

To be Dutch is to be White¹

A qualitative research about how white and young Dutch people see their own Dutchness and who they consider to be included within this Dutchness

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¹ For the title of my thesis, I was inspired by anthropologist Sinan Çankaya who wrote an essay for Al Jazeera after a Dutch judge decided that ethnicity can be used to single out passengers at Dutch airports (Çankaya, 2021). I will write more about this case in the introduction of this study.

Abstract

Within Dutch society, 'immigrants' are perceived as a threat to Dutch identity, norms and values, and the debate about Dutchness became intensified and heated. Therefore, this qualitative research inquired how white and young Dutch people see their own Dutchness and who they consider to be included in this Dutchness. This study is conducted among white people, to shift the gaze from the racialised 'Other' to those who remain racially invisible and unnamed. The first finding is that Dutchness of white people is seen as an implicit 'norm'. Second, this study shows that an implicit distinction between 'real' and 'not quite' Dutchness is made, based on ancestry and whiteness. In the third finding it is argued that young and white participants have the idea that racism and excluding people from Dutchness, is not something 'they' as young people do but is a problem of the 'older' generation, the PVV-voters, or chavs (*tokkies*). These findings show that the Netherlands indeed is a colourblind nation, in which whiteness is made invisible and it is often denied that race is an important building block of the structural, symbolic, and interpersonal order of the Netherlands (Wekker, 2018). The Dutch self-image as 'free' and 'open' plays a role in this as well. One important limitation of this research is my own whiteness since it was sometimes hard to get free of the colourblind ideology in which I grew up.

Keywords: colourblind racism, Dutchness, national identity, whiteness

Table of content

Abstract.....	2
Introduction	4
Theoretical framework.....	6
National identity and myths of homogeneity	7
National identity and the 'Other'	7
'Real' Dutchness and 'not quite' Dutchness.....	8
Methods.....	10
Findings and analysis	12
Dutchness of white people as implicit 'norm'	12
'Real' Dutch and 'not quite' Dutch: a distinction based on ancestry and whiteness	13
Racism and excluding people from Dutchness is not something 'we' young people do.....	16
Conclusion and discussion	19
Reference list	21
Appendix A Interview questions with theoretical foundation.....	24
Appendix B Checklist ethical and privacy aspects of research	25
Informed consent.....	29

Introduction

'Our history is being erased, our traditions ridiculed, and our identities squandered. An environment is being created in which the Dutch adapt to migrants instead of the other way around', was written by the third largest political party of the Netherlands, PVV (Party for freedom) (Partij voor de Vrijheid, 2021). Arguments like this, in which immigrants are perceived as threat to Dutch identity, norms and values, are regularly used in both the public as the political debate (Siebers, 2017). For instance, in the public debate on the racist tradition of Black Pete, in which usually a white person uses black face (Wekker, 2018). White defenders of Black Pete feel the urge to protect 'their' culture and traditions and argue that the celebration of Black Pete is innocent since it is 'only a children's party'. Nowadays, still 56 percent of the Dutch population defends Black Pete (EenVandaag, 2021). Even though the support for Black Pete is decreasing, the debate reflects a fear among white Dutch people for developing changes within 'their' culture, identity, and the composition of the Dutch population (Jordan, 2014; Wekker, 2018).

In the past twenty years, the debate about Dutchness became heated and intensified (Kešić & Duyvendak, 2016). The public and political notion of Dutchness has become intertwined with migration and integration issues. Besides, nationalism and protectionism increased, leading to more reactive reassertions of nativist nationalism in which 'newcomers' are perceived as the cause of threatening changes (Hage, 1998; De Haas, Castles & Miller, 2020). Moreover, immigration questions the nation state ideologies and ideas about a common identity and culture (De Haas et al., 2020). Due to globalisation and social change, international and intercontinental migration is accelerating and the ethnic and cultural diversity in society is intensifying (De Haas et al., 2020; Giddens & Sutton, 2021). Within the Netherlands, different historical developments occurred in the field of migration (Essed, 1996). Between the 1950s and 1970s, migration by post-colonial immigrants took place, primarily from Indonesia, Suriname, and the Antilles. Subsequently, in the 1960s and 1970s the Netherlands attracted labour migrants, primarily from Italy, Spain, Turkey, and Morocco (De Haas et al., 2020). From the 1970s onwards various refugees, from for instance former Yugoslavia, Eritrea, Afghanistan, and Syria, arrived in the Netherlands (Essed, 1996).

The idea that the Dutch identity is under threat is often blamed on the failure of the multicultural society and 'integration' of immigrants (Siebers, 2017). Within the Netherlands, multiculturalism is framed as a 'failure' and is blamed for respecting the cultural 'strangeness' of migrants too much (Reekum, Duyvendak & Bertossi, 2012). As a result, migrants are blamed for their unwillingness to 'integrate' due to their cultural 'strangeness'. The backlash against multiculturalism since the 1990s, is part of a bigger trend in Europe, in which events fuelled this idea of 'failure' of integration models. An event which fuelled this idea in the Netherlands, was the murder of Theo van Gogh in 2004, who made an anti-Muslim movie together with Ayaan Hirsi Ali, and was therefore killed by a radical Islamist (Reekum, et al., 2012). Politicians, such as Pim Fortuyn and Geert Wilders, play a role in this as well, who are known for their critique on Islam and immigration. Essed and Trienekens (2008) argue that the dominant discourse on racial-ethnic groups focuses on 'cultural' problems and since the 2000s as well on the Islam as anti-democratic.

Moreover, people 'with a migration background' are problematised in the Netherlands and are seen as a burden on society's resources and as unwilling or incapable to 'integrate' into 'society' (Essed & Trienekens, 2008). People of colour or Black people face institutional racism, including in the labour market, education, and housing (College voor de Rechten van de Mens, n.d.). For instance, they were monitored more closely and easier labelled as fraudsters by the tax authorities of the Netherlands, based on personal characteristics and nationality (Van Rij, 2022).

Another example is racial profiling by the Marechaussee police force (Kmar), against which Amnesty International, RADAR, Controle Alt Delete, and two civilians have filed a lawsuit in 2021 (Amnesty International, 2022). One of these civilians is Mpanzu Bamenga, who was selected for an extra security check because of his Black skin and his 'non-Dutch appearance', although he was a Dutch national holding a Dutch passport. Nonetheless, they lost the case and the judge argued that at checks, in which someone is picked from the queue at Dutch airports, ethnicity can be used to single out passengers (Çankaya, 2021). This shows that, in the words of anthropologist Sinan Çankaya: 'to be Dutch is to be white'. The examples mentioned above illustrate processes of boundary-drawing within the Dutch society between 'real' Dutch and 'not quite' Dutch, and that people of colour are excluded from Dutch society based on ideas of what 'real' Dutchness entails (Essed & Trienekens, 2008). Therefore, the research question of this study is: *'How do white and young Dutch people see their own Dutchness and who do they consider to be included in this Dutchness?'*.

Since Dutch whiteness is seen as natural and is not recognised within racial and ethnic categories (Wekker, 2018), this research focuses on white Dutch people. The racial and ethnic position of white people within Dutch society is made invisible and seen as the norm, which leads to white people not having to name their whiteness. As a result, as well the academic, political as public debates often focus on the ones who are perceived as 'different' and less on those who are seen as the norm, namely white people. As Gloria Wekker (2018) states it is only since 2014 that multiple books have been written about whiteness within the Netherlands. To compare, in the United States has been written about whiteness since the nineteenth century. Moreover, to investigate whiteness, the critical gaze should be shifted from the racialised 'other' to those who remain racially invisible and unnamed, namely whites (McKinney, 2004). Therefore, I chose to conduct this research among white people and critically investigate how they see their own Dutchness and who they consider to be included in this Dutchness. This is especially interesting within a society in which the debate about racism has intensified because of the world-wide resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020.

Theoretical framework

This section describes existing theory around the research topic, which was used for the formulation of the interview questions and during the analysis of the data. How this theory is used, is explained in the method section. First, I will give a general idea of what a nation-state entails, since national identities are formed within a nation-state perspective. Furthermore, it describes how a change of ethnic to civic citizenship took place, although Dutch citizenship is still strongly defined in cultural terms. Besides, this theory section describes how Dutch national identity is formed and how this creates myths of homogeneity. It is also argued that the construction of national identity requires an 'Other', and how this turns into the Dutch self-image as modern and progressive. Furthermore, the idea of colour-blindness within Dutch society will be discussed as well. Ultimately, a distinction made between 'real' Dutchness and 'not quite' Dutchness is argued.

The nation-state and an ethnic understanding of citizenship

It is often assumed that the nation-state is the natural social and political form of the modern world and therefore the world is looked at from a nation-state perspective, as well in academia as in the public and political debate (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002). However, migration and globalisation challenged the dominant concept of the nation-state and ethnocentric models of citizenship (De Haas et al., 2020). While the authority of pre-modern states was based on the power of a monarch over a specific territory, the contemporary nation-state is built on a close link between cultural belonging and political identity (Castles & Davidson, 2000). Within a state, political, economic, and social relations are regulated in a bounded territory (Seton-Watson, 1977). These territories are bounded by borders, which are legal constructs (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002).

On the other hand, a nation is a belief system, which includes a sense of identity and belonging and may be defined as "a community of people, whose members are bound together by a sense of solidarity, a common culture, a national consciousness" (Seton-Watson, 1977, p. 1). Within the nation-state is an underlying cultural consensus and agreement on values assumed (De Haas et al., 2020). However, Anderson (1983) argues that the nation is an imagined political community since the members of a nation do not know each other, but nonetheless they live the 'image of their communion' and the nation is 'conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship' (Anderson, 1983, p. 15).

Being a member of such a national community, is defined by the status of citizenship and is often based on the dominant ethnic group within the territory (De Haas et al., 2020). Nationalism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries equated citizenship with being a member of a dominant ethnic group, based on biological, cultural, or religious characteristics (De Haas et al., 2020). Societies perceived themselves as different nations and people, and had a more ethnic understanding of citizenship in which membership was passed through blood ties (Joppke, 2007). Due to diversity within nation-states, this changed towards a more civic understanding of citizenship in which membership depends on the actual ties of a person to a territory (Joppke, 2007). Despite, the collective cultural identity within nation-states is often still based on the dominant national culture (Held & McGrew, 2003). This also applies to the Netherlands, since Dutch citizenship strongly has been defined in cultural terms rather than formal or political terms (Duyvendak, 2011; Schinkel 2007).

National identity and myths of homogeneity

A national community is built on national identity, since a continuous reproduction of 'the' national identity as a natural and primary category of public life takes place (Billig, 1995). Even though this national identity is an imagined one, it is perceived as real by members of the nation-state (Anderson, 1983). Therefore, subjective experiences play a role in the formation of a national identity, since a nation is a subjective community which is defined by the experiences and interpretations of their citizens (De Hart & Versantvoort, 2019). Moreover, national identity is formed by stories, myths, memories, and interpretations of the world and is built on a connection of a specific territory with a collective history and its nationals. Besides, national identity includes meanings and self-images as well, which are expressed by symbols, values, and myths (De Hart & Versantvoort, 2019). Within Dutch society is a wide-spread agreement on the Dutch self-image as progressive and modern (Duyvendak, 2011). Dutchness is typified as exceptional liberality and civicness (Van Reekum, 2016). However, these dominant notions of being Dutch, and as well of being European, are embedded in ideas of modernity, progress, and the superiority of western civilization (Said, 1978; Essed & Trienekens, 2008). Goldberg (2002) argues that European cultures assume that their historical maturity gives them the moral right to force the 'rest of the world' into western 'modernity'. Essed and Trienekens (2008) argue that this is built on old racist theories of cultural hierarchies. Therefore, myths of ethnic purity and cultural superiority influenced ideas of belonging to a nation (De Haas et al., 2020).

Moreover, national identity and nationalism create myths of homogeneity, since diversity and variation in the way people shape their identities is often overlooked within the imagined community of the nation-state (Anderson, 1983; De Haas et al., 2020). Gellner (1983) argues that this myth of homogeneity is necessary for the nation-state to function. It can be seen as a socially bonding force, which creates solidarity and common identification among groups of people, even though they do not know each other (Anderson, 1983). Within nationalist ideologies, the ethnic group, nation, and state correspond, and every ethnic group should have its own nation and state. However, most of the modern nation-states have never been ethnically homogeneous, and multiple belongings have always been part of the human condition (Sen, 2006; De Haas et al., 2020). Therefore, cultural homogeneity is rarely achieved and has been challenged by cultural change, diversity, and migration (Gellner, 1983). Especially within so called ethno-states, in which nationality concepts have been constructed around the idea of a common ancestry (De Haas et al., 2020). It became more difficult to sustain racial identities based on geographical territories (Appadurai, 1994; Kothari, 2006), and monocultural and assimilationist models of national identity are no longer sufficient for diversified societies, and probably they have never really been sufficient (De Haas et al., 2020).

National identity and the 'Other'

Aside from the fact that national identity unites a group of people with shared experiences and memories, it simultaneously distinguishes them from 'outsiders' (Smith, 2000). Therefore, a sense of togetherness and belonging is always bounded (Smith, 2000), since the identification with a specific group is often based on ethnicity and race (De Haas et al., 2020). However, only processes of boundary-drawing with other groups gives national identity a social and political meaning. Therefore, the imagination of Dutchness as progressive has been crucial in boundary-drawing between 'us' and 'them' (Van Reekum, 2016). Populist right-wing politicians use this progressive self-image to differentiate between Dutch and 'foreign' culture, in which they especially focus on Islam (Van Reekum, 2012). In his famous book *Orientalism*, Said (1978) argues that representations of the Oriental 'other' influenced the way places and people in the 'Orient' came

to be known, but at the same time shaped how Europe constructed itself in comparison with the 'Other'. National identities are therefore formed and reinforced by the process of othering (Said, 1978). The construction of a category 'same' simultaneously requires an 'Other' (Kothari, 2006). Thus, the 'Other' is needed to construct identity and a distinction between 'us' and 'them' has been made (Said, 1978). Hall (1992) agrees and argues that "it was in the process of comparison between the 'virtues' of 'Englishness' and the negative features of other cultures that many of the distinctive characterisations of English identities were first defined" (p. 297). Hall writes about Englishness, but it could be argued that this also applies to Dutchness since the idea of Dutchness as open and liberal is formed by the perception of the 'non-western' newcomer as 'culturally backwards' and 'caught' in traditional restrictions of religion and ethnicity (Van Reekum, 2016).

Moreover, migrants and descendants are portrayed as politically, culturally, or religiously different, in comparison with non-migrants (De Haas et al., 2020). By the construction of 'enemies of the nation', the myth of homogeneity within the nation can be accomplished (Schrover & Schinkel, 2013). Besides, nation-state building and the ideas of a homogenous nation, a territorially bounded state and sovereign citizenry are legitimised by describing migrants as culturally others and as security threat (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002). By portraying the migrant as different or 'foreigner', national identities, unities, and borders are reinforced, and both construct as well as mark cultural differences (Barth, 1969; Brubaker, 2004; Glick Schiller & Faist, 2010). Cultural differences, such as language, customs, shared history, religion, behaviour, and phenotype, are used as markers for these ethnic boundaries (De Haas et al., 2020). Barth (1969) called this 'boundary constructions', through which people mark the difference between themselves and 'Others'. Whiteness is often not seen as such a boundary marker, since the notion of race remains often unnamed within the Netherlands (Essed & Trienekens, 2008). However, in the next subheading will be argued that whiteness is a boundary marker and underlies a distinction between 'real' Dutch and 'not quite' Dutch, since whiteness is a structure that created notions of the nation-state, citizenship, and national identity.

'Real' Dutchness and 'not quite' Dutchness

Within the Netherlands a distinction between 'real' and 'not quite' Dutch is made (Essed & Trienekens, 2008). Wekker (2018) argues that the notion of 'we' is often extremely limited, from which Black people, migrants and refugees are excluded. In the Netherlands, this notion of 'we' is based on whiteness and ancestry (Essed & Trienekens, 2008). However, it is often denied that whiteness is a boundary marker for Dutch identity, since the Netherlands is a colourblind nation (Goldberg, 2002; Bonilla-Silva, 2017). Colour-blindness defends the contemporary racial order (Bonilla-Silva, 2017). Moreover, Wekker (2018) argues that it is often denied that race is an important building block of the structural, symbolic, and interpersonal order of the Netherlands. By ignoring the implications of race on people's lives, problems of inequality will not be acknowledged, and structures of power will remain unspoken (Ballantine, Roberts & Korgen, 2018). Besides, Wekker (2018) refers to white innocence, as dominant way of how white Dutch people look at themselves and in which the Netherlands is seen as a small but righteous and ethic nation, and as colourblind and therefore free of racism.

Moreover, racism is often reduced to an individual attitude that unluckily affects some people, instead of seeing it as a collective heritage of certain kinds of knowledge, structures of attitudes and references, and feelings, stored in a cultural archive based on four hundred years of imperial empire (Wekker, 2018, p. 237). This individual attitude of racist acts is often attributed to, for example, chavs ('*tokkies*'), PVV-voters, and 'lower' educated people (Wekker, 2018). Consequently, most people see themselves as unbiased (Wekker, 2018) and do not acknowledge

their own privileges (Ballantine et al., 2018). Especially for 'progressive' people it is often harder to acknowledge racist acts in their own behaviour (Wekker, 2018). The belief that these 'progressive' people are not racist or even anti-racist, makes it more difficult to be critical of one's own actions. The positive self-image of the Netherlands, as described before, plays a role in this as well. As a result of this positive self-image, real anti-racist acts are avoided. Moreover, the racial and ethnic position of white people within Dutch society is made invisible and seen as the norm, which leads to white people not having to name their whiteness and privileges (Wekker, 2018). Therefore, Dutch whiteness is seen as natural and is not recognised within racial and ethnic categories. Whiteness is often seen as 'normal', stripped of specific characteristics, and free of any meaning (Wekker, 2018). Consequently, it is often denied that whiteness is one of the criteria to be considered as 'real' Dutch. Nonetheless, whiteness is a boundary marker and a site of privilege (Frankenberg, 2004; Essed & Trienekens, 2008).

The distinction between 'real' and 'not quite' Dutchness is as well rooted in the Dutch language (Essed & Trienekens, 2008). Labels and categories within the debate about national identity are a consequence of the tendency of controlling migration (Dahinden, 2016). For instance, the categories 'foreigner' or 'people with a migration background' only makes sense within a nation-state logic and in relation to a 'natural' multi-generational rootedness within a national territory (Dahinden, 2016). Again, within the Netherlands white people are seen as this 'natural' multigenerational rootedness. Therefore, a person without a migration background entails 'being from Holland', whereby Dutchness depends on genealogy. Conversely, people labelled as person with a migration background, are perceived as 'being in the Netherlands but from somewhere else' and can acquire a degree of Dutchness (Essed & Trienekens, 2008). This distinction between genealogical claims or acquired claims of Dutchness underly a power hierarchy (Dahinden, 2016).

No matter how well migrants are 'integrated', their integration is never considered as complete (Kešić & Duyvendak, 2019). Moreover, Schinkel (2010) argues that the monolithic notion of a 'national culture' underlies the idea that 'migrants' have to 'integrate' into 'society'. Requirement to 'pass' as 'Dutch' only applies to those who are considered as 'different', and therefore not to people who are considered as 'native' (Schinkel, 2017). This shows why people can be excluded from the national imagined community, even though they are often citizens or nationals themselves (Dahinden, 2016). Schrover and Schinkel (2013) show this by a distinction of citizenship in juridical terms and citizenship in moral terms. At the juridical level, there is a distinction between citizens who have rights and non-citizens who do not have rights. This focusses on the membership of the nation-state. However, at the discursive and moral level it is about the membership of society, in which being seen as part of the society plays a role (Schrover & Schinkel, 2013). The current political and public discourse equates citizenship with integration and active participation in society (Schrover & Schinkel, 2013). However, good, or active citizenship is defined by how states think that citizens should behave.

Methods

This qualitative research inquired how white and young Dutch people see their own Dutchness and who they consider to be included in this Dutchness. I did qualitative research, since Dutch identity is a complex topic, whereby a deeper understanding of the experiences and interpretations of participants is important. I conducted twelve interviews with white Dutch people, which is, due to time limitations of this master thesis, a small sample. However, this was enough to obtain saturation of the data. The participants were selected by a criterion sample, in which participants were recruited who can best inform the researcher about white Dutchness and who meet the following criterion (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Since Dutchness is built upon ideas of a common ancestry (Essed & Trienekens, 2008), participants and as well both of their parents were white and Dutch. In my introduction I explained that I chose to have a sample with white Dutch people, since it is important to shift the gaze from the racialised 'other' to those who remain racially invisible and unnamed. Since this is a master thesis with a small sample, I chose to only interview people under 30 years old. This gave me the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of this specific group. Moreover, I used my own network to select participants, since this increased the chance that people were willing to participate in this research. However, close relatives did not participate in this study since they are familiar with my opinion about racism, what thus may influence their answers.

Furthermore, the interviews were conducted face to face and were held in the Dutch language. For participants it may be easier to express thoughts and feelings in their native language, especially with a complex subject such as Dutchness and whiteness. Besides, this may prevent relevant data from being lost during the data collection due to the use of English. Therefore, I translated the quotes at the latest phase of this research, namely during writing my findings. However, words or sentences may lose their meaning by translating them and therefore translations were sometimes followed by the original Dutch words. Moreover, the interviews were semi-structured, which entails that a set of topics were discussed in depth, instead of using standardised questions (Babbie, 2016). The interview questions and the theoretical foundation can be found in appendix A. However, the experiences and stories of the participants were leading throughout the whole research process, since subjective experiences and interpretations play a role in the formation of a national identity (De Hart & Versantvoort, 2019). Besides, to gain a deeper understanding, it was important to see which ideas the participants produced first and therefore the questions were formulated broadly. Furthermore, my own whiteness could have contributed to a more open and honest conversation about experiences, feelings, and ideas about Dutchness and whiteness.

In addition, the interviews were recorded, and transcripts have been written. Since anonymity and confidentiality are important values in conducting research, all information that can lead to the identity of the interviewee is removed from the transcript. All participants were given a pseudonym within the transcripts and the thesis, and recordings will be removed at the end of the thesis process. Besides, all participants signed an informed consent, which can be found, together with the checklist of the ethical and privacy aspects of the study, in appendix B. Furthermore, the transcripts were coded using Excel to gain an overview of patterns in the data, whereby different tabs were used for different codes and subcodes. Since the goal was to gain an in-depth understanding of the research topic and to understand the lived experiences of the participants, open coding has been used to be open for ideas of the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Also, language and word choices were coded and analysed, since language can reproduce and affirm power structures. After finding the patterns within the data, these findings were

analysed and combined with the theory. Nonetheless, the coding and analysis were influenced by my own whiteness, personal bias, and perspectives. Limitations due to my whiteness will be discussed in the discussion section.

Findings and analysis

The main findings that emerged from the data will be discussed and analysed. Within the first finding is argued that Dutchness of white people is seen as an implicit 'norm' within Dutch society. Furthermore, within the second finding a distinction between 'real' and 'not quite' Dutchness based on ancestry and whiteness is discussed. Additionally, it is argued that the participants were mostly not aware of their own privileges and that they argue a self-image of the Netherlands as an equal, free, safe, and well organised country, without being aware of inequalities. Within the last finding it is discussed that racism and excluding people from Dutchness is not considered as something 'we' as young people do but as a problem of the 'older' generations, chavs ('*tokkies*'), and PVV-voters. Within these findings and analysis will also be referred to communalities with the theory described before in the theoretical framework.

Dutchness of white people as implicit 'norm'

The first finding that will be discussed is the Dutchness of white people as an implicit 'norm'. During the interviews, it became clear that most participants do not regularly think about Dutchness. Some felt awkward talking about it and over half of them expressed that they had never talked about it before. Evidently, it was new for them to talk about their own Dutchness and therefore, all participants were struggling with describing what Dutchness means to them. A lot of participants fell silent and expressed that they had no idea what Dutchness means to them, or that their Dutchness does not mean anything to them. For instance, Lisa (24 years old) said: "*I have no idea, I actually never thought about it [...] It is just fine to be Dutch*" and Roos (24 years old) argued "*I am it [Dutch], but that does not really matter in my life at all. That is not something I think about*". This shows that besides not knowing what Dutchness entails, it is also suggested as 'nothing'. Therefore, there is not much awareness about the many ways in which Dutchness and being considered as Dutch influence their lives and participants perceive their Dutchness as 'nothing special'. Moreover, the interviews showed that the white participants are not confronted with their Dutchness in their daily lives and live in a society in which white Dutch people are seen as the norm and in which their Dutchness is not questioned by others. Consequently, they argue that their Dutchness means 'nothing' to them.

This is consistent with the theory of Wekker (2018), in which she argues that the racial and ethnic position of white people within Dutch society is made invisible and seen as the norm. Dutch whiteness is seen as natural, normal, stripped of specific characteristics, and free of any meaning (Wekker, 2018). This is also consistent with the theory of Billig (1995), in which is argued that a national community is built on national identity by a continuous reproduction of 'the' national identity as a natural and primary category of public life. From the interviews it seems that Dutchness is 'the' national identity that is natural and free from any meaning, since the participants argue that it means 'nothing' to them. Arguing that something means 'nothing' is only possible when it is seen as the norm and therefore not special enough to mention. That the Dutchness of white people is normalised is also visible in the words participants use to refer to their own Dutchness. Most of the participants used sentences such as "*I am just [gewoon] Dutch*" (Roos, 24 years old). By using the word 'just' [*gewoon*] they normalise their own Dutchness. This comes up several times in the quotes later in this section as well. Furthermore, the fact that none of the respondents had any doubts about whether they considered themselves Dutch, underlies this idea of Dutchness of white people as an implicit 'norm'. How whiteness plays a role in this as well will be discussed later at the second finding.

'Real' Dutch and 'not quite' Dutch: a distinction based on ancestry and whiteness

The second finding of this thesis is about the distinction between 'real' Dutchness and 'not quite' Dutchness, based on ancestry and whiteness. Later, whiteness will be argued, but first the distinction based on ancestry will be discussed. The most frequent and most important reason for the participants to consider themselves as Dutch was that they are born and raised in the Netherlands. Besides, half of the respondents argued that they consider themselves Dutch because both of their parents and other family members are Dutch. For instance, Roos (24 years old) argues:

"Well, both of my parents were just born in the Netherlands, I was born in the Netherlands and my brothers were born in the Netherlands. So you could say that I am just Dutch. Actually yes, it runs in my whole family so everyone is Dutch".

Apparently, ancestry plays a role in whether a part of the respondents consider themselves as Dutch, which confirms the theory about genealogical claims of Dutchness (Essed & Trienekens, 2008). The white and young Dutch participants argue that they inherited the Dutch culture from their parents and generations before and that they do not have any influences of 'other' cultures. For example, Lisa (24 years old) says: *"You do not have any characteristics which can be traced back to another culture or other countries"*. This indeed shows that Dutch citizenship strongly has been defined in cultural terms rather than formal or political terms, as argued by Duyvendak (2011) and Schinkel (2007). The theory describes a shift towards a more civic understanding of citizenship due to diversity (Joppke, 2007), but this interviews show that the notion of Dutchness is still based on the dominant ethnic group within a territory (De Haas et al., 2020), namely white Dutch people who inherited the 'Dutch culture' from past generations and do not have any influences of 'other' cultures.

By arguing this, the participants implicitly say that people who do have 'another' cultural or ethnic background are 'not quite Dutch'. It seems that white and young Dutch people, within this sample, consider different levels of Dutchness. For example, Tamar (26 years old) said: *"I was just born in the Netherlands, my parents are Dutch, so you cannot get it more Dutch"*. This is consistent with the theory of Essed and Trienekens (2008) in which they argue that a distinction is made within Dutch society between 'real' and 'not quite' Dutchness based on ancestry. Eight out of twelve respondents argued that their ancestry influenced their Dutchness. However, none of the participants said explicitly that they think they are 'more' Dutch than Dutch people of colour or Black people. Besides, most of them argued that they do not agree with the 'general' idea within the Dutch society that Black people or people of colour are not perceived as Dutch. For instance, Maaïke (22 years old) argues: *"I see everyone as Dutch, if you were raised and born here why would you be less Dutch as I am, also when your parents come from somewhere else?"*.

Thus, the participants use two separate ways of arguing what Dutchness entails. When talking about themselves they use ancestry to argue why they are Dutch, but when talking about 'others' they use being born, raised and 'integrated' in the Netherlands as an argument for being Dutch. This supports the theory of Essed and Trienekens (2008) in which they argue that people without a migration background entails 'being from Holland', while people who are labelled as person with a migration background are perceived as 'being in the Netherlands but from somewhere else' and can acquire a degree of Dutchness. The idea that 'migrants' have to 'integrate' into 'society' and imposed requirements on 'them' to 'pass' as 'Dutch', as described by Schinkel (2010; 2017), underlies this distinction and was also reflected in the conversations with the participants. For instance, Florian (27 years old) said about his adopted girlfriend:

“My girlfriend is just really Dutch, she really has no ties at all to China. She does not speak Chinese, she goes there for a holiday but also in terms of her upbringing she is just really very Dutch. So as far as I am concerned she is very Dutch”.

Although his girlfriend has a Chinese background, Florian does consider her as Dutch, because she does not have any ties to China and she does not speak Chinese. Therefore, her lack of ties with China seems to be a condition for being ‘Dutch’. Underlying this argument of Florian is a notion of national identity as monocultural and assimilationist, as described by De Haas et al. (2020). As well in the conversation with Joost (28 years old) were conditions to be considered as Dutch mentioned when he talked about a Dutch-Algerian friend: *“I do see him as Dutch. I see him, just for the fact that he just has the norms and values which I expect from a Dutch person”*. Additionally, Daphne (23 years old) argues:

“There are refugees who came here to our country 20 years ago and who have adapted themselves in such a way in terms of language or habits or something like that, so they could be placed in the category Dutch”.

Implicitly Daphne and Joost argue that somebody could be considered as Dutch if ‘they’ adapt themselves to the Dutch norms, values, habits, or language.

Although participants do not explicitly say that they think ‘migrants’, people of colour or Black people are not as Dutch as white people, implicitly all of them suggest the distinction between ‘real’ Dutch and ‘not quite’ Dutch by their word choices throughout the interviews. Roos (24 years old) explains that her parents chose a primary school with *“not only Dutch, really pure Dutch, white Dutch”* children and Daphne (23 years old) said: *“I always went to a white school [a school with almost only white kids], so I always had very white friends who were just very very Dutch”*. Furthermore, Bas (24 years old) argues that he is *“really typical Dutch”* since he and his parents are white (*‘blank’*), and Benjamin (27 years old) refers to himself as *“me as a normal Dutchman”*. Thus, if there is something such as ‘pure’, ‘very very’, ‘typical’ and ‘normal’ Dutch, apparently there is also something such as ‘not-pure’, ‘not-typical’ or ‘not-normal’ Dutch, even though they argue that they do not make this distinction.

Furthermore, it stands out that the participants refer to ‘pure’, ‘typical’ and ‘very’ Dutch in combination with whiteness. These quotes show that Dutchness is equalised with whiteness and that whiteness is a boundary marker. This underlies the theory of Essed and Trienekens (2008) in which they argue that whiteness is used as a criterion to be considered as ‘real’ Dutch, although this is often denied. On the surface, it looks like the white and young Dutch people admit that their whiteness plays a role in being perceived as ‘real’ Dutch. However, these references to whiteness are rather implicit than explicit since the Netherlands is a colourblind nation (Goldberg, 2002; Wekker, 2018; Bonilla-Silva, 2017). This can also be seen in the way the participants describe their ‘Dutch’ appearance. When asked why people in public perceive the participants as Dutch, half of the participants did not mention their whiteness at all and they were beating about the bush a lot, which is consistent with Wekker (2018) her theory in which she argues that whiteness within the Netherlands is seen as natural and is not recognised within racial and ethnic categories. Instead of mentioning whiteness as a boundary marker to be considered as ‘real’ Dutch, the participants talked a lot about behaviour, clothes, hair, and eye colour. For instance, Benjamin (27 years old) mentions his behaviour as the reason to be considered as Dutch:

“I think it will be defined by behaviour, that people really take that into account. As I said before, heart on the sleeve, so people immediately think you are really Dutch. I think that plays a role and not appearance or clothes or something”.

Only three participants mentioned their whiteness immediately. Although, one of these three respondents quickly mentioned it and then changed the subject to language as if white was a forbidden word to say. Moreover, a quarter of the participants argued that their skin colour does not play a role in being perceived as Dutch, but they argue that the skin colour of people of colour or Black people does influence the way they are perceived as Dutch. For instance, Marisa (24 years old) argues: *“I think it plays a big role nowadays, but especially maybe for people who have an appearance that you might think of maybe you have a different background”*. Thus, it is denied by these participants that their whiteness does play a role in being perceived as Dutch. Underlying this is the norm of whiteness as Dutchness in society, as discussed earlier on. This indeed shows that white people do not have to name their whiteness, since it is made invisible and is seen as the norm (Wekker, 2018). Additionally, it is striking that most of the respondents still use the word *‘blank’*, which is a colonial term that suggests white superiority, innocence, and purity (Wekker, 2018). Sometimes they used the word *‘blank’* instead of white and sometimes they combined them by saying *“blank wit”* (*‘white’*). White Dutch people resist against the word *‘wit’* (white) and prefer to be called *‘blank’* (Wekker, 2018). Wekker (2018) argues that this resistance towards the word white is a resistance against naming their white privilege, of which invisibility and normalization are part of.

This is also visible in the way white people do not mention their white privilege during the interviews. Only a few participants mentioned their privileges because of their whiteness. For instance, Bas (24 years old) argues:

“Well, the fact that I am a white Dutch person and my name is Dutch as well, that a lot of things like internship discrimination, which was in the news, that I do not have to worry about that because I have a Dutch name”.

Furthermore, Joost (28 years old) argues that hearing about other people’s experiences with racism and sexism helped him to become aware of his own privileges: *“Me as a person is going to look at myself, like do I have privilege? The answer is yes I have privilege, because I am a white man, white and man”*. Although some participants did recognize their privileges, most of them did not mention their privileges at all. For the participants, it was clearly easy to mention other people’s skin colour and to recognize that people are treated unfair and face discrimination, but they deny that their own skin colour plays a role in if people perceive and treat them as Dutch. So, they admit one part of racism, which is that people are treated badly and unfair because of their Blackness, but most participants do not admit the other part of racism in which they have privileges because of their whiteness. Apparently, it is easier to talk about the disadvantages and discrimination Black people and people of colour face due to their skin colour than to talk about the advantages and privileges white people have due to their whiteness. This fits the colourblind ideology that is the dominant discourse within the Netherlands, in which white people do not have to name as well their whiteness as their privileges (Wekker, 2018). Because of colour-blindness, people see themselves as unbiased and inequalities and privileges are ignored (Ballantine et al., 2018).

That the participants were not aware of their privileges became also clear by the way all participants expressed that they are happy to live in the Netherlands and that everything is well organised. Only a few seems to be aware that systems within Dutch society are not in favour of all people in society, and that participants have the privilege to enjoy all these *‘well organised’* systems. One of these respondents that did not seem to be aware of his privileges is Boris (23 years old), he argued:

“The Netherlands is a very nice country, because they organised everything well. The infrastructure of course is good, healthcare system is good [...]. The education system is good, you can study wherever you want. There has been a lot of hassle about the loaning system for studying, but I am a fan, that you can decide on your own what you need, when you need, if you need it. It is all in your hands. [...] I am a fan of the political system, the proportional distribution of the chairs. Yes I am actually proud of that”.

That Boris argues to be a fan of the loaning system for studying shows that he is not aware of the inequalities this system causes and increases. Apparently, he has the privilege to decide if he wants to use the student loan or not, but he is not aware that other people do not have the choice. The meritocracy mindset within the Netherlands underlies this idea of ‘own choice’.

Furthermore, what also underlies the unawareness of privileges by the participants is the Dutch self-image as progressive and modern. Within the sample, a self-image of the Netherlands as equal, free, safe, and well organized appears. For instance, Max (27 years old) said:

“Dutch people are free I think, free-minded, open in my opinion, honest. [...] You are allowed to do everything here, you can do everything here and you can go wherever you want as Dutch person, you have a lot of possibilities”.

The Dutch self-image described by the participants of this research is consistent with the self-image described by Duyvendak (2011) and Van Reekum (2016), who argue a self-image of progressive, modernity, liberality, and civicness. Only three participants referred to the ‘freedom’ within Dutch society as fake, limited or not accessible for everyone. Furthermore, in the theory section it was argued that these dominant notions of being Dutch, or European, are embedded in the idea of superiority of western civilization (Said, 1978; Essed & Trienekens, 2008), in which European cultures assume that their historical maturity gives them the moral right to force the ‘rest of the world’ into western ‘modernity’ (Goldberg, 2002). This feeling of superiority was also reflected in the interviews. For example, Bas (24 years old) said: *“I think that we as Dutch culture can show more freedom of speech to other cultures, like in your own country you had to be more reserved but here you can say a bit more”.* This quote shows the idea that the Dutch culture is superior to ‘other’ cultures. Besides, it stands out that he uses terms as ‘we as Dutch culture’ and ‘your own country’, which shows indeed, as argued by Van Reekum (2016), that the imagination of Dutchness as progressive has been crucial in boundary-drawing between ‘us’ and ‘them’. Furthermore, by talking about freedom some participants not only referred to the Netherlands but also to Europe as a whole. For instance, Tamar (26 years old) argues: *“Europe stands for freedom and equality, [...] it stands for freedom and equality and that is something that is very important and what is important to everybody, so that you can do what you want”.* Thus, the fact that the Netherlands is part of Europe, also plays a role in the formation of this self-image of Dutchness.

Racism and excluding people from Dutchness is not something ‘we’ young people do

This brings us to the third finding, in which it will be argued that the young and white participants have the idea that excluding people from Dutchness and racism more general, is not something ‘they’ as young people do but is a problem of the ‘older’ generations, the PVV-voters or chavs (*‘tokkies’*). All participants argued that racism occurs within the Dutch society and most of them mentioned employment discrimination: *“I think for example with job interviews that when they see a foreign last name, that they maybe think we actually need a Dutch name or it maybe suits our group better”.* (Boris, 23 years old). Another type of racism mentioned by the participants are

negative stigmas, such as Muslims who are seen as terrorist, or ‘migrants’ who are criminalised. For instance, Bas (24 years old) argues: *“when something happens that is not allowed, soon a dark [donker] person is seen as suspect or as guilty while that of course does not have to be the case”*.

Although all participants admit that racism occurs within Dutch society, none of them used the word racism. Racism seems to be a forbidden word, although they use other words to describe racism, such as biases and discrimination. However, even these words are used doubtful: *“because that are the people who are discriminatory, is it allowed to say that?”* (Maaike, 23 years old). Besides avoiding the word racism, a quarter of the participants starts justifying racist acts by people. For instance, Tamar (26 years old) said:

“But these people have such a different idea, they only read media and they do not know people with another background, only their own. And they do barely leave their own village and then imagine that suddenly people from a totally different group, where you hear nothing but negative information about or where you are afraid of, they will come... yes they cannot handle that”.

Besides justifying people being racist, she also used ‘a totally different group’ to talk about ‘migrants’ or ‘refugees’, whereby she othered this ‘group’ as if they could not be similar in many ways to the people in the village. Another example is Florian (27 years old), who tells about a racist comment of his colleague about his girlfriend with a Chinese background, and his reaction on this:

“I showed a picture of my girlfriend and then she said ‘oh is it a spring roll’ [oh is het een loempiaatje]? So yes that was a bit awkward to say of course, but I have to say [...] it was a rude comment but it was not meant badly. [...] When I told my girlfriend she was really a bit mad. And I though yes it is actually a bit strange, but she did not mean it... So in the end I was protecting my colleague a bit like she did not mean it badly and she often just blurts things out”.

Within this situation Florian did not respond to the racist comment of his colleague and justified it by arguing that she did not mean it badly. Only by the reaction of his girlfriend he saw the gravity of the racist comment, although he kept ‘protecting’ his colleague. This is linked to an aspect of Wekker’s (2016) White Innocence. One element of White Innocence is that the Netherlands is seen as a small but righteous and ethic nation, and as colourblind and therefore free of racism. The well-meaning white person is a familiar element of this type of colour-blindness. It seems that Florian do not want to accept that the comment of his colleague is racist, which can arise from the idea of white innocence. Besides justifying racist comments, one of the participants, Max (26 years old), even said explicitly racist things by himself although he also argued that racism is not acceptable. He said:

“In the news you see yes in general with not-Dutch last names, let us put it that way, [...] that is the vast majority. So the vast majority of what is put in prison is indeed often with a colour [kleurtje] yes. And that still could be Dutch people, but in general people of colour are often put in prison yes”.

Besides, it is striking that both racist comments in the last two quotes use a diminutive to talk about people of colour, namely ‘loempiaatje’ and ‘kleurtje’ which implicate white superiority.

However, most of the respondents argue that racism is not acceptable. Nonetheless, only one of the respondents admit her own biases and three of the participants argue that they became more aware and admit that they made racist comments in the past. Most of the participants refer to racism and the exclusion of people of colour and Black people from Dutchness as something older people, chavs (‘tokkies’), PVV-voters, people with a more practical education background, or people who live in villages do. For instance, Maaike (22 years old) argued:

“I think there is just a kind of generation and maybe old, I imagine those old white men with a beer belly and you know, these chavs [‘tokkies’] from Scheveningen or something or Duindorp. Yes they see it as a kind of people who steal our country”.

Roos (24 years old) said: *“I think in small villages it for sure will be important that you are white and then you will be a real Dutch person. But in the big cities I do not think so in the vast majority”.* Especially older generations were seen as racists by almost all participants. They argued that racism and the exclusion of people of colour or Black people from Dutchness is something older people do and not something they as young people do. Daphne (23 years old) argued that everything will be better *“when a few generations disappear, then from the generation from 30 years or something below 30, 35 or something then everybody is raised better”.*

This idea that racism and exclusion from Dutchness is not something ‘we’ young people do reflects colour-blindness within Dutch society. The problem of racism within Dutch society is hereby blamed on specific groups, which were exactly the groups Wekker (2018) as well mentioned in her book ‘white innocence’. With blaming specific groups, the young and white people go free and can continue living in their self-image as open, free, progressive, and anti-racist, without being critical of their own behaviour (Wekker, 2018). Consequently, their own biases and privileges will remain unspoken, and racism is reduced to an individual attitude of some people. Therefore, the collective heritage of certain kinds of knowledge, structures of attitudes and references, and feelings, stored in a cultural archive based on four hundred years of imperial empire, as described by Wekker (2018, p. 237), are ignored. Therefore, this idea of young people being more tolerant than older people, is also part of the ideology of colour-blindness. Since only young white people are interviewed during this study, it cannot be argued with certainty that young people are not more open-minded about what Dutchness entails and are not less racist than older people. Therefore, it seems to be possible that indeed young people think differently about these subjects than older people. However, the findings before showed that young white people do see their own white Dutchness as the norm, that they implicitly do make a distinction between ‘real’ and ‘not quite’ Dutch and that they do not acknowledge their own privileges. Thus, it could be questioned if young white people are indeed as open, free, and tolerant as they think they are. And, even if they are more open-minded and tolerant than older people, by carrying on this positive self-image of being open, tolerant, and anti-racist, young people do still ignore their own biases and privileges.

Conclusion and discussion

This study investigated how white and young Dutch people perceive their own Dutchness and who they consider to be included in this Dutchness. From the interview data and the theory, it can be concluded that the Netherlands indeed is a colourblind nation, in which it is often denied that race is an important building block of the structural, symbolic, and interpersonal order of the Netherlands (Wekker, 2018). First, the Dutchness of white people is seen as the 'norm' and participants argued that Dutchness does not mean anything to them, which shows that Dutch whiteness is seen as natural and free of any meaning (Wekker, 2018). The word choices of the participants show this as well, since they often use the word 'just' [*gewoon*] to argue that they are 'just' Dutch. Second, a distinction between 'real' Dutch and 'not quite' Dutch has been made, based on ancestry and whiteness. Ancestry plays a role in whether the participants consider themselves as Dutch, but when talking about 'Others' the participants used being born, raised and 'integrated' as reason for being Dutch. Thus, the participants use two different ways of arguing what Dutchness entails and argue implicitly that people without a migration background 'are from the Netherlands', while people with a migration background 'are in the Netherlands but from somewhere else' and that they can acquire a degree of Dutchness, as described in the theory by Essed and Trienekens (2008). However, this distinction is rather implicit than explicit, since the participants do not explicitly argue that people of colour or Black people are not as Dutch as white people. However, their word choices, again, show that they do make this distinction. The participants use words as 'pure', 'typical', and 'normal' to refer to Dutchness, whereby they implicitly argue that there is also something such as 'not-pure', 'not-typical', and 'not-normal' Dutch. Besides, they refer to 'pure', 'typical', and 'very' Dutch in combination with whiteness, which shows that whiteness indeed is a criterion to be considered as 'real' Dutch.

That the Netherlands is a colourblind country also became clear by the way white and young Dutch people talked about their own whiteness and privilege, or rather how they did not talk about it. Only three participants mentioned their whiteness when they were asked why they think they are perceived as Dutch in public. Half of the participants did not mention their whiteness at all, and a quarter of the participants argued that their whiteness does not play a role in being perceived as Dutch. However, they argue that the skin colour of people of colour or Black people does influence the way 'they' are perceived as Dutch. Moreover, the participants admit the part of racism in which people of colour or Black people are excluded and treated badly and unfairly because of their Blackness, but they do not see their own privileges. This shows that whiteness is indeed made invisible and seen as the norm within Dutch society (Wekker, 2018). Consequently, white people do not have to name and face their own whiteness and privilege. Therefore, most of them argued that the Netherlands is a 'well organised', 'free', and 'open' country, which is consistent with descriptions of the Dutch self-image by Duyvendak (2011) and Van Reekum (2016). Only three respondents questioned this image of the Netherlands as 'free' and 'open'.

The third finding, which also underlines that the Netherlands is a colourblind nation, reflects the idea that excluding people from Dutchness and racism more general is not something 'they' as young people do but is a problem of the 'older' generations, the PVV-voters, or chavs (*tokkies*). These groups were exactly the groups Wekker (2018) mentioned as well. By blaming specific groups, the young and white people go free and can continue living in their self-images as open, free, progressive, and anti-racist, without being critical of their own behaviour. Therefore, their own biases and privileges will remain unspoken, and racism is reduced to an individual attitude instead of acknowledged as a structure.

However, this also brings us to a suggestion for further research. Since the sample of this study only consisted of young white people, this study gained a deeper understanding of their perspectives on their own Dutchness and who they consider to be included in this Dutchness. However, from this study it cannot be argued whether there are differences between younger and older people in this regard. Especially since young people argue that they are more 'open' and 'tolerant' towards 'Others' than older people, it would be interesting to compare the attitudes of younger and older white Dutch people. Although I argue that the data showed that the young participants were not as open, free, and tolerant as they think they are, and that this idea of older people being less tolerant is part of the colourblind ideology, it would be interesting to investigate this in further research.

One important limitation of this research that I would like to point out, is my own whiteness. During this study, I was confronted with my own whiteness and privilege multiple times. As described before in this thesis, the Netherlands is a colourblind nation in which white people do not have to face their whiteness and privileges. Since I grew up in this nation, I also grew up in a society in which whiteness is dominant. I was not aware of my own whiteness and privileges for a very long time. It was 2016 and I was 20 years old when I for the first time experienced and thought about my whiteness and privileges. Until a doctor in a hospital in Indonesia gave me priority over an Indonesian woman who was hurting really badly and he explicitly said that he helped me first since I am white and therefore I have money, I was not aware of my own skin colour and privileges. However, my whiteness plays a crucial role in my life experiences, attitudes and thinking, and therefore it was sometimes hard to get free of the colourblind ideology within the Netherlands.

Especially during the coding and analysis of the data, I struggled with my own whiteness, and I realised that it is difficult to study whiteness as structure within Dutchness while I am a white Dutch person myself. Since I am young and white myself, the participants of this research functioned as a mirror, which helped me seeing my own shortcomings within this research. For instance, during the analysis of the data I found that none of the participants used the word racism, which made me realise that throughout the whole thesis I only used the word racism three times, and that I was avoiding the word as well. I did not avoid the word racism consciously, but it shows how growing up in a colourblind nation, which sees itself as tolerant and anti-racist, affects my own behaviour and thinking. Besides, within this research I decided to shift the gaze from the racialised 'Other' to those who remain racially invisible and unnamed, namely whites (McKinney, 2004). However, while writing about the distinction between 'really' Dutch and 'not quite' Dutch in my theory section, I wrote a lot about how the 'Other' is excluded from Dutchness, instead of writing critically about the role of whiteness within this distinction. The work of Gloria Wekker (2018), among others, made me realise this kind of shortcomings and helped me to write more critically about whiteness. Thus, besides learning about how white and young Dutch people see their own Dutchness and who they consider to be included in this Dutchness, I also gained a deeper understanding of my own whiteness and privileges.

Overall, this research adds value to already existing literature and to the public debate within the Netherlands, since it showed the violence of colourblind racism and it shifted the gaze from the racialised 'Others' to those who remain racially invisible and unnamed, namely white people. Becoming aware of the structure of whiteness and colourblind racism through research, is a step towards the dismantling of colourblind racism and to move towards more equity within Dutch society.

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Appendix A Interview questions with theoretical foundation

After asking some demographics of the participants, the first interview question was 'Do you consider yourself as Dutch?'. After this introduction question, I asked 'What does it mean to be Dutch to you?'. Since Dutch citizenship strongly has been defined in cultural terms rather than formal or political terms (Schinkel, 2007; Duyvendak, 2011), a follow-up question was 'what does it mean to be culturally Dutch?'. Besides, the theory showed that nationality concepts, and therefore Dutchness as well, have been constructed around the idea of a common ancestry (Essed & Trienekens, 2008; De Haas et al., 2020). Therefore I asked 'Is your entirely ancestry Dutch?' and 'Do you think your ancestry plays a role in your Dutchness?'. To talk about who is perceived as Dutch and who is not, I first asked the participants 'When you are in public, are you perceived by others as Dutch?' and I used a follow-up question: 'Why do you think people perceive you as Dutch?'. Furthermore, I asked 'How do you think your appearance related to being seen as Dutch?'. Since Dutch whiteness is seen as natural and the norm, people may not be used to talk about their own whiteness (Wekker, 2018). Besides, it is often denied that whiteness is one of the criteria to be considered as Dutch (Essed & Trienekens, 2008). Therefore I asked the following question if people did not bring up their own whiteness 'Do you think whiteness plays a role in 'being Dutch'?'. To start the conversation about racism and exclusion of Dutchness, I asked 'What do you think about the idea that some people in the Netherlands could be legally Dutch but not treated or perceived as Dutch?'. To conclude, I always ended with the question 'What did I forgot to ask?', to give participants the opportunity to mention everything they wanted and for me to be open for the ideas of participants.

Appendix B Checklist ethical and privacy aspects of research

PART I: GENERAL INFORMATION



Project title: To be Dutch is to be white: a qualitative research about how white and young Dutch people see their own Dutchness and who they consider to be included within this Dutchness

Name, email of student: Romy Vermeer, 578698rv@eur.nl

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

Start date and duration: 20-03-2022, four months

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.).

Does the study involve the risk of causing psychological stress or negative emotions beyond those normally encountered by participants? ~~YES~~ - NO

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~~

Will the study involve the participation of minors (<18 years old) or other groups that cannot give consent? ~~YES~~ - NO

Is the health and/or safety of participants at risk during the study? ~~YES~~ - NO

Can participants be identified by the study results or can the confidentiality of the participants' identity not be ensured? ~~YES~~ - NO

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.

The purpose of the research will not be told to the participants, namely to find out their perception of their own Dutchness. However, this research will also investigate who they consider to be included within this Dutchness, which will not be told to the participants since this may otherwise influence the research outcome. This is important, since implicit word choices and behaviour is also part of the analysis. Besides, information about the ethnic background of the participants will be collected, since the sample of this research have to be white Dutch people.

What safeguards are taken to relieve possible adverse consequences of these issues (e.g., informing participants about the study afterwards, extra safety regulations, etc.).
All information that can lead to the identity of the interviewee will be removed from the transcript. All respondents will be given a pseudonym within the transcripts and recordings will be removed at the end of the thesis process.

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.
No.

PART IV: SAMPLE

Where will you collect or obtain your data?
By face to face interviews
Note: indicate for separate data sources.

What is the (anticipated) size of your sample?
12 participants
Note: indicate for separate data sources.

What is the size of the population from which you will sample?
All white Dutch people with both of their parents born in the Netherlands (74,7% of the Dutch population)
Note: indicate for separate data sources.

Part V: DATA STORAGE AND BACK UP

Where and when will you store your data in the short term, after acquisition?
Interviews will be recorded with my phone and a backup will be saved at my laptop. I will remove the recordings from my phone and laptop at the end of the thesis period. The transcripts will immediately be anonymised.
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 will be responsible for the storage and backup of the data and I will be the only one who have access to them.

How (frequently) will you back-up your research data for short-term data security?
I will back-up the recordings at my laptop and phone.

In case of collecting personal data how will you anonymize the data?
All information that can lead to the identity of the interviewee will be removed from the transcript. All respondents will be given a pseudonym within the transcripts

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: Romy Vermeer

Name (EUR) supervisor: Bonnie French

Date: 20-03-2022

Date: 20-03-2022

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Romy Vermeer', written over a grey rectangular background.A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Bonnie French', written on a white background.

Informed consent

Onder begeleiding van Bonnie French onderzoekt Romy Vermeer, masterstudent sociologie van de Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam, de invloed van de nationale identiteit op ervaringen en interpretaties van witte Nederlanders. Dit onderzoek wordt gebruikt voor mijn scriptie voor de master Governance of Migration and Diversity. Met behulp van uw deelname kan dit onderzoek worden gerealiseerd.

Waarom dit onderzoek? Met dit onderzoek wil ik als masterstudent van de Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam nagaan wat de invloed van de nationale identiteit op ervaringen en interpretaties is van witte Nederlanders.

Verloop U neemt deel aan een onderzoek waarbij ik informatie zal vergaren door:

- U te interviewen en het gesprek op te nemen via audio-opname. Er wordt een transcript uitgewerkt van het interview. U heeft altijd het recht om dit transcript op te vragen bij Romy Vermeer, via 578698rv@eur.nl.

Vertrouwelijkheid Ik doe er alles aan uw privacy zo goed mogelijk te beschermen. Naast de student zal alleen de scriptiebegeleider toegang krijgen tot alle door u verstrekte gegevens. De gegevens die gedeeld worden met de scriptiebegeleider zullen geanonimiseerd worden.

Er wordt op geen enkele wijze vertrouwelijke informatie of persoonsgegevens van of over u naar buiten gebracht, waardoor iemand u zal kunnen herkennen.

In het onderzoek wordt u aangeduid met een verzonden naam (pseudoniem), waardoor u niet herkenbaar of herleidbaar bent. Daarnaast worden andere gegevens die eventueel naar u kunnen leiden ook geanonimiseerd.

Als u vragen heeft over de vertrouwelijkheid van het onderzoek, kunt u altijd contact opnemen met mij, Romy Vermeer, via 578698rv@eur.nl.

Vrijwilligheid U hoeft geen vragen te beantwoorden die u niet wilt beantwoorden. Uw deelname is vrijwillig en u kunt stoppen wanneer u wilt.

Als u tijdens het onderzoek besluit om uw medewerking te staken, zullen de gegevens die u reeds hebt verstrekt tot het moment van intrekking van de toestemming in het onderzoek gebruikt worden.

Wilt u stoppen met dit onderzoek? Neem dan contact op met Romy Vermeer, via 578698rv@eur.nl.

Dataopslag In het onderzoek zullen anonieme gegevens of pseudoniemen worden gebruikt. De verzamelde data worden beveiligd opgeslagen. Deze audio-opname wordt aan het einde van het scriptieproces verwijderd.

De onderzoeksgegevens worden bewaard voor een periode van maximaal 2 jaar. Uiterlijk na het verstrijken van deze termijn zullen de gegevens worden verwijderd.

Indienen van een vraag of klacht

Indien u specifieke vragen heeft over hoe er met uw persoonsgegevens wordt omgegaan, kunt u deze stellen aan Romy Vermeer, via 578698rv@eur.nl. Daarnaast kunt u ook altijd terecht bij de de scriptiebegeleider Bonnie French, french@essb.eur.nl of de Data Protection Officer van de Erasmus Universiteit, via privacy@eur.nl. Het indienen van een klacht kan bij de Autoriteit Persoonsgegevens indien u vermoedt dat uw gegevens verkeerd zijn verwerkt.

Door dit toestemmingsformulier te ondertekenen erken ik het volgende [includeer alleen de categorieën die van toepassing zijn]

- | | JA | NEE |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Ik ben voldoende geïnformeerd over het onderzoek. Ik heb het informatieblad gelezen en heb daarna de mogelijkheid gehad vragen te kunnen stellen. Deze vragen zijn voldoende beantwoord en ik heb voldoende tijd gehad om over mijn deelname te beslissen. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 Ik neem vrijwillig deel aan dit onderzoek. Het is mij duidelijk dat ik deelname aan het onderzoek op elk moment, zonder opgaaf van reden, kan beëindigen. Ik hoef een vraag niet te beantwoorden als ik dat niet wil. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Voor deelname aan het onderzoek is het bovendien nodig dat u voor verschillende onderdelen specifiek toestemming geeft. | | |
| 3 Ik geef toestemming om de gegevens die tijdens dit onderzoek over mij worden verzameld te verwerken zoals is uitgelegd in het bijgevoegde informatieblad. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 Ik geef toestemming om tijdens het gesprek geluid-opnames te maken en mijn antwoorden uit te werken in een transcript. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Naam deelnemer:

Naam student:

Romy Vermeer

Handtekening:

Handtekening:

Datum:

Datum: