

# **NO INTERNATIONALS PLEASE**

**EXPERIENCES AND NEGOTIATIONS OF  
EVERYDAY RACISM IN THE ROTTERDAM  
HOUSING MARKET**

**KIRSTEN KARDIJK**



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Kirsten Kardijk with student number 575270  
born on July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1998

Supervised by  
Dr. J.L. Bier

Second reader  
Dr. I. van Oorschot

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# "WELKOM"

I went for a walk around my old neighbourhood today. Bags and flags hung from flagpoles, a tradition for high school graduates to proudly announce their accomplishments to the world. I realised it has been eight years since I graduated from high school. At the time I was extremely happy that I had passed my exams, and would be able to start my studies, but also because shortly after I heard I graduated I went on my first vacation alone and got extremely lost in London.

In the meantime, a lot has changed. I moved from Groningen to Malmö, then back to Groningen, Uppsala, and Rotterdam. I changed careers from gym teacher to sociology. Nonetheless, writing this thesis takes me back to that period. Not because I'm glad that I have anything on paper and can maybe begin a new part of my life, but because while I was writing it I felt like how I felt in London, a bit lost. It is therefore I would like, and need to thank a number of people for the joint effort of this project.

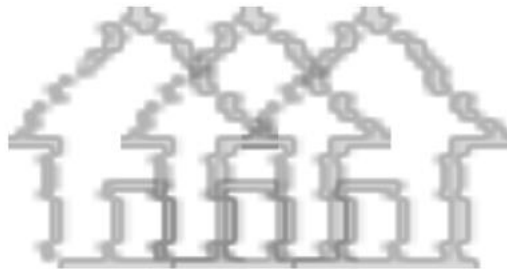
This thesis would not have been completed was it not for some of you. First, to my supervisor Jess Bier. For the support, the enthusiasm, the positivity, the baby talk and of course the feedback. You make every task seem manageable while occasionally lighting fire under our asses. Your input into this dissertation has been extremely valuable, and I could not have wished for a better supervisor. Irene van Oorschot, my second reader and substitute supervisor when Jess was in baby town. Thank you for giving this thesis structure and guiding me through it when I did not know how to do it anymore. Thank you for the inspiring classes that led me to my thesis, Willem Schinkel, Rogier van Reekum, and Jess Bier. And a warm thank you to my co-workers Hanneke and Diane who academically and personally always have supported me through this process.

Without the participants, this project would have been nothing. I appreciate your willingness to meet with me and freely discuss your housing narrative. Thank you for sharing your experiences, thoughts and emotions with me.

The final word goes to friends and family. A big thank you to my roommates Anne, Sanne and Bram, for making our house in Rotterdam feel like home. Here is to many more nights filled with drinks, food and dancing as well as the occasional days of tears, and supportive flowers or banana bread. Max, Mees, Jolijn, Bob, and Loretta who have made attending classes enjoyable, each of you have been indispensable to how my thesis unfolded. Josey, thank you for the unconditional support and comfort during this difficult process. A huge

amount of appreciation goes to my family, who always welcome me with open arms. I am grateful for my parents for supporting me in anything I do. You are truly the best cheerleaders. To my siblings, Anouk and Thijs. Thank you for applying sunscreen when I wanted to study outside. I could not have finished my thesis without getting sunburned if it had not been for you.

# PART ONE





## **ABSTRACT**

*International students are a growing group in the Netherlands. While often marked as privileged, literature shows they are generally disadvantaged in the Dutch housing market as a consequence of structural constraints. Previous research has shown racism is still present in our day-to-day interactions and behaviour. However, little is known about the different housing market experiences among international students. This article seeks to reveal how non-Dutch students of colour subjectively experience and negotiate everyday racism in the housing market. My grounded theory approach is based on interviews conducted with 9 international students of colour living in Rotterdam. The interviews aimed to understand experiences and sense-making of racism through a combination of Clapman's (2006) housing pathway approach and Essed's (1991) reflection on everyday racism method. The findings of this thesis explain how excluding people from the housing market becomes acceptable, how and why this has an impact on international students of colour and how they can act. Acceptable racist practises, I discovered, included the denial of housing for international students of colour on the illusory ground of language or normalised racist microaggressions in communication and behaviour. As the Netherlands thrives on its endless innocence - the passionate denial of racial discrimination that coexists alongside racism - racist interactions have become tolerated. Simultaneously, when privileging white experiences, responsibility is deflected, and this results in the inability of students of colour to act on their own terms. With these power dynamics at work, where the white Dutch decide what is accepted and who belongs, there is a need to dismiss the innocent character they would like to hold on to so tightly to create inclusion.*

**Keywords:** international students of colour; everyday racism; Dutch housing market; experiences of racism; negotiations of racism;

## INTRODUCTION

International students are an expanding population in the Netherlands. The number of international students has increased more rapidly than Dutch students over the past 16 years, a trend that has persisted despite the COVID-19 pandemic (CBS, 2022). In the academic year 2021/22, 115.000 students crossed borders to the Netherlands resulting in an international enrolment rate of 40% at the universities. However, these universities are not responsible for housing international students (Kuzmane et al., 2017). While they often provide information about the housing market online, and sometimes even collaborate with student housing societies, they are generally unable to accommodate their yearly intake of international students (Erasmus University, 2022). As a result, the private rental sector is the sector that an increasing number of international students are forced to use but experience structural disadvantages in.

While studying abroad is generally perceived to be a privileged act, research has shown this is hardly applicable to all international students. Difficulties that international students face to find adequate housing in various countries can be found in anecdotal accounts that have been brought to light in past years, mirroring the uncertainties of tight housing markets (Obeng-Odoom, 2012; Hoolachan & McKee, 2019). In the Netherlands, numerous international students describe living involuntarily in environments characterised by instability and insecurity, aside from a number experiencing progressively worsening housing conditions (Fang & van Liempt, 2021). Furthermore, Fang and van Liempt (2021) note these difficulties in housing pathways are often ascribed to discriminatory and structural disadvantages in the Dutch housing market. While this gives a sense of how disadvantages are experienced by international students in general, it fails to highlight differences within this group and to acknowledge some have more tangled routes than others.

Many scholars argue for the strong paradox that is operative in the Netherlands, showing how the dominant discourse stubbornly maintains that the Netherlands is and always has been a multicultural, antiracist place, while simultaneously, there is academic evidence that racial prejudice and power relations remain established in Dutch culture and influence everyday life (Wekker, 2016; Kaya, 2009). Specifically to this case, during this research, the current Minister of Education, Culture, and Science, Minister Dijkgraaf, introduced measures limiting the number of international students on a degree (Rijksoverheid, 2023). More specifically, the minister wishes to limit the number of students from outside Europe. A measurement rejecting non-Europeans, while continuously admitting Dutch and European students has significant consequences for the academic world's attempt to attain diversity.

How racism might be present in the housing market can be identified in the research of neighbouring countries which has pointed out that once landlords or co-residents are involved

in the decision-making process, racial prejudices make it more difficult for international students of colour to obtain accommodation (Heylen & Van den Broeck, 2016). While decisions in the Dutch housing market rely heavily on co-residents and landlords (Fang & van Liempt, 2021), few studies in the Netherlands have focused on where and how racism in the housing market occurs. There has been insufficient focus on experiences, reasoning, and other ways of making do among the students exposed to day-to-day racist encounters in the housing market. To put it bluntly, we are unaware of the detailed narratives of uncertainty and precariousness that international students of colour especially seem to experience in the housing market.

Considering Essed's (2008) work on everyday racism, illuminating the experience and interpretation of racism is necessary to fully comprehend what everyday racism in the housing market looks and feels like. Lightly touching upon racism in a study focusing on the bigger picture of housing market barriers can be argued to be inadequate, as racism should be explained in detail and within the context of the individual to eliminate attempts to deny the definition of reality (Essed, 2008). I will therefore engage in personal accounts of the multidimensional experiences of everyday racism in the Dutch housing market.

However, as the majority in the Netherlands considers themselves to be non-racist, it might be difficult to identify racist interactions by those who experience them. According to Wenzel, Mummendey, and Walzdus (2018), the dominant culture reflects its standards, values, and perspectives on individuals who do not belong to 'them'. The white Dutch framework dictates what is considered to be acceptable, non-racist interaction, and what is considered to be racist (Wenzel, Mummendey, & Waldzus, 2008). This means that those experiencing racism might be influenced by the majority's attitudes toward racism, leading to the negotiation of racism.

This thesis examines if and how everyday racism is present and experienced in the Dutch housing market and will then investigate the influence of the dominant Dutch culture in negotiations of racism. The main question this thesis addresses is:

*How do international students of colour experience and negotiate everyday racism in the housing market in Rotterdam?*

The way this question is formulated consists of a couple of choices. While both the 'how' and 'where' questions lack investigation, in this study I will mainly focus on the 'how' question as I am interested in accounts of experiences and ways racism operates, meaning the 'how' question is more fitting. In addition, I have decided to use the term 'international students of colour' to define people who are or were enrolled in a degree course, who completed all prior education in another country, *and* who are not considered 'white'. The term

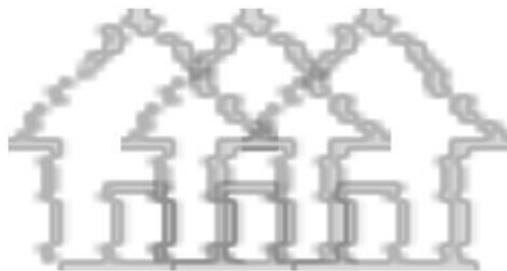
'of colour' needs more careful attention, as it consists of complexities behind the discourse of identity and experiences beyond the colour of your skin (Tammy Kim, 2020). While the term 'people of colour' still flattens differences among all people of colour and simplifies complexities (Pérez, 2020), it has a less negative connotation than the term 'non-white', which was used in a system of institutionalised racial segregation e.g., in the apartness in South Africa (Wolpe, 1972).

Focusing on international students of colour in the housing market has scientific relevance as preliminary research on the difficulties international students face in their search for housing (e.g., Fang & van Liempt, 2021) overlooks the levels of disadvantages within this group. While increasing disadvantages for people of colour come to light (Wekker, 2016), research has yet to be done focusing on their narrative of uncertainty and precariousness in the housing market. By outlining and highlighting the narratives of discrimination in the housing market through a narrowed lens of international students of colour, this thesis will attempt to demonstrate the presence of racism in the Rotterdam housing market.

In addition to demonstrating the presence of racism, I am trying to engage in voicing those who take part in a system or culture in which they seem to be particularly disadvantaged. During the current housing shortages in the private rental sector, much attention is devoted to the experiences of white Dutch students in conversations of change and improvement (Boelhouver, 2020). However, in a market based on a white Dutch framework, in which they are already disadvantaged, the perspectives and experiences of international students of colour should at least be included, if not considered more crucial. I will therefore use thickly descriptive narratives to make sense of their experiences in the Dutch housing market.

In the following sections, I will begin by outlining the theoretical features of this research. The second section is concerned with the methods that were used in this study. In the final part of the paper, I present the research findings, discussion, and conclusion, focusing on the primary themes of experience and negotiation.

# PART TWO



# CHAPTER 1: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, I first explore the general structural limitations in the housing market that invite discrimination in the housing market. Next, the significance of narratives when trying to understand everyday racism is highlighted. As everyday racism might be difficult to pinpoint, in the last section, I aim to explain how everyday racism might be negotiated among international students of colour. Together these pieces of literature reveal that, regardless of the general structural limitations of international students in the housing market, international students of colour might experience additional day-to-day uncertainties and barriers (Heylen & Van den Broeck, 2016; Wekker, 2016). While the Dutch white framework leads to negotiating everyday racism among victims, the examination of narratives of everyday racism can illustrate how structural limitations, additional everyday uncertainties, and barriers shape housing pathways on an individual level (Essed, 1991).

## 1.1 Discrimination in the housing market

The structural limitations of the Dutch housing market invite discrimination against international students. Despite some studies implying that international students constitute a privileged group (King & Raghuram, 2013), most highlight that 'privilege' is doubtfully applicable to all of them (Hall, 2010; Fang & van Liempt, 2021). General (trans)national trends show international students experience more housing difficulties compared to local students.

Research highlighting the economic, cultural, and social difficulties international students experience illustrates an interesting viewpoint on how the housing market invites discrimination (Hall, 2010; Fang & van Liempt, 2021). Hall (2010) notes most international students do not work full-time or are rejected by the labour market, which means that they must find other ways of financing their stay abroad. Of equal importance, international students have less *social* and *cultural capital* compared to local students (Fang & van Liempt, 2021). Hochstenbach and Boterman (2021) define *social capital* as an individual's social network from which one can draw. *Cultural capital* can be defined as being 'culturally compatible' with the housing setting e.g., by knowing the local language. Fang and van Liempt (2021) use this as the foundation to argue that international students have less social and cultural capital than local students because the majority lack social networks in their host countries and are unable to speak the local language. Their work gives a clear overview of the extra barriers faced by international students yet overlooks the fact that not all international students are the same, and some might have more tangled routes than others.

In contrast to the considerable amount of research focusing on general disadvantages of international students, limited research has been carried out on ethnical discrimination in the Dutch housing market, even though we know from research in neighbouring countries that

the private housing market sector is a breeding ground for racism (Mazziotta, Zerr, & Rohmann, 2015; Heylen & Van den Broeck, 2016). In their work on the Belgium housing market, Heylen and van den Broeck (2016) highlight that landlords or co-residents, who often occupy a powerful position in the housing market, tend to be biased against certain ethnic groups. Given that ethnic bias frequently manifests itself along racial lines, it is reasonable to predict that international students of colour will be affected as well, if not increasingly more so.

Building on the idea that international students of colour might struggle more in the housing market due to ethnic bias, the assumption that all international students experience the same degree of economic, cultural, and social difficulties does not hold. However, there is a lack of exploration of the differentiated routes of individuals within this group in the Netherlands. It is necessary to understand how, in the housing market context, shared, often unexamined patterns concerning race continue to shape how 'we' and 'they' are constructed and perceived. By focusing on experiences, I want to explore the additional day-to-day hurdles international students of colour have to deal with.

## **1.2 Experiences of Racism in the Netherlands**

The long-lasting debate on what the term 'racism' constitutes identifies an interesting starting point when exploring racism in the housing market. Generally, racism is defined as a complicated, long-lasting social problem that manifests itself in a variety of ways at the institutional, interpersonal, and individual levels (Walton, Priest, & Paradies, 2013). It is broadly described as a phenomenon in a society that sustains or exacerbates preventable and unfair disparities in power, resources, or opportunities between racial, ethnic, cultural, or religious groups (Walton, Priest, & Paradies, 2013). Until recently, many mainstream political sociological histories did not address the day-to-day reality of racism. However, research suggests that it is in the everyday encounters with majority group members that the experience of being othered is most poignantly felt (Dixon, Durrheim, & Tredoux, 2005). Following this line of thinking, Essed (1991) introduces the key concept of everyday racism, which operates as the foundation of my research. Studying everyday racism allows me to grasp the reality of day-to-day racism in the Dutch housing market.

### **1.2.1 Everyday racism**

What does everyday racism mean, and how does it distinguish itself from 'racism'? I understand the concept of everyday racism as terminology that bridges day-to-day racial discrimination to the macrostructural background of group inequalities portrayed within and between nations as racial hierarchies (Essed, 1991). While racism is easily recognised in its extreme (violence against a black person) and overt (racial slurs against a black athlete) forms, everyday racism can be more coded and not consciously intended.

There is an increasing body of work focusing on the specific contexts of everyday racism in the Netherlands. Building on a larger field of study in black studies and black feminism, according to Essed (1991), everyday racism is a concept divided into two parts, one referring to 'racism' and the other to 'everyday'. She highlights 'everyday' refers to practices of social relations that are present and replicated in everyday situations. With this, she argues that racism is not limited to institutional settings, just as our daily lives are not limited to institutional settings (Essed, 1991). Racism, from her point of view, is not a singular act in itself but the accumulation of small inequities. This means that everyday racism consists of common violations consequential of a racist system without a legally sanctioned race-supremacy ideology. The following section explores the idea that exactly this is what the Netherlands is.

### 1.2.2 Everyday racism in the Netherlands

"We are a small, innocent nation; without bad intentions," this bright thought of innocence is the discourse that shapes the denial of racism in the Netherlands (Wekker, 2016). Likewise, van Dijk (1992) emphasises, parliaments, and inhabitants are prone to positive self-presentation, and frequently declare that their country is more equal, humane, tolerant, and fair than anywhere else. This idea of positive self-presentation is rooted in Amin's (1989) notion of '*Eurocentrism*', comprising of how universal claims of Western knowledge, and the dominance of Western norms for progress, remain deeply established in contemporary cultures while being criticised. As mentioned previously, the feeling of being marginalised is predominantly felt in everyday encounters with members of the dominant culture (Dixon, Durrheim, & Tredoux, 2005). The most prominent evidence of the presence of racism transmitted through day-to-day interactions can be found in the work of Wekker (2016) on 'innocence' and Essed and Hoving (2014) on 'innocence, ignorance and resentment' in the Netherlands.

What might be at the core of everyday racism is the common perception that race does not play a role in the Netherlands. Innocence, in Wekker's (2016) understanding, has particular resonance in the Dutch landscape, both as an embraced self-descriptor as well as the way it fits with a chain of associations the Netherlands strongly identifies with. Association-wise, she argues that Christian religion's glorification of innocence is still the desired state of being in the Netherlands. On a self-descriptor level, Wekker (2016) sheds light on the small nation, affectionate personality the Dutch like to convey. In other words, innocence characterises the Dutch way of being (Wekker, 2016). However, the claim of innocence is two-edged: it includes not-knowing as well as not wishing to know, capturing another part of everyday racism, namely ignorance (Wekker, 2016; Hoving & Essed, 2014).

According to Hoving and Essed (2014), ignorance is another indicator of the presence of racism. In a white supremacist state, ignorance divides the human race into full persons and



sub-persons. Those considered 'full persons' tend not to understand the racist world they live in as they can fully benefit from its racial hierarchies (Sullivan, 2007). Practises of knowing and not-knowing is connected to this not-understanding. As an illustration, by forcefully defending the claim of innocence and denying racism, the Dutch, according to Essed and Hoving (2014), demonstrate smug ignorance: rejecting the possibility of knowing. In other words, in addition to not knowing, ignorance also includes intentionally preferring not to know or consciously refusing to take action to learn. This ignorance might lead to resentment.

Resentment is the third indicator of racism. In the Netherlands, when referring to 'racism', one should expect to step into a minefield where full-force anger and violence are released (Hoving & Essed, 2014). Despite efforts, the Netherlands has been unable to properly address and move forward from its traumatic colonial past. Essed and Hoving (2014) note the painful presence of this is at the centre of Dutch national identity, resulting in the development of feelings of remorse and shame in parts of Dutch society. To push away guilt, feelings of resentment towards black and migrant people – as representations of a violent past or silent accusers – have come to the fore (Hoving & Essed, 2014). This is strongly related to De Jong's (2016) definition of typical Dutch resentment: '*spijtwraak*,'. He describes how the Netherlands dwells on past regrets and seeks revenge (De Jong, 2016). This not only rejects history but also transforms it into a caricature of hatred that is transmitted through daily racialised interactions.

Innocence, ignorance, and resentment shape verbal and non-verbal interactions through racial microaggressions. Sue et al. (2007) provide clarity on how these microaggressions become apparent in day-to-day communications. In their work on everyday racism, Sue et. al. (2007) were able to identify nine categories of microaggressions: alien in one's land, the ascription of intelligence, colour blindness, criminality assumption, denial of individual racism, the myth of meritocracy, pathologising cultural values/communication styles, second-class status and environmental invalidation (see appendix 1). The conceptualisation of these nine categories enables me to identify how Dutch innocence, ignorance, and resentment operate in the housing market.

### 1.2.3 Why narratives of everyday racism are important

As innocence, ignorance, and resentment characterises Dutch attitudes and behaviour towards racism, it is to be expected these are transmitted in the way non-Dutch students of colour are excluded from the housing market. To capture these forms of exclusion, Essed (1991) highlights that the experiences of people of colour in such situations can be elicited by non-directive interviewing, simulating a natural conversation. This situates the narrators and their experiences in the social framework of their everyday lives, providing specificity and detail to occurrences and encouraging the narrator to define subtle instances of racism (Essed,

1991). Investigating personal testimony from those who have encountered racism enables me to reveal the minor injustices that are so common that they are almost taken for granted (Essed, 1991).

Because Dutch culture refuses to acknowledge everyday racism (Ghorashi, 2014), and dominant group members would stigmatise evidence as 'being 'oversensitive' (Wekker, 2016), I am not only interested in how international students of colour experience racism, but also how they negotiate it. Rather than solely recognising racism, this paper focuses on how participants debate racism, including both its abstract definition and its tangible expression in everyday situations. Simply put, rather than solely focusing on "racism in talk" I also investigate "talk about racism".

### **1.3 Negotiations of Racism**

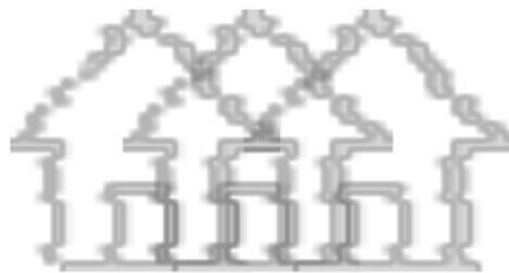
As mentioned above, due to the presence of racism in Dutch culture it is expected that international students face and debate racism daily. This begs the question of how they are likely to respond to it. Previous research on the 'talk about racism' from the victim's point of view has shown that people of colour have varying communicative and behavioural responses to situations in which everyday racism occurs (Richeson & Shelton, 2007). The following paragraphs provide a discussion on these responses, which, according to research, vary from acceptance to anxiety and self-segregation (Osbourne, Barnett, & Blackwood, 2023; Richeson & Shelton, 2007)

The acceptance of everyday racism could be explained by the power imbalances present in the Dutch housing market context (Wenzel, Mummendey, & Waldzus, 2008; Lammers, Gordijn, & Otten, 2008). Within these power imbalances, Lammers, Gordijn, and Otten (2008) notice that those possessing more power have the authority to define 'normal' but are also less inclined to listen to how they are to be perceived by the other group. These power dynamics are inherent in the distinctive social representations and discourses that are available and used to stereotype and stigmatise students of colour, rather than just being the outcome of white students' greater numbers and status (Osbourne, Barnett, & Blackwood, 2023). This is what enables the formation and preservation of "acceptable" racist discourse, which generally consists of "banter" or the elevation of white experiences to avoid taking responsibility for statements made and the denial of one's own words (Osbourne, Barnett, & Blackwood, 2023). From this perspective, a racist slur can also be justified by students of colour as it operates in a context in which the majority considers it an 'acceptable' act (Hesse, 2004). Thus, as a result of predominantly white housing markets, where white students and landlords have the authority to define normative values, international students of colour are more likely to conform to or tolerate set standards conveyed in day-to-day encounters.

However, another angle on this debate points out that while these standards are

generally accepted or tolerated, they can still be perceived as negative or harmful by students of colour. Research shows both well and mal-intentioned actions of racism raise identity puzzling (Osbourne, Barnett, & Blackwood, 2023). This is especially the case when students of colour try to achieve a sense of an identity abroad as students attempt to accomplish an identity that is integrated with their own nationality's identity (Amiot, E., R., G., & Smith, 2015). Osbourne, Barnett, and Blackwood (2023) show this sense of identity is often negatively influenced by the actions of the dominant group, e.g., by being seen as one identity while wishing to be seen in terms of another identity or being negatively defined through an identity that is a source of pride (Blackwood, Hopkins, & Reicher, 2013). Consequently, a range of negative psychological effects can emerge, including self-regulation, withdrawal from social spaces (Richeson & Shelton, 2007), enacting identity performance strategies (Morales, 2014), diminished self-worth or a sense of inauthenticity (Mihoko Doyle & Kao, 2007). The above stated suggests that the weight of racism is often absorbed by the victims of everyday racism through sense-making and developing other ways to navigate racist situations (Osbourne, Barnett, & Blackwood, 2023). In other words, whether intentional or unintentional, and whether accepted or not, sustaining majority-group standards impacts those who do not belong to this group negatively. This is necessary to point out because in a 'talk about racism', these standards and effects are likely to be translated into how international students negotiate experiences of everyday racism in the housing market.

# PART THREE



## **CHAPTER 2: METHODS**

In this chapter, I will be presenting this study's methodologies. First, I discuss my use of a grounded theory approach which allows me to inductively discover the Dutch housing market realities from the perspective of international students of colour. The interview design is then discussed, including how I combined the housing pathway approach (HPA) and the reflection on everyday racism method to gather chronological narratives. After establishing my position, I go into further detail about the decision to use three complementary sample techniques. Next, in the data collection section, I explain how I practically implemented my methodological interview device. This is followed by a description of how my data analysis consists of three coding phases for which the concept 'everyday racism' allowed me to categorise codes. Lastly, I describe how informed consent, privacy, and confidentiality are taken into consideration when conducting this study.

### **2.1 Research design**

To explore the way international students of colour experience and navigate everyday racism in the housing market, I used qualitative interview-based research (Babbie, 2021). I am most interested in the common meaning of international students of colour lived experiences of everyday racism. Focusing on these experiences helps me to engage in a dialogue that constructs a thorough description through the eyes of international students (Creswell & Poth, 2016). By using qualitative research, I intend to offer space for insights into their experiential interpretations, allowing them to be heard in a situation where their reality is rarely listened to.

A grounded theory approach was therefore employed to discover new theories on their reality of the housing market (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Grounded theory is an approach that characterises itself by using an inductive approach; it relies on patterns, themes, and categories of analysis that emerge out of data rather than being imposed on data before the collection of it (Patton, 1980). Previous theoretical concepts, 'sensitising concepts', are used as interpretive devices which provide a guideline for research (Padgett, 2016). I used the theoretical conceptualisations of experiences and negotiations of everyday racism as the foundation of my study. The survival of these concepts depends on where the data took me. In this case, emergent concepts complemented each other (Padgett, 2016).

### **2.2 Method selection and operationalisation**

To derive chronological and detailed narratives on everyday racism in the housing market, I combined the housing pathway approach (HPA) and the reflection on everyday racism method leading to narrative and semi-structured interviews. Combining these two interview designs helped me achieve retrieve comparable data, while being able to collect people's stories about

their experiences, and keeping a flexible structure allowing to prompt or encourage the interviewee (Anderson & Kirkpatrick, 2016; Babbie E. R., 2018).

The HPA, as used by Fang and van Liempt (2021), allows for the analysis of housing biographies across significantly short periods making it feasible to interpret housing decisions and tenure transactions as a complicated string of events (Clapham, 2002). This method generally leads to an understanding of an individual housing pathway as a set of living conditions differing in price, quality, and tenure. However, in this exploration, I am focusing on experiences of everyday racism. I will, therefore, mainly use this method as a methodological device to install chronology and detail.

To then get a better understanding of everyday racism within the housing market, I used the conceptualisation of microaggressions by Sue et al. (2007) (see appendix 1). With experiences and negotiations as central concepts, the reflection on everyday racism, as used by Essed (1991), allows for locating the narrators, their experiences, and their negotiations in the social context of their everyday lives. This method gives specificity and detail to events and invites the narrator to carefully qualify subtle experiences of racism. To fully comprehend experiences of everyday racism in the housing market, this method asks for reconstructions of the context, the complication (what went wrong?), the evaluation (was it racism?), argumentation (why do you think it is?) and reaction (what did you do?). As previously mentioned, since racism is never a singular act but a multidimensional experience, argumentation was especially relevant. This had to show consistency over time, over situations, or in behaviour of the same actor. When a search for consistency led to doubt, I encouraged the participants to compare for inconsistency with other (nonracist) situations. For example, I asked how communication should have been in non-racialised situations. Or if they had similar situations where it had not been a problem, what happened in that case?

With the ethical difficulties in mind, which I will elaborate on in the ethics section, I intended to create a bypass for the taboo around talking about racism by using the housing pathway approach as a thread for dialogue. It was not only a soft cushion for the participants to land on after diving deeper into frustrating or even painful situations in which racism occurred, but it was also a softer cushion to 'throw', allowing me to carefully probe into information they comfortably shared before. To be more specific, as I could start and return to questions about their housing pathway, there was less pressure to immediately, constantly, and directly talk about racism which is strongly related to what Essed (1991) considers to be a righteous way to gain experiences.

### **2.3 Self-positioning**

A consideration for not instantly, constantly, and directly discussing racism is also related to monitoring and comprehending my position as a researcher. As I am conscious that I, as the

researcher, am the instrument through which research results are created, I will elaborate on my role in the following paragraphs.

As a white Dutch student, I have never directly faced racism in the housing market. I came across remarks and requests with racist implications when seeking housing in Rotterdam. However, because I am white, I have never experienced and will never fully grasp what racism feels like. In reality, based on my characteristics, I am more likely to belong to the group that excludes them.

Throughout the study's process, particularly while interviewing and analysing, I encountered moments of vulnerability, awkwardness, and sudden self-awareness. I purposefully chose to enter into a conversation more indirectly to generate more trust and comfort, but the established power dynamics were obvious in several of our conversations. For example, when I asked about her thoughts on Dutch housing policy, one of the participants remarked that she "might not be in a position to have an opinion." Furthermore, one of the students apologised to me for her communication style, which she described as "different from the one here in the Netherlands". I tried to stay close to their perception of the events and negotiations when analysing and writing my results, but I am aware that these are ultimately presented as a white Dutch student who has never experienced racism. They should also be read by this study's reader as such.

## **2.4 Sampling method**

In this study, I used three complementing sample procedures, with criteria sampling serving as the main approach. This was a type of nonprobability sampling to strategically sample people who were relevant to this particular study (Bryman, 2016). I used a combination of convenience and snowball sampling to sample international students of colour. Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where those that are the simplest for the researcher to obtain are chosen for inclusion in the sample (Bryman, 2016) Through specific social media channels e.g., the Instagram of Erasmus School of Colour, possible respondents were encouraged to self-select and register for an interview. Snowball sampling was useful in this study to further select interview participants as they were suggested by the respondents who are part of the study's population (Thompson, 2012). By using these two sample strategies, flexibility was offered to anticipate students who agreed to participate in the study (Babbie E. R., 2018; Bryman, 2016).

The students selected must meet three criteria that are in line with the study's objective: understanding how international students of colour experience and negotiate racism in the housing market in Rotterdam. Criteria sampling took place by sharing these specific criteria in any form of communication, e.g., in the Instagram post, or word-of-mouth advertisement. Firstly, they must reside or have resided in Rotterdam longer than 6 months ago. While

experiences should be about the housing market in Rotterdam, it is not necessary for them to currently live in Rotterdam as the tight housing market elicits continuing their housing search elsewhere while their experiences still add value to the study (Fang & van Liempt, 2021). Secondly, they must be enrolled in a degree programme or graduated no longer than 6 months ago. Thirdly, they must be a person of colour. Sampling is done based on their interpretation of 'international student of colour', as setting boundaries on what a person of colour is and who experienced racism promotes tensions between ethnic groups (Mihoko Doyle & Kao, 2007).

## 2.5 Data collection

I conducted nine (N=9) interviews in total to develop an understanding of the interviewees' experiences and negotiations of racism in the Rotterdam housing market. See appendix 2 for an overview of the participants. As the interviews were narrative-based, the length differed from 45 minutes to 1 hour and 45 minutes. These interviews took place either online via Teams, in-person at the Erasmus University, or the student's preferred location. I decided to give multiple location options to create comfort for participants.

The interviews were based on a topic list (appendix 3) and interview guideline (appendix 4), which were derived from the housing pathway approach and the reflection on everyday racism method. The participants were asked questions based on their housing narrative, including topics such as search length, platforms, and sources, type of contract, and the decision-making process. Example questions include: *Just before you started the housing search, how did you envision the housing market?* and *During this process, who do you think decided most of the time who would be the new roommate?* Everyday racism was questioned using topics such as housing market barriers or interactions that included microaggressions, as described by Wing Sue et al. (2007). These questions were generally follow-up questions to go more in-depth on certain situations, e.g., when someone stated they felt like they had to adjust to the Dutch culture once they moved here, a follow-up question would be: *'What kind of characteristics or personal preferences did you feel like you had to adjust most?'* Or when someone stated they felt like the housing market was unfair, I asked: *'Could you give an example of when you experienced this unfairness?'*

## 2.6 Data analysis

As the data analysis is inductively focused, the codes mainly emerged from the empirical data. However, sensitising concepts derived from previous research inspired the coding process. The concept of 'everyday racism' - consisting of two central sub-concepts: experiences and navigating – functioned as the foundation for classifying codes. These sub-concepts helped in categorising data, yet the content of these categories came from the data itself.

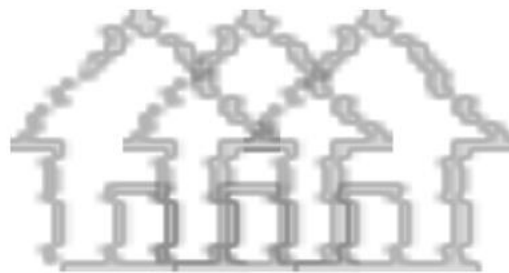


To analyse the data, I coded the transcripts of the interviews using the software Atlas.ti. During the coding process, I used three different coding techniques to end up with central categories: open, axial, and selective coding (Babbie, 2014). The data were first categorised, and subjects were found using open coding in which codes were derived such as 'looking for a Dutch-speaking tenant' or 'feeling lucky'. Secondly, these subjects were further categorised and arranged into core codes using axial coding, e.g., 'rejecting English-speaking tenants' or 'comparing'. In the last step, central categories connected the core codes e.g. 'language as a tool to exclude' racism' or 'individual consequences' (Williams & Moser, 2019). These central categories could be subdivided into two different, interrelated parts of this study: experiencing and negotiating (see appendix 5).

## **2.7 Ethical considerations**

Several ethical considerations were taken into account (see appendix 6). First, during the data collection, informed consent was essential. Based on Bhutta's (2004) study, three crucial processes can be described for obtaining informed consent. While obtaining informed consent on paper, I paid attention to these processes. The first step includes the researcher fully disclosing all pertinent information regarding the research and the rights of the participants e.g., the participants have the right to ask questions to clarify any misunderstandings. The second requirement argues for participants understanding of their role in the study. The third category deals with voluntary participation, which requires that they give consent (Bhutta, 2004). Secondly, during data collection, it was important to be aware I was invading the interviewees' privacy. Therefore, after giving informed consent, all participants were free to decline to answer questions. Third, confidentiality should safeguard both the participant's and the researcher's access to their information. This is crucial for the study's analysis and publication phases. When the research is published, it is important to store the shared material discreetly and in a secure location to reduce the risk of harm (Fuji, 2012). Additionally, I anonymised the participants such that their pseudonyms and descriptions cannot be used to retrieve them.

# PART FOUR



## CHAPTER 3: RESULTS

International students of colour described a variety of positive and negative interactions they experienced in the Dutch housing market with other students, landlords, agencies, and educational institutions, mainly Erasmus University Rotterdam. The experience of everyday racism was common in all of the interviews, but not all participants associated the term racism with what they experienced. The majority expressed frustration at how common racism is in the Dutch housing market, as it violated their assumptions of the Netherlands as a tolerant country. In the first section, I explore how the dominant conception of the Netherlands as an 'innocent', 'liberal', and 'tolerant' country leaves a mark on the experiences of racism, although language exclusion and microaggressions indicate the Dutch prefer 'their own'. In the second section, I examine how reality is influenced by the dominant culture, which leads to doubting and downplaying racist situations, as well as how international students of colour counteract this reality by taking on responsibility for 'their own'.

### 3.1 Experiencing Dutch realities

*'I heard that the Netherlands is also very multicultural'* was a recurring response students gave when they were asked why they moved to the Netherlands. The dominant discourse of the Netherlands as a place of extraordinary hospitality and tolerance maintains not only nationally but also transnationally (Wekker, 2016). This hospitality and tolerance seem to be confirmed by the diversity-promoting attitude that Dutch universities communicate through their wide and attractive educational possibilities for international students. Noticing the number of programmes fully offered in English and the relatively cheap tuition fee, none of the participants expected to literally end up standing in front of a closed door.

The expectations they had of the Netherlands outside its borders were quickly refined the moment they set foot in the country. They realised that participating in Dutch culture and the Dutch housing market culture meant assimilating into the dominant culture (Kaya, 2009). More specifically, they experienced clear differences between Dutch, European, and non-European students in which mainly non-European had to go through an extra loop of structural and interactional barriers. Below, I examine, within a 'liberal' and 'tolerant' context, how racism and stereotyping are accepted and sustained.

#### 3.1.1 Language as a tool to exclude

One of the most impactful experiences of racism mentioned was encountering the *no-internationals* title on Facebook; in the words of one participant: *'In the Facebook groups like looking for housing, it is just a whole range of ways to rephrase no internationals, in prettier or*

uglier ways.” In the following example, Asiya explains an unpleasant experience while searching for housing in her first year. Whilst looking at Facebook and reading posts of people looking for a new tenant, including requirements for the new person, she noticed the following:

*Asiya: ‘If there were any requirements in the messages, it was usually on the Facebook pages. [...] I remember post saying like they were not excluding specific people, but just foreign people were not allowed. Or only Dutch-speaking persons were allowed. There were many of these posts, to be honest.’*

Asiya’s experience is one of the most openly used discriminative slurs in the housing sphere (Fang & van Liempt, 2021). Such experiences pose a particular challenge to the Dutch sense of self in which they stress their tolerant nature (Wekker, 2016). This more subtle, less in-your-face approach expressed as ‘looking for a Dutch-speaking tenant’ shows similarities with what Essed and Hoving (2014) explain to be the Dutch bluntly implicit racism. While it can be understood as a choice of convenience, sharing they ‘prefer their own’ echoes the bluntly implicit racism of the Dutch.

Additionally, this implies Dutch students, as part of the majority, potentially have the power to decide what is appropriate and acceptable in the digital housing space. In the following quote, Imani discusses her experience with no-internationals on Facebook below, and we see further complexities.

*Imani: ‘Sometimes they didn’t clarify in the posts that they only wanted Dutch people. But then I would just be ignored, or they told me “sorry we are really just looking for a Dutch person”. That was just so frustrating and unfair. Well.. I mean, I kind of understand because people looking for roommates who are Dutch, communication-wise it might be a bit easier.’*

Here, it is visible how the use of ‘no-internationals’ appears to be an ‘acceptable’ act by the majority and consequently becomes accepted by those who are not Dutch. Despite the suggestion of Imani experiencing recognition of exclusion based on language (that was unfair), she also makes room for a double-barrelled motivation (I kind of understand it). This makes calling out the discriminative undertone of slurs like this especially difficult, as the majority of the group agrees on the commonality of it.

### 3.1.2 Non-verbal and verbal microaggressions

While the ‘no-internationals’ slur prominently came forward, it was hardly the only discriminative language or action. One of the most common actions all participants experienced, also visible in Imani’s quote above, is being ignored. Whilst the act of ignoring

may not appear to be meaningful at first glance, as scarcity and high demand for housing lead to an overwhelmingly high amount of queries (Boelhouwer, 2020), Nidhi's reflection on the differences in the number of replies she received shows other reasoning:

*Nidhi: 'When I just moved here, I started using the English abbreviation of my name. Just because it was easier to pronounce it. The funny thing is, I had also changed my number to a Dutch phone number. And I just noticed I immediately was receiving more responses.'*

This pattern of receiving considerably more favourable responses while using an English name and Dutch phone number demonstrates that exclusion passes language barriers and is also found in assumptions. These assumptions are not only expressed through non-responses; students also identified harmful microaggressions, whereby 'lowkey racism' would be expressed verbally. These frequently emerged in stereotypes held by their Dutch peers, in which a distinction in personality assumptions and personal preference assumptions can be identified as they lead to different experiences. First, I will use Jung's perspective when talking with a potential co-resident to see how personality assumptions were experienced:

*Jung: 'I remember she said like, yeah when I first saw your profile on the server, I was like, ah, geez, an American. She is probably going to be this, which is also a stereotype, like I thought you were going to be an extravagant Southern little princess or something. But then when I saw you're like Asian, I was like ooh she's Asian and way more down to earth.'*

Although the remark 'you're way more down to earth than I expected' could seem harmless initially, it cannot solely be read in this manner. What is being conveyed here are communicational assumptions based on nationality or ethnicity. Moreover, a preferable way of communicating from the perspective of the potential co-resident is present ("ooh she is way more down to earth"). It is an expectation Jung feels like she has to live up to. When she disproves the Asian personality stereotype later in the interview, explaining she mainly 'adjusted her way of speech because she talks a lot and fast', she feels the need to apologise as I might have to 'relisten the interview at 0.5 speed'. Sitting across from myself, a Dutch white student, in a context where language is highly valued, apologising could be linked to research suggesting assimilating to the dominant culture and engaging in self-control is more like to be done by those considered minority in interracial contact (Richeson & Shelton, 2007; Shelton, Richeson, Salvatore, & Hill, 2006). When Jung is concerned about being the target of prejudice, she applies self-control.

Whereas Jung's personality assumptions led to self-control, frustration, and anger are also communicated following these expectations. For example, Nidhi gets frustrated when she hears disrespectful remarks about her beta IQ because she is Indian.

*Nidhi: 'I have heard, oh, you're Indian. You're definitely good at math. Okay. And I'm not. I'm like, oh my God, should I be your friend here? Um, but also just from friends or like whenever you meet someone.'*

An insulting joke is contested here, particularly because it is contrary to Nidhi's personality. Nevertheless, the description in her reflection of how it also occurs whether she talks to friends or new people raises the possibility of the consistency of this insulting humour. The normalisation of this humour arises from the majority/minority power relationship that is present in not only the housing market but also Dutch culture. This normalisation is achieved due to the difficulties experienced when challenging it without running the risk of being labelled as 'unable to take a joke'.

While personality assumptions were generally experienced with a higher level of rejection and frustration, assumptions of personal preferences were often pushed away as 'who they just are'. Lunkeny briefly describes hearing the following:

*Lunkeny: ' I went to this viewing once, girls' house. Very girly. And I think they had this tendency to make assumptions about me. Oh yeah. But you probably cook a lot or, oh, you probably like to dance a lot. Even though this is not too bad of a stereotype, obviously. It still is and I did not let it bother me at all. Because, uh, this was more something that is true. I mean I do love music. I don't love cooking, but I cook.'*

The viewpoint conveyed here is based on the assumption of Lunkeny possess 'cultural markers' associated with Black women, such as a love for dancing and cooking (Sue, et al., 2007). While Lunkeny partially disproves the assumptions, she emphasises the positive sides of these queries. While she may not have felt prejudiced in a 'bad way' and considers this *low-key* racism, these assumptions are based on racialised beliefs, which can be costly, as I will show below.

### **3.2 Negotiating everyday racism**

So far, I have looked at participants' experiences of everyday racism and stereotypes that persist in the housing market. I have described how, from the perspective of international students of colour, Dutch students define and enact a culture of legitimised racism. In the

following section, I will look at how international students of colour navigate this culture by paying specific attention to the behavioural and psychological effects.

### 3.2.1 Doubt

Doubt was one of the most evident responses to racism among the subjects. While participants' narratives show awareness of dominant cultural stereotypes, they have difficulty acknowledging and accepting the discriminatory motivations of their peers or landlords - to quote Juan: *'It is incredibly hard to know [their motives]. I can't look, can't see inside their heads. It could also just be their personality.'* Juan realises that he is being treated differently; nonetheless, he carefully analyses his reasoning. His doubt can be explained by the lasting construct of a white framework consisting of white privilege forming power relations. In other words, these differences in recourses are 'simply' the way they are and always have been. It is difficult to find leverage to invalidate these differences, especially in a culture with an international reputation for being diverse and multicultural, in which the population firmly clings to the "we are not racist" identity. Even if several people recognise a racial insult or act, it falls off its weight if the majority group maintains silence or firmly refutes the racist motive behind it (Crosby, 2015; Czopp & Monteith, 2003).

### 3.2.2 Comparison: downplaying racism

In addition to doubt over pinpointing racism, international students of colour also showed coping mechanisms that helped them navigate racism in the housing market. One of the most prevalent coping mechanisms was comparing. Even after experiences of rejection, homelessness, or racist stereotypes, many of their stories ended with the words 'but I'm still lucky' or 'I'm still privileged'. Sometimes they made comparisons with others they believed had dealt with more challenging circumstances in the Dutch housing market setting. This type of downplaying may originate from the dominant group's belief that people who express prejudice are "too sensitive". Often, there was a need for self-regulation of their feelings to adjust to the dominant group's expectations, yet there was also a need for self-regulation of their behaviour. For example, Sofia, who self-regulated to adjust to the dominant group:

*Sofia: 'There was nothing I could do. And I generally, I really just tried to be myself. You know, but sometimes I tweaked some of my traits a little bit so they maybe stand out a little more.'*

Sofia believes that being herself is not an option because of negative stereotypes. She implies that her conversations are less sincere as a result of her fear that she isn't liked enough. She attributes her modification to the need to 'stand out a little bit more,' which reveals the power

dynamics in the housing market. Prioritising her expression would, in her opinion, imply that the majority of people would not like her. Her self-regulation, however, might cause her to lose some aspects of herself.

The act of self-regulation was sometimes a reflection of their position in society instead of solely in the housing market. Consider Jung's reflections as she responds to the question: 'what do you think your position is to your landlord?'

Jung: *'Slightly hierarchical I got into this fight with my boyfriend over it, he was like, "we can do all these things, you have rights I'll support you through like putting up the fight". And I was like, you don't understand like how triggering it is for like international people because I don't feel safe. I'm not European. I have like to go through all this stuff as an international, like I have to be a good citizen. Like so I can remain here in good standing. And that comes with a lot of. Um, layers and triggering stuff that like, you're, like, you make yourself a little small just so you can be, you can fit in.'*

Jung's decision not to fight for her rights reflects the complexity of self-regulation. It highlights a conflict between her preferred reaction and, consequently, how the dominant group will react to her. Conclusion: she chooses to reject the original instinct to take appropriate action and instead chooses to 'make herself small' and let it go to 'fit in'.

### 3.2.3 Taking matters into their own hands

What is perhaps most striking is that, while international students of colour carry the burden of regulating their behaviour, they additionally take on responsibility for other international students who are disproportionately affected by the structural constraints that characterise the Dutch housing market. Because the market fails to accommodate international students of colour, they were forced to step in to *'support those who literally have nowhere to go'*. On an individual level, the following statement by Lunkeny illustrates this well:

Lunkeny: *'We were just looking on Facebook for those who sent out self-promotions, who have trouble finding a place.'*

But also on an organisational level which is more visible Li's story how she ended up finding a place in Rotterdam:

Li: *'The funny thing is we have a Chinese group on WeChat. They usually just sell their things at a much cheaper price. But they sometimes post advertisements when people are leaving. Then there is a vacancy searching for tenant'*.



Here it is visible how international students of colour, who do not have the privilege to fully participate in the same housing market as Dutch students, create their own 'international' housing market in the Netherlands. They use the structural constraint in the housing market they experience the most difficulty with to their advantage, namely the fact that Dutch co-residents or the landlord choose who can move into the house, sometimes with racist motives. This is done by making a conscious choice for other international students of color in houses where they, as co-residents, can choose who will live with them. Put differently, there is a sense that "what I do influences everyone." However, uniformly, they would much rather see the university taking a more prominent role, not only to mitigate their paradoxical promotion of a diverse university and adopting a hands-off policy when it comes to inclusive housing but also *'to create awareness, solidarity and improve **all** students' wellbeing.'*

## CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Unsurprisingly, the international students of colour I interviewed experienced everyday racism in the Rotterdam housing market, such as non-verbal and verbal racial microaggressions, as it is consistent with previous studies on how racism is visible in the Netherlands (Essed, 2008). This study expanded on these previous findings by demonstrating how racism is experienced and how power dynamics work to justify and sustain 'low-key' racism in the housing market. Furthermore, it examined the impact of these dynamics on international students of colour's ability to behave and interact. This study offered five key findings which conjoinedly demonstrate that international students of colour face greater challenges than their white (inter)national peers as a consequence of racism in the housing market. But in light of the dominant Dutch culture of innocence, experiences of racism are accepted, contested, or debunked by both dominant and non-dominant groups.

First, after moving to the Netherlands international students of colour are confronted with 'normalised' and integrated racism. Besides extra structural barriers for non-European students, there is a gut feeling that the rejection of international students based on language is deceptive, as the number of responses is considerably higher once their name or telephone number is more "Dutch-like". The Dutch students and landlords seem to cover their underlying preference to accommodate their 'own' by using language as a Trojan horse for exclusion (Tate & Page, 2018). The new 'noodcapaciteitfixus' for incoming international students, which allows universities to reject students from outside the EU, has proven this gut feeling right (Rijksoverheid, 2023). It implies that there are preferences and boundaries as to how diverse society may be; the further someone away gets from Dutch culture, the less they are allowed to participate.

Secondly, when the Dutch do welcome international students and open up for dialogue, racial micro-aggressions that are nestled in day-to-day interaction and behaviour become apparent. The acceptance of these racist expressions by both Dutch as well as international students of colour can be explained by the Netherlands' prevailing innocence (Wekker, 2016). The transnational and national expectation that the Netherlands is ever so diverse, tolerant, and innocent contributes to ignoring experiences of racism and the silencing of international students of colour as there is no trust they will be listened to. And, even if there is recognition of racism among the majority group, it is likely to remain undiscussed as the dominant culture forcefully refuses to acknowledge it (Hoving & Essed, 2014).

Thirdly, by forcefully defending the claim of innocence and denying racism, participants do not only feel silenced, they frequently have feelings of doubt about whether unintended or

mal-intended racism is present, even when their stories reveal interactions based on negative stereotypes or even exclusion. This can be explained by the presence of diminished self-worth, which is visible in the way they negotiate experiences of racism through ongoing comparisons with those assigned to the low-power group (Richeson & Shelton, 2007). Through accounts of even more complexity, uncertainty, and difficulty of other international students of colour in the Dutch housing market, the participants set themselves a standard: when they do not experience such overt forms of racism, they consider themselves lucky or privileged. This implies there is a sense among students of colour that having similar housing routes to Dutch students is out of the picture. Yet, the level of 'luck' or 'privilege' these students may have been feeling could be seen differently when they compared themselves to Dutch students.

Fourth, there is day-to-day self-regulation to avoid stereotypes or to make one's differences less noticeable (Richeson & Shelton, 2007). Not being able to act following one's self-concept implies that their true selves are not expected to be accepted. While this did not imply that this study's participants were always restrained, it did highlight the extent to which judgements about how to act were referenced to the white framework (Mihoko Doyle & Kao, 2007).

Finally, those who are excluded are more likely to bear the burden of racism on an individual as well as a societal level in the Netherlands. The exclusion of international students of colour from the housing market does not only result in a need to make sense of racist acts on an individual level. There are also visible strategies by individuals and organisations to navigate and help others navigate the housing market, which implies too little is done to support this group.

It is important to note that this is caused by the majority group member's failure to acknowledge that we live in a racist society rather than their intentions (Osbourne, Barnett, & Blackwood, 2023). This realisation should be acted on, rather than solely understanding and relying on strategies of international students of colour to find and offer their group members a safe space (Richeson & Shelton, 2007). There is a need to realise there is specificity to Dutch racism, including a strong attachment to a self-image that stresses being innocent, being a victim rather than a perpetrator of violence (Wekker, 2016).

One of the most eye-opening insights of this research on a personal level is realising that listening and trying to understand is not enough knowing the majority group has the power to change normative culture. When considering the implications of the minority status international students of colour experience, there is often emphasis on how to prepare and support students of colour. While this is important, there is a significant role to play for the majority group. Rather than ignoring the r-word taboo, and dwelling on feelings of guilt and

discomfort, there is a need for the majority group to actively take part in the conversation about racism (Hoving & Essed, 2014). As mentioned previously, conducting this research also gave me feelings of discomfort. However, while pushing away these feelings of awkwardness might be the easier way out, there is need for the Dutch to get uncomfortable and face their intentional or unintentional innocence in participating and sustaining the structures of power that result in racism.

Further research could build on this line of thinking by focusing on collective actions, both on an individual as well as institutional level, the Netherlands can take as a consequence of these experiences of microaggressions in the housing market. Moreover, as a new policy has been introduced to specifically reject international students from outside the EU, there is a need to investigate what kind of consequences this has on the feelings of belonging of international students from outside the EU who already live in the Netherlands.

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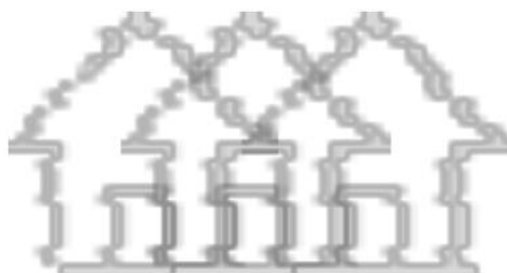
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# APPENDICES



# APPENDIX ONE: MICROAGGRESSIONS

Table A.1 Microaggressions examples – Wing Sue et. al. (2007)

Theme	Microaggression	Message
<i>Alien in own land</i> When Asian Americans and Latino Americans are assumed to be foreign-born	"Where are you from?" "Where were you born?" "You speak good English." A person asking an Asian American to teach them words in their native language.	You are not American You are a foreigner
<i>Ascription of Intelligence</i> Assigning intelligence to a person of color on the basis of their race.	"You are a credit to your race." "You are so articulate." Asking an Asian person to help with a Math or Science problem.	People of color are generally not as intelligent as Whites. It is unusual for someone of your race to be intelligent. All Asians are intelligent and good in Math / Sciences.
<i>Color Blindness</i> Statements that indicate that a White person does not want to acknowledge race	"When I look at you, I don't see color." "America is a melting pot." "There is only one race, the human race."	Denying a person of color's racial / ethnic experiences. Assimilate / acculturate to the dominant culture. Denying the individual as a racial / cultural being.
<i>Criminality – assumption of criminal status</i> A person of color is presumed to be dangerous, criminal, or deviant on the basis of their race.	A White man or woman clutching their purse or checking their wallet as a Black or Latino approaches or passes. A store owner following a customer of color around the store. A White person waits to ride the next elevator when a person of color is on it.	You are a criminal. You are going to steal / You are poor / You do not belong / You are dangerous.
<i>Denial of individual racism</i> A statement made when Whites deny their racial biases	"I'm not a racist. I have several Black friends." "As a woman, I know what you go through as a racial minority."	I am immune to races because I have friends of color. Your racial oppression is no different than my gender oppression. I can't be a racist. I'm like you.
<i>Myth of meritocracy</i> Statements which assert that race does not play a role in life successes	"I believe the most qualified person should get the job." "Everyone can succeed in this society, if they work hard enough."	People of color are given extra unfair benefits because of their race. People of color are lazy and / or incompetent and need to work harder.
<i>Pathologizing cultural values / communication styles</i> The notion that the values and communication styles of the dominant / White culture are ideal	Asking a Black person: "Why do you have to be so loud / animated? Just calm down." To an Asian or Latino person: Why are you so quiet? We want to know what you think. Be more verbal." Speak up more." Dismissing an individual who brings up race / culture in work / school setting.	Assimilate to dominant culture. Leave your cultural baggage outside.

Theme	Microaggression	Message
<p><i>Second-class citizen</i> Occurs when a White person is given preferential treatment as a consumer over a person of color</p>	<p>Person of color mistaken for a service worker Having a taxi cab pass a person of color and pick up a White passenger Being ignored at a store counter as attention is given to the White customer behind you "You people ..."</p>	<p>People of color are servants to Whites. They couldn't possibly occupy high-status positions. You are likely to cause trouble and / or travel to a dangerous neighborhood. Whites are more valued customers than people of color You don't belong. You are a lesser being.</p>
<p><i>Environmental microaggressions</i> Macro-level microaggressions, which are more apparent on systemic and environmental levels</p>	<p>A college or university with buildings that are all named after White heterosexual upper class males Television shows and movies that feature predominantly White people, without representation of people of color Overcrowding of public schools in communities of color Overabundance of liquor stores in communities of color</p>	<p>You don't belong / You won't succeed here. There is only so far you can go. You are an outsider / You don't exist. People of color don't / shouldn't value education. People of color are deviant.</p>
<p><i>How to offend without really trying</i></p>	<p>"Indian giver." "That's so gay." "She welshed on the bet." "I jewed him down." "That's so White of you." "You people ..." "We got gypped." Imitating accents or dialects Others?</p>	

## APPENDIX TWO: OVERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

<i>Name</i>	<i>Nationality</i>	<i>Educational Background</i>	<i>Study programme pursued</i>	<i>Location of previous residence</i>	<i>Length of residence Rotterdam</i>
Nidhi	Indian	Bachelor	Master	Other	Less than 1 year
Ria	Indian	Bachelor	Double master	Home country	More than 2 years
Juan	Taiwanees	High school	Bachelor	Home country	More than 2 years
Asiya	Turkish	Bachelor	Master	Home country	1-2 years
Imani	Morrocan	Bachelor	Master	Home country	More than 2 years
Sofia	Greek-Nigerian	High school	Bachelor	Home country	More than 2 years
Li	Chineese	Bachelor	Master	Home country	Less than 1 year
Jung	Korean-American	Bachelor	Master	Home country	More than 2 years
Lunkeny	Algolán-German	Bachelor	Master	Other	1-2 years

Table A.2: overview of interview participants

## APPENDIX THREE: TOPIC LIST

The topic list is created to notice cues when they occur in the conversation; it is not a step by step guide to go through the conversation.

	<i>Interview flow</i>	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Subtopics</i>	<i>Interactional/behavioural cues</i>
HOUSING PATHWAY APPROACH	Background information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Nationality they identify with</li> <li>• Country of residence before the Netherlands</li> <li>• Reasons to study in the Netherlands</li> </ul>		
	Everyday racism	Housing market barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of social capital</li> <li>• Lack of cultural capital</li> <li>• Extra requirements</li> <li>• Decision-making process</li> </ul>	
		Interactions housing market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experiences of innocence</li> <li>• Experiences of ignorance</li> <li>• Experiences of resentment</li> <li>• Microaggressions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ascription of intelligence</li> <li>• Ascription of criminality</li> <li>• Denial of individual racism</li> <li>• Color blindness</li> <li>• Myth of meritocracy</li> <li>• Pathologizing cultural values/communication styles</li> <li>• Second-class citizen</li> <li>• Environmental microaggressions</li> </ul>
	Negotiations of racism	Reflections on society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Micro (within that conversation)</li> <li>• Meso (within a specific group)</li> <li>• Macro (on Dutch society)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feelings of doubt, frustration, anger, etc.</li> <li>• Acceptance</li> <li>• Self-segregation</li> <li>• Self-regulation</li> </ul>
		Reflections on self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflection on self-worth</li> <li>• Reflection on authenticity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diminished self-worth</li> <li>• A sense of inauthenticity</li> </ul>

TABLE A.2: Topic list

# APPENDIX FOUR: INTERVIEW GUIDE

When conducting the interviews there are a couple of steps that should be taken. This interview guide functions as a mnemonic.

## **Prior to the interview**

Communication beforehand

- Introduce yourself
- Describe the research purpose
- Disclaimer for informed consent and recordings
- Share example questions

Introduction:

- Introduce yourself as the researcher
- Describe the research purpose
- Describe the structure of the interviews (audio recording, taking notes, topics, etc.)
- Ask if the interviewee has any questions
- Explain the key terms
- Get a signature for informed consent

## **During the interview**

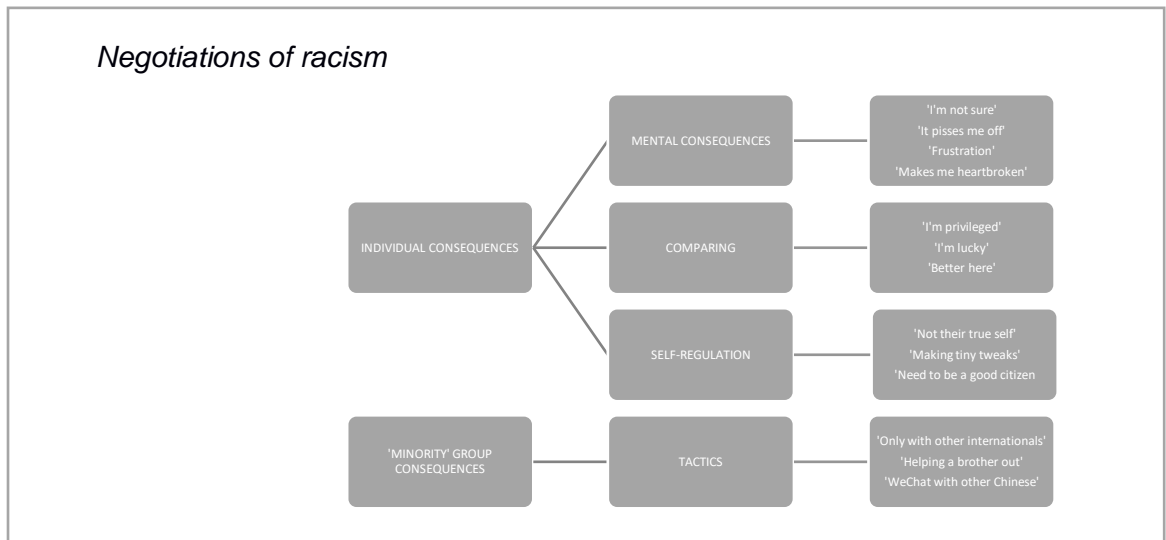
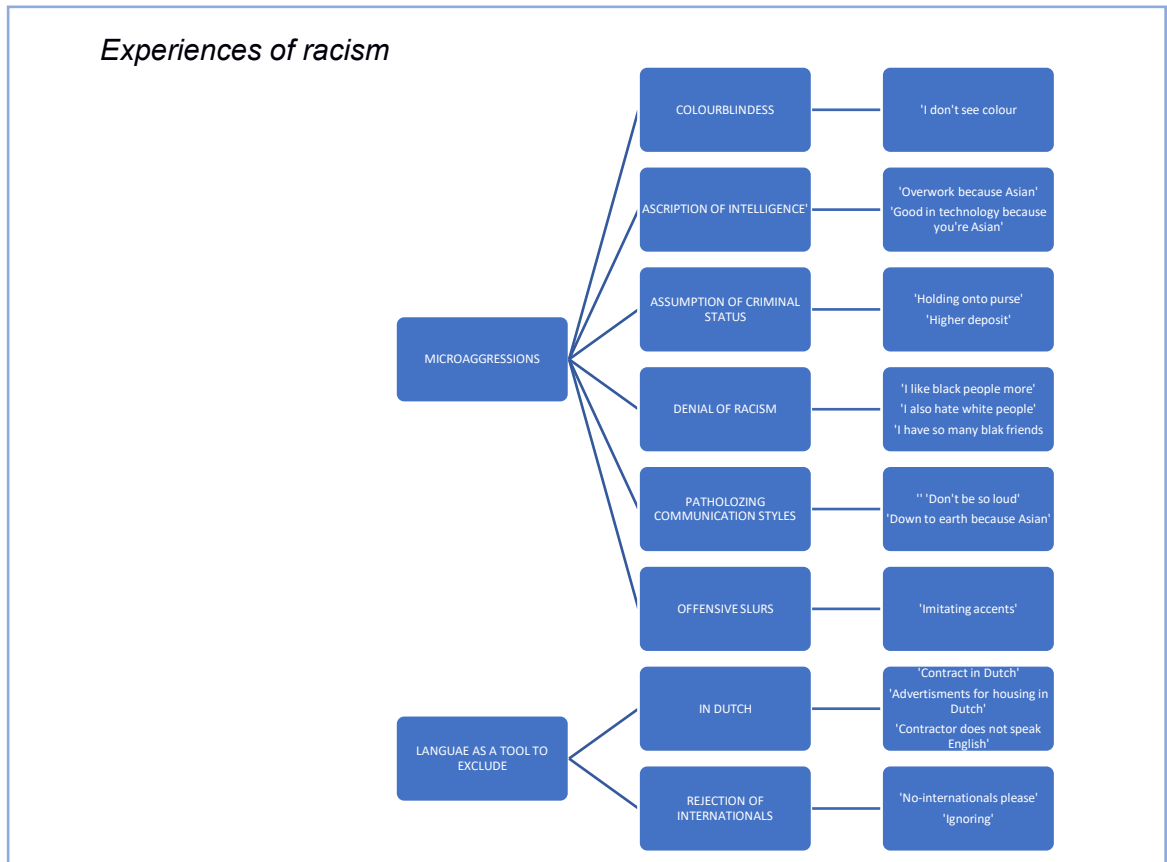
- Ask background questions (age, educational background, nationality they identify with, country of residence, why Netherlands)
- Chronically reconstruct their housing narrative using the interview flow of the topic list.
- Listen, and follow-up with questions to reconstruct experiences of:
  - o The context (where, when, who)
  - o The complication (what went wrong?),
  - o The evaluation (was it racism?),
  - o The argumentation (why do you think it is racism?) and,
  - o The reaction (what did you do about it?).

## **After the interview**

- Thank them for their time and openness.

# APPENDIX FIVE: CODE TREE

Figure A.1: Code tree



# APPENDIX SIX: ETHICAL CHECKLIST

## PART I: GENERAL INFORMATION

Project title:                    \*no internationals pls\* master thesis on the perspectives of international students on the Dutch housing market

Name, email of student:                    Kirsten Kardijk, 575270kk@eur.nl

Name, email of supervisor:                    Jess Bier, bier@essb.eur.nl

Start date and duration:                    01-02-2023 – 26-06-2023

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?  
*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.).* YES - **NO**
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.

*As the research focuses on the perception of international students on navigating the housing market, the specific confluence of race, gender, and economic class that person embodies is unavoidable to bring to the table. Yet, as the main focus is on their personal experience, it is only important and will be elaborated on if the participants mention this.*

What safeguards are taken to relieve possible adverse consequences of these issues

(e.g., informing participants about the study afterwards, extra safety regulations, etc.).

*I will only use pseudonyms for all the participants and will inform the participants afterwards as well.*

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.

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*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?

*The interview data will be collected on a place that depends on the student their preferences. They have the possibility to choose online, in person on campus, or in person at their room/apartment/studio.*

*Note: indicate for separate data sources.*

What is the (anticipated) size of your sample?

9

*Note: indicate for separate data sources.*

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

*The intake of international students is 6930 yearly.*

*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?

*The data will be stored on a password-protected Google Drive in standard formats within a week of obtaining the data.*

*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?

*At least once a week manually.*

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

*By using pseudonyms and by separating directly identifying personal details from the rest of 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:        Kirsten Kardijk

Name (EUR) supervisor:

Date:                26-03-2023

Date:

## APPENDIX I: Informed Consent Form (if applicable)

Figure A.2: Informed consent form

In the context of this research I analyze the interplay of personal characteristics and structural constraints on the housing narrative of international students. With this research, I intend to gain insight into different possibilities of house paths, the role of personal characteristics, and the role of structural constraints. A research report is written with the collected data.

- Course** You are taking part in a study where information is collected by interviewing you. The interview can be conducted digitally or face-to-face. Audio recordings are made when possible. In addition, the interview was transcribed. The photo will be analyzed during but also after the interview. The anonymised transcript, pseudonymised quotes, and photo are included in the report, which is only shared with fellow students and teachers.
- Confidentiality** I will make sure to guarantee your privacy. Only the researcher will have access to the sound recording or photo. No confidential information or personal data about you will be disclosed in any way that would allow anyone to recognize you. In the survey, you will be referred to by a made-up name (pseudonym).
- Voluntariness** You don't have to answer the questions you don't want to answer. Your participation is voluntary and you can stop at any time.
- Data storage** Anonymous data or pseudonyms will be used in the research. The research data will be kept for a maximum period of one year. The data will be deleted after the expiry of this period at the latest.
- Submit a question or complaint** If you have specific questions about how your personal data is handled, you can ask the researcher: 575270kk@eur.nl.

By signing this consent form I acknowledge the following:

- |   | YES                      | NO                       |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 I have been sufficiently informed about the research. I have read the information sheet and then had the opportunity to ask questions. These questions have been answered satisfactorily and I have had sufficient time to decide whether to participate. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 I voluntarily participate in this research. It is clear to me that I can terminate participation in the study at any time without giving any reason. I don't have to answer a question if I don't want to.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

In order to participate in the research, it is also necessary that you give specific permission for various parts.

- |   |                          |                          |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 3 I consent to the processing of the data collected about me during this research as explained in the attached information sheet. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 I give permission to make audio recordings during the conversation and to elaborate my answers in an anonymised transcript.     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 I give permission to analyse and use my photo in the reporting of the research.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6 I give permission to use my answers for pseudonymised quotes in the reporting of the research.                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |