From half to whole
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Black-White Biraciality in The Netherlands: experiences in negotiating racialized identities

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Amsterdam, the 21st of June 2019,
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Abstract
This thesis seeks to understand the lived experiences of black-white biracial people through their racialized bodies in The Netherlands. As of yet, limited research has been done on biracial identities in the Dutch context. This research seeks to add to the ever-growing body of work on multicultural identities, race, nationalism and belonging. Topics which will continue to become more relevant in a globalised world, where identities will prove to be more complicated than black or white, or what are perceived as ‘pure’ races. By using semi-structured interviews and life stories, the experiences of twenty-three adult biracial people were collected in Amsterdam. To analyse experiences with regards to race, an intersectional approach was used along with critical race theory.

Although The Netherlands is considered beyond race, its colonial history continues to influence the daily realities of biracial people, who have their skin colour emphasised to them constantly by both black and white individuals. Outdated words such as ‘half blood’ and ‘mulatto’, continue to be used to racially classify biracial people in the country. Biracial people stand accused of either not being white enough, or black enough, facing racism and colourism. Negotiating their racial identities in different contexts, biracial people feel that they only partially belong to monoracial groups. Their partial belonging can be seen as a privilege, understanding two racial groups and being able to move in both spaces. All their relationships, public and private, are affected by perceptions and associations of race.

Interracial relationships although perceived as a symbol for post-raciality seem to still be tainted by colonial mindsets. This work is about biracial individuals and their search for belonging in a racialized world, where they are seen as half and not whole.

Keywords: biracial identity, interracial relationships, belonging, racialism, racial terminology, The Netherlands.
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Introduction

For as long as I can remember I have been intrigued by biraciality. Being the child of a Ghanaian father and Belgian mother, I grew up in Accra, the capital of Ghana, where being a black-white biracial person has different implications than it does in Belgium or in The Netherlands. In Ghana I was white and when I moved to Belgium, I became black. Moving to Europe as a teenager made me aware of my biracial identity. Before then I believed I was white like my mother, I’d accepted/normalised being called an ‘obruni’ (which means white in Twi, a Ghanaian dialect) by the locals.¹

At home my parents never spoke to my younger brother and I about race. At the rare occasions that my mother did, she said that we (her children) were ‘the best of both worlds’. As a child I never understood ‘which worlds’ she was talking about. Only later did I realise that perceptions and convictions exist of white and black (racialised) worlds and that I existed in a space between both.

By moving to Europe, I developed an interest in the experiences of black-white biracial people because I am one and because I wanted to understand what this identity entailed. For my thesis I decided to learn more about biracial people's identity in The Netherlands, which led to the following research question:

*What are the lived experiences of black-white biracial people in The Netherlands through their racialized bodies?*

This work looks at black-white relationships and how these are experienced by biracial people. I use the word biracial, to address black-white biracial people throughout my work, sometimes addressing them with synonyms such as mixed-race and mixed.

¹ Interesting how I call other Ghanaians ‘locals’, distancing myself from them.
Methodology

For a period of three months (January 2019 - March 2019), my research question guided my fieldwork. I conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with twenty-three black-white biracial adults living in Amsterdam (Bryman 2012: 472). Two interlocutors did not live in the Dutch capital but in Amersfoort and Rotterdam. I used life histories to get more detailed narratives from my participants (ibid.: 489). During the semi-structured interviews, I asked open questions, often letting my participants partially lead where the conversation was going (ibid.: 246). I would ask them questions that came up along the way, which made it more organic and gave them a sense of agency (Eriksen 2015). In my interviews I tried to find out how my interlocutors experience/think about their racialized identities, how they think other people perceive them and how this influences how they see themselves. The topics I addressed where racial identities, family (cultural) socialization, how others have influenced their identities/perceptions of self and specific moments that shaped their identities. I let interlocutors choose where our conversations took place, because I wanted to be sure that they felt at ease. This often led me into their homes which was also interesting because they could share personal documents such as pictures with me (Bryman 2012: 544).

Before each conversation I gave the participant a gift, an energy bar, a symbol for the time and the energy they put into meeting with me. I only had one follow-up conversation with an interlocutor (ibid.: 476). I started my fieldwork by posting a public message on my Facebook profile, saying that I was looking for black-white biracial people individuals in The Netherlands and shortly explaining my motivations, I included my own story of my biraciality. This generated a lot of positive responses, which quickly filled my agenda with meetings, all of which were one-on-one. My personal network was my main resource in finding people. I had not expected such huge enthusiasm from people wanting to participate, receiving thirty-two requests in the first weeks. I think this is because this group is not generally sought out and my research granted them a chance to tell their stories.

Each time I met a participant it activated snowball sampling; they always knew someone else that could take part (ibid.: 202). I participated in ten events2 that were relevant to my topic, where I conducted participant observation (ibid.:34). At such events I often

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2 Gatherings open to the public, taking place in venues, where speakers were invited to talk on topics regarding race.
initiated contact through small talk (Driessen & Jansen 2013). I always used applications such as WhatsApp, Facebook messenger, email to stay in touch.

I used two diaries (Bryman 2012: 243), one to reflect on myself as a researcher and in the other I kept fieldnotes (ibid: 447-452). This method helped me to keep track of my own process and thoughts during the months that followed. I recorded all the interviews, which I later coded and transcribed for analysis (ibid.: 482).

I ended my fieldwork as I began it, by making a public Facebook-post in which I thanked the participants and those that helped me. I sent a personal message to each individual, even those that I had not spoken with, but who had wanted to participate. This marked the end of my fieldwork, after which I coded the information according to topics.

**Interlocutors**

To participate in my research, my twenty-three participants had to meet the following criteria.

Firstly, they should have one black and one white parent. I choose first-generation biracial people because this combination is the same as my own and they often share similar physical traits. In my thesis I argue that appearance affects how others treat you which consequently affects how individuals see themselves.

Secondly, interlocutors had to be eighteen plus, the ages varied between nineteen and sixty-seven. The majority of participants (twenty), fell between the ages of nineteen and thirty, only three were forty plus. I did not want people under eighteen because their identity is still in formation and they are more likely to have more limited experiences regarding race. Also holding into account that choosing a younger group would have required me to interact with their monoracial parents, who most likely have different realities than their children, so addressing race and racial/cultural socialisation might have caused harm (Bryman 2012: 135). Having interlocutors who were older gave me access to people with more experiences. I chose to not only speak to young adults but also to seniors. I wanted to compare the experiences of seniors to those of people from a younger generation, to see in which aspects their realities were similar or different. This also gave me a broader insights into the history of black-white biraciality in the country.

Finally, interlocutors had to currently be living in The Netherlands, having grown up here. Only one participant did not grow up in The Netherlands but she lives here now. Most of my interlocutors lived in Amsterdam. I kept the area broad because biracial people do not
live in a specific region in The Netherlands, being scattered all over the country, so I relied on snowball sampling, my network and convenience to find interlocutors (ibid.: 202). I wanted to look at locality, see how living in different areas in the country (cities versus small towns) affected their perceptions of self, compare biracial experiences across regions. Keeping into account that experiences of biracial people in Amsterdam are different from those living in other areas. All interlocutors were middle class at this point in their lives, as I am. Out of the twenty-three people whom I spoke, sixteen were women and seven were men.

In the appendix, the reader can find more information about each interlocutor, their age and where their parents are from. Each white parent is Dutch, apart from two cases. I gave names that refer to colours to people who wanted to be anonymous. I choose colours because race refers to skin colour, choosing abstract colours as names is my way of criticizing the social construct of race. I will not introduce each participant in my thesis.

Amsterdam
My fieldwork took place where I currently live, in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Being part Belgian, Dutch is my mother tongue, which made it easy for me to have in-depth conversations. As a biracial woman, I had an insider status with my interlocutors but my Flemish\(^3\) accent made it clear that I am not ‘from here’, The Netherlands. This aspect granted me more room for questions, and these questions were answered more thoroughly because they wanted to make sure I understood. To position myself as an insider, I explained my biracial background before each interview. Interlocutors were always curious about it, and sharing my biracial information with them, made them more comfortable sharing their experiences with me, knowing I would understand.

I partly choose Amsterdam as the venue for my research because of the role the city played during the Dutch colonial era. Amsterdam was closely linked to Suriname, a former Dutch colony, because the city itself co-owned the country (Slavery Heritage Guide 2018). It is no coincidence that many fortresses and cities around the world carry Amsterdam as its name, as in Suriname, the Dutch Antilles, Indonesia, west and south Africa, north and south America, and in east and south Asia (Slavery Heritage Guide 2018: 12). Hondius (2014: 3 A) explains that ‘Holland provided new names for places as far apart as Harlem (from Haarlem)

\(^3\) Belgian Dutch.
and New Zealand (from Zeeland). Dutch colonies ‘included Indonesia, New Amsterdam, Suriname, the Dutch West Indies, and the Cape Colony in South Africa.’ (Hondius 2014: 3).

Race in The Netherlands

The concept of race ‘has its origins in Europe and has been one of its main export’ during colonialism and slavery (Amponsah 2017: 166). Amponsah (2017) says that it is not only important to deconstruct the idea of Europe as ‘homogeneously white’ and ‘racially pure’, but that it is equally important to realise that the concept of race was created here (Wekker 2016; Amponsah 2017). Hondius (2014: 3 A) emphasises the prominent role of the Dutch colonial empire in the creation of race in Europe and ‘its direct and indirect contributions to the modern race theory and racism’. She adds that ‘Dutch merchants and their companies were among the Europeans who played a critical role in the development of white supremacy across the globe. In practice, through empire and the slave trade, as well as in theory, developing and disseminating racial ways of thinking.’ (Hondius 2014: 3 A). Coté (2009) argues that the construction of race is inherently colonial.

Today racial categorizations in The Netherlands are still based on scientific racism, which focuses on racialized phenotypes, such as skin tone (Slavery Heritage Guide 2018: 30). Scientific racism (also called race biology) is the pseudoscientific belief that there is empirical evidence which supports racialism, where there are inferior and superior races (Weitz 2015). Phenotypes, which are observable characteristics, were connected to race and used as evidence to support racist claims. Scientific racism employed studies such as anthropology to support hierarchical classification of human populations (Hondius 2014 A). Petrus Camper is one example of many Dutch anthropologists that stood behind scientific racism (Slavery Heritage Guide 2018). After World War II, scientific racism was denounced, acknowledging that there are no biological distinctions to be made between humans and that race is a ‘myth’, a social construct (Weitz 2015). Although denounced, scientific racism was

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4 Camper’s work (on physiognomy and the ‘facial angle’) was used as the basis for scientific racism (Slavery Heritage Guide 2018: 30). In 1758, he dissected an eleven-year-old Angolan boy in the lecture theater of ‘De Waag’ on the Nieuwmarkt, Amsterdam (ibid.: 2018:30). In the years that followed he dissected three more black people publicly.
used to justify apartheid in South Africa, long after WWII. Today, there are still advocates of scientific racism and white supremacy around.

Although racism has many definitions and there are many varieties of it, to define it I will address three important dimensions of it. Which are: ‘first is the doctrine, ideology, or idea of racism; second is the attitude, regards, perception, and assumptions of racism; and third, is the behaviour, actions, deeds, and practice of racism’ (Hondius 2014: 36 A). The philosopher Tzvetan Todorov distinguishes two meanings of racism, one of which he proposes to call racialism. ‘Racism can be a matter of behaviour, a manifestation of hatred of contempt for individuals who have well-defined physical characteristics different from our own; racism can also be a matter of ideology, a doctrine concerning human races: that he calls racialism’ (Hondius 2014: 36 A). He gives an example ‘racism that is rooted in racialism produces particularly catastrophic results: this is precisely the case of Nazism’ (ibid.: 36 A). When I refer to racism, I refer to the behavioural aspects on micro level as well as the doctrine (systemic racism). ‘Racism is about power and not about prejudice’ (Hage 1998: 33).

Although the terminology of ‘race’ ‘had become ordinary and widely used both in public life and in academic research before the Nazi rise to power’ (Hondius 2014: 16 A), after the second world war the word ‘race’ was avoided because of the ‘association with Nazi Germany’s racial policy’ (ibid.: 39 A). In North-West Europe the terms ‘race’ and ‘races’ ‘are avoided in intellectual and public policy discourse, to be replaced by “ethnicity”, “minority”, and “culture”’ (ibid.: 39 A).

In The Netherlands white people were and are still addressed as blanken which is a contested term by some, for it meaning pure. Those who disagree with the use of blanken prefer the use of wit, which translates to white. Wit, white European, is what the typical Dutch person is expected to look like within the Dutch white imaginary (Hage 1998). I say imaginary to reference Hage’s (1998) ideas regarding the construction of white fantasies in order to create/sustain a white nation.

People of African descent in The Netherlands were called neger in Dutch, which is similar to the English word negro. Due to its connotations, Dutch people currently call black people zwart (black) or donker (dark). I have found that there are many more words than

5 More words which I found that refer to black in The Netherlands are: gekleurd, gemengd, buitenlands, mixed, gemixed, met een kleurtje, getint, licht getint, bruin, exotisch, anders.
these in Dutch to identify black people. Hondius (2014: 17 A) states that the word * neger* is also part of the Dutch verb * negeren*, meaning to both ‘treat (someone) like a negro’ [and] from the nineteenth century onwards [...] “to act as if someone does not exist” (Hondius 2014: 17 A). Hondius (2014 A) finds the definition of the word * negeren* telling, it reflects historical attitudes of denying and/or ignoring black people within the Dutch context.

Currently there is a heated dispute on the much-debated Dutch traditional character, *Zwarte Piet*, which literally translates to Black Pete, the dispute is about whether or not it is racist (Slavery Heritage Guide 2018: 22). Black Pete is a fictional character that is said to embody the Dutch colonial legacy, as argued by black activist groups (Wekker 2017; de Jong 2018; Slavery Heritage Guide 2018). The character has Afro hair, painted black skin, big red lips and sometimes mimics a Surinamese accent (Weiner 2014: 6). Traditionally Black Pete is played by white Dutch persons. The activist group KOZP (Kick out zwarte piet) asks the Dutch government to recognise the colonial history of the character and change its ‘racist appearance’, calling it a Dutch interpretation of *blackface*, which was an American theatrical tradition in which white people painted their faces black and acted out ‘black’ caricatures (Weiner 2014; de Jong 2018).

**Theoretical Framework**

In the United States black-white biracial identity has often been studied by the discipline of psychology as an identity crisis. I will look at this identity from an anthropological perspective while recognising psychological aspects (Gillem, Cohn,& Thorne 2001; Gilbert 2005; Gibbs 2013). Dealing with racism every day can cause people of colour psychological damage, which has been demonstrated by many academics (Bryant-Davis & Ocampo 2005; Franklin, Boyd-Franklin, & Kelly 2006; Lowe, Okubo & Reilly 2012). Out of twenty-three interlocutors, five admit to have suffered psychologically because of racism. All interlocutors have experienced *everyday racism* in The Netherlands, which made them realise they were different, not white (Essed 1991). Everyday racism concerns the behavioural aspect of racism, taking place in the interactional order and materialises itself in the form of microaggressions (Essed 1991). Microaggression is a term used for brief everyday encounters with behavioural or verbal indignities, both intentional or unintentional, which communicate negative prejudice towards a group (Sue 2010).
Interlocutors experienced microaggressions through comments such as ‘you are pretty for a black girl’ or ‘you have that diploma really? you?’, these making clear that 1) people with black heritage are less attractive and 2) that it is uncommon for people of colour to be educated, both comments expressing ‘amazement’. An example of a racist microaggression, which is/was experienced by all interlocutors, is the well-known touching of their afro hair without asking permission. This gesture is contested due to the history of exoticising and bestializing black people (Hondius 2014 A). Wekker (2016) argues that in The Netherlands, humour can also be used as a microaggression. Further experiences of microaggressions will be given throughout the thesis. Stereotypes regarding black people such as, black being ugly, stupid, bad and so on, is something all interlocutors faced and have had to deal with (Blok 1998). On the other hand, some black people accuse biracial people of thinking they are ‘better’ than them because of their lighter complexion, as interlocutors explain. Biracial people also deal with colourism, coming from both black and white people. Colourism upholds hierarchies in skin colour, favouring lighter skin to darker skin, making biracial people ‘superior’ to other black people because of their white parent/lighter skin. Colourism, stems from racism (Hunter 2002). As both racism and colourism are forms of othering, they may both have negative effects. Colourism is exercised mostly in black communities because they are more sensitive to variations in skin tones due to historical background (addressed in chapter one) (Brunsma & Rockquemore 2001: 241). How biracial people handle situations in which they were ‘othered’ is what I will discuss in the thesis. Being *othered* is a process where people are made to feel different from the perceived norm, which more often than not has a negative influence on the lives of individuals (Eriksen 2015).

As argued, racism and colourism are forms of othering. Sanchez-Hucles (1999) argues that racism causes psychological stress. Because racism takes place every day in the lives of minorities in The Netherlands, through *everyday racism*, minorities have found ways to cope with it (Essed 1991; Essed & Hondius 2004). I will show that biracial people do not only experience racism but also colourism.

I will talk about how race is *ascribed* and how it can be *achieved* through *cultural capital* (Hage 1998; Eriksen 2015). What race biracial people are assigned to, has to do with the context they are in: in a black majority they are perceived as more white, and in a white

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6 Stereotypes are generalisations made about a particular category of people, encouraging prejudice (Judd & Park 1993).
majority as primarily black. Biracial individuals have different interpretations of their racialized identities depending on their appearance and on the context, they inhabit (Brunsma & Rockquemore 2011). I will argue that identity is fluid and although race is ascribed, biracial individuals continue to have agency (Eriksen 2015).

To analyse identity I use an intersectional lens, intersectionality is ‘the complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect, especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups’ (Crenshaw 1990). I use an intersectional approach throughout the thesis and will elaborate on it in chapter one. I use critical race theory to question and resist the normalisation of white supremacy, colonial thinking and other forms of oppression. My thesis is about how black-white biracial people search for belonging between black and white and how they negotiate their identities in The Netherlands. I define belonging as the human need to be accepted in a group.

Relevance
I found that to express racial realities in The Netherlands, biracial people mainly use english words. Apparently, they do not possess these words in Dutch, which might indicate that in The Netherlands there is a lack of research regarding race. In my research I have not found examples of academic research regarding black-white biracial people in The Netherlands. Therefore, my research is relevant to gain more insight in how race is experienced and expressed in The Netherlands. I contend that biraciality will become an increasingly important topic within the context of current and future debates on Dutch identity. Today globalisation and multiculturalism are a reality in The Netherlands, meaning that questions regarding race and belonging will become more prominent. My thesis brings the stories of people that are not black or white, but both.

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7 Definition given by Crenshaw at an event I attended on the 8th of June 2019.
Chapter outline

This master thesis has three chapters that are structured in the following way.

In the first chapter, I give a brief history on black-white biraciality, I compare The Netherlands to the United States and South Africa to try and show the particularities of the Dutch context, how it is similar but different. I show why this history and the meaning of emic words, used to identify biracial people, are important to understand the current lived experiences of biracial people here. I then narrow it down to interracial relationships in The Netherlands. The second half of this chapter is about identity formation. Here I look at how biracial people create their social and racial identities in regards to their racialized bodies and environment. With ethnography, I show which words interlocutors choose to identify themselves and how this feels.

In the second chapter, I speak about specific moments in the interlocutors’ lives that led them to feel, understand that they are different from racial norms. I start from childhood, going through adolescence to end up with adulthood. I explain that biracial people experience racism and colourism, which leads to them being excluded by both black and white groups. I then explain how they cope with being othered and partial belonging. This is followed by illustrations of how they claim their biracial identity. Showing the agency and beauty of having both worlds.

In the third and final chapter, I argue that although interracial relationships have the allure of the solution to racial issues, in some cases they recreate colonial power dynamics between black and white people. I use Fanon (1952) to illustrate what can go wrong in black-white relationships, using his concept internalized racism. This chapter ends with a few examples of how biracial people are affected by systemic racism and how this affects their sense of belonging. Each chapter has a conclusion to it and introduces the next. All chapters and their conclusions lead to the thesis conclusion.
Chapter 1 - Biracial identity in The Netherlands

Words and historical context

1898
Mulat: *Mulat* m. (-ten), persoon die geboren is uit een blanken⁸ man en een negerin of uit eene blanke vrouw en een neger⁹; (ook) persoon geproten uit een mulat en een blanke. *MULATTIN*, v. (-nen). Van Dale, Groot Woordenboek der Nederlandsche taal.₁⁰ ₁¹

2017
- Mulat: *halfbloed met een gemengde zwarte en blanke afstamming*. Algemeen Nederlands Woordenboek.₁²
- Mulat: *Nakomeling van een zwarte en blanke ouder*. Inmiddels ervaren veel mensen deze term als verouderd en denigrerend. Zij gebruiken dan het minder specifieke woord *mix*, om kinderen van ouders met verschillende etnische achtergrond mee aan te duiden. Lexicon van de multiculturele samenleving.₁³

In this chapter I explain emic words regarding biraciality in The Netherlands to better understand the history and racial categorizations of biracial people here. It must be said that words are dynamic and context dependent. Secondly, I explain how categorizations affect social identity and how my interlocutors define themselves using ethnography.

In The Netherlands there are a few emic words to identify black-white biracial people, the most common are *mulat* and *halfbloed* (Voorn 2017). In the above, I have presented definitions of the term ‘mulat’ in standard Dutch dictionaries. The Dutch word ‘halfbloed’ can be best translated to the English term half-caste, which has roughly the same connotation.

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⁸ *Blanken* is a Dutch word for white persons which is nowadays contested by activists in the Netherlands for its connotation regarding white superiority, because the word in Dutch can also mean pure.
⁹ Neger and negerin are traditional Dutch terms for black people, which are currently considered derogatory and offensive.
₁¹ I chose non-academics definitions because I want to show the accessible definitions as used in daily life. I think these definitions are relevant to grasp how race is addressed in the public sphere. Translations are to be found in the appendix.
Although these synonyms date back to the Dutch period of colonialism and slavery (Bates, Martin, DeMaio & De La Puente 1995; Coté 2009; Jacobson 2016) they are still used today. These are racial classifications and many consider them offensive as the definition of the Dutch *mulat*, mulatto, exemplifies. A mulatto is the child of a black and white individual. The word originates “from the Spanish *mulatto*, which derives from the Latin *mulus* meaning bastard/mule” (Voorn 2017: 11) and can be traced back further to the Arabic word *muladi* derived from *Walad* (Forbes 1993). A mulat is the *hybrid* (Goldstein and Thacker 2011) offspring of a horse and donkey, the horse represents a white person and the donkey a black individual. This controversial metaphor highlights the uncomfortable historical racial position of black-white biracial people in The Netherlands and other Dutch-language regions (Keith & Herring 1991; Coté 2009; Goldstein & Thacker 2011; Gaither, Sommers, & Ambady 2013; Jacobson 2016; Noah 2016; Amponsah 2017). Being not yet a horse (white) and just above a donkey (black), biracial people were placed in between two (black and white) racial categorisations.

During my fieldwork I regularly came across the use of the word *halfbloed*, which literally means half blood, suggesting that a person can be half (part) of a race. On all accounts, the twenty-three interlocutors explained to me that to be addressed as a halfbloed one must be half white and half something else. By ‘something else’ they meant a non-white individual. It did not seem crucial to their definition what this non-white identity entailed, which arguably emphasises the importance of whiteness in regards to biraciality (Khanna 2011).

The term ‘halfbloed’, also used in the former Dutch Indies (Coté 2009), suggests that there is a *volbloed* (full blood). A volbloed (full blooded, thoroughbred) is a person, or concept, that is derived from the realm of racial singularity, which is based on the idea, the notion of racial purity (Higginbotham & Kopytoff 1988). European settlers used racial categorizations such as the Dutch halfbloed, the English *half-caste*, French *métis*, Spanish *mulatto* and so on, as a means to distinguish European whiteness (Stoler 2002c & Reynolds 2005, in: Coté 2009). Ideas regarding racial purity gained renewed interest in Europe during the Nazi era (for example: Aryan race theories).

Although much academic literature on race is published in The United States, the concept has its origins in Western Europe (Hondius 2014, Wekker 2016, Amponsah, 2017) and remains a
Race is a socio-political construct that classifies people into socially stratified categories based on arbitrary biological characteristics such as skin colour, hair and facial features (Tatum 2003, cited in Stone & Dolbin-MacNab 2017: 98). Racism stems from an ideology that deems white people as superior to non-white people, it manifests itself in negative behaviour against people with different physical appearances from oneself (Hondius 2014: 36 A). Racism is experienced mostly by people of colour although it affects everyone’s day-to-day existence (Brunsma & Rockquemore 2011: 237). Race also touches upon class and socio-economic positions (Hondius 2014 A). It can be argued that the American one-drop rule, scientific racism, Nazi race ideology, white nationalism and similar pseudo-scientific doctrines are all rooted in efforts to created and sustain illusions and practices of white supremacy.

During slavery in The United States, ‘white [male] slave owners often raped their black female slaves [leading to] the creation of mulatto children’ (Daniel 1996, cited in Khanna 2010: 98). The raping of non-white female enslaved persons by white colonials also occurred in the Dutch colonial empire, in the Caribbean, but also for instance in South Africa (Scully 1995; Posel 2001) and in Indonesia (Coté 2009). As Hondius (2014 A) states ‘female slaves could sometimes obtain freedom if they provided their masters with three or more children’, showing how sex could be used as a domination tool by of white slave masters, and highlighting the intersections between race, power and gender (Hondius 2014: 23 A). Descendants of white slave masters and enslaved black women were placed above other black people, perceived as more intelligent and beautiful. Although they were often still enslaved by their biological fathers, they were usually granted more privileges due to their partial whiteness. They were, often made into house slaves and therefore lived in marginally better conditions than field slaves (Herring & Keith 1991). During the era of trans-Atlantic slavery, it was also possible for descendants of white fathers and African women to be freed on an individual basis, this phenomenon is called manumission.

Biracial enslaved people were given higher social positions than their mothers or other enslaved black people being the (often unrecognised) bastard of their fathers or were

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14 Bastard is a term that refers to children born out of wedlock but is also specifically used for biracial people. Historically, biracial children were perceived as bastards because they could not be recognized by their white parents due to their race. Bastardy is defined as children born outside a marriage, and during the days of...
sold at the market at higher prices than other slaves due to their white ancestry (Herring & Keith 1991). According to Keith & Herring (1991) and Hunter (2002), biracial people continue to have more privileges than other black people today because of their lighter complexion: facing less discrimination and benefiting from more socio-economic advantages. Black-white biracial people benefit from light skinned privilege, which is comparable to white privilege (or white skin privilege), which are the societal privileges/benefits accorded to white people over non-white people due to their skin colour (McIntoch 1988). Light skinned privilege is the outcome of colourism (MTV Decoded 2019), a form of discrimination/prejudice based on skin tone, not be confused with racism, it being the outcome of it (Jones 1999). As said in the introduction, colourism upholds hierarchies in skin colour, favouring lighter skin to darker skin (Hunter 2002), making biracial people ‘superior’ to other black people because of their white parent/lighter skin. Colourism is exercised mostly in black communities because they are more sensitive to variations in skin tones due to this historical background (Brunsma & Rockquemore 2001:241).

Keith and Herring (1991: 765) explain that the civil rights movement played a role in reducing the distinction between black and biracial people but that as long as white people are the gatekeepers to work/education and express colour preferences, colourism will continue to affect the African American community.

In The Netherlands, I have noticed that it is more likely to see a light skinned biracial person on, for example billboards, than it is to see a darker skinned person on one. ‘Black people think that biracial people think that we are better than them’ a few of my interlocutors expressed. The African American community identifies biracial individuals as light skinned and see them as more privilege than they are, deeming biracial people closer to whiteness. The majority of white Americans, however, do not see the difference between a biracial person and a black person, classifying both as black (Brunsma & Rockquemore 2001: 241). Sometimes interlocutors of my research, are called bounty or oreo by other black people in The Netherlands. Both terms mean, black on the outside but white on the inside and feel as an accusation.

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The emergence of black-white biracial people in the United States caused ‘problems to the strict colour line separating black and white’ (Khanna 2010: 98). Black-white relationships were thus declared illegal. In the former Dutch colony South Africa, a strict colour line also existed, between the minority white population and on the other side, the majority black population and the coloured population. In South Africa racial segregation took the form of the apartheid regime (Posel 1991). Paul, an older Surinamese-Dutch man whom I spoke, told me that “apartheid is the best-known Dutch word”. Hondius (2014: 3 A) reinforces this statement by stating ‘the Dutch language gave rise to Afrikaans, and contributed the word Apartheid to global discourse’. Children of mixed ancestry in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Zambia, are to this day called coloured, a race-based classification for biracial people (Posel 2001).

The Dutch history of trans-Atlantic slavery and colonialism created a legacy of continued racial inequality which we can witness in the form of socio-economic and political power discrepancies between white and non-white people in The Netherlands and its former colonies (Van Welie 2008). Weiner (2014) criticises The Netherlands for social forgetting in regards to their colonial history, for teaching scientific racism in Dutch Primary schools and for their racial neoliberalism. Weiner (2014) argues that ‘the Dutch have long engaged in the social forgetting of slavery even as race served as an organizing principle during centuries of colonial domination of the Dutch West Indies and Suriname’ (Weiner 2014: 1).

Van Welie (2008) argues that the VOC-mentality16 is glorified in The Netherlands. He adds that the Dutch government still has to apologise for its role during slavery and colonialism, and partially denies its legacy. Or, as Weiner (2012: 1) states:

‘While the Dutch have recently begun to address their history of enslavement, they have yet to sufficiently address how the discursive legacies of slavery continue to impact the lives of Afro-Dutch descendants of enslaved Africans and White Dutch in The Netherlands today’ (Weiner 2012: 1).

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15 The term coloured is more complicated for it is used for a variety of people with a multi-ethnic background. For example, the term includes people with Asian descent, such as Indian and Malay.

16 VOC means Dutch East India Company. Here referring to the company’s practices in slavery, colonialism and monopoly on violence.
In ‘North-West Europe the terms ‘race’ and ‘races’ are avoided in intellectual and public policy discourse, to be replaced by ‘ethnicity’, ‘minority’ and ‘culture’ (Hondius 2014: 39 A). Hondius (2014 A) states that this avoidance, particularly in The Netherlands and Germany, has to do with the association between race and Nazi Germany’s racial policy. After WWII, Western Europe started calling itself anti-racist and post-racial (ibid.). It can be argued that colour-blind ideology in The Netherlands is a post-WWII result. Colour-blindness is the denial of racial inequalities and belief of being ‘beyond’ race, which can be expressed by sentences such as “I do not see race” (Rockquemore, Kerry & Arend 2002).

It can be argued that the use of words such as halfbloed and volbloed, as racial categories, are a Dutch analogy of the American one-drop rule. The latter is an ideology based on ‘the fear that interracial relationships may ‘taint’ the purity of the white race’ (Khanna 2010: 98). This informal rule is a result of white supremacist ideology and categorised anyone with a ‘drop’ of black blood as ‘black’ (David 1991, cited in Khanna 2010: 96). It was intended to prohibit race mixing and led to legal constructs such as the Jim Crow segregation in the Southern United States (ibid.: 98). Once ‘contaminated’ by blackness it was seen as impossible to become white again, which reveals the extent to which whiteness had to be protected.

As said before racist ideologies made a come back in Western Europe during the Nazi era which influenced perceptions on race in The Netherlands (Grant 2006). Grant was a mixed-race Guyanese officer who fought during World War II and recalls the contemporary racial attitudes while captured in The Netherlands. His book commemorates airmen, particularly those from the West Indies and West Africa who died fighting against a racist Nazi regime. Grant addressed the duality he faced fighting against Nazism yet simultaneously being subjected to racism by Britain. This dilemma is what Du Bois (2015) speaks off in his double consciousness. Double consciousness exemplifies the two-ness and internal conflict African Americans face, being both Black and American (Bruce 1992). These ‘dual personalities were not just different from each other but were inevitably in opposition’ (Bruce 1992: 304). Du Bois’ concept questions how African Americans reconcile being both black and knowing the racial dispositions this entailed whilst embracing the American part of their identity that oppressed them. Paul’s father fought for The Netherlands while Suriname was still a Dutch colony, which to me is a good example of how double consciousness can also take place here. Paul’s father was one of the many non-white soldiers that fought in The
Netherlands during WWII. In WWII there were also soldiers from Morocco, the Dutch Antilles and Turkey (van den Oord 2004). In WWI as well, many non-white soldiers from Europe’s colonies fought on the side of the allied forces (Dendoven & Chielens 2008). The presence of black soldiers in The Netherlands leads us to post-WWII interracial relationships in Limburg.

**Interracial relationships in The Netherlands**

In Limburg, there is a less known history of African American soldiers who had biracial children with Dutch women after the victory of World War Two (Kirkels 2017). Kirkels collected the stories of these children (now elderly) and illustrated their struggles growing up in majority white catholic neighbourhoods while having inherited brown skin from their fathers. Brown (1990: 319) states that ‘black-white biracial people belong to both [races] while simultaneously not fully belonging to either’ thus finding themselves in an indeterminate space. Grant (2006) says that during his captivity in Germany the SS-soldiers could not classify him racially thus calling his race indeterminate. Unlike the United States and South Africa, The Netherlands does not legally categorise individuals on the basis of race.

Although The Netherlands does not legally classify people by race, the agencies responsible for the collection of socioeconomic data and national accounts however do use criteria to classify people on the basis of ethnic background. One can look at the issue in The Netherlands on three levels, the everyday usage meaning the language and the concepts people use in daily encounters, for example ethnic profiling by the police. Secondly there is the legal domain which does not recognise race-based categories. Thirdly however, the Dutch government uses quasi formal classifications, such as niet-westerse allochtoon\(^\text{17}\) and allochtoon (Yanow, Dvora & Van der Haar 2013).

As implied before, there is long history of interracial relationships in The Netherlands and its former colonies, as exemplified by Indonesian-Dutch and coloured people (Coté 2009). In 2006, 15.52 percent of marriages in the Netherlands were interracial (Schuh 2008 in Amponsah 2017: 166). Half of these marriages ‘consisted of marriages between one spouse

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\(^{17}\) *Niet-westerse allochtoon* is a Dutch classification for people that do not belong to The Netherlands and are non-white. Whereas *allochtoon* is also a way of classifying outsiders but can include non-Dutch white people.
from The Netherlands and a spouse from one of Holland’s former colonies’ (Schuh 2008, cited in Amponsah 2017: 166).

Although The Netherlands is considered beyond race, post-racial, Essed’s work *Everyday Racism* proves otherwise (Essed 1991; Essed & Hoving 2014; Hondius 2014 A). She explains how racist ideology from the Dutch colonial era continues to have lingering effects on the daily experiences of people of colour in The Netherlands. Essed explains that racism does not only take place on an institutional level but also in mundane interactions. Interlocutors experience everyday racism, being treated as different.

These experiences can be related to another Dutch definition which described black-white biracial people as not *belonging* to the white race,\(^\text{18}\) a bastard and a *gemengd mens* (meaning mixed person). Biracial persons are often seen as deviations from the norm. Pointing to the sense of *abnormality* regarding biracial people and the inability for them to belong within whiteness (Erikson 2015). The perception of it being abnormal can be explained by the history which was elaborated earlier. Biracial persons still feel treated as being different, in spite of there being more biracial people due to globalisation, migration and more efficient travel (Erikson 2015). How they identify themselves and how social identity functions will be addressed in the next section.

**Identity, fluidity and intersectionality**

‘While biracial identity development overlaps with racial identity development, it is unique and complex since biracial individuals often incorporate two or more distinct heritages into one identity’ (Root 1990, cited in Stone & Dolbin-MacNab 2017: 98).

Identity is a broad topic. In this thesis I will only be addressing social identity, how people see themselves and how others see them. Social identity will help us understand how social interactions affect and create racial identities. Jenkins (2000: 7) argues that social identification is the product of both ‘internal and external moments of the dialectic identification’. Internal-external dialectic means that how we identify ourselves is connected to how others identify us, our interactions with others forming who we are. External interactions impact our internal definitions of self. The identities of interlocutors are the

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outcome of both how others perceive them and how they, as a consequence, came to perceive themselves.

Identity is fluid, ever-evolving and intersectional concept (Ochs & Capps 1996; Rockquemore, Kerry & Arend 2002; Cho, Crenshaw & McCall 2013; Gaither, Sommers & Ambady 2013). Someone can be multiple things at the same time, such as woman, biracial, lesbian, mother, daughter, doctor, client, pianist, Amsterdamer, Dutch, and so on. Different elements interplay when forming identity such as gender, class, ethnicity, location and age (Erikson 2015: 80). We are ‘a combination of partial selves which together form our identity’ (Ochs & Capps 1996: 22). We are our narratives (ibid.: 22). What happens to us becoming a part of who we are, such as aging, accidents, losing someone dear, moving and so on. We are our experiences. I used intersectionality to look at how the different parts of someone’s identity, such as class and gender, influence their experiences in The Netherlands.

Biraciality is only one part of biracial people’s identity, it is a racial classification. Jenkins (2000) explains that classification is a human need to understand and manage the world around us. We classify ourselves and others, this process is called social identification, which is ‘dependent on us knowing who we are in regards to others’ (Jenkins 2000: 8). Who we are has to do with similarity and difference (ibid.: 8). Humans experience the world from their perspective and compare others to themselves, seeing who is similar and different from them (ibid.: 8). We create our identity in relation to others, the other is essential in creating the self. As James Baldwin said in regards to race, white people created black people to be white (Peck & Baldwin 2007). I argue that similarity and difference mechanisms decide who is black and white in a particular context, biracial people being black in The Netherlands contrasting white Dutch people, and are whiter in contrast to darker skinned people of African-descent. Identification in itself is a form of classification (Jenkins 2000).

Identity can be used as a political tool; this practice is called identity politics. Identity politics can be used as an intersectional tool to create awareness for various people’s experiences regarding external categorisations. It can be a tool to confront institutional and social inequality or to create community (Crenshaw 1990).

In spite of identity being fluid, some physical traits may stay the same for a lifetime such as race, disability and gender. A problem occurs when our identify is fixated/classified by others as being only one thing, such as race. This takes away the fluidity of someone’s
identity and restricts them. Race classifies people into being only one thing, their race, removing the other aspects of their identity, race becoming the singular fact about them. Race is a form of categorization where individuals are classified depending on their physical appearance, and racism attributes stereotypes to groups that have been racially classified.

Jenkins (2000) explains that there are power processes at hand when creating classifications, such as group categorizations. Power/authority, such as the state, categorizes people regardless of their personal self-identifications. ‘We know who we are because “[…] others tell us’ (Jenkins 2000: 11). When an institution such as the state, tell us who we are this influences us far more than when individuals do. Systemic racism is a system that racially classifies individuals, which leads to people living in that system to treat you a certain way and which causes you to see yourself as such. Racial classifications have to do with power, people see themselves as biracial because they are treated a certain way and not because they want or choose to be. Biracial individuals are made biracial by a system that upholds race and not because they choose to be. Although people have agency, we cannot escape the power structures in place that tell us who we are. An example is: we are not female because we want to be, we are because others tell us what female bodies should look like and we might recognise ourselves in the definitions, we are female because and in how others treat us, because others tell us we are. We can choose to not identify as female but as long as others tell us we are our agency is limited. This is, by analogy, a similar case for biracial people.

‘When developing identity, racial-ethnic minorities must form a personal identity and a racial-ethnic identity in order to form a complete self-identity’ (Phinney and Chavira 1995 cited in Stone & Dolbin-MacNab 2017: 98). Keeping in mind that their racial identity is influenced by ‘class, culture, gender, parental biological characteristics (e.g. skin colour, hair texture), and the individual's physical features’ (Stone & Dolbin-MacNab 2017: 98).

Black-white biracial individuals have a personal identity (internal) and a racial identity (external and internal), both forming their social identity. They have two identities which together form one.

19 State racism, systemic racism and the treatment of biracial persons are distinct issues. Apartheid (South Africa), Hutu and Tutsi labels (Rwanda, Burundi), for example, are forms of State racism. The one-drop rule and segregation in the US are forms of systemic racism. The treatment of coloured persons in South Africa was possibly an example of racism, that was organised at the level of the state, was systemic and was specifically directed at biracial people.
Levels of categorization

Jenkins (2000: 10) explains that there are three levels of social identification. Firstly, the individual order, ‘the world of embodied individuals and ‘what-goes-on-in-their-heads’’ (ibid.: 10). Secondly, the interactional order, ‘the world of co-presence and relationships between embodied individuals, of what-goes-on-between-people’ (ibid.: 10). And thirdly the institutional order, ‘the world of patterned, organized and symbolically-templated ‘ways-of-doing-things’’ (ibid.: 10). These levels are constantly interacting and are important in understanding how categorization influences self-image.

Categorization takes place on each level.

Race is a categorization that takes place on each of the above-cited three levels and impacts every aspect of one's experiences. Othering is never just a matter of classification. It has to do with politics and power, as said before (Jenkins 2000). Race is a ‘powerful collective identification’ (Jenkins 2000: 20). There are widely-shared-categorizations such as race, whereby racism attributes certain characteristics to certain groups. Who made the classifications? Who decided who is white and who is not? ‘Who shapes the public image? Who is authorized to make decisions which count, and [...] make those decisions count in the social construction of self-image and public image, and their coming together in social identity?’ (Jenkins 2000: 13). These questions are answered by power, the institutional level, the systems of power in place that determine who is who in The Netherlands and that subjects its citizens to these categorizations which have impacts on people’s lives. As Jenkins (2000: 12) says ‘processes of identification [...] have material consequences’ and ‘identity is produced and reproduced by individuals interacting with institutionalized contexts’ (Jenkins 2000: 14).

How we are categorized influences our experiences with the world around us, some people are associated with positive attributes due to their appearance whereas others are associated with negative attributes each affecting individuals’ realities. To conclude, Cooley (1902, cited in Khanna 2010) argues that ‘individuals imagine how they appear to others’ because ‘self-concepts are formed as a reflection of responses and evaluations of others in the environment’ (Khanna 2010: 101). He argues that we imagine how others judge us on our appearance and create a self based on this. ‘Individuals come to see themselves as they
perceive others to see them. Their self and identity are formed, at least in part, by this reflective process.’ (Khanna 2010: 101). Although ‘individuals do have some control over how they are perceived in the interactional order, their classification by others is always moot’ (Goffman 1983, cited in Jenkins 2000: 8). As Rose, an interlocutor, says “I’m black, I’m brown because that is how the world sees me.”

In The Netherlands these three levels are also at play. As said before there is no officially racial categorization (census) of biracial people in the country but racial categorizations do occur on an institutional level. Essed’s concept everyday racism takes place in the interactional order. Daily experiences are ‘perhaps the most important contribution of social categorization’ (Jenkins 2000: 22). Certain behaviours produce and reproduce social categorizations, putting people ‘in their place’.

Being classified, categorized, labelled can be met with resistance (Jenkins 2000: 9). Biracial people may refuse racial labels such as black, white or biracial and may choose to not identify with racial categorisation at all. Or a group of categorized people may internalize their given identification and call themselves whichever label they were given (Jenkins 2000).

Race, appearance and identity

Brunsma and Rockquemore (2001) explain the complex relationship between appearance and identity when it comes to biracial individuals’ self-identification and explain how most experience that the world defines or perceives them as black, which I have also found in my research. Black-white biracial people should theoretically be able to claim whiteness equally but this category is denied to them by broader white Dutch opinion. Brown (1990), Brunsma & Rockquemore (2011) argue that racial appearances have an effect on how people choose their racial identity. Biracial individuals have different interpretations of their racialized bodies depending on their looks and on the context, they inhabit (Brunsma & Rockquemore 2011). A good example of this is what Melanta, an interlocutor, says: “Yes, I feel different from black people and white people, I notice this often. Because I ‘have a colour in The Netherlands’. I count as black here, so when I talk about myself it is easier to identify as black. But honestly I don’t feel part of either group.”
Racial identification is thus the outcome of internal and external dialectics. Race is determined externally by others due to physical appearance, being that it can be seen (in most cases). Black-white biracial people share their ascribed brown bodies. Although race is ascribed this does not fully take away agency of the racialized. Biracial people can partially influence how they are viewed by their choices in self-representation. An example of agency can be seen in hair choices: straight hair is seen as white, whereas having locs\textsuperscript{20} is perceived as black, thus choosing to straighten curls makes you more white.

All the biracial people with whom I spoke, had naturally curly hair except for one. The African American civil rights movement started embracing black hair under their motto ‘Black is beautiful’, today there is an online trend called ‘the big chop’ which encourages black and brown people to cut off their chemically straightened hair and embrace their natural curls. All sixteen women whom I interviewed, were inspired by this movement. Aisha says that she had straightened hair before and that cutting it off was a step for her towards self-love. Jakhini is the only one who wore a weave\textsuperscript{21}. She said that she does not like her natural hair. There is still an idea that black hair is not beautiful: Sandy’s Ghanaian mother always wanted her daughters to “do something nice with their hair” and still needs convincing that Sandy’s natural hair is fine as it is. All seven men have natural hair, four of them having big afros. This sometimes gives them extra attention, which they do not always want. Kevin said that sometimes people comment on his hair not being ‘proper enough’ (\emph{niet netjes}). \emph{Netjes} being perceived as straight, non-kinky hair as explained to me.

Azul and Melanta have locs. They feel as though this represents a part of their African heritage so they wear it with pride. For them their hair is more than a aesthetical choice, they see it as a political statement. Black hair can thus be argued to be political or have political associations.\textsuperscript{22} All my interlocutors, male and female, feel that they are regularly exoticized\textsuperscript{23} due to their natural hair and skin colour (being ‘different’). Their hair, often being a topic of

\textsuperscript{20} Locs refer to dreadlocks, a hairstyle which is often associated with the Rastafari movement. It is better to say locs because ‘dread’ refers to something negative, ‘dreadful’.

\textsuperscript{21} Weave is cosmetic hair, often in the form of wigs.

\textsuperscript{22} Refusing the norm of ‘netjes’, proper hair, and instead embracing their natural curl patterns, can be seen as empowering and as a form of self-love, self-acceptance. Self-love can be political, such as radical self-love.

\textsuperscript{23} To be made ‘exotic’. Exoticism is a legacy of European colonialism, where the ‘other’ is sexualised and objectified (Forsdick 2001). Will be elaborated on in chapter three.
discussion. Everyone has an opinion on it and feels inclined to state that opinion, finding it beautiful, ugly or envy it.

Us, words and feelings

Out of the twenty-three people I spoke, all identify as biracial. Although they do not all use the same words, choosing a preference from the following variety: mixed, halfbloed, gemengd, bi-cultureel, donker, zwart, afro-surinamer, dubbelbloed, or mulat. Latiffah prefers saying “I have a parent from (...) and a parent from (...”). Sandy is the only one that would only say “I am Ghanaian”, she says this is because her mother found it very important that she saw herself as Ghanaian. All interlocutors, feel negative connotations around the words mulat and halfbloed, but only started thinking about this at later stages of their lives. Some do not take too much offence to it. Mulatto was ‘just’ how they were called growing up, and they know when people mean it negatively or not. When Aisha goes back to where she grew up, she knows that she will likely be called a mulat, but she places it within the context of her town.

Two people use ‘mulatje’, the word they grew up with. Adding ‘-tje’ is a diminutive suffix, a Dutch way of making things smaller, but it can also be an affectionate term. Usually, however, calling a grown-up ‘-tje’ adds a layer of infantilization. Negertje or mulatje illustrates the history of infantilization of black and brown people in Western Europe (Hondius 2014 A).

Most of my interlocutors were called halfbloed and five have started using the word ‘dubbelbloed’. Dubbelbloed literally means double blood, I spoke with the writer of the book Dubbelbloed (2017), Etchica Voorn, as part of my research. She explained that she is not the creator of the word, but that it was in use long before she started to use it. She learned it from her cousin, who said: “How so half blood? you are double blood” (Voorn 2017: 11).

I argue that using dubbelbloed is a way of choosing one's identity and creating a new term for oneself. I see it as a way of resisting being labeled as half and saying ‘I am not half (blood) but I am two worlds, two cultures coming together’. It is a way of embracing the two parts that make you (as will be further addressed in chapter two). Yet, not everyone I spoke to, feels comfortable with the term, saying that it still feels a bit strange, not liking the ‘blood’ part of it. It made them feel as though there were still two separate parts, that are not completely united, maybe even fighting against each other, in one body. Sandy uses
‘dubbelbloed’ but says that for her it does not really matter which word is used to define her, she remains the same regardless. Sandy said that being called halfbloed was sexy when she grew up. To her, it meant, at that time, that she was attractive.

As explained before, I went to two events, of which the title was *dubbelbloed*. Both events took place in Amsterdam and both times the event was sold out. Each time, Voorn was one of the speakers. I find the fact that both events were well-attended shows interest and the search for biracial people in finding out who they are. Biraciality seems to be a novel subject in The Netherlands, seemingly became more popular, known, after the publication of Voorn’s book, in 2017. This topic will probably continue to attract more interest by more people, as the number of biracial people in The Netherlands grows. The second event ‘Double blood & identity’, took place at a two-floor venue, which was packed with people that looked like me. A very special experience for me, as this does not happen very often. Iris, one of my interlocutors, was also there, she said she felt very emotional hearing Etchica Voorn speak, she said that she could recognize herself in each story Etchica had shared. The event felt as a coming together, a creation of a community, one that I did not know I was part of. Creating an ‘us’ that biracial people were a part of. When I met Paul, he said ‘us’ when he spoke to me, this was an ‘us’ that included me. Before these meetings and events, the word ‘us’ was usually a word that meant ‘us as white people’ or ‘us as black people’, these being exclusionary for biracial people (Hondius 2014 A).

Which made it a novel to hear of an ‘us’ which stood for ‘us as biracial people’. When Voorn spoke, she used this same ‘us’. This ‘us’ creates an *imaginary community* by biracial people and for biracial people (Anderson 2016). This imaginary becoming reality by attending such an event. At least six of my interlocutors, were at that event, others wanted to attend but could not, because it was sold out so quickly. Latiffah and Iris met each other there through me. It was nice for me to hear them talk, and to sense the warmth they felt in recognizing parts of themselves in each other. Voorn said to have been struggling with her identity her whole life, which sounded familiar to the interlocutors of my research. The community of ‘us’ of which Voorn speaks, contrasted with the sense of being ‘not white

24 The majority of the attendants at both events were black-white biracial people. Other attendants were assumably parents of, partners of, and other people interested in the topic.
25 The Dutch title of the event was ‘Dubbelbloed en identiteit’.
enough and not black enough” which affected all of them in their search for their identity. Voorn, has come to accept being biracial and being proud of it. She does not try to fit into black or whiteness anymore but is creating space for herself and people like her. She told me I should read her book, “read it, it’s about you.”

All interlocutors have said in one way or another that they feel like “a bridge” between black and white. They have the unique capacity/position to understanding both ‘races’. As they have access to both, they find it easy to empathise with members of both groups. This can be seen as an asset, having more cultural capital (chapter two). Rose said that she believes to be more understanding of white people than other black people, when it comes to white individuals not understanding race issues. This understanding arose as she had to explain her own reality to her white father and other white family members. Rose added that she can honestly say that she loves white people, because of her having white family members. She does not think ‘I love white people’, is something other black people would say as easily as she does, or mean it as she does, keeping in mind the history of colonialism.26

None of those to whom I spoke would say about themselves that they are white. None of them identify as white women or as white men. None enjoy it, when people ask them questions such as “do you feel more white or more black?” saying that this feels offensive, that they can not choose, being both.

I noticed that men said “I am black” easier than women did. This could be because they are more regularly perceived as black by their Dutch environments. Women felt more comfortable saying they are biracial. Saying “I am a black woman” is something they are not very comfortable with. My female interlocutors feel that they are not treated the same way as black women are, black women facing harsher discrimination than them in the Dutch context. Thus stating that they are black women, feels conflicting even if they might feel that way. Although some admitted to say it in particular contexts, when there are no other black women around. Sophia, who is very light skinned, sees herself as racially ambiguous. She prefers being called a person of colour, because she finds it more vague and this vagueness is what

26 I think she believes that because her having white family members, ‘should’ grant her ‘closer’ proximity to whiteness than black people that do not have white relatives. This is my assumption.
she feels racially. Sophia is even more hesitant than others to say that she is black, she feels ‘more’ white due to her appearance (elaborated on in chapter two).

Anecdotally, I found a YouTube series, called the Loving Generation, where American black-white biracial people discuss their experiences regarding their racial identity. After analysis of the series, I found that there appear to be similarities between the experiences of biracial people in The Netherlands and biracial people in the United States. Although I have no way of knowing whether the series is representative of all American black-white biracial people, I found that they expressed the same issues and dilemmas that biracial people face here. All struggling with their racialized identity, which it prohibits their fluidity.

What I find interesting about biraciality is that biracial peoples’ race is more fluid, their ascribed race is context dependent. As said before, they are perceived as black in a white majority, and as white in a black majority. Biracial people arguably have more racial fluidity than monoracial people. I argue that this affects my interlocutors’ sense and perception of race. All interlocutors, recognize and understand the sense, the feeling or awareness of having partial membership to both groups, yet not belonging to either. Strangers have often asked interlocutors if they were Brazilian, Ethiopian, part-Italian and so on, trying to guess their race. This shows, on the one hand, the racial fluidity or hybridity of biracial people, but on the other hand, it shows the unease others feel when they cannot immediately classify biracial peoples, according to their own racial hierarchies. Seemingly there is a ‘need’ to classify racially.

27 Online video channel.

28 Documentary series (on YouTube) where American black-white biracial people discuss their experiences. See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H9mj0ZC9UOc. (accessed 2/2/2019).
Conclusion

Although The Netherlands claims to be post-racial, its colonial past still influences how biracial people are racially categorized today, as exemplified by the use of words such as *halfbloed*. How biracial interlocutors identify is a combination of how they see themselves and how others see them. There are power structures in place that created and uphold the concept of race (systemic racism), this trickles down to the interactional level. Although interlocutors have agency in how they identify this is greatly affected by how others see them. They see themselves as biracial because others tell them they are. Interlocutors have been brought up with an awareness of their biraciality and experience their racial identity in everyday life. Because their skin colour is emphasised to them constantly, the fluidity of their identity is compromised. Biraciality is only one element of who they are but seems to take centre stage in the interactional order. How they experience, cope and claim their identity will be discussed in the following chapter.
Chapter 2 - Out of race

Realisation of difference

‘For racial-ethnic minorities, the process of developing a racial identity is an interactive and reflexive process that usually begins during adolescence with an awareness of race and racial group membership that is fostered through racial socialization from parents’ (Hughes et al. 2006; Williams and Smalls-Glover 2014, cited in Stone & Dolbin-MacNab 2017: 98).

This chapter is about biracial peoples’ road to self-acceptance and the obstacles they encountered in between. In this first section, I will address specific moments in the lives of interlocutors where they realised they were perceived as ‘different’. These moments will be exemplified by different moments in their lives (childhood, adolescence and adulthood). This will be followed by a second section, in which claiming and coping mechanisms are discussed.

Childhood

At a young age my interlocutors started experiencing being perceived as ‘different’ by those around them. All of them (with the exception of two) grew up in predominantly white neighbourhoods, where their skin colour did not go unnoticed, it being different from the white Dutch norm. The two that grew up in more multicultural areas were also perceived as different from black, their skin being lighter. Racism and colourism made all of them aware being different growing up and remains a part of their daily experiences. A few examples from people’s childhoods are: going to the market at the age of three and encountering a grown man shouting racial slurs at them for touching a piece of fruit only to have their white mother jump in to save them, being called the children of the negro in their hometown and no one knowing their actual names, being spat on while walking down the street, being sent out of class all the time because they were ‘inherently bad’, seeing their black parent being called Zwarte Piet by strangers in public, being called ugly continuously and being humiliated

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29 All interlocutors had a story about Zwarte Piet.
when saying who their mom is, to which a teacher reacted ‘‘your mom can’t be white, can’t you see you are black, stupid!’’.

All my interlocutors remember moments in their childhood where it was made clear to them that they were not white. Before these moments they were not aware of the concept of race, Paul says ‘‘I didn’t know colour until…’’. Their childhoods did not enjoy the bliss of not being confronted with race, as the examples points out.

As infants their white parents were asked if their child was adopted. Which brings us back to the viewed ‘abnormality’ of interracial relationships and biracial children (Eriksen 2015). Azul says that ‘‘people are still amazed at the fact that white people can make brown children too’’. Adoption and biraciality are historically linked, biracial children born from the union of black soldiers and white women after WWII were often put up for adoption. White Christian families pushed their daughters to give up their coloured children. This happened in countries such as the United Kingdom, Germany, The Netherlands and Belgium (Amatmoekrim 2018; Jones 2019; Zane 2019). Belgium recently apologized for kidnapping biracial children from Congo, Burundi and Rwanda (Gachanja 2019).

In Belgium and in The Netherlands these children were taken away from their parents because interracial relationships were discouraged by the catholic church, being a threat to their colonial enterprise, these children were seen as a blemish to the ‘white race’ (Gachanja 2019). The Belgian government was afraid the métis, term used for biracial people, would rebel against them as they did in the Red River Rebellion in Canada (ibid.:2019). The children were rarely adopted, never knowing their mothers or fathers, only knowing they were different (Amatmoekrim 2018; Jones 2019; Zane 2019). Germany wanted to get rid of their ‘brown babies’ so asked the United States to adopt them, believing they would fit in better there. After WWII, Germany was still dealing with Nazi ideologies, in which biracial people did not fit (Jones 2019).

Anique’s mother was rejected by her white family when she had her coloured daughter, so she moved to multicultural Amsterdam to find a better life. This was also the case for Paul’s mother who was disinherit by her mother’s family for marrying a Surinamese soldier. Both mothers chose their children over their family’s rejection. Anique and Paul are from an older generation of biracial people (50+). How their parents were treated with regards to their interracial relationships, differs from the experiences of the younger generation, which I interviewed. But there are similarities between both generations,
although there is not such an outspoken dismissal or threat of disininheritance today, the younger generations’ parents did sometimes get comments regarding their relationship choices.

Red’s father was called all the negative stereotypes black men endure by his Surinamese ex-wife, to discourage his wife-to-be from marrying him, telling her “you-know-how they are”. Sophia’s mothers’ siblings made racist jokes about her marrying a black man.

Thirteen people thought they were white growing up, unaware of their skin colour until confronted by it. Once their ‘realisation of difference’ started to settle in, my interlocutors were conflicted about their identity, ‘am I white or am I black? What am I?’”. Melanta recalls a boy from her class telling her: “You are brown! One part of you is black and the other is white!”. She went home confused and asked her mother “am I half? Is this true?”.

The questions my interlocutors had about their identity were turned towards their parents, but not all parents knew how to answer these questions. Some might say: ‘you are a mix of two cultures/the best of both worlds’, ‘you are my child’ or they might avoid the question completely ‘don’t worry about it’.

Six of my interlocutors said their parents talked to them about race whereas seventeen said their parents avoided the topic. Those whose parents did talk to them about race seem to have had an easier path to understanding their identity than those whose parents did not talk to them about it, having to figure it out alone. For racial socialization to go well, parents must share their information about ‘coping and navigating racial relationships’ with their children’ (Rollins and Hunter 2013 cited in Stone & Dolbin-MacNab 2017: 98). Paul believes that it was his responsibility as a parent to inform his children about race, as his father informed him, to make them weerbaar (emic word for strong).

Five people who were not able to talk about race with their parents, felt alone and isolated in their search for self. These five, wanted to be white because that was the only thing, they ‘knew’, not having a black parent or black relatives in their lives, blackness was seeming unattainable and unknown to them. Djata remembers sitting in the kids chair of his mother’s bicycle and asking her “how can I become white?”. He explains how he wanted to be white so terribly that he was willing to change his last name and do everything necessary to become white. One of my interlocutors changed her African last name to her Dutch
mother's maiden name, wanting everything black about her to disappear. She now regrets doing this but at the time, saw it as her only option, working entire summer periods as a teenager to pay for a name change. Another person remembers going to the bathroom, in her pre-teenage years, to try and bleach her skin with household products.

Twelve people wanted to be white between childhood and adolescence, of which five suffered psychologically due to their ‘inside whiteness’ not matching their physical appearance.

**Adolescence**

All of my interlocutors started to search for their black side and what this meant during their adolescence. Growing up in The Netherlands left them with limited representation of black people on television or in mainstream media (Essed & Trienekens 2008; Hondius 2014 B). Six out of seven men learned about blackness through American hip-hop. For them this was the first time seeing black men represented as something positive and ‘cool’. Before then, they had often only heard negative stereotypes regarding black masculinity. Learning about black culture through television often creates an incomplete image, mostly centred around African-American blackness. It can be argued that even though these biracial men were black in comparison to white Dutch people, they learned about blackness in a similar way to their white peers, as something foreign and far away. Something they had to look up and take an interest in, in order to learn more about. How these biracial men made up ‘blackness’ was arguably through the same western lens as their white peers.

Azul has a similar experience, she learned about a specific kind of blackness, also the ‘entertaining’, ‘globalised’, ‘American kind’. She remembers wanting to be “a white version of black”, she explained that she wanted to be Fergie from the Black-Eyed Peas or Christina Aguilera, “they were in fact white but they embodied blackness, and that was the kind of blackness I liked. They were a better version of black. I wanted to be like these people because they reminded me of my sister and my mother, like Anouk when she had gold teeth”. Even when she played with other children, “everyone wanted to be Maya from Moulin Rouge, no one wanted to be Lil Kim. Maya was super light skinned and had good hair”. In her adolescence Azul continues this trend, she gets locs because she saw it on white people in metal music videos.

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30 Music genre.
For the nine people who grew up without a black parent or contact with black people growing up, having only their single white mothers, everything about them was white, their neighbourhoods, their family, classmates etc., except their skin. Djata points out that although hip-hop gave him the pride he needed, it also reinforced toxic masculinity and harboured a cliché image of blackness. This African-American blackness could not fully answer his questions about his Ghanaian identity.

Growing up in a white majority often meant not having brown role models, “no one looked like me and this influenced how I saw yourself” Tess says. She felt blacker than she actually was for a long time, saying that the worst thing about her, was her skin, while growing up. When she was four, she realised that she did not look like her white mother which came as a shock. Her being different was a bad thing growing up and led to a range of racist experiences which remain traumatic. Not getting any answers about her black parent from her mother, she googled Zimbabwe. She had to use the internet to find out more about who she is. Which shows the distance between her and her black identity and the loneliness of her search.

I argue that Djata and Tess learned about their black side through a white gaze. Djata says that “in a white country you learn who you are in relation to whiteness, often in colonial terms.” Both he and Tess, were othered and had to look for answers through television and google, their questions answered by Western media. Now that Tess lives in Amsterdam, she realises that she is not as ‘dark’ as she once thought. She often bursts out in tears when going to events where biracial and black people speak about their experiences, she says its “healing”. And even when they do come to accept their blackness it seems to be conditional. As Djata explains:

“I accepted myself as black and gained pride from it. So, when my brother called me a ‘tata’, slang meaning white Dutch person, for liking liquorice or something else, it hurt. The belonging was conditional. Here came the fear of losing what gave me value, it introduced a right and a wrong way to express myself. I had to make sure my behaviour, tastes, interests, etc, didn’t stray too much from the 50-cent on TV or else I

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31 Toxic masculinity is a term used to criticize and question harmful forms of masculinity. Often use to criticize patriarchy, homophobic and misogynistic norms boys and men are taught.

32 White gaze is a metaphor for ‘seeing things through the eyes of white people’.

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was a ‘bounty’, you know. For me coming from a small town, living in a quiet white city, I often didn’t find myself in predominantly black spaces and sometimes when I did, I felt like I didn’t have enough blackness to be accepted as black, which was a bummer.”

Djata illustrates that there is a conditionality to biracial peoples’ belonging to blackness. Being called a bounty, oreo or tata feels hurtful because it makes people aware of them not being black ‘enough’, excluding them from claiming blackness completely. Bounty and oreo are slang for someone who is black on the outside but white on the inside and tata is slang for white Dutch, as Djata explained. Such words tell them they do not belong to blackness fully, that they are white inside, a faker, wannabe black person. Their blackness is certain and unquestioned when in white majorities, but this is not the case when they find themselves in black majorities, where they can be seen as light skinned.

Adulthood

All interlocutors share a variable of this trajectory: first being unaware of their skin colour, to being confronted by it, followed by searching for its meaning and then growing to accept/cope with it. The process of learning about and gradually ‘accepting’ their blackness and biracial identity in a white society is experienced as a complex process. All have said to have had a hard time trying to figure out their identity, the majority of which are still trying to figure it out. The final step of ‘self-acceptance’ is not one all have reached. Of course, how people express their self-acceptance varies, this will be talked about later in this chapter under ‘claiming’. Stone and Dolbin-MacNab (2017) explain that ‘questions about sameness and difference emerge as early as pre-school and elementary school (ages 4-9) (Tatum 2003), but are typically explored more during adolescence (ages 10-18) and solidified during emerging adulthood (ages 18-29) (Arnett 2014)’ (Stone & Dolbin-MacNab 2017). Because the majority of interlocutors, twenty out of twenty-three, have not yet reached Stone and Dolbin-MacNabs’ suggested end-of-adulthood age (twenty-nine), which could explain the fact that they have not yet fully accepted their biracial identity. Those that are above the age of twenty-nine, have accepted their identities. I noticed that people in their late twenties, have a higher level of self-acceptance in comparison to those in their early twenties.
Coping mechanisms

In this section I will show a few ways in which biracial people cope with microaggressions stemming from everyday racism and colourism. Coping is a concept I will use to address how people deal with being ascribed as different, as has been done by other scholars in regards to racism (R. Williams & Williams-Morris 2000; Thomas, Witherspoon & Speight 2008). Coping is a term used in psychology to address how people deal with different forms of stress (Pearlin & Schooler 1978).\textsuperscript{33} I find coping something that can be both positive or negative. To highlight the positive ways of coping I use claiming\textsuperscript{34} later on. I see both as ways of dealing with being othered. Claiming I believe is also a form of coping. Both coping and claiming, deal with ‘being ascribed a race’ and are intertwined. But I have tried to divide them into: 1) Coping as a more passive way of dealing with ascribed difference, and 2) claiming as a more interactive way of coping, where agency is central, focusing on achievable identity.

I made a space in between both which I call ‘negotiating between coping and claiming’. Here, interlocutors use one technique, to both cope and claim. In this third space, they cope and claim simultaneously, to negotiate their identities, being aware of the spaces they are in. In each section, coping, negotiating between coping and claiming, and claiming, I list techniques my interlocutors use.

I argue that the experiences of biracial people in The Netherlands are not exactly the same as those of black Dutch people here. Being both ‘black’ and ‘not really black’ at the same time, their experiences with race are influenced by both racism and colourism. As argued biracial people do not have a ‘complete’ racial belonging to either race, because their racial identity is more fluid. They are a minority within a black majority. This is what Crenshaw (1990) speaks of in regards to intersectionality, that it is important to be aware of the differences within a perceived group.

As Djata’s example, about conditional belonging illustrates above, blackness and whiteness can be perceived as a way of behaving. Things you do, what you like, what you wear and so on can be racially classified. And if you do not fit the image of blackness you are a tata and this works both ways. Aisha found it annoying that in situations where hip-hop music played,

\textsuperscript{33} The term sometimes has a negative connotation, for it can suggest psychological instability.

\textsuperscript{34} Claiming is a term I am introducing. I do not know if it having been used as such before by other academics.
white friends would assume that she would like it, or how some of her hobbies were seen as ‘too white’ for her. Ideas of what blackness and whiteness entail go further than physical appearances and are ideologically attributed to practices, behaviour and skills. You can do ‘white things’ and ‘black things’, both latching on to racial clichés which form stereotypes (such as white people being smart and black people having rhythm). Black and white are seen as opposites of each other (Hondius 2014 A), which makes it hard for biracial people to be both. Interlocutors are often asked: “What are you more? more black or more white?” To most, choosing one side over the other feels as though they would be denying a piece of themselves. Latiffah says she would never choose one or the other and hates that people ask her this, “why can’t I be both?”. But if she had to choose based on her experiences in The Netherlands it is plausible that she would answer: black.

Although black and white, interlocutors are more inclined to identify as black because of their experiences in The Netherlands. Brunsma and Rockquemore (2001) explain the complex relationship between appearance and identity when it comes to biracial individual’s self-identification and explain how most experience the world as black. Although they should theoretically be able to claim whiteness, by saying thing such as “I am white”, this category is denied to them by broader opinion. Brown (1990) and Brunsma & Rockquemore (2011) say that racial appearances have an effect on how people choose their racial identity.

Sophia’s appearance differs from most of the people I spoke to, she almost ‘passes’ as white, therefore choses terms such as ‘racially ambiguous’ to describe herself (chapter one). Showing that if you look more white, you can choose from another range of racial identifications categories. Being able to choose from categories which are not choosable for those with darker skin.

I do know of some biracial people that have chosen one race over the other. Deciding to be ‘only black’ or ‘only white’. But none of my interlocutors claim themselves monoracial, all see themselves as biracial.

The following are three techniques interlocutors use to cope with othering.

The first is the *colour-blind* approach. This is an ideology that avoids racial language/discourse, people who practice it are inclined to say things such as: ‘I do not see colour’ or ‘we live in a post-racial reality’ (Bonilla-Silva 2002). This ideology can be harmful in its tendency to disregard/silence lived experiences regarding racism. It can be practiced by all people, both white and black, but arguably for different reasons (ibid.: 2002). Colour-blind racism is a discourse more often used by white people (ibid.: 2002) to avoid race and ‘as a strategy to express racist ideas without mentioning race or colour’ (Bonilla-Silva 2006, cited in Amponsah 2017: 171). People of colour may use it to prove their loyalty to whiteness (Hage 1998; Ryan, Hunt, Weible, Peterson & Casas 2007) and as a way of assimilating, becoming ‘more’ white (Fanon 1952). Assimilation is erasing one’s culture and replacing it with that of another (Geldof 2013). It is a coping strategy enforced on and used by migrants living in Europe (ibid.: 2013), and is exactly what Amanda’s black mother did. She told her daughter that she burned her past to embrace everything Dutch, leaving behind who she was to become Dutch. Amanda sometimes wishes she could go back to believing in assimilation, to being colour-blind, because she finds being *woke* exhausting (*woke* is seen as the opposite of colour-blindness, wokeness will be explained in the claiming section). During her childhood, Amanda followed her mother's advice, doing everything to fit in, trying to be as white as possible and to not stand out. This was her way of coping before, but she did not see it as coping at the time, because it was who she was. Now she sees her wanting to assimilate as a way of surviving in the past. Today she is ‘woke’, aware of racism and not denying it any longer, she cannot imagine going back.

The second technique is, *fight or flight* 36, which in this case is the dilemma most interlocutors faced: whether to stay or leave The Netherlands. Twenty-two people have said they do not feel at home in The Netherlands and have not yet decided whether to stay here permanently or leave. Only one person is the exception, having decided to stay. Those who take leaving seriously, are quite frustrated about their experiences with racism in The Netherlands. Finding this an obstacle for them to feel at home here. Rose says that she stays here until she finds a “better option”. This will be further elaborated in chapter three.

36 Fight or flight is a response to stressful situations, where individuals choose between either: running away or staying (Bracha 2004).
The third and final coping technique is linked to the one before, it is the active search for places where they are “one with the crowd”. By this I mean the ‘need’ to look up, move and seek out places where they feel they can blend in. Melanta and Maringo admit that they move and travel to places that are more racially diverse because they love diversity. It is appealing to them to be in places where they do not stand out. Where they can disappear in the crowd, Maringo has very fond memories of Brazil. Melanta says that she seeks spaces that have many different kinds of people. Feeling more at home in multicultural spaces. Many interlocutors do this by going to events where they feel represented in the crowd or on stage. Many move to Dutch cities from the countryside because they feel more at home and safe there, in comparison to white areas where they felt and were the only ones.

**Negotiating between coping and claiming**

In this category, I give examples in which interlocutors are aware of their ascribed identity and start to partially claim it, but have not yet claimed their identities fully. In this section they still adapt themselves to their black and white surroundings.

Racial identification is the combination of *achieved* and *ascribed* (Erikson 2015:64). Ascribed, meaning given/identified by others, one cannot choose one’s racial appearance and achieved, meaning something that can be gained, because whiteness and blackness can be acquired (in language, habits etc.) (Hage 1998). During their childhoods, biracial individuals learn and acquire ‘blackness’ and ‘whiteness’ from their parents, they accumulate *cultural capital* (Erel 2010; Bourdieu 1977, cited in Eriksen 2015). Cultural capital refers to the social assets of a person, such as education, the way they dress etc., that enhances their social mobility (Bourdieu 1977, cited in Eriksen 2015). A person can gain cultural capital by gaining cultural knowledge, which gives them more status and power. Bourdieu (1977, cited in Eriksen 2015) explains his concept of culturally conditioned agency, which he terms ‘*habitus*’. Habitus is ‘enduring, learned, embodied dispositions for action’ (Bourdieu 1997, cited in Eriksen 2016: 115). Bourdieu argues that habitus is internalized in the bodies and minds of humans, it is their embodied culture which can be seen in skills, habits and dispositions. I argue that biracial people have more embodied cultural capital than monoracial individuals, because they have been socialised by two sets of habitus, black and white. Each one of the two racially different parents, gave them access to acquire two sets of habitus.
Which can be seen as a privilege, an advantage, a double (as the word double blood), which monoracial children do not have.\textsuperscript{37}

Although their racial identity is more fluid than that of monoracial people, their appearance is racially fixed by observers. How other people see us can differ from how we see ourselves (Jenkins 2000; Eriksen 2015). Biracial people can identify as white internally but when their bodies appear to be non-white, it is unlikely that their claim will be accepted. The power of external classifications may limit someone’s inner identification. Biracial people can only gain ‘credibility’ in blackness and whiteness if they act accordingly. If Djata and others listen to the right music, eat the right foods, use the right words they might have a shot at being accepted as black. Until then they are a bounty and have something to prove. When it comes to blackness biracial individuals have a chance at acceptance, whiteness is something that is more beyond their reach in The Netherlands. Individuals, such as Djata, feel that their blackness and whiteness have to be proven occasionally, due to their partial acceptance to both groups. In majority black spaces they tend to stand out as ‘typically white’ to a black majority, and in white majorities they are ‘typically black’. Both groups are gatekeepers, choosing whom may be included or excluded. Because interlocutors are not black or white, they tend to behave ‘more’ black or ‘more’ white dependent on the setting they are in, which brings us to the first technique: code-switching.

I argue that biracial interlocutors use their cultural capital when code-switching. Four biracial women said they code-switch. Code-switching is a term used in linguistics for bilingual speakers that alternates between two languages or more (Auer 2013). Code-switching behaviours vary depending on the users’ social positions, such as class and race (Heller 1995). Language\textsuperscript{38} can carry a racial dimension, one can speak ‘white’ or ‘black’. People alter their language (the way they speak or accent) to belong, be more accepted in a certain group (Auer 2013). Code-switching is used by people of colour to discuss their alternating between their white and black selves, adapting their behaviours to their surroundings while being aware of what is expected (Huffpost 2018). For African-Americans, the technique has been used as a survival strategy in navigating white spaces (ibid.: 2018).

\textsuperscript{37} It could of course also be seen as a disadvantage during childhood, because as interlocutors said, all struggled with finding out who they are exactly because of having two cultures. I think that once they come to claim their identities fully then it can be an advantage.

\textsuperscript{38} I am referring to spoken language.
Iris says: “You have white and black codes, each having their own norms you must abide by. When I find myself in a community where there are many black people, I switch to those codes, becoming ‘black Iris’. When I’m in a white community I use other codes. I act calmer. [...] I am very aware of my behaviour at all times”. She adjusts her behaviour according to the context, possessing the cultural capital to blend in each, always aware of what might be expected. Anique code-switches through clothes, picking outfits depending on where she is going, what role she needs to embody, to get the respect she needs and blend in. I asked Amanda who she is in between ‘black’ and ‘white Amanda’, she says she has not figured that out yet. Biracial people code-switching reminds me of Goffman’s frontstage and backstage, it can be argued that race is in part an act, acting white, acting black, a never-ending negotiation between selves, aware of self- and public image (Eriksen 2015).

Each of my interlocutors speaks Dutch but only three speak their black parents’ native language. Making their linguistic code-switching only partially possible. Iris was not allowed to learn a Surinamese language; her grandparents saw it as ‘less’. To them everything ‘Dutch’ was better. This experience was shared by Rose, whose upper-class Surinamese family did not allow her mother to learn their language, it being for “lower class people”. Latiffah experiences not speaking her father’s native language as a cultural loss, loss of cultural capital. Friderika is the only one that travelled to Cape Verde to learn the language and now speaks it fluently, teaching it to those that want to learn it too. By learning Creole, Friderika has gotten to know another part of her and can now connect with her Cape Verdean family, unlike she could before. A few others, such as Djata, still plan on learning the language of their black parent later in life.

Although Paul’s mother tongue is Dutch, when white Dutch people see him in person, they ‘see an accent’, which they did not hear on the phone. Paul claims that white Dutch people see an accent on people of colour even when it is non-existent. To speak a language is to have acquired linguistic cultural capital (Bourdieu 1997, cited in Eriksen 2015; Fanon 1952). Language can be acquired, possessing it grants biracial people more access to a parts of their racial identity, not having it closes doors, as the example of Latiffah not being able to speak with her father's family or with people from her father’s country. Not speaking Dutch or not speaking it well enough can have racial implications (Amponsah 2017: 169). Having a ‘foreign accent’ is often seen as not being ‘well integrated’, meaning that someone is ‘less’ Dutch. Language also has to do with class.
Nineteen biracial interlocutors, feel like a ‘bridge’ between white and black people (chapter on). Rose believes to more empathetic in understanding viewpoints of white and black people. Being biracial, she comprehends the pain of racism and her white side’s not being confronted by it. Rose claims that having a white and black parents has made her able to better understand both, being the connecter/moderator between them, although this is a complicated position. Many recognise taking up a position of bridge-builder, reconciling parties and being the one that says ‘yes but have you considered’ in both groups. They are in between. Although biracial people share similar racial experiences to black people, due to their classification as such in The Netherlands, they are seen as white/Western when abroad granting them an understanding of their white side as well (elaborated on in chapter three). Melanta also sees her body as a symbol for the unity between black and white.

Because blackness is conditional for biracial people, Latiffah struggles with calling herself a black woman in public, even if she identifies as one (chapter one). She realises that there is a difference between her and a black woman. She acknowledges her light skinned privilege, having more opportunities because of her skin tone, than darker skinned black women do. Lattifah, Aisha, Sophia, Melanta and a few other women recognise this feeling and would also not say they are black women, understanding that they cannot claim it the same way. If they say it, it would be in a white setting. Iris makes a compromise and says she is a coloured woman, not identifying as a white woman. Even though Latiffah feels like a black woman inside, not all black women would agree or accept her as such. None identify as white women, although Sophia who feels racially ambiguous does a little bit. I found that men have less of a hard time saying ‘I am a black man’. This having to do with the intersection: gender and race.

Claiming

To claim something is to make it our own. I see claiming as a form of agency in which biracial people accept their biracial identity, reclaiming it and making it their own. Where they acknowledge their positions, power and own it. The road to achieving their own identity might have taken a few a while, juggling between black and white. But in this section, I discuss how interlocutors use their habitus to recreate fluidity. In this phase they use their

39 Of course other people of colour who live in the global North, also experience being perceived as white, Western, in the global South.
acquired, achieved cultural capital, recognising both sides of their racial identities, and use it to be their ‘full’ themselves. No more ‘trying to fit in’ to ascribed categories, embracing who they are.

While trying to claim their blackness, two people have said to have issues with cultural appropriation, others although not finding it a problem themselves, do understand the dilemma. Cultural appropriation is ‘defined as the use of a culture’s symbols, artefacts, genres, rituals, or technologies by members of another culture’ (Rogers 2006: 474).

As a teenager, Iris grew up white, being raised by her white mother. She became drawn to discovering her Surinamese heritage but felt conflicted about doing so because she felt as an outsider. Not knowing much about Suriname yet ‘appropriating it’ felt strange. Because of her skin tone, she could claim it more than others could, which she found unusual. Aisha says that she feels uncomfortable wearing African prints when she is surrounded by black people. She says she cannot fully claim her blackness around people that are darker skinned than her. Once, she experienced a black South African taxi driver laugh at her after she said she was black, as if she did not know that clearly she was not. The driver left her feeling ashamed, she wondered if she was ‘allowed’ to claim blackness. This same feeling comes up when she wears something African in a black majority. Other interlocutors are also aware of how some black people might perceive biracial individuals wearing prints as ‘appropriating’, but do not let this prohibit them from embracing a part of themselves. Melanta feels that she also has a right to her express blackness.

Activism is a way of acknowledging their black-white biracial position in society and doing something about it, it is a tool to reclaim power. Eleven biracial people engage in activism, a medium through which they channel their frustration, with regards to racial inequality, into political change. Activism is their way of community building, creating an urban tribe and as an outlet.

Wokeness is seen as the opposite of the colour-blind ideology, as explained by Amanda, and is often used in activism. Woke is slang for someone who is aware of social

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40 Sometimes cultural misappropriation is used as its synonym, this being the controversial act of members from the dominant culture appropriating culture belonging to minorities (Coombe 1993; Young 2010).
41 Feeling confident about one’s racial expression in clothing might have to do with a degree in which individuals have accepted their racial identity. To feel confident wearing prints, symbolising: ‘I belong regardless of what you may think’ or ‘I know who I am’. Not daring to, seems to let others decide for you, your identity still being dependent on how others see you and less on how you see yourself.
42 Activism is the effort put into societal change, on different levels such as social-economic, political, environmental etc. Examples are: black activism, LGBTQIA+ activism, vegan activism etc.
justice and racial issues, a political term created by African-Americans (Finkelman 2009). It is derived from the expression ‘stay woke’ resulting from the Black Lives Matter Movement (Garofalo 2016). Wokeness requires a continuous effort to pursue and create awareness (ibid.: 2016). Biracial people that are activists in anti-racism movements here, practice being woke. It is a way of questioning power dynamics and developing political consciousness. Amanda finds herself ‘becoming woke’ since moving to Amsterdam. She finds it important but also hard, it feels as a burden sometimes. It requires research and staying up to date with social justice issues and can feel as a responsibility.

Eight people express themselves through art, such as spoken word⁴. Which is an artform that gives them space to address their lived experiences and share these with others on stage. Often using it politically, many started poetry as a way to pinpoint their realities.

“We are double blood” is that biracial people in the audience were encouraged to repeat and cheer together during ‘Babs’ Woord Salon: Dubbelbloed’. Dubbelbloed is dubbed a ‘new’ positive term for mixed-race people valuing their unique identity in The Netherlands. Biracial people in The Netherlands have started to use this word to identify themselves and their experiences (Voorn 2017). It gives people the opportunity to redefine, reshape and choose their own identity, without having it defined for them, as halfbloed does. As Etchica explains, the word felt as a warm embrace to her when she heard it for the first time, her cousin told her dubbelbloed stands for the unity of power, beauty and knowledge of two cultures coming together (Voorn 2017). He said that there is “no such thing as half!”, letting her know that she is not half but whole, two wholes forming one. Not only is it an alternative to halfbloed, it creates an ‘us’. An imagined community of biracial people (Anderson 2016), who share a reality. No longer excluded from a white or black ‘us’ but creating an ‘us’ to which biracial people belong.

Iris, supports the word dubbelbloed, she stands behind the idea that there should be a new category for biracial people, saying: “I think it is time we get our own ethnic group, we aren’t an exception anymore, there are many of us. We share a lot of similarities, behavioural, how we were raised, cultural. Actually we have our own culture we could say. (laughs). We don’t fit in with white or black people and need an extra category! Something new!”.

‘Where do you come from?’ is a question interlocutors find annoying and often complicated to answer. Biraciality is only one part of their identity, who they are is in part

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⁴ Word based performance art.
restricted by racial classifications such as biracial. Saying ‘I am not biracial’ can be a way for some to refuse all categorizations, regaining fluidity and being hybrid. All my interlocutors would like to be able to explore their identities further without racial limitations.

Biracial people are not recognised as a race in The Netherlands, not having complete membership to any race, biracial people should, theoretically, be able to transcend race. They are hybrid, hybridity means the mixture of two races creating something completely different (Lusty 2017). They cannot answer the question ‘are you more white or more black?’ because it is irrelevant to them being both and something else. All interlocutors think there is something special about being biracial, some have even said ‘magical’. A few believe that biracial individuals have the power to transcend race. Being the coming together of two different races, best of both worlds, they can create something new, undefinable. Interlocutors have often been mistaken for belonging to other nations, they can be Brazilian, Ethiopian, Latin American etc. Depending on their roots they can resemble anyone from anywhere. Everyone on earth is technically biracial, biraciality can be argued to be a common trait in humanity. Biraciality can be a tool to defy race, but not being able to categorise others racially makes people insecure, as Iris argues. Rose explains that: “for me there is no word for me, I am just Dutch and Surinamese, I am mixed, not double not half, just human”.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter I showed the struggle interlocutors went through before accepting, claiming themselves. I have shown how interlocutors are made aware of their skin colour at an early age and how it affects them later on in life, through colourism and racism. Their skin colour proving to be an issue on both ends, for white Dutch people they are black and for Pan-Africans they are light skinned. Interlocutors are simultaneously included and excluded, manoeuvring themselves between partial belongings. Race is both ascribed and achievable for them. Being biracial gives them knowledge of both ‘worlds’, they possess cultural capital to both black and white spaces. How they are perceived in a particular time and space has to do with power, they reclaim power by defining themselves. Some refuse to be called half blood and create new identities for themselves. One of these identities is double blood, the symbol for two cultures coming together as one. Although there is an assumption that biracial people somehow overcome race, are the embodiment of post-raciality, interracial relationships prove to be more complex as will be addressed in the upcoming chapter.

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Chapter 3 – Black-white relationships and home

Black-white relationships: motivations and perceptions

In Fanon’s *Black skin, white masks* (1952), he explains how interracial relationships between black and white individuals remain affected by race. He uses a concept called *internalized racism*, which he says is a psychological illness caused by colonialism and slavery. Fanon (1952) argues that internalized racism still affects people’s everyday life. White supremacy, the idea of white being superior to other races, affects one’s mental state (ibid.: 1952). Racism he argues, is internalized by both black and white people. Black people have internalized the racism white people held against them. They thus suffer from a black inferiority complex, meaning two things: 1) that they have internalized feelings of hatred and shame regarding their own skin colour, 2) that they aspire to be as close to whiteness as possible. White individuals who suffer from internalized racism, have a superiority complex, which is expressed by the exoticization or hatred for the other (non-white individual). Fanon (1952) says that both: the ones who love (fetishize), and hate, black persons equally suffer from internalized racism. ‘The white man who adores the negro is as ‘sick’ as the one who nominates him. Conversely, the black who wants to turn his/her face white is as miserable as he who preaches hatred for whites’ (Fanon, 1953, pp.8-9, cited in Amponsah 2017: 165). Fanon (1952) concludes that race still affects all our lives consciously and unconsciously. His work remains relevant today, as racism continues to affects people’s lives.

Nevertheless, Fanon (1952) believes in the possibility of love in black-white relationships, he argues that this can only be made a reality when issues of race are addressed. I argue that Fanon’s concepts still impact black-white relationships and biracial people, which I will explain on by using examples given by interlocutors. The following are examples of situations in which race relations did go wrong between individuals.

In the appendix the reader will find an overview, table, that exemplifies how different combinations in interracial relationships are perceived and by whom. Not all the examples given in appendix three, could be explained in this chapter and some were addressed earlier on. The table shows how intersections between race, gender, class and age, affect how
interracial relationships are interpreted. It is based on given, ascribed stereotypes and all relationships are looked at from a heteronormative perspective.\footnote{Heteronormativity is the belief in hetero-relationships, where cis-male and cis-female relations are the norm.}

Fanon (1925) argues that black and white people who suffer from internalized racism have different motivations for getting into interracial relationships. Black partners look for salvation in white partners, to feed their black inferiority, wanting to distance themselves from blackness and ‘whitewash’ their bloodline (Amponsah 2017). Their hunger for whiteness ‘forms a problematic base for love relations’ (Fanon 1952, cited in Amponsah 2017). Whereas white partners might choose a black partner because they find them exotic and/or have a white saviour complex (Fanon 1952; Eriksen 2015). A white saviour complex refers to a white person’s need to help, ‘save’ non-white people through ‘civilising them’, it is the modern-day interpretation of ‘a white man’s burden’ (Eriksen 2015). Exoticism, on the other hand, is ‘the inclination of Europeans to regard and to treat Africans and Asians as extraordinary, fascinating, exciting, beautiful, endearing, attractive and adorable, with a hint of danger’ (Hondius 2014: 4 A). Such reasonings for entering interracial relationships, remain problematic for they are rooted in colonial mindsets.

The legacy of colonial thinking can be noticed in small things; such as a black partner’s family acting ‘overly enthusiastic’ when discovering that their child has a white partner, saying this as ‘you made it’. Similarly, there can be scepticism on both sides, when a child comes home with someone from another ‘race’, thinking ‘this will not work’, ‘we are too different’ (racially and culturally). Melanta’s black uncle and Sophia’s white uncles have said that their race would be weakened by mixing with the other. In both families, even when their uncles think such things, their nieces are ‘an exception to the rule’.

It can be argued that in the Dutch imaginary of self, Dutch identity is white. This could be explained by Western Europe’s long history of restricting people of colour from entering Europe, thus remaining predominantly white for decades (Hage 1998; Hondius 2014 A; Amponsah 2017; Wekker 2017). This is an example of how boundaries were kept on an institutional and systemic level.

Jenkins (2000) explains that on an interactional level, gossip may serve as a tool to conserve and mark boundaries between communities, he adds that it is ‘one of the most
effective ways of policing relationships across the boundary’ (Jenkins 2000: 15). I argue that gossip continues to be used as a way of conserving racial boundaries, limiting race-mixing, which in turn influences how interracial relationships are perceived. As Azul says, observers still find it hard to link a black body to a white one or see these side by side. Thinking that ‘black and white bodies do not belong together’, speaks to the remains of coloniality, gender and racial inequalities today. It is not uncommon for interlocutors to be asked by strangers ‘if their parents are still together’, which shows the public disbelief that interracial relationships can work and speaks to their ‘entitlement to know’. Everyone seemingly has an opinion on mixed liaisons, they are up for discussion, whether or not it will work, what people’s intentions are and so on. This leads to mixed couples feeling judged (positively and negatively), their unions are still not so ‘gewoon’ (Dutch for normal), although more so in cities than in the outskirts.

Gossip is founded on ideas of what is right and wrong. I discovered a few ideas people have regarding black-white relationships and why they should be avoided. Some people feel a sense of ownership on those of the opposite sex from the same racial group. Black people might feel that white supremacy has stolen ‘enough’ from them already historically. So why would a white person also have to ‘steal’ attractive black/biracial partners from them? This is seen as ‘greedy’ and creates feelings of frustration for some black observers, when they see a black or biracial person with a white person.

While it is not socially acceptable to state, some people when seeing a person colour with a white individual, think it must be for financial reasons, assuming that black people have less economic power than their white counterpart. Thinking it ‘cannot be love’. Observers judge interracial relationships according to patterns they know and these intertwine with power dynamics.

There is a variety of reasons people choose not to engage in interracial relationships. One of which is ‘black love’, which is the spiritual journey of black people loving black people. Through conversations, I noticed that black love has a certain popularity within black circles in The Netherlands. Some see it as being ‘radical’ and ‘woke’ to choose for a black partner, it

45 This assumption can be racist and can also be placed within knowledge of power dynamics in place such as systemic racism, which disadvantage minorities.
being empowering to love ‘your own’. This decision can be understood when taking into account the power dynamics that took place between black and white people during colonialism, where enslaved black women were raped by white colonials (Daniel 1996, cited in Khanna 2010), and where black and biracial men were sterilized when interacting with white women (such as occurred in Germany during WWII) (Zane 2019). The historical and everyday systemic violence inflicted on black bodies by white supremacy, makes it ‘unthinkable’ for some black people to choose a white partner, still viewing white people as oppressors. Interesting that while actively disassociating themselves with colonial power structures, they seem to reproduce it by thinking and acting upon racial categorizations.

Internalized biracial inferiority

The psychological issues some interlocutors faced by wanting to be white during their childhoods-adolescence, as addressed in chapter two, can be seen as a form of black inferiority. In these cases, it can be argued that they had ‘biracial inferiority’, for they are not black, nor white. I argue that their ‘not belonging to either’ caused them a specific ‘biracial’ insecurity.

In Azul’s following story, we will see how she expressed her internalized racism and how this intersects with her relationship to her monoracial parent. As explained before in this paper, Azul badly wanted to be white during a vast period of her life, stretching from her childhood to her late adolescence. She recalls starting to listen to metal with racist lyrics against black people. One day when her African father came to pick her up in her white neighbourhood, she felt ashamed. Her father’s car was old and had a broken window, which he had not yet repaired (class) and he was also listening to loud African music. She entered the car hoping no one would see her and asked her father to put on the metal music she liked, which insulted him, she enjoyed that. He could not understand the lyrics because his Dutch was not good enough, although she believes he could feel the hate in the words. Looking back Azul feels pain when thinking about such instances in her life, where she was not only insulting her father but also a part of herself. In those days, Azul felt anger towards both her parents, towards her black parent for ‘making her brown’ and towards her white parent for not fully understanding her with regards to her racial identity.

47 During WWII, biracial people (Rhineland bastards) were murdered and sterilized such as Jewish people were to prohibit ‘race mixing’ (Zane 2019). Jewish and biracial children were called ‘Mischlingskinder’, which was a degrading term for racially ‘impure’ children (Amatmoekrim 2018).
Azul explains that “even though my mother saw me as her daughter, she refused to see that I am also a brown body”. She illustrates that it does not matter if her mother sees her as ‘colourless’, this does not change her reality of being perceived as black within the Dutch context. Tess experienced a very similar relationship with her mother. Tess says that her mother saw her as: her child first and as brown second (if at all). Not as her ‘brown child’.

Monoracial parents and their biracial children

It can be hard for biracial people to relate to their monoracial parents and vice-versa, because all three (white and black parent, biracial child) have different lived experiences, as explained by interlocutors. ‘Parents racially socialize their children based on their own experiences of racial identity’ (Stone & Dolbin-MacNab 2017: 99). Which, makes it more complicated in interracial households because ‘monoracial parents cannot rely on a shared racial identity and social status with their children’, nor with their partners (ibid.: 99). Both parents have monoracial experiences and their children's experiences come from a biracial/multiracial perspective.

How parents communicate about race in their child’s upbringing impacts how they view/approach the topic and how they form their racial identity (Jenkins 2000; Stone & Dolbin-MacNab 2017). Jenkins (2000) and Stone & Dolbin-MacNab (2017), both argue that primary and racial socialization is the responsibility of a child’s caretaker. As said in chapter two, when parents do not address race, it may cause harm to their children’s identity formation, in contrast to supportive family environments where racial identities bloom more gracefully.

It can be argued that monoracial parents have two choices: either they 1) choose to recognise and try to understand/support the racial identities of their children, albeit it different form their own, or 2) they dismiss it and put their own racial identity forward as ‘the truth’. Some white parents although not being able to fully grasp racism, do partially understand the impact of race on their black partner and brown children. As Amponsah says ‘when white people witness racism through their intimate relationships with non-white people (i.e. a partner, or mixed-race children), this can lead them to an experience that encourages on to learn about racial dynamics’ (Amponsah 2017: 169).
Both white and black parents can avoid race and claim colour-blindness, albeit for different reasons. White parents can remain colour-blind because of white privilege, and black parents might want to assimilate, as a coping mechanism.

A few examples of black mothers’ avoiding the topic of race are: Amanda’s mother refuses to acknowledge her own blackness, Lila’s mother ignored racism to survive and Rose explains that her mother accentuated the positives so as not to be pulled into negatives. These can all be seen as coping mechanisms.

Both parents can also be supportive by teaching their children about their two heritages, culturally socializing them and preparing them for racial experiences they might have outside the home (Stone & Dolbin-MacNab 2017). Aisha and Jahkini’s white mothers discussed race with their daughters and educated themselves on anti-racism, to be able to answer their children’s questions. Sandy’s black mother made sure her daughters knew everything about Ghanaian culture.

In some situations, biracial people held it against their parents that they did not teach them about their heritages/racial identities, as is the case for Tess. She wishes her mother could have told her how to navigate race. Latiffah (and others) wished their black parents had thought them their language. Sandy feels sorrow for mixed-race children that did not ‘get’ the same knowledge (cultural socialisation), as she did regarding her black heritage, finding this a ‘loss’ for them.

White parents, colour-blindness and their biracial children

Out of the twenty-three interlocutors, ten people have said to have had issues with their white parent regarding race. Three of these ten people, have said specifically to have a racially loaded relationship with their white mothers, because of their mothers not wanting to address race. Race became a barrier between them. In all these situations, their white parents claimed colour-blindness. Stone & Dolbin-MacNab (2017) explain that the ‘colour-blind approach’ is mostly used by biracial people’s white parents. In this approach, white parents emphasize skills and hard work are as a means to get ahead in society and silence or avoid any discussion about race (Stone & Dolbin-MacNab 2017: 99). ‘White parents may also simply deny or deemphasize any race at all’ (ibid.: 2017: 99). Having a position of white privilege,
White parents were socialised differently, often learning to believe in colour-blindness. White privilege, ‘disregards the impact of race and/or skin colour on lived experiences, either consciously or unconsciously’ (ibid.: 2017: 99). When a white parent refuses the racial reality of their biracial child, this can feel as though they have chosen a side; their white side, the same side that discriminates against their children in The Netherlands. Such a situation can be traumatising. Colour-blind attitudes can lead white parents to say things such as: ‘You are white too, why are you making a problem about it?’ or ‘You choose to focus on race, I have no issues with it’, which can lead to heated discussions.

Rose remembers an instance where her white father used the word ‘neger’. She became quite upset with him because “how could he after all these years of being married to a black woman and having brown children use such a word?” He answered that ‘he did not know that the word was racist’, arguably portraying ‘smug ignorance’ (Essed & Hoving 2014). Such occurrences have led Rose and others, to avoid the topic of race around their white parents. Interlocutors find such situations conflicting, it being the denial of their reality/identity by their own parent. Five white parents have even claimed reverse racism, which is problematic to say the least. Reverse racism is a concept that sees the empowerment of minorities as a threat and claims that white people suffer from racism against them (Chang 1995). One person has even decided to cut herself off from her white family, because of unresolvable racial issues.

Azul recalls moments from her childhood when her white Dutch mother was befriended with lower class white women who only wanted to date black men. They would go to African parties, or to sport clubs where they knew black men would be present, to try and ‘get one’. She remembers how she would play with other biracial children while their mothers sat around a table discussing their sexual interactions with black men, such as the length of their genitals. Azul felt as though these white mothers were proud to have biracial children because it gave them access to blackness, as a sort of ‘thing’ they could ‘show off’, giving them status/street credibility. These mothers could use their mixed child to portray themselves as anti-racist: ‘I’m not racist because I have a halfbloedje’, whilst not

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48 It can be argued that white parents want to teach their children colour-blind attitudes to racially socialise them as they were, as white. This might have been white parents way of teaching them about their world. But this can be painful, for they live in different worlds from that of their biracial children and in some cases this can lead to dangerous situations. An example is that of white American fathers teaching their biracial sons how to interact with the police as white men. Which could result in their sons getting shot, for they are perceived as black men (Durrant & Gillum 2018).
understanding their child's racial reality and simultaneously selecting black men based on racist ideologies.

Although a few of these women had a white child prior to their biracial one, all the attention seemed to go to the second. These women also ‘acted black’, by copying stereotypical lower-class African-American blackness. Wearing attributes such as gold teeth, mimicking Antillean accents, giving their biracial children cliché ‘black’ names, such as Felicity and so on.

What Azul finds interesting is how her mother had this ‘black phase’, which now seems to be over, latching on to her whiteness again. These women searched for black economic migrants, wanting their money. None of them had long lasting relationships and would fall back on racism such as ‘he wants my papers’ whenever things did not go to plan. This story is an example of how exoticisation, gender, power and racism can intersect negatively when looking at black-white interracial relationship. Azul finds this example of white women and black men to be a paradox, she believes these women to be deeply racist: feeling a strong attraction towards black men while simultaneously having a tendency to practice white supremacy towards them. This case can be argued to be a form of romantic racialism, coming from a ‘negrophile-feminist viewpoint’ (Hondius 2014: 42 A). These white women objectify and use black men for financial and reproductive purposes, while know full well that they have power over them (in the form of Dutch passports and whiteness). ‘Romantic racialism opens a field of uncertainty and tension, with a simultaneous positive and negative correlation with white supremacist feeling: a force of softening and masking the harsh and structural inequalities.’ (Hondius 2014: 43 A).

These mothers wanted to ‘get’ a mixed-race child, which might seem a strange idea, but a few interlocutors share the experience of white women (often strangers) walking up to them and saying “I would like to make a mixed baby like you”. As if the bodies of biracial people are still to be purchased, owned as they were in colonial times. Which reminds us of the higher value of light skinned enslaved people on the slave markets and continuation of colourism, as addressed in chapter one (Herring and Keith 1991; Hunter 2002). Biracial children in this case are still being perceived as something better than, holding up notions of them being more attractive and a kind of ‘hybrid human’.

A few biracial men also attested to their experiences of white women wanting to sleep with them because of ‘the believed superiority of coloured men in bed’. This idea that biracial
people are somehow more sexually desirable or more attractive, brings us back to exoticism and fetishism (Fanon 1952; Hondius 2014 A).

Intimate relationships

Fanon (1952) dedicates a passage to the métis, French for biracial. He says that when a métis is born, the black parent (who suffers from internalized racism) rejoices for they were now one step closer to witness. This child is then encouraged to marry a white person, as to have white children, blackness is then successfully erased from their bloodline. The female métis in Fanon’s work, feels insulted when a black man proposes himself to her and has him punished. Having come this far to get rid of their black complexion, climbing up the racial latter, they would be foolish to go down the path of mixing with ‘inferior’ black people. Through conversations with interlocutors, it was made clear that some black people they encountered still think that biracial people perceive themselves as superior to them. The idea that biracial people are more attractive (chapter one) is still experienced by interlocutors, all have felt exoticized by both black and white people, because of their appearance (mostly regarding their hair and skin colour).

Women particularly feel that men find them attractive for different reasons, white men finding them ‘exotic’ but not ‘too exotic’ and black men see them as a light skinned ‘trophy’. Their beauty in both situations stemming mostly from their closer proximity to whiteness, than black women. As Sandy told me it was sexy to be called a ‘halfbloedje’ when she was a teen. Being mixed has been sexy and pretty in The Netherlands for a while now, as Anique who is in her late forties, accounts for.

Iris has a white son. She explains that when she had a white partner, black people assumed that she had issues with her blackness, wanting to white. Black observers gave her the feeling she has ‘betrayed them/blackness’ by choosing a white man. This made Iris very

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49 Children that come from mixed-raced parents used to be called ‘quadroon’, meaning three quarters European and one quarter African. Similar classifications were octoroon (one-eighth black) and hexadecaroon (one-sixteenth black).

50 This will for ‘whitewashing’ the blackness out of one's family has been represented in many paintings such as the well-known: ‘The Redemption of Ham’ by Modesto Brocos. The painting shows a black grandmother in praise, a mixed-race mother, a white father and white baby. The brazilian painters’ work was a critic on ‘blanqueamiento’, the whitening practice of Brazilians through interracial marriages.

51 This can be linked to the sociological concepts of “marrying up” or “marrying down” in Suriname or the Southern USA. A black or coloured female marrying a white man, “marries up”. A coloured female marrying a darker man, “marries down”. A white female marrying a darker male was considered foolish in Suriname, and it was simply taboo in the Southern USA.
conscious about her partners’ race. Although she has started a ‘black book club’, she feels that her blackness could be compromised by choosing a white partner again. If she would, she could be accused of ‘not really being down for the struggle’ or ‘choosing the side of the oppressor’. Whomever she chooses, black or white, both feel known to her because of her heritage, both being parts of herself. Black and white observers will judge her racial identity dependent on her partners’ race. When walking on the street with a white man, she is seen as ‘one of us’ by other white Dutch people, and when walking with a black man these same observers would see both as a possible danger, calling them ‘allochthons’. It seems that either way she loses.

A handful of black Dutch people she encounters, make her feel that she has chosen whiteness by having a white son. When she shows her white friends pictures of her boy, they say he is beautiful but when doing the same with black individuals, some they refuse to say anything positive, ‘ze vertikken het’ (typical Dutch saying hard to translate, they staunchly refuse to say anything positive). Yet both sides, black and white, find her having a white son unusual, not expecting to see a white child when she talks about her boy.

Iris told me about an annoying situation she experienced at a playground with her son. While she was sitting on a bench, he fell so she went to pick him up but a white woman was there before her. This woman told her son, ‘oh that must be your nanny’, Iris said she was his mother, which apparently surprised the woman. Because Iris is brown, the other woman could not imagine her to be a white boy’s mother, so must have been his nanny. This example says something about race, power dynamics and gender. Iris is also seen as an assistant when visiting her white grandparents.

**Systematically Biracial**

As said earlier in this paper, in the Dutch imaginary, Dutch identity is white (Hage 1998; Hondius 2014; Amponsah 2017; Wekker 2017). Making it hard for non-white Dutch people to belong to that imaginary. Paul says: ‘It doesn’t matter how many generations you’re here. They will say: can’t you see that he isn’t Dutch’, which is a reality he finds hard to accept. ‘Until recently ‘native’ white and white-passing were called ‘autochochtones’, while immigrants with a non-white background were called ‘allochthonous’ up until the fourth generation’ (Amponsah 2017: 167). ‘If they still had not managed to become white in
complexion by then, they were likely to remain ‘allochthonous’” (Wekker 2016: 23, cited in Amponsah 2017: 167). Biracial people are thus forever *allochthons* in The Netherlands because of their non-white skin, you can see it. Yanow and Van der Haar (2013) explain the Dutch words ‘allochtoon’ and ‘autochtoon’. An autochtoon is a person that belongs in The Netherlands and an allochtoon is someone that does not, both words refer to stones. An autochoon being a stone that can be found here and an allochtoon being a stone from another country that ended up here (Yanow and Van der Haar 2013). Even if that foreign stone is here for years it can be traced back to where it came from, never fully being able to blend with the landscape (ibid.: 2013). This metaphor says everything about belonging in The Netherlands and as Paul said, it does not matter how long you are here, or whether you are born in The Netherlands, you remain an allochtoon. These words imply race without saying it directly (ibid.: 2013). Hage (1998) says that the white imaginary is linked to white nationalism, where boundaries restrict non-white ‘others’ from gaining too much power in ‘their white nation’.

Although non-white people can gain white cultural capital (Hage 1998; Bourdieu 1977, cited in Eriksen 2015), their non-white skin is what makes it impossible for them to be seen as a member of the white imaginary nation by its white gatekeepers (Hage 1988). It can be argued that in The Netherlands there is also an white imaginary nation to which non-white Dutch people cannot belong. No matter how well they speak the language, how many generations they live here etc., when you are not white you are not Dutch. All interlocutors have felt that they were treated as allochtoons because of their brown skin. Rose says: “What makes me Dutch is the fact that I have the papers (passport) to back it up, otherwise I would not belong here.” Racism remains the main cause for interlocutors to not feel at home in The Netherlands. They experience it both at the interactional and at institutional level. In the following I will give examples of how biracial people experience institutionalised racism.

**Positive discrimination at work**

Rose talks about how she code-switches at work, which is a predominantly white space, and criticises the ‘knuffel beleid’. Knuffel beleid (loosely translated as a policy of cuddling) is a Dutch vernacular word which refers to positive discrimination in The Netherlands. Its goal is to have more ‘different’ people within organisations to better represent the multiculturality of The Netherlands.
Rose: “Often, I am the only one, so they can say ‘we have one’. For a long time, I acted white [and] became someone I was not, when I was with white people. I acted ‘netjes’, did my hair netjes, wore clothes that were netjes, was different from how I was when I was with my people, so that they would think ‘she is a good one’ you know? ‘She is completely integrated’, ‘assimilated’ you know? She ‘is just a white person with a bit of colour’, that is how I thought I needed to be before, so I wouldn’t have any problems… Just be less black.”

- And did that work? Did you have less problems when acting this way?

“Yes, it really works! That shit really works! They all want to show, nobody is racist of course, because ‘look I have a black friend’ and I was often that black friend, the only one. But that black friend who is also very white. Bounty, that kind of thing.”

- So do you believe in the knuffel beleid you mentioned?

“It is used but not effective. One percent is chosen but the rest is rejected because ‘we already have one’. Even if another person comes that is qualified they are rejected, ‘we already have one’. They would like to have none if they could but they can’t, or their business will be closed or something. But one that is white enough and then they are good. I think it is bullshit!”

In her explanation, she criticises white Dutch organisations saying that in her experience, they tend to not want to hire non-white people, but if they have to, they want to hire someone that is ‘white enough’. One that is white inside but with a bit of colour, a bounty. She illustrates how code-switching and acting ‘whiter’ are needed to cope in work situations where you are the only one. She believes that the system of knuffel beleid is nonsense because it limits the number of people being hired, once the organisation has their ‘one’ black person they do not need any more, choosing the whitest one of the bunch. There is no room for real diversity instead there is tokenism. Tokenism is a symbolic practice to be more inclusive to members of minority groups by hiring a few of them into the workforce, in order to give the appearance of having more racial or gender equality. Rose accuses the knuffel

52 The word diversity has been criticized by activist groups for being a term white people use to accentuate the presence of non-white people, ” look how divers this group is”.

beleid of tokenizing people of colour, not wanting ‘true’ diversity and hiring them because they have to. Between the lines we can hear Rose saying that white organisations ‘act intersectional’ and ‘non-racist’ to keep one’s business afloat. She is often ‘the only one’, by which she means the only non-white person and she said that she stays the only one.

Red complained about having a higher diploma than his white colleagues but being placed in a lower position than them, although they happily use his knowledge when needed. Aisha, on the other hand, said that she can invariably be sure that she gets a job when applying for it. She says she is the diversity white Dutch organisations want, because she is biracial, she is not ‘too black’, she has a ‘white’ diploma and knows white social codes. She is the ‘perfectly integrated’ allochtoon, which organisations are looking to hire for their knuffel beleid. Aisha believes that her biracial appearance serves as an advantage, granting her better job opportunities.

Sometimes having a white parent present at certain occasions, such as signing a housing contract, grants them a higher guarantee of success. Their parents’ whiteness making them more ‘reliable’ and ‘trustworthy’. Rose explains that for some things she knew to ask her white father because he could influence situations more than her black mother could. She says that her father never got any diplomas and yet could get any job he wanted; he could just fake it. Rose feels that ‘faking it’ would be impossible for her, she needs papers to prove everything and even those might not be ‘enough’.

When people of colour make it financially, they can be claimed as a ‘successful Dutch person’, which builds on the aspect of colour-blindness where everyone has the same chances but just has to try hard enough and be skilled. Economic power can make you white, showing that race has to do with class (Hondius 2014 A). An example of this phenomenon in The Netherlands, is explained by an interlocutor in connection with the game of football. When a black football player plays for the Dutch football team, everyone can pronounce his name and he is Dutch, whereas if he loses a game, he becomes black again. This example shows another conditionality for belonging, if you want to be Dutch then you have to be the ‘best’ black person, the ‘exceptional’ one. To climb the racial ladder, you need economic capital (Bourdieu 1977, cited in Eriksen 2015). Rose explains that you need money to belong and money can be lost again. These case studies do not inspire optimism for the economic advancement of biracial persons in The Netherlands, but their case seems similar to the case
of black persons in The Netherlands. All the same, these case studies are indicative only, and need more corroboration before general conclusions can be drawn.

‘Allochtoon’ at home

Sandy is the only one of the interlocutors that says she feels at home in The Netherlands. Although, she also recognised Dutch racism, she does not let it get in the way of feeling home here. She has children and has chosen to settle down here. Of twenty-three interlocutors, five are parents and eighteen are childless. I think that having children and sending them to school here, is a moment in which people might choose to stay. The other four parents admitted to not feeling fully at home in The Netherlands, sometimes still flirting with the idea of leaving. Thus, having children and sending them to school, is not a guarantee for biracial people to feel at home here.

Eighteen interlocutors do not have children, some are still seriously contemplating to leave the country such as Red. Red said that he has lived in many places in the country and has tried to feel home here on numerous accounts but that he does not see a future for himself here. Having to prove himself constantly and not being able to ‘just be’ has tired him down. Red, such as Maringo, Melanta and others have moved to more diverse cities with hopes of finding that belonging they search for, to be one with the crowd.

Many of these eighteen people are still deciding whether to fight or flight. They all acknowledge the comforts that the country has to offer (such as the educational system for their children, transportation, the power of their Dutch passport etc.) but that does not seem to be enough. Rose says that if she knew of a better option than The Netherlands, she would go there in an instant but so far, she knows of “no better alternative”.

Latiffah says that abroad she feels more at home than she does here. Abroad she does not have to explain where she comes from. Here when they (she means white Dutch people) ask her ‘where do you come from?’, they are never satisfied with her answer and keep questioning her until they get to race. Saying you are Dutch does not seem ‘true’, although she would never just say that. When she is abroad and says she comes from The Netherlands, people generally simply accept it.
White abroad

I asked each participant if they had gone to the country of their black parent, to discover their non-Dutch roots, of which nineteen did. All nineteen said that they felt welcomed, that this was a positive experience that had given them a better understanding of their racial identity and heritage. Azul said that going to Ghana helped her understand, accept and be proud of her African heritage. Most interlocutors went to their black parents’ country during their adolescence, while they were still figuring out who they were, or after a milestone (finishing university for example) as a way to celebrate. Those that went, try to go regularly (to keep family relations intact) but are not always able to because of the high prices of trans-continental flights. When going for the first time, all of them went to see their Pan-African families, sometimes meeting them for the first time in person.

Rose says that it first feels like coming home but then when you stay for a longer period you realise that you do not belong there either. That you are an outsider, there you are ‘The Dutch person’. Of course, not speaking the language is also a factor. All interlocutors felt white and treated as different after being there for a few days. Four people have not gone yet, three of them are a bit ‘afraid’ of what they might discover but all want to go at some point in their lives.

Conclusion

As shown by the experiences of a few interlocutors, interrelationships continue to be affected by colonial mindsets. Racism still affects who can be in a relationship with whom. Black and white observers have an opinion and making this known in subtle and less subtle ways. This chapter reconfirms the conditional belonging biracial people experience, this time through their partner choices. Dependent on the race of their partners’ they can gain or lose access to a racial group. It seems that racism affects them not only in the public sphere but also at home, with their parents, with their partners and with their own children. Race affects all their relationships. It also affects them at work, where their skin tone can grant them more opportunities than darker skinned individuals because of colourism, but it can simultaneously be a disadvantage because of racism. Interlocutors find themselves at the intersection between black and white. They continue to look for a home, a place to belong, between racism and colourism, black and white.
Conclusion

On this journey to understand black-white biraciality in The Netherlands, I learned about myself as a biracial person. It felt strangely familiar for me to hear the stories and experiences of people I had never met before; their stories were very often also my own stories. While listening to my recordings, I realised that these were conversations between two biracial people, who were trying to find answers about their identities together. It was emotional for me to listen to myself talk about my internal conflict of being two things simultaneously, speaking to others who recognised this felt strangely therapeutic. For me this research was a me-search. I learned about myself through the others that went on this journey with me. This process validated and helped me to better define my own biracial identity. I always felt that I was not an obruni54 nor black, I knew I was mixed but did not see it as a space/thing of its own, which I now do. I will definitely continue to be interested in interracial relationships and biracial identities. I, and my interlocutors really have no choice: Dutch or European society invariably seeks to define who we are or who we must be.

The aim of this thesis research was to answer my central question:

*What are the lived experiences of black-white biracial people in The Netherlands through their racialized bodies?*

The question was kept broad to give interlocutors enough space to answer, the focus being on their experiences. To answer this question, I divided my thesis into three chapters each giving us a piece of a complex, multifaceted, puzzle that is biracial identity. The first chapter illustrated the history of black-white biraciality in The Netherlands and addressed identification and identity. The second chapter explained realisations of difference, along with coping, claiming and negotiating techniques. The third chapter addressed interracial relationships and how biracial people are treated in institutions such as work environments.

Throughout this thesis I argued and showed the particularities of black-white biracial identity in the Dutch context, showing how interlocutors balance and negotiate who they are in The Netherlands. Be it at a family gathering, at work, with friends, at school, biracial people seem to have to deal with race on all occasions. They know how to be in a variety of spaces

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54 Twi for white.
because they know ‘both worlds’, they code switch between one and the other, blending in yet never blending in completely due to their appearances. If they act too ‘black’ they are called out by white associates and if they act too ‘white’ they risk being called a *bounty*. Each side holding part of who they are against them. Although all have tired fitting in with either/or, many find peace when embracing their biracial identity. Not trying to be ‘black’ or ‘white enough’ but accepting that they are something else, which does not have to be measured by monoracial groups. Their journey to self-acceptance has taken many roads, from some this meant denying a part of themselves, wishing their blackness away, holding on to that white self, having internal conflicts.

I started by explaining how the Dutch colonial past still affects how biracial people are racialized in The Netherlands today. How words such as *halfbloed* suggest racial purity, which brought me to racial ideologies during Nazi Germany. Where biracial people were killed and sterilized for being ‘half breeds’, a threat to racial purity and ‘bastards’. After the second world war, black-white biracial people were born in Limburg, descendant of black and white consenting adults. Although the story of biracility and the Netherlands starts offshore in former Dutch colonies, our story starts here. In Limburg, is where our problem starts, although joyous when soldiers came to fight the Nazi regime and won, there was less enthusiasm when brown babies were born. These children had to be put up for adoption, because they did not belong in white families. Biracial people not belonging to white environments nor to black environments is what causes interlocutors internal conflict, as we saw during childhood through to adolescence. Many of my interlocutors thought they were white or wanted to be. Internalisation of black inferiority and wanting to belong to whiteness causes conflict, for they can never be white or Dutch because of their skin. This phase was often followed by their search for blackness, which led to the acceptance of their biracial identity. Claiming who they are was expressed by sometimes refusing categories all together or creating new ones for themselves.

Biracial people not belonging to the white Dutch imaginary or to blackness. In chapter two we see how white parents today, almost a century after the second world war, are still asked if their biracial child is adopted. Which continues the ideology of black and white people not belonging together, which was elaborated on in chapter three.
The problem is that biracial people although not having an official racial category in The Netherlands, continue to be racialized, as a legacy of the Dutch colonial past. Both black and white people continue to be affected by race. Consciously or unconsciously, with good or bad intentions, both groups exclude people that are not like them. As Fanon (1952) explains, both those that exoticize or hate the other are just as guilty, because as long as a difference is made, differences continue to have influence.

White and black people judge biracial people for, on the one hand not being white enough and the other for not being black enough. Both groups continuing the practices of racism and colourism, seeing and acting upon colour, judging others for not being as they are. While both groups aspire to post-raciality.

Not being a part of either group, biracial people find themselves in between both, partially belonging to both. Interlocutors search for belonging in a racialized world, where their race is more fluid dependent on time, space and power dynamics.

People in The Netherlands do not seem ready to let go of racial classifications, as explained by the experiences of interlocutors. Interlocutors have experienced an emphasis on their skin colour from as soon as they can remember.

Interracial relationships are seen as a symbol for overcoming race and so are the bodies of biracial individuals. In some cases, biracial people have become a means for monoracial parents to gain status, albeit to show they are not racist or as a way of feeding their black inferiority, hoping to gain access to whiteness. For my interlocutors, race affects all their relationships, with their parents, partners, children, friends. They cannot escape it, do not have the luxury of being monoracial or belonging to a group. The creation of a biracial group seems to be ongoing in The Netherlands, as seen by the creation of the word double blood.

Interlocutors are both black and white, which is a burden and a gift. They can adapt to each setting because they know the codes. They can be mistaken for Brazilian, Ethiopian etc. because they look ‘international’. They are something in and of themselves, something different. Race is a big part of how they experience the world and how the world experiences them. They are exoticized and given opportunities others might not get because of their light skinned beauty/privileges. A privilege they cannot claim without risking being called a bounty.
There is a fascination with their bodies, their appearances seem to tell stories that go beyond borders and nations. Giving hope for a future without racial inequalities. They symbolise what we all are, a mix of multiple identities, a globalised world where we all meet. But this is romanticized, because it does not fully recognise the power dynamics in place, we cannot all ‘meet’ so to say. Only when we are rid of inequality and power discrepancies, can we truly come together. Making babies is too simple and that is not how equality works. By addressing our shared past and questioning the status quo, we can strive for a more socially just world. Not by romanticizing love and equality through interracial relationships. Love is not possible without the recognition of our differences, as Fanon (1952) argues.

As has been said by many civil rights activists: “None of us are free until we are all free.”
Black, white, biracial it still matters. Who will we be without race?
When will biracial people be seen as wholes? And not as half?
Who will be Dutch in the future?
To simply answer my question, my black-white biracial interlocutors have various experiences in The Netherlands, but what they all share is a feeling of only partially belonging to this country. The Netherlands represents their white side that sees them as black. Their experiences in The Netherlands are both being Dutch but not Dutch enough, because of their skin colour. The Netherlands is their home but not everyone accepts them saying it is. Asking ‘where do you come from?’, assumes that they are not from here and the question is repeated until race is revealed. As Paul said, “They will see us and will say ‘you can see he is not Dutch’” and “it does not matter how many generations you are here”. When you are not white you remain an allochtoon, outsider.

Although The Netherlands is proclaimed to be a post-racial place, it is apparently not so progressive yet, nor equally welcoming to all its citizens. Whiteness seems to be the only way to being accepted as Dutch, as one of ‘us’. The idea of a white Dutch nation has to be let go. Race continues to play a part in biracial people’s experiences in The Netherlands today, as it did for generations before.
Obviously, the mere conclusions drawn from conversations with a limited group of biracial persons, places constraints on generalisations that can be drawn from this study. However, in as much as my interlocutors had to search for non-Dutch terms to describe their experiences, I too found that I had to reach for much non-Dutch academic literature to relate in anthropological terms to the experience of my interlocutors. One can only hope that Dutch academia recognizes that biraciality in a Dutch context requires more study.

My thesis addresses biraciality, race, nationalism, interracial relationships, identity, multiculturalism and belonging. This research adds to the ever-growing body of work on multicultural identity, which will continue to be relevant in a globalised world, where I assume identity will prove more complicated. Numbers of biracial people will continue to grow and they too will have to negotiate and balance identities. I enjoyed bringing the stories of a group that is not black or white but both. I feel and hope that a time is coming where we could be more than black or white.
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Coombe, Rosemary J.  

Coté, Joost  

Crenshaw, Kimberlé Williams  

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Delgado, Richard, & Stefancic, Jean  

Dendooven, Dominiek & Chielen, Piet  
Driessen, Henk, & Jansen, Willy

Du Bois, William Edward Burghardt, & Marable, Manning

Durrant, Lorna & Gillum, Nerissa LeBlanc

Eastmond, Marita

Erel, Umut

Eriksen, Thomas Hylland

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Sue, Derald Wing  

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Van Manen, Max  

Van Welie, Rick  

Voorn, Etchica  
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Young, James O.  

Weiner, Melissa F  

Weitz, Eric D.  

Wekker, Gloria  

Zane, Damian  
Appendix 1: Translation definitions

The following definitions, from chapter one, are loosely translated.

1898

Mulatto: person that is born out of a white man and negro, or of a white woman and a negro. Also person coming from a mulatto and a white person.

2017

Mulatto: half blood with mixed ancestry, black and white.

Mulatto: Offspring of a black and white parent. Today many people experience this term as outdated and derogatory. They use the less specific word mixed, to describe children of parents having a different ethnic background.
## Appendix 2: General information interlocutors

<table>
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<tr>
<th>First Generation Black-White Biracial (23):</th>
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<th>Living in Rotterdam (2)</th>
<th>Living in Amersfoort (1)</th>
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<td>50+ (3)</td>
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<td>Ghana - NL (3)</td>
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<td>African-American - Belgian (1)</td>
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<td><strong>Speak a Pan-African language (3)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Parents did not talk to them about race (17)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Feel at home in the Netherlands (1)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Don’t feel at home in the Netherlands (22)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Search for their black side - All (23)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Denied their blackness at some point (5)</strong> which led to psychological stress</td>
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<td><strong>Having black mothers + white Fathers (7)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Are not parents (18)</strong></td>
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Appendix 3: Details individuals

The following is an alphabetical list of information about each of the twenty-three interlocutors. Those that want to remain anonymous have been given names that refer to colours. I choose colours because my topic is race related, the colour of their skin mattering to the society they inhabit. The colours are absurd which is also a critic on the social construction of race.

<table>
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<th>Ethnicity/Dutch, Gender, Age</th>
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<td>Red</td>
<td>Surinamese-Dutch, male, thirties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rose</td>
<td>Surinamese-Dutch, female, twenties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandy</td>
<td>Ghanaian-Dutch, female, thirties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silver</td>
<td>Brazilian-Dutch, male, twenties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophia</td>
<td>African-American - Belgian, female, twenties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tess</td>
<td>Zimbabwean-Dutch, female, twenties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Surinamese-Dutch, female, twenties</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 4: Table of stereotypical perceptions

This table was inspired by my readings of Frantz Fanon (1952), Gloria Wekker (2016) and mostly by conversations with interlocutors. I thought about Fanon’s *internalized racism*, connected it with Wekker’s take on feminism and added the lived experiences of those that I spoke. It is an attempt to schematically represent some issues, and relates very much to the Dutch context and the experiences of my interlocutors.

### Relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black man + white woman</td>
<td>well done, congratulations (in the eyes of other Black men)</td>
<td>(in a sense humanity is proven by having a white partner)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>= jealousy and competition (in the eyes of white men)</td>
<td>also a sexual threat for black men are said to have more sexual drive (racial stereotypes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>= jealousy and competition (in the eyes of black women - competing with white man)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black woman + white man</td>
<td>jealousy and competition (in the eyes of black men) +</td>
<td>believe she must not love her blackness enough otherwise she would date black men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>= jealousy and competition (in the eyes of white women) +</td>
<td>feeling of racial superiority to black women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biracial women</td>
<td>have the same outcome as black women in this regard.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black man + biracial woman</td>
<td>she thinks she is better than us and</td>
<td>why can’t he appreciate a ‘real’ black woman? (in the eyes of black women) -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>= well done in the eyes of a black man (same as with white woman but maybe this is even better)</td>
<td>second reaction similar to thought of white women stealing black men from them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>= most white people just see this as two black people together</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents and child</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White father + biracial adult</td>
<td>seen as dating to outsiders, he has agency she does not (gold digger + sex object)</td>
<td>‘she must be a prostitute’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White mother + biracial adult</td>
<td>seen as dating, she has agency but less for she is a woman,</td>
<td>he has agency to but less because he is seen as Black,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White mother + biracial child</td>
<td>he might be dangerous for her (as seen by White outsiders)</td>
<td>‘he is her gigolo’ (gold digger + sex object)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White father + biracial child</td>
<td>child is adopted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biracial mother + her white</td>
<td>she is the nanny</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biracial father + his white</td>
<td>dangerous, might be a kidnapping (‘must save White child’), not related</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biracial adult daughter +</td>
<td>daughter is the nanny/nurse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When this is with opposite sex (example elderly white father + biracial daughter or elderly white mother + biracial son, a sexual relationship is expected)

Biracial child (adult or child) + black parent = they are related
Biracial child (adult or child) + white parent = power relationship ( when an adult this relationship is seen as sexual and when the biracial person is a child, this child must be adopted - in both cases white individuals are always seen as more powerful )