to discontinue the participation at any time be withheld from participants? YES -
NO
4. Will the study involve actively deceiving the participants? YES -
NO

Note: almost all research studies involve some kind of deception of participants. Try to think about what types of deception are ethical or non-ethical (e.g. purpose of the study is not told, coercion is exerted on participants, giving participants the feeling that they harm other people by making certain decisions, etc.).
5. Does the study involve the risk of causing psychological stress or negative emotions beyond those normally encountered by participants? YES -
NO
6. Will information be collected about special categories of data, as defined by the GDPR (e.g. racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a person, data concerning mental or physical health, data concerning a person's sex life or sexual orientation)? YES - **NO**
7. Will the study involve the participation of minors (<18 years old) or other groups that cannot give consent? YES - **NO**
8. Is the health and/or safety of participants at risk during the study? YES -
NO
9. Can participants be identified by the study results or can the confidentiality of the participants' identity not be ensured? YES -

NO

10. Are there any other possible ethical issues with regard to this study? YES - **NO**

If you have answered 'YES' to any of the previous questions, please indicate below why this issue is unavoidable in this study.

What safeguards are taken to relieve possible adverse consequences of these issues (e.g., informing participants about the study afterwards, extra safety regulations, etc.).

Are there any unintended circumstances in the study that can cause harm or have negative (emotional) consequences to the participants? Indicate what possible circumstances this could be.

Please attach your informed consent form in Appendix I, if applicable.

Continue to part IV.

PART IV: SAMPLE

Where will you collect or obtain your data?

On the social media platform Facebook.

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

What is the (anticipated) size of your sample?

I don't necessarily research *people*, but I research the reactions they leave on the open social media site. I only select from public pages, which means that I don't need any connection to the participants. These reactions are left on a public page, accessible to everyone.

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

What is the size of the population from which you will sample?

This depends on the amount of reactions, but it will be an estimated of fifty reactions from people.

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

Continue to part V.

Part V: Data storage and backup

Where and when will you store your data in the short term, after acquisition?

I will not copy any data, only look at it on Facebook itself, which is already public.

Note: indicate for separate data sources, for instance for paper-and pencil test data, and for digital data files.

Who is responsible for the immediate day-to-day management, storage and backup of the data arising from your research?

I am.

How (frequently) will you back-up your research data for short-term data security?

Once a week.

In case of collecting personal data how will you anonymize the data?

There will be no names used, so there is no need to anonymize the data.

Note: It is advisable to keep directly identifying personal details separated from the rest of the data. Personal details are then replaced by a key/ code. Only the code is part of the database with data and the list of respondents/research subjects is kept separate.

PART VI: SIGNATURE

Please note that it is your responsibility to follow the ethical guidelines in the conduct of your study. This includes providing information to participants about the study and ensuring confidentiality in storage and use of personal data. Treat participants respectfully, be on time at appointments, call participants when they have signed up for your study and fulfil promises made to participants.

Furthermore, it is your responsibility that data are authentic, of high quality and properly stored. The principle is always that the supervisor (or strictly speaking the Erasmus University Rotterdam) remains owner of the data, and that the student should therefore hand over all data to the supervisor.

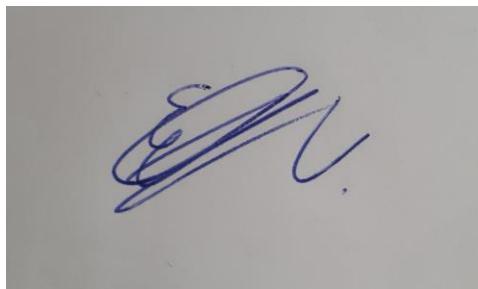
Hereby I declare that the study will be conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the Department of Public Administration and Sociology at Erasmus University Rotterdam. I have answered the questions truthfully.

Name student: E.M. Visser

Name (EUR) supervisor: dr. B. French

Date: 19-3-2021

Date: 21-3-2021



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