

“It is not possible to be Dutch, and Muslim, and Black”:
Second-Generation Youths’ Everyday Practices of
Resisting Racism and Islamophobia in the Netherlands

by

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Abstract

Xenophobia and nationalism are rising in countries across Europe and ‘Western,’ liberal democracies globally. Alongside anti-immigrant discourses, Islamophobia and anti-Blackness – two forms of racism – work to exclude certain bodies from full social citizenship. Taking the Netherlands as a case study, this research interrogates normative constructions of citizenship and the everyday register of belonging by investigating how second-generation Black and Muslim Dutch youth resist and subvert processes of exclusion and how they imaginatively prefigure different futures and realities.

In this research, semi-structured interviews and a 14-week theatre project are both the method and the object of study in and of itself. Approaching this research with an ethics of solidarity, I use theatre to engage participants more fully in the research process and as a tool to further theorize more unconscious or intuitive practices. I specifically focus on the everyday: this micro-level of analysis reveals how marginalized Dutch youth grapple with complex yet mundane dilemmas and enact different visions for the future through seemingly ordinary and commonplace gestures and decisions.

First, I look at how normative white Dutch discourses of exclusion, such as the expression *doe normaal* and the lexicon around ‘othering,’ work to foster a fragmented sense of belonging among racialized Dutch youth. Second, I examine the importance of affect and emotion as tools both in normative discourses of exclusion of mainstream white Dutch society and in coping mechanisms and visions of alternate realities of marginalized Dutch youth. Third, I analyze how the practices of everyday resistance employed by second-generation Dutch youth are mediated and tempered by pressures to

assimilate but also how resistance, instead of being *against* something, prefigures alternate futures.

This research calls for racialized Dutch youth, policy makers, and educators to expand the lexicon with which to engage and enhance public dialogue around racism and Islamophobia in the Netherlands. It also invites white Dutch society to sit with and practice discomfort as a way of moving beyond white innocence and other forms of privilege which shut down conversation. Finally, it contributes to understanding resistance as working in the margins of consciousness towards a third space of imagined possibilities.

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Introduction

Current migration to Europe is portrayed as a ‘crisis,’ an uncontrollable ‘wave,’ and an ‘invasion.’ Far-right nationalist parties such as Geert Wilders’ *Partij voor Vrijheid* (Party for Freedom) in the Netherlands and *le Front National* in France have made significant gains in the last decade. In the United Kingdom, Brexit was won largely on anti-immigrant sentiment. Using the Netherlands as a case study, this research examines how the children of racialized immigrants navigate a Dutch context of growing anti-immigrant and Islamophobic sentiment, shared across many Western European countries. During the 2017 Dutch national election campaign, several political parties appealed to anti-immigrant sentiment. In the Netherlands, as in other European countries, discourse around immigration, particularly of Muslims, is increasingly xenophobic (Ghorashi, 2014; Korteweg, 2017; Schinkel & van Houdt, 2010; van der Veer, 2006). The resurgence of far-right nationalism and xenophobia, specifically in the form of Islamophobia, has been measured by various research think tanks (going back to the mid-1980s, but becoming more frequent after 9/11) using attitudinal surveys and statistics on racially motivated crime and cases of discrimination (Esposito, 2011; European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2017) and takes place in the context of rising migration from Muslim countries and fear around terror attacks (Bangstad, 2014; Halikiopoulou & Vlandas, 2019; van der Valk, 2015; Witteveen, 2017). Additionally, anti-Black racism and the legacies of colonialism continue to be societal issues in Europe (Essed & Hoving, 2014; European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2018; Wekker, 2016). Movements such as Decolonizing the Academy and *Zwarte Piet is Racisme* (Black Piet is Racist) (Gario, 2012) draw attention to ongoing, structural racism. Alongside xenophobic

discourse around migration, these two forms of racism – Islamophobia and anti-Blackness – work together to exclude certain bodies from the national imaginary of what it means to be ‘Dutch.’ These discourses are ostensibly couched in fears around the current, ongoing migration ‘crisis’; yet they have a material and emotional impact on second-generation racialized European citizens and grave implications for the universal promises of citizenship. This case study, though focused on the Netherlands, speaks to challenges around migration and integration in Europe and other ‘Western,’ liberal democracies more globally.

The experiences of second-generation Black and Muslim youth in the Netherlands reveal certain inequalities inherent to current, neoliberal applications of citizenship: on the one hand, second-generation youth have legal citizenship of the country in which they are born (what is called *de jure* citizenship), which supposedly confers upon them all the rights and responsibilities of citizenship status. On the other hand, if they look different than the dominant, white majority, their social membership (what is also called *de facto* citizenship, or everyday sense of belonging) is called into question (Arendt, 1951; Somers, 2008). In addition, the multiple, intersecting identities of second-generation youth are often politicized in the wider context of contested citizenship. This erosion of the right to legal and social membership is what is referred to as “precarious,” “contested,” or “second-class” citizenship (Benhabib, 1999; Butler, 2003; Emecheta, 1974; Goldring, Berinstein, & Bernhard, 2009; Soysal, 1994; Young, 1989). Hannah Arendt (1951) famously describes citizenship as “the right to have rights” (p. 177). However, these rights are diminishing as increasing numbers of people who have “de jure citizenship [are] being expelled from rights-bearing terrain” (Somers, 2008, p. 118). No-

fly lists, racial profiling, and heightened security are ways in which citizenship is increasingly circumscribed. As Arendt (1951) describes, the right to have rights is an ideal rather than a reality because when people are stripped of their rights, they become the “scum of the earth” (p. 267). In a neoliberal age, Somers (2008) states that citizenship has become contractual and commodified leading to social exclusion. This loss of meaningful membership, she argues, is the loss of the right to have rights, which is a precondition for citizenship. This research uses theatre as method to ask how second-generation Black and Muslim Dutch youth are responding to the erosion of citizenship rights and what belonging means for these citizens whose daily sense of belonging is circumscribed.

Sara Ahmed (2000) points out in her investigation of ‘strangers’ that the idea of a unified nationhood relies on a generalizable other. Universal national values and a coherent ‘we’ are imaginary, and yet instrumental in nation-building projects. Iman, a 27-year-old Somali-Dutch university student I interviewed, describes how she feels excluded in a visceral way both as a Black woman and as a Muslim: “For some people, it is not possible to be Dutch, and Muslim, and Black...The skin I am in, I cannot change that. It is a big part of me. Some people say they are colour blind. But skin also has its own culture, its own history, its own story and to say you don’t see that is kind of diminishing it” (Interview with Iman. December 4, 2016). In exclusionary discourses and processes, skin becomes a “locus of differentiation” (Ahmed, 2000, p. 50) because it registers familiarity and strangeness. Iman echoes Ahmed, who says: “Skin is a border that feels” (*Ibid.* p. 45). Familiarity and strangeness are what Iman is grappling with; she wonders when she will be part of the ‘us’ as defined by the white majority but refuses to give up

her history and culture to do so. The term “impossible subjects” (Ngai, 2004) refers to racialized ‘illegal aliens’ in the United States as “simultaneously a social reality and a legal impossibility – a subject barred from citizenship and without rights...a person who cannot be and a problem that cannot be solved” (p. 4-5). The idea of impossibility applies differently but is also relevant in a European context where racialized bodies are excluded from the national imaginary of who belongs. Inspired by Iman, I use ‘impossibility’ in an intersectional sense rather than a legal sense to describe the impossibility of being at once Dutch, racialized, and Muslim. My research investigates how Black and Muslim second-generation youth navigate, claim, and explore identity politics in a setting where they are made to feel like an impossibility.

The societal and political processes that surround the creation of ‘impossible subjects’ are what I refer to in my writing as ‘othering’ – the ways in which certain people are made into strangers by the dominant majority. Ahmed (2000) describes how the stranger has been produced as an ‘othered’ being, not merely someone we do not recognize, but someone who is already recognizable as a stranger because of specific characteristics that make them stand out from the normative culture. This, says Ahmed (2004a, 2004b), is how ‘othering’ takes place: it connects strangers of a certain type through the creation of ‘sticky’ categories which cause emotions such as fear to attach to certain markers, circulate, and grow. Orientalism (Said, 1979) – the creation and representation of ‘East’ and ‘West’ as opposing cultures, with the East as an inferior culture – works in much the same way as it promotes “...the difference between the familiar and the strange” (*Ibid.* p. 43) and creates an ‘us’ and ‘them.’ This binary thinking also translates into a dangerous but common ‘Western’ narrative around saving ‘inferior’

cultures from themselves (Spivak, 1988). In the Netherlands, fear has crystalized around the spectre of the migrant and a hypothetical “clash of civilizations” (Ghorashi, 2014; Huntington, 1997). In the current climate around migration, Black and Muslim migrants have been constructed as dangerous, unwelcome interlopers into Fortress Europe. Halleh Ghorashi (2014) argues that migrants have never been fully incorporated into Dutch society because of “...the assumption that migrants are completely different from the Dutch (they have not been considered as full citizens) with particular cultural characteristics that are incompatible with ‘Western’ society” (p. 111). This ‘incompatibility’ also implies a hierarchy of culture, with ‘Western’ culture at the top. In this sense, Dutch colonial history continues to have a sustained presence in current constructions of ‘us’ and ‘them,’ posturing of “white innocence,” and the ongoing denial of racism in the Netherlands (Wekker, 2016), which is connected to experiences of “everyday racism” or how structural racism is reproduced in everyday encounters (Essed, 1990, 1991).

My research creates space for experimenting with how we can converse, behave, and interact differently *and* reflects on the extent to which these experiments work and fail to manifest alternate realities. Theatre assists in accessing a third or marginal space (hooks, 1990) for reflection and prefigurative practice. In using theatre as method to have conversations about racism, Islamophobia, belonging, and resistance, this research aims to be generative rather than extractive. At the same time, these conversations are an object of study in and of themselves. I reflect on theatre’s capacity for training “one’s imagination to go for a walk” (Arendt, 1982; quoted in Disch, 1993, p. 686) or for “world”-travelling (Lugones, 1987) in order to view a situation from multiple

perspectives and thus increase our critical understanding of the world, each other, and ourselves.

Chapter one gives a theoretical overview of the concepts I use in this research to theorize belonging, citizenship, and resistance in the experiences of second-generation Dutch youth. Though I first approached my research through the lens of citizenship, it became clear that my research participants connected more strongly with the concept of belonging; thus, I take belonging as a foundational concept through which I approach emotions and affect, processes of ‘othering’ and second-class citizenship, and practices of resistance. In the second chapter, I provide a broad history of migration in the Netherlands, including policy and discursive changes that have occurred in the last century. Here, I focus on the culturalist turn, which took place in the 21st century, to describe how a preoccupation with culture as a barrier to migrant integration has positioned ‘barbaric’ others in opposition to ‘liberal,’ ‘progressive,’ white, Dutch nationals with particular consequences for Muslim women.

My methodological approach for this research involved fostering an emotionally safe(r) space for participants to reflect on and discuss oppression and belonging, to develop advocacy tools and strategies against oppression, and to facilitate a public conversation around integration, belonging, and racism. The third chapter, then, describes how, as part of my participatory research practice, I collected data through designing and delivering a 14-week participatory theatre project with ten youth in Rotterdam, as well as via semi-structured interviews with 21 youth and key informants from different parts of the country. In this chapter, I analyze the public performance of our ‘Theatre School of Resistance’ and the capacity of Theatre of the Oppressed (Boal, 1979) – the popular

education technique I used – to foster public dialogue and “rehearse resistance” (*Ibid.*). My participatory research practice also extends into thinking about an ethics of solidarity (Reynolds, 2014) and how to position both myself and my research approach in relation to questions of power and decolonization (Smith, 1999). In this sense, while I foreground the experiences of marginalized youth, I take their experiences as a launching point for ‘researching back’ or ‘researching up’ (Chilisa, 2012; Smith, 1999) in an effort to turn the research gaze back onto workings of power and refuse “inquiry as a form of invasion...damage-centered studies, rescue research, and pain tourism” (Tuck & Yang, 2014, p. 811). This chapter also discusses the imperfect ways in which this played out in my participatory theatre project.

In Chapter four, using Foucauldian (1982, 1995, 2008) concepts of discursive and disciplinary power, I provide a deep description of two ways in which white Dutch society makes people feel like ‘others’: namely, the ways in which the concept of ‘normal’ is created and sustained in daily life and the words that are used alternately to create and avoid dichotomous distinctions between ‘us’ and ‘them.’ Drawing from Sara Ahmed’s (2000, 2004b, 2004a) thinking on affect, I investigate the idea of ‘fragmented belonging’ in Chapter five, including the affective ways in which white Dutch society engages with people who are considered outsiders and how second-generation youth negotiate emotional belonging using affect. Through this investigation it became clearer to me that nationalism and neoliberalism deeply impact second-generation Dutch youths’ practices of resistance to racism and Islamophobia. In the sixth and final chapter, I look at these practices through the lens of the everyday and demonstrate how Black and Muslim Dutch youth often adapt to dominant societal norms in order to resist. This shows how

practices of resistance are shaped and constrained by power and affect, but also how second-generation youth are adapting to society in order to make it work for them and to change it.

A short introspective

Undertaking this research was important for me personally because of my family roots in the Netherlands. Both the paternal and maternal sides of my family are Dutch and I have dual Dutch-Canadian citizenship. I grew up in a homogenous white, Dutch community alongside third-generation Dutch-Canadian children like myself. Yet the Netherlands was always something intangible. The practices that were passed down were disconnected from more material aspects of the culture such as food, language, clothing, or music and more connected to intangible values, norms, and beliefs such as Calvinism and the protestant work ethic. For a long time, I had wanted to spend a significant amount of time in the Netherlands to learn more about my heritage and determine whether I wanted to live there. The PhD afforded me the opportunity to do so.

I crafted a research topic with these thoughts in mind. What I did not expect, however, was how my own journey of belonging and connection might converge and diverge from the experiences of second-generation Black and Muslim Dutch youth, particularly since my reality as a privileged white woman varies significantly from theirs. Despite these differences, there have been surprising and humorous points of connection. For instance, a major buzzword in the Netherlands and in Europe more broadly is ‘integration.’ In my interviews, I was often asked questions about how the Dutch community ‘integrated’ into Canadian society. Since we are white, we blend in

with the mainstream majority. However, the Dutch, if they were Protestant, chose not to ‘integrate’ into existing churches; rather, they created their own Dutch Reformed church, which has since splintered into a variety of denominations of varying levels of conservatism. In addition, these Dutch Protestants did not send their children to the Canadian public school system. Instead they created their own private Christian (Calvinist) primary schools, high schools, and eventually even colleges and universities which are now well established in Canadian (and American) society. This has led to a community that sets itself very much apart from mainstream society and which, in many ways, has not integrated fully. As a result, even today there are third- and fourth-generation Canadians who identify as Dutch-Canadians and live their life within the sphere of the Dutch-Canadian community – my family included, to some extent.

In one theatre workshop during my research we created monologues about the first time we felt we were different; my story of venturing out of my Dutch Calvinist church to another Protestant church for a summer day camp provoked a lot of comments. Second-generation youth were intrigued that white Dutch immigrants to Canada had not fully ‘integrated’ and that there were communities of Dutch-Canadians and Dutch-Americans living in North America. This interest likely stems from the irony around critiques they and their communities face for not fully ‘integrating’ into Dutch society. I include these stories here intentionally, as they formed an important part of building rapport with participants in my study and they reveal my positionality and some of my subconscious and conscious understanding of these issues. I do not want to elide the differences between me and my research participants; however, stories of mother-

tongues, feeling different, and heavy religion provided small resonances during interviews and the theatre workshops.

While living in the Netherlands, despite having legal Dutch citizenship and racially ‘passing’ as white Dutch (I was often told that I look very ‘Dutch’), I quickly realized that my *de facto* citizenship could be questioned: particularly when I said anything critical about Dutch society. This was, in a small way, a shared experience with participants, albeit with very different implications. How I was read by people who are part of the mainstream white Dutch society, for example Dutch relatives or colleagues at the (mostly white) university where I was a guest scholar, became relevant to my research. As I was engaging in questions of race and migration, which I soon understood to be contentious and often taboo topics, I was deemed as not a knower or not capable of fully understanding. Full, objective knowledge of these topics was closed off to me because of my embodied positionality as not ‘Dutch enough.’ This dissertation is my effort to articulate how I saw this practice, and others, shut down and close off conversations around race and migration with other white Dutch citizens. While ‘not knowing’ is one form of controlling who belongs in (and gets to critique) Dutch society, the youth I worked with identified and critiqued other forms of social control around belonging.

These dynamics are apparent in other societies. At times, I narrate parallels to Canada, since it is the context with which I am most familiar and one of the lenses through which I make sense of these experiences. While the Netherlands is a nation with a history of colonial imperialism and Canada is a settler-colonial nation; there are similarities and differences in how racism and Islamophobia manifest, operate, and are

perpetuated in both Dutch and Canadian contexts. Writing this dissertation is my own form of resistance. I write in the hope that by revealing different practices of ‘othering,’ more can be done to resist them.

A note on terminology and grammar

Terminology is fraught in all discussions about ‘othering.’ I have struggled with how to identify people when politics around identity are what is problematic in the first place. For instance, I use the word ‘racialized’ to identify non-white people though I agree that we are all racialized – to put it in overly simplistic terms, white people are racialized in positive ways and non-white people in negative ways. Along these same lines, it is important to note that while I refer to my research participants as Black and Muslim second-generation Dutch youth, only some of them identify as Black *and* Muslim. Some identify as Black, others as Muslim, and a few as neither. It would be more accurate to write Black and/or Muslim; however, for ease of writing I simply use ‘and’ in the recognition that I am writing about experiences that are common to Black and/or Muslim second-generation youth. Additionally, I have chosen to use hyphenated descriptors (i.e. Somali-Dutch) to describe second-generation Dutch youths’ cultural and/or ethnic background. Though it would be more accurate to simply state ‘Dutch youth,’ what I am investigating is ‘othering’ and so it is necessary to name the identity factors that white Dutch society problematizes. This is one area where my Canadian socialization is obvious. Hyphenation is not as common in the Netherlands as in Canada. Though fairly ubiquitous in Canada, it is contested (Mahtani, 2002). However, I chose to use it for ease of writing instead of the current, unwieldy, Dutch appellation *met*

imigratie achtergrond (with an immigrant background), which would still require identifying *which* immigrant background is being problematized.

There are also a couple areas where I use certain terms or grammar intentionally, for which I have a political rationale. First, I draw attention to the way in which I intentionally use the terms ‘Black’ and ‘white’ though, as I will show in Chapter four, these terms are loaded and often avoided in the Netherlands. I capitalize Black but choose not to capitalize white. It is generally acceptable grammatical practice to capitalize the names of cultures, ethnicities and groups of people (i.e. Yoruba, Arab, or Dutch) and capitalizing Black refers to people of the African diaspora (Tharps, 2014). Conversely, white people do not usually refer to themselves as a group (although with the rise in nationalism one could argue that this is changing) as many of them can trace ancestry to specific locations in Europe. Though they are not a homogenous group, I capitalize ‘Black’ in reference to people of the African diaspora in an acknowledgement that, for many, the trade in enslaved people has disrupted familial or national connections (Touré, 2011). I also capitalize Black to center and acknowledge the truth of the people I write about (Kapitan, 2016) as so often whiteness works to erase, discredit, and dismiss marginalized knowledges. Along these same lines, though I do intentionally name whiteness I do not capitalize ‘white’ in order to draw attention to the ways in which whiteness is taken-for-granted and normalized. I recognize this practice is grammatically inconsistent. Like Kapitan (2016), I do not particularly feel the need for grammatical consistency when unequal treatment persists in society and grammar may serve to perpetuate and obfuscate these realities.

Second, I refer to racism and Islamophobia not interchangeably – in a recognition of the different signifiers at work – but rather simultaneously in order to acknowledge that the same processes of ‘othering’ and power operate in both phenomena. While racism is typically equated with phenotypical distinctions such as skin colour, racism has always involved more than mere physical differences – it has been about maintaining culture, class, and power differentials (Goldberg, 2015; Stoler, 2002, 2008). Likewise, Edward Said (1979) demonstrates how Orientalism was never solely about religious superiority but encompassed cultural and racial superiority as well. In this sense, I take Islamophobia to be a manifestation of racism as it operates with the same premise of cultural, racial, and religious superiority. While Islamophobia has had a sustained presence since the Middle Ages (Mastnak, 2010; Said, 1979), it has increased in significance in the 21st century with the supposed “clash of civilizations” (Huntington, 1997) and the global ‘War on Terror.’ Racial, cultural, and gendered dimensions are intertwined with the religious aspects of Islamophobia (van der Valk, 2015), which necessitates an intersectional approach. For example, often when a participant was explicitly using the words race or racism they would be talking about discrimination not only based on their skin colour but their culture or gender as well, demonstrating how racism and Islamophobia operate at the intersections of multiple identity markers. This makes it difficult, if not impossible, to consistently parse down exclusionary practices to ‘sexism,’ ‘racism,’ or ‘Islamophobia’ as often they are entangled. Subsequently, I use racism and Islamophobia simultaneously throughout but try to denote the ways in which the gendered, raced, cultural, and religious aspects of racism and Islamophobia play out and buttress each other in different ways.

Finally, I use double quotes “” to quote a source directly and single quotes ‘ ’ to problematize certain terms. All non-English words are written in italics and presented using the spelling of that language. I translate non-English terms in brackets. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own and I take full responsibility for any errors.

Chapter 1: Theorizing Belonging, Citizenship, and Resistance with Second-Generation Youth in the Netherlands

This chapter provides a theoretical account of belonging, citizenship, and resistance in order to provide a conceptual frame through which to better understand the experiences of second-generation Black and Muslim Dutch youth. In this chapter, I define belonging and how it relates to my research. I start with an analysis of the emotional aspect of belonging, which I see as the primary sense of belonging. Then I look at belonging through the lens of normative values around social membership as well as formal legal structures including citizenship; specifically, how these aspects of belonging are influenced by neoliberalism and can be theorized using analytical tools of discursive and disciplinary power. Following this, I look at resistance, namely the micro and macro practices and strategies of claiming belonging.

Belonging as a Foundational Concept

Though I initially framed my research with second-generation youth around citizenship, the concept of belonging emerged frequently in conversations, interviews, and the theatre project. Given these frequent encounters, I decided that a more productive approach to understanding how second-generation youth approach citizenship is through the concept of belonging. This research thus takes belonging as a foundational concept through which other concepts such as citizenship and practices of resistance can be explored. Through my fieldwork, it became clear to me that belonging is foremost an emotional connection or an affective sense and this emotional connection is experienced through social membership, personal/group identities, and formal legal citizenship. Elaine

Lynne-Ee Ho (2009) argues that citizenship is constituted and contested through the emotions, thus giving credence to approaching citizenship through an exploration of belonging and affect. Caroline Nagel (2011) categorizes belonging into four areas: emotional, formal, normative, and negotiated. I draw on Nagel's four categories of belonging in order to give structure to my observations on the experiences of citizenship, belonging and resistance for second-generation Dutch youth.

Emotional Belonging

Belonging is a concept that is frequently mustered by politicians, in the media, and in society yet it is rarely defined. In day-to-day usage, there is a common assumption that everyone understands what is meant by belonging. In this section, I refer to *belonging* as an emotional attachment to social or economic locations, identity/ies, people, groupings, or places which can be circumscribed by normative values, ethics, politics, and social mores. I draw here on Nira Yuval-Davis' (2006) levels of belonging: she starts with social locations, then moves on to identifications and emotional attachments, and ends with ethical and political value systems. I thus examine belonging "...as an emotionally constructed category to understand its implications for citizenship and nationhood" (Ho, 2009, p. 791). *Emotional belonging*, then, is not only an embodied phenomenon, but one that is deeply connected to the places, people, and policies that shape our lives. While emotions are regularly overlooked in favour of more rational, scientific language when discussing citizenship and belonging (*Ibid.*), it is important to give primacy to the emotional component of belonging as individuals engage with citizenship and social membership through affect. Emotional belonging includes

attachment and affect: how one *feels* about belonging to a particular identity, space, or place. Children of immigrants often manage complex situations; despite being born in the Netherlands, the racialized Dutch youth in this study are often made to feel like second-class citizens. Second-generation youth use affective responses to navigate societal expectations and normative values which may work to exclude them. The concept of emotional belonging must necessarily consider emotional subjectivity as well as emotional representation (*Ibid.*). Citizenship is not solely an intellectual or legal construct. It is “constituted and contested through the emotions” (*Ibid.*, p. 789). Like Ho, I argue that it is important to give space for emotions when discussing citizenship, as emotions are called upon both by the state to produce certain behaviours and ways of thinking, and by citizens, both individually and collectively, when critically reflecting and acting in response to state and societal discrimination.

Multiple signifiers become relevant when discussing belonging; the presence of these signifiers underscores the importance of intersectionality for conversations around belonging and citizenship (Crenshaw, 1989; Hill-Collins, 2015). Wood (2013) argues that a focus on emotions allows for a greater variety of differentials in citizenship identities and experiences to emerge, whether through axes of gender, class, race or age. Many people may identify with the identity marker of ‘woman,’ for example; however, it means something different to be a working class, brown, middle-aged, hijab-wearing woman than it does to be an upper-class, white, young, university-going woman. These different aspects of someone’s identity come together to form a unique whole and can be perceived differently depending on the social and political context. Emotional belonging allows for

a deeper and more intersectional understanding of people's lived experiences and the ways in which inequality operates.

Analyses of belonging must also consider questions of scale. Belonging is experienced at the most intimate level – our bodies – yet profoundly impacted by meso- (e.g. community or institutions) and macro- (e.g. urban or national) scalar happenings. Two distinct categories of inquiry – emotional subjectivity and emotional representation (Ho, 2009) – are useful in this regard. Emotional subjectivity examines the experiences of the social world and how individuals and collectives negotiate power relations of citizenship governance. Emotional representation questions the discourse around how citizenship is represented and whose interests this serves. This is similar to Yuval-Davis' (2011) emphasis on the difference between relational belonging (emotional subjectivity) and the politics of belonging (emotional representation). Someone's interior sense of belonging, developed through relationships with others, can be influenced by external normative and political value structures. Ethical values and political norms also wield an influence of their own by structuring concepts, laws, and behaviours. Taken together, relational belonging and the politics of belonging both act on emotional belonging.

The field of emotional geographies (Anderson & Smith, 2001; Davidson & Bondi, 2004; Davidson & Milligan, 2004) draws attention to the ways in which embodied, emotional experiences interact with spaces. Understanding emotion is central to comprehending how we engage with the world around us – “socio-spatial life” (Wood & Smith, 2004) – and this relationship helps make sense of belonging. For instance, Olga den Besten (2010) demonstrates how the emotional relationships of immigrant children from diverse backgrounds towards their local neighbourhoods in Paris and Berlin – where

they carry out everyday activities – contributes to a sense of belonging. Emotional belonging is deeply connected to space and daily encounters.

Furthermore, drawing on research in New Zealand high schools, Bronwyn Wood (2013) demonstrates how a focus on emotions challenges the abstract notions of belonging that are championed by state institutions and practices, such as schools or citizenship policies. For example, primary schools in England and Wales teach children and youth to regulate their emotions as part of “citizenly” behaviour (Gagen, 2015). Young people in Singapore and New Zealand are also conceptualizing and practicing citizenship for themselves during daily social encounters and experiences (Tang, 2015; Wood, 2014). Emotions can motivate activism, shape collective identities, and sustain or burn-out citizenship practices (Brown & Pickerill, 2009). Ho (2014) exemplifies this by demonstrating how Chinese migrants to Canada manage their emotions in their quest for social and economic integration – adjusting their outward emotions towards what are considered appropriate responses within the norms and sanctions of migration regimes in order to fit in and succeed. Analyzing emotions within social relations, then, provides insight into “how emotional relations shape society and space” (Anderson & Smith, 2001, p. 9), and how people interact with policies and dominant social practices around belonging. This is not only an individual undertaking, but also speaks to a dynamic interaction with social relationships and spatial location. Sara Ahmed (2010, 2017) demonstrates how happiness is often described as something we *should* feel, provided we follow the path prescribed by normative social values. Children of immigrants might be burdened with “debts of happiness” (Ahmed, 2017, p. 52) – an obligation to live the type of life their parents gave up. The happiness of second-generation children might also be

construed by the national imaginary as contingent on escaping their family, custom, and culture, in other words, establishing their “proximity to whiteness” (*Ibid.*). As Judith Butler reminds us; “The body is social” (2010, p. 33). It is relationships with others, including others who are seen as strangers, which define the self: “My existence is found outside of myself, in relation to other people; in essence, in relation to what I am not” (*Ibid.*, p. 44). Since embodiment and affect are experienced in relation to others, emotional belonging therefore requires society and place for definition.

Starting with an analysis of the emotional aspects of belonging allows, in turn, for an analysis of the political-legal structures of citizenship and the socio-cultural norms surrounding belonging. The concept of emotional belonging encourages “researching up” or “researching back” (Chilisa, 2012; Smith, 1999); what Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang (2014) term “refusals” – turning the institutional gaze away from the commodification of pain and onto structures of power. Scaling up from an analysis of relational belonging to the politics of belonging gives insight into how exclusion is created and defined:

Belonging is structured through nation-states, but it also takes shape in the multitude of interpersonal encounters that one finds in schools, workplaces, neighborhoods, places of worship, cities, and so on. Such encounters reflect, inform, and reinforce societal understandings of who belongs and where they belong. (Nagel, 2011, p. 121)

Social ‘encounters’ work on an individual’s sense of belonging. Not only does belonging play out on an emotional and personal level, it also involves a macro-analysis of power at the local and national levels. Second-generation youth experience and claim belonging in a multiplicity of ways, depending on the social boundaries that have been established

around belonging and social membership in society. Nagel posits that belonging is primarily “a political process through which different groups produce and reproduce boundaries of membership” (*Ibid.*, p. 120). While Nagel is focusing on what Yuval-Davis (2006, 2011) describes as the politics of belonging or what Ho (2009) describes as emotional representation, her emphasis on the political process which produces membership boundaries is important. These membership boundaries play out in unique ways for second-generation youth. While citizenship holds out a promise of universality, the reality of this promise is quite nuanced. What happens to the universal promise of citizenship when some citizens are not extended the same privileges as others?

I follow Marston and Mitchell’s (2004) definition of citizenship as a “...non-static, non-linear, social, political, cultural, economic and legal construction” (p. 95). Bringing emotions into this definition of citizenship not only provides language for important interpersonal dimensions of citizenship, but also: “...acts as a tool of critical analysis for relating microlevel emotional dynamics to social and political structures” (Ho, 2009, p. 792). Emotional belonging, then, takes on extra-legal significance. It gives space to think about citizenship and belonging for the national citizenry as well as for those experiencing exclusion, whether through precarious or ‘irregular’ status¹ or daily experiences of marginalisation. As demonstrated above, citizenship and social membership norms are also used as a tool of exclusion. I join others (Ahmed, 2000; Appadurai, 2006; Balibar, 2006) in advocating for a critical analysis of nationalism which is becoming increasingly problematic in an era of transnational mobilities and global

¹ Though imperfect, I use the word irregular instead of illegal because, along with the No One Is Illegal (NOII) movement, I do not believe people can be illegal. Actions may be illegal, but individuals can not be. NOII is a loose collection of grassroots migrant justice organizations fighting for freedom of movement for undocumented migrants and refugees. The most active chapters are in Canada, Germany, and Switzerland.

cultural dispersions. This research investigates citizenship in terms of social inequalities for the national citizenry (full members) *and* those who are excluded, either as non-citizens or those whose experiences of substantive citizenship are limited despite their formal legal status.

I have argued above that emotional belonging is circumscribed by social exclusion and the political-legal structures of citizenship. One aim of this dissertation is to demarcate the landscape of exclusion and ‘othering’ in order to more precisely analyse the specific processes which restrict or circumscribe belonging for certain people. ‘Othering’ works in a variety of ways. As in other ‘Western’ nations, people of colour in Dutch society continue to experience exclusion through segregation, exclusionary language, everyday racism, institutional racism, and dominant representations of what it means to be a national citizen (Essed, 1990; Wekker, 2016). In the post-9/11 era and the current geopolitical context surrounding ‘terrorism,’ Muslims have been characterized as particular others who pose a “threat to the nation” (Razack, 2007, p. 19) in ‘Western’ liberal democracies. Various phenotypes or visual markers such as brown or black skin or the hijab are cast as a physical manifestation of this threat to the nation (Abu-Lughod, 2002; Haque, 2010; Maira, 2016; Nguyen, 2011). Sunera Thobani (2007) posits that the universalist claims of nationhood are untenable because a nation is, by definition, created in opposition or distinction to others.

Words play a role in identity formation and the ‘othering’ process. Sara Ahmed (2004a) describes how naming objects sticks and then words start sticking together. In turn, these words generate effects. This is apparent with the conflation of the terms “Islamic” and “terrorists” (*Ibid.*, p. 131). These two words on their own can mean

different things. Not all terrorists are Muslim, and not all Muslims are terrorists. By linking the two words, Islamic terrorist, the two concepts stick together. It becomes difficult to separate Islam from terrorism. Like the term “Islamic terrorist,” figures of hate circulate and grow, says Ahmed, because they do not have a fixed referent – they could be anyone anywhere. In turn, this justifies violence and increasingly repressive state security measures because the national subject is always waiting for the vilified other. The Anti-Terrorism Act 2015, and C-24, dubbed the “second-class citizen” bill,² are examples of this process at work in Canada. The combination of fear and anxiety leads to the structural possibility that anyone could be a terrorist (*Ibid.*). This creates a generalized climate of fear and produces space for governments to capitalize on this fear and enact discriminatory legislation. Fear “works to restrict some bodies through the movement or expansion of others” (*Ibid.*, p. 127). In Canada, this phenomenon is embodied in the lives of Hassan Diab, Mahar Arar, and Mohamed Harkat,³ to name a few.

Like words, symbols take on meaning and negative connotations in the process of ‘othering.’ For example, all women wearing a head covering are grouped under the same rubric of oppressed and backwards, regardless of their background, religiosity, and other identity markers. By grouping them together and homogenizing them, the imagined ‘we’ of the nation groups themselves in opposition to women who cover their heads and paints

² Both bills were tabled by the Canadian Conservative Party under Stephen Harper and became law in 2015. The first broadened the authority of Canadian government agencies to share information about individuals and expanded the mandate of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS). The second, among other things, eroded the rights of naturalized Canadian citizens who hold another citizenship by making it possible to repeal their Canadian citizenship if they were convicted of a serious crime. Parts of Bill C-24 were repealed by the Liberal Trudeau government in 2017.

³ Canadian citizens Hassan Diab, Mahar Arar, and Mohamed Harkat all faced jail time, extradition, and, in some cases, torture, for crimes that they were not convicted of. While the cases of Hassan Diab, Mahar Arar, and Mohamed Harkat are unconnected, what they share in common is the suspension of due process, a presumption of guilt, and the erosion of citizenship rights.

themselves as progressive and tolerant. Ahmed (2004a, 2004b) describes the stickiness of emotions as they circulate between objects and, in so doing, amplify in intensity.

Emotions move between, and attach to, visible or audible symbols. Using the example of hate, she describes how the movement of an emotion as it attaches to different referents (signs or objects) creates a surplus of that emotion. Applying Ahmed's affective economy to the headscarf shows how it becomes an object of hate and fear because of its symbolic connection to Islam. It also means that once an emotion is attached to a certain symbol, in this case the headscarf, one starts noticing other people who cover their heads and connecting those individuals to the same emotion. Though I did not go into my research with the intention of asking questions about headscarves, largely because it has been already widely studied and debated (Abu-Lughod, 2002; Ferguson, 1998; Haque, 2010; Jouili, 2009; Korteweg, 2013; Macdonald, 2006; Partridge, 2012; Zine, 2006), it repeatedly came up in interviews as an important signifier in the tapestry of belonging. The frequent mention of headscarves demonstrates how a symbol takes on affective meaning both for normative white society and for Muslim women; it becomes more than the sum of its parts.

The example of the headscarf also reveals how belonging becomes politicized. Yuval-Davis (2011) claims that identity and emotional constructions of the self become more important when threatened. This is how belonging becomes politicized, but it works on multiple planes. For Muslim women, deciding to wear the headscarf in a 'Western' nation becomes more than just a question of religious belief; it becomes a political statement, a strategy, or a negotiation (Haque, 2010; Jouili, 2009). For normative white 'Westerners,' positioning themselves in opposition to the supposed 'threat to the nation'

allows them to view themselves alternately as saviours, progressive, tolerant, or liberal (Partridge, 2012; Spivak, 1988). While Ahmed demonstrates how emotions stick and grow, Yuval-Davis (2011) expands our understanding by showing how the existence of others challenges normativity so “...boundaries of belonging become more salient and fierce when their naturalness is challenged, because categorization always happens in relation to others” (p. 91). This discussion also demonstrates how an analysis of power is pertinent to emotions and belonging.

In summary, emotional belonging is an important vantage point for citizenship scholars. Citizenship and belonging are constituted through the emotions: incorporating emotions into analyses of citizenship turns abstract concepts into immediate, embodied realities and gives language to emotive expressions and connections of belonging. Emotional belonging gives prominence to the intersections of identities and allows for different experiences to emerge. It also gives insight into the structuring of social-spatial life and the influence of relationships and encounters. By focusing on emotional representation (Ho, 2009) and the politics of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2011) we can turn the gaze back on unequal power relations, structures, and institutions and deconstruct the processes of ‘othering.’ Drawing mainly on Sara Ahmed’s (2000, 2004a, 2004b) engagement with affect, I have demonstrated one way that ‘othering’ operates. In Chapter five, I demonstrate how second-generation Dutch youth engage with the concept of belonging and with experiences of partial belonging, showing how emotions provide a language for understanding agency. The next section builds on my discussion of ‘othering’ by looking at how discursive and disciplinary power influence social and legal belonging and how tolerance and the ‘good/bad’ citizen binary works to exclude.

Social and Legal Belonging

Part of my dissertation is concerned with examining the experiences of second generation Black and Muslim youth with ‘othering’ and exclusion in a Dutch context. As I demonstrated in the previous section, macro-political structures and institutions as well as social norms and values influence feelings of exclusion. The second and third categories of belonging described by Nagel (2011) – normative belonging (social membership) and formal belonging (in relation to state legislation and power) – are useful for analyzing processes of exclusion. These two aspects of belonging, social and legal, work together in specific ways for second-generation youth: though they have legal citizenship status, their daily membership is questioned. In the present age, both normative belonging and formal belonging are shaped by the macro-context of neoliberalism and nationalism.

Neoliberalism is an ideology with three main components: economics, social policy, and governance. First, *economically*, neoliberalism promotes market-led capitalism. It encourages the primacy of the market through policies such as deregulation, devolution, and privatization. Neoliberalism is specifically focused on the individual, entrepreneurial self and tied to expanding the economy, national security, and global power (Brown, 2003). In terms of *social policy*, neoliberalism devolves responsibility for becoming productive citizens away from the state and on to individuals and communities. Neoliberal social policies thus deflect accountability for social inequality, structural barriers, and oppression from the state to individuals. In so doing, neoliberal approaches effectively refute the existence of structural inequalities and systemic power imbalances.

Wendy Brown (*Ibid.*) cautions: "...it also carries responsibility for the self to new heights: the rationally calculating individual bears full responsibility for the consequences of his or her action no matter how severe the constraints on this action" (para. 15). Neoliberal social policy equates 'good' citizenship with one's ability to contribute to the nation-state through gainful employment and the accumulation of social capital, converting those who do not or cannot contribute into 'bad' citizens (Kennelly, 2011; Kennelly & Llewellyn, 2011). As I will show in the next section, this also affects how resistance and activism are figured in popular imagination, specifically which avenues are available to youth as "good youth citizens" which Kennelly (2011a) defines as "those engaged in community work for the purposes of self-fulfillment and resume enhancement" (p. 20). The reduction of citizens to economic actors reduces all decisions to a rational cost-benefit analysis which permeates all aspects of one's life. Finally, neoliberal *governance* refers to the policies and structures put into place to support its social and economic approaches such as disciplining 'deviant' or 'non-compliant' individuals through the prison or welfare systems, for example.

Governmentality, an approach developed by Michel Foucault (2008) to examine political power, can be seen as a set of tools (Rose, O'Malley, & Valverde, 2006) with which to analyze the workings of power – both techniques of power and a broader field of practice. In one sense the term is a misnomer: as a form of analysis governmentality is not just applied to the workings of power at the state level (the government) but it is applied to the process by which human conduct is defined, molded, and reinforced at a variety of political and apolitical levels and institutions, including the level of individuals. As a framework for analysis, governmentality, "...begins with the observation that

governance is a very widespread phenomenon, in no way confined to the sphere of the state, but something that goes on whenever individuals and groups seek to shape their own conduct or the conduct of others” (Walters, 2012, p. 11). Two elements of governmentality, an approach to studying power understood as: “...the way in which one conducts the conduct of men” (Foucault, 2008, p. 186), are useful in understanding processes of exclusion in the Netherlands. These two elements of governmentality – discipline and discourse – influence both social and legal belonging. I borrow discipline and discourse (also referred to as rationalities) in my analysis. While these two elements only form a part of the governmentality toolkit, I use them to reveal particular things about belonging and ‘othering’ processes in the Netherlands.

First, I invoke the idea of discipline: “...the continuous exercise of power through surveillance, individualization, and normalization” (Rose, 1999, p. 23) to examine the ways in which different bodies are disciplined to adhere to certain norms and behaviours. Discipline is a technology of power which works to discipline the conduct of people, not only through institutions, structures, and socialization, but also through self-discipline. It is “...a type of power, a modality for its exercise, comprising a whole set of instruments, techniques, procedures, levels of application, targets; it is a ‘physics’ or an ‘anatomy’ of power, a technology” (Foucault, 1995, p. 215). Disciplinary power is important to an analysis of the ‘othering’ processes at work in Dutch society. My research highlights how disciplinary power works in specific ways in the Netherlands: specifically, bodies which are ‘out of place’ (Ahmed, 2004b, 2017b) are disciplined through discourses of ‘normal.’ An analysis of disciplinary power also extends to self-conduct (Foucault 1985), what I will be referencing as self-discipline. In this sense, it is the taken-for-grantedness of

disciplinary power which makes it so powerful (Adams, 2003): individuals acquire and internalize specific norms, customs, and rules so that over time these appear normal and go unquestioned (Larruina & Ghorashi, 2016). Since power is omnipresent and pervasive in all aspects of society including the everyday, not only do institutions and social relations work to ‘other’ certain people and regulate conduct, people who are the focus of ‘othering’ techniques also self-discipline their own conduct to conform to mainstream norms.

Discourses, the second of Foucault’s elements of governmentality which I use, subtly but powerfully serve to reinforce political power by shaping how people govern themselves: the rationales, norms, and comportment they adopt and promote. It is this sense of governmentality that draws on the latter part of the world – mentality – as the “...idea of mentalities of government emphasizes the ways in which the thought involved in practices of government is collective and relatively taken for granted, i.e. not usually open to questioning by its practitioners” (Dean, 1999, p. 16). Though words are powerful, discourse refers not just to the lexicon used to discipline conduct but also to the ideas, beliefs, practices, dispositions and conducts that form normative structures. Discursive power includes “...routinization, formalization, and legalization of everyday practices. Power is thus no longer a manipulative resource but a web of relations, or structures of dominance, normalizing the actions of dominant and subordinate groups alike” (Ghorashi & Sabelis, 2013). This web of relations forms the tapestry of what is taken-for-granted in everyday life, attesting to the pervasiveness of power and rendering anything that falls outside of the taken-for-granted discourse as crazy, incomprehensible, or strange (Hook,

2001). Discourse produces specific ways of knowing or a system for how the world can be known (Jirri, 2015) and works, then, to inhibit and produce certain ways of being.

Using theatre, my work attempts to disrupt the taken-for-granted nature of disciplinary processes and ‘othering’ discourses at work in the Netherlands, such as words used for ‘others,’ popular expressions that reinforce normativity, or national values like tolerance. I take a critical feminist, decolonial approach in analyzing these practices. First, collectively, theatre allows us to build from the lived experiences of participants in order to rupture the taken-for-grantedness of the everyday, take a step back, and critically reflect on the power, processes, and effects of certain exclusionary discourses. Second, we ‘play’ with and disrupt different discourses by rehearsing different possible responses and envisioning alternate futures.

The analytical tools of disciplinary and discursive power can be applied to the idea of tolerance. Tolerance is a form of governing which simultaneously regulates subjects and legitimates state power. Connected to the Dutch discourse around ‘normal’ which I analyze in Chapter four, the Dutch value of tolerance positions white Dutch culture as ‘liberal’ and ‘progressive’ and non-white cultures, particularly Muslims, as ‘conservative’ and ‘backwards.’ As in other ‘Western,’ liberal democracies, tolerance subsumes race, ethnicity, sexuality and other markers under the broader umbrella of cultural practices and beliefs and dismisses them as religious, which then confirms that those doing the tolerating are neutral and secular (Brown, 2008, p. 45). As such, tolerance demonstrates a certain magnanimity towards the tolerated while conferring superiority to supposedly tolerant individuals and groups. The word itself implies merely a strategy for coping as opposed to full acceptance. In addition, tolerance serves to reproduce dominant

group norms (*Ibid.*). Brown argues that tolerance as a state discourse and practice has become prevalent partly because of a “legitimacy deficit” (*Ibid.*, p. 83) in democracy. The state has turned to tolerance as a tool of legitimation precisely because of the erosion of the state’s ability to embody universal representation (Brown, 2008; Thobani, 2007). The inability to follow through on the promise of universal representation also means the pretense of norm-free cultural standing and liberal values of assimilation, secularism and equality are called into question. As Brown (2008) notes, this means that:

...state promotion of tolerance can serve simultaneously to distract from these losses, to resurrect the neutral status of the state on a post-universal footing, and to expand state power to pursue ‘intolerant’ and even violent domestic and foreign policies....State speech about tolerance grows more vociferous as the state falters in its commitment to equal treatment, when it focuses on difference rather than equality. (p. 96)

Understanding how tolerance works to govern the citizenry is also important for understanding social exclusion. Practicing tolerance allows the ‘tolerators’ to believe that they are good and that the ‘tolerated’ are bad. This is one way the ‘good/bad’ citizen binary manifests. Nations also show tolerance by allowing certain immigrants to move along the ‘good/bad’ spectrum. For example, Aihwa Ong (2003) demonstrates how American society is based on a bi-racial spectrum. Immigrants find themselves somewhere along this spectrum depending on their phenotype. With hard work and enough social capital, she states, it is possible for immigrants to ‘whiten’ over time and pass as ‘good’ citizens, such as the ‘good Asian.’

In nation-building projects, not only are neoliberal values invoked to create ideals of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ citizens, but people who look or act differently than the social norm are also cast as outsiders in order to increase a sense of national coherence. As discussed in the previous section, values around race, culture, religion, and sexual orientation come together to discursively typify the ideal citizen; people who do not fulfill this notion are deemed unworthy of fully belonging to the national project (Ahmed, 2004a, 2004b; Ong, 2003; Puar, 2007; Thobani, 2007). Archetypes around ‘good’ and ‘bad’ play into processes of ‘othering’ and are often delineated along racial, religious, or cultural lines. The stranger has been produced as an ‘othered’ being, not merely someone we do not recognize but someone who is already recognizable as a stranger because of specific identity traits that make them stand out from the normative culture, someone who is “...already recognized as strange, as not belonging” (Poyntz, 2013, p. 876). Others, or strangers, are used as a nation-building device through the promotion of tolerance, multiculturalism and archetypes of the ‘good’ citizen. In particular, strangers have become associated with danger over time through different discourses and practices (Ahmed, 2000; Poyntz, 2013). The creation of strangers associated with fear and danger leads to political and social exclusion of people who have *de facto* citizenship.

The ‘good/bad’ citizen binary and stranger-making work in tandem with government policies which selectively target certain bodies for differential, negative treatment from the state. As discussed earlier, citizenship and belonging become politicized when they are under threat (Thobani, 2007; Yuval-Davis, 2011). This ‘othering’ plays out in various restrictions and suspensions of citizenship rights and is characterized by fear, vilification, and hatred. The micro-aggressions which call into

question everyday belonging and the discriminatory official policies which call into question legal membership work together to disenfranchise certain bodies that are marked for exclusion as ‘bad’ citizens. For example, Jasbir Puar (2007) shows how Americans demonstrate a liberal self-image of tolerance by accepting homonormative citizens (gay, white male couples living in socially sanctioned relationships) which then allows for discrimination against queers or other communities who do not fit into the normative mold (i.e. queers of colour or people who have alternative sexual relationships). Writing about perceptions of Islam and homosexuality in the USA, Puar (2007) describes the affirmation of homonormative citizens at the expense of demonized others as “homonationalism.” The exceptionalism of homonationalism is contingent on the creation of racial and sexual others who are disqualified from the national imaginary. Puar's homonationalism also accurately describes Pim Fortyn's nationalist party in the Netherlands. Fortyn, a flamboyantly gay politician who was assassinated by a white environmentalist, held a hyper-conservative stance on immigrants and race. Fortuyn portrayed tolerance of homosexuality as an inherently Dutch value and positioned homosexuality as antithetical to Islam and Muslims, thus positioning Muslims as inherently un-Dutch. The exceptionalism of homonationalism is contingent on the creation of racial and sexual others who are disqualified from the national imaginary.

The ‘good/bad’ citizen binary also applies to thinking about ‘good’ and ‘bad’ Muslims. As Sunaina Marr Maira (2016) demonstrates, young Muslim activists whose politics are deemed ‘too’ radical by the state (for mobilizing around pro-Palestinian causes, for example) are categorized as ‘bad’ Muslims. The state exercises its power to categorize certain activities or qualities as ‘bad’ when they are perceived in opposition to

the maintenance of neoliberal state power. In this context, Yuval-Davis (2011) argues that there is a strong connection between the state's need for social cohesion, the process of 'othering,' and the war on terror. The 'good' citizen narrative is used to reproduce myths about nationality and personhood, particularly which people get to be 'good' citizens.

The ways in which the public reacts to these portrayals of 'good' and 'bad' citizens further consolidates the 'othering' of people. Thobani (2007) demonstrates how the proximity of strangers helps people feel at home, but posits that this outcome is substantiated through the 'good' and 'bad' citizen myth. It occurs through what Thobani (*Ibid.*) describes as a process of exaltation: when full citizens are seen as particular types of human beings, belonging to a particular community (distinct from strangers), and "...as the embodiment of the particular qualities said to characterize nationality...this technique of power has been central to the processes of modern national formation" (p. 5). Exaltation also demonstrates how the archetype of a 'good' citizen is produced and reproduced in national narrative and how myths of the national subject become inflated: it seduces people into reproducing myths and norms around their nationality. For example, Thobani (*Ibid.*) shows how national subjects who fail are treated as exceptions, while outsiders who fail are seen as reflective of their entire community, culture, or race. On the other hand, the successes of outsiders are seen as aberrations, and due to their qualities as an individual. The 'good/bad' citizen archetype connects to neoliberal constructions of economic productivity and demonstrates how 'others' are individualized and made outsiders in harmful ways. Exaltation works against connections between national subjects and 'others' because exalted characteristics are only made available to national

subjects while ‘others’ are excluded from owning the same characteristics. This binary is evident in commonly held stereotypes about different immigrant communities. Wendy Brown (2008), Sara Ahmed (2000, 2004a, 2004b), and Sunera Thobani (2007) all point out that what tolerance actually accomplishes is a dissonance between stated values and behaviour: for example, tolerance operates in the Netherlands to exclude certain bodies and control social behaviour, as I explore in more detail in Chapter four.

In summary, this section uses the concepts of disciplinary and discursive power to demonstrate how tolerance reinforces hierarchies of social membership. The myth of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ citizens works to prop up ideas about a worthy and deserving populace positioned against inferior interlopers. Practically, tolerance leads to a democratic deficit and limited societal membership for certain legal citizens. The reality of second-class citizenship mutes the promises of universal democratic principles and depoliticizes public life. For second generation youth, these challenges to belonging play out in complex ways. I will look at the specific ways in which exclusion manifests for second-generation youth in the Netherlands in Chapter four. Understanding how discursive and disciplinary power work is also important when thinking through resistance. What possibilities exist for national subjects, marginalised or not, to resist these pressures? In the next section, I think through the concept of resistance; specifically, how resistance is negotiated in the context of neoliberalism, tolerance, and ‘good’ and ‘bad’ citizenship.

Negotiating Belonging

Neoliberalism shapes how individuals and groups resist, mobilize, and challenge the status quo. In this section, continuing to think with Caroline Nagel (2011) and her

final category of negotiated belonging, I draw on theories of resistance to analyze how citizenship is negotiated, particularly by those with precarious or second-class citizenship. Specifically, I look at the practices and strategies people use to navigate the politics of belonging.

The neoliberal state contains specific logics, grounded in capitalism, which privilege and legitimize certain forms of organizing and mobilizing while delegitimizing others. As I have shown in the previous section, neoliberalism defines which issues are considered political and structural and which are individual; this devolution of responsibility for success further legitimizes state power, allowing it to enact even more neoliberal policies. Soo Ah Kwon (2013b) demonstrates how race and other markers of identity have been depoliticized and cast as individual problems rather than social ones through neoliberal policies enacted in the USA. Drawing again on Sunaina Marr Maira's (2016) work with young Muslim American activists, we can see a distinction between 'good' Muslims (peaceful, economically productive citizens who believe in American democracy) and 'bad' Muslims (those who are skeptical or openly critical of the US government, foreign policy, and the 'War on Terror'). This distinction regulates the behaviour of minorities and draws a dividing line between 'acceptable' citizens and 'radicals,' leaving only certain paths of organizing available within 'acceptable' conduct and limiting radical critiques of the state. Brown (2003, para. 15) argues that tolerance has effectively depoliticized citizenship and encouraged a retreat from public life. For example, Justin Gest (2010) compared the experiences of young Muslim men of Bangladeshi and Moroccan heritage in England and Spain to find out why second-generation Muslim men engage in 'anti-system' behaviour: behaviour that is perceived as

negative in relation to the state. According to Gest, disillusionment is the primary reason why people engage negatively with the system. When the standards of equality and justice that people expect of their government appear to be violated – like the failed promise of universal representation discussed by Brown – it causes “...withdrawal from or rebellion against the political system” (*Ibid.*, p. 215). When policies are unfairly applied to certain people based on race or religion, it reduces confidence in the system.

Discourses of tolerance also undermine the legitimacy and efficacy of political action, effectively depoliticizing issues such as racism. Soo Ah Kwon (2013a) argues that under the neoliberal policies enacted in the USA, race has become a depoliticized and institutionalized concept which is politically neutral, rather than a concept marked by power and inequalities. She demonstrates how the steady dismantling of the welfare state was not just an economic endeavour, but linked to depoliticizing race, culture, and other identity markers which crippled social justice movements. Kwon (2013b) also demonstrates how the racial category of Asian-American was depoliticized by co-opting advocacy organizations and transforming them into social welfare organizations. Identity categories have been steadily depoliticized and individualized. Cindi Katz (2005) discusses how neoliberalism has incorporated activists into neoliberal agendas by turning them into professional grant writers, brokers, and advocates. I can attest to this in my own career in international development and social service work. The transformation of advocacy into social welfare has had a profound impact on how people resist, organize, and mobilize. Katz (*Ibid.*) problematizes this dilemma as part of the politics of belonging:

In the face of numbingly endless “local” iterations of neoliberalism gone global, it is incumbent upon us to analyze...what the seductions of belonging are, how

these seductions are enacted, how belonging can be transformative or resistant, what the long-term costs of being on the “inside” are, and where agency becomes alchemically compromised as “the enemy becomes us.” (p. 631).

It is clear that power – specifically the neoliberal workings of power – and resistance are entangled. Integral to this insight is the recognition that there is an inherent tension between structure and agency inherent in practices of resistance. Strategies and practices such as effecting change from the inside or taking to the streets are littered with compromises, seductions, and challenges. Sara Ahmed (2012, 2017) articulates this tension in her examination of institutional diversity work: by highlighting and celebrating racial (or other forms of) diversity, individuals may see themselves more readily in an institution, but diversity work can also cover up institutional racism and structural oppression by deflecting attention away from whiteness and other hegemonic structures of an institution. Ahmed focuses on universities, but her analysis can be extrapolated to other institutions, including government.

Resistance to neoliberalism necessitates a re-imagining of alternatives. Brown (2003) encourages her readers to prefigure an alternative world that completely rejects an economic configuration of humanity, and rather envisions a world of collaboration and sharing power. She argues for a de-emphasis of the legal trappings of citizenship such as voting or human rights and a centering of an egalitarian distribution of power and wealth. This prefigurative future provides fodder for the creative imagination. Day-to-day realities on the ground both constrain and incite various practices and strategies of negotiation and resistance. How do youth practice resistance when their agency is so entangled with, and circumscribed by, power?

I argue for a broad conceptualization of resistance which includes theorizing through power and its influence and how power itself constitutes, shapes, and restricts practices of resistance. My definition of resistance includes behaviours perceived as subversive, anti-system, or negative and also practices which may be accommodating, assimilating, or disengaging, what I term *adaptive resistance*. These practices and strategies are multivalent, multimodal, and multi-scalar. In this sense, I diverge from many scholars who theorize resistance solely ‘in opposition to’ (Giroux, 1983; Scott, 1985; Willis, 1981); rather, I align with a growing number of scholars who theorize the connections and influences between power and resistance (Bayat, 2015; Hollander & Einwohner, 2004; Lilja & Vinthagen, 2018). I also make a case for theorizing resistance as resistance *towards* alternative futures where practices and ideations of resistance prefigure different visions of society.

My investigation of belonging and resistance is primarily focused on the micro-scalar level: the everyday. Partial social membership, what I term ‘fragmented belonging,’ is experienced not only exceptionally – at the level of institutional policies and practices – but also continually: in daily, mundane social encounters. These everyday social encounters shape and mold second-generation youths’ affective responses. A focus on the everyday allows me to theorize with Philomena Essed’s (1990) seminal work on everyday racism. Based on studies in the Netherlands and the United States, Essed (*Ibid.*) defines “everyday racism” as the daily, micro-level racism people of colour face. Specifically, everyday racism refers to “...the various types and expressions of racism experienced by ethnic groups in everyday contact with members of the more powerful (white) group” (p. 31). In my analysis, I build on Essed’s examination of everyday racism

by examining its counterweight: everyday resistance (Scott, 1985). Taking off from the work of James Scott (*Ibid.*), the investigation of “everyday resistance” has grown to include not only Scott’s focus on anti-state behaviour, but also everyday practices of accommodation (Bayat, 2015; MacLeod, 1991; Weitz, 2001), refusals (Kärki, 2018; Tuck & Yang, 2014), and ideational practices (Richter-Devroe, 2011), all of which may be more difficult to identify as resistance.

In order to readily identify practices of resistance, scholars have attempted to define its common characteristics. Most notably, Hollander and Einwohner (2004) distill the concept of resistance down to three core elements: 1) action, 2) opposition, and 3) recognition and intent. The latter – recognition and intent – are sites of theoretical contention, particularly when discussing everyday resistance. This is apparent in Kärki’s (2018) discussion of “not doings.” While most scholars discuss resistance in terms of positive actions, not doings are intentional omissions based on oppositional attitudes such as refusal, silence, or abstinence. As such, they may not be readily recognized as resistance. My own thinking around resistance has been profoundly shaped by the concept of conscientization (Freire, 2002) which I have used in popular education; however, this research challenged my own notions of conscientization. Conscientization refers to a shift in awareness or in one’s ability to connect one’s personal struggles to structural conditions, similar to Mills’ (2014) sociological imagination. But it also refers to an awareness of the possibility of transforming these conditions. As such, resistance is often connected to both self-awareness, structural oppression, and the possibility of change. Similarly, Henry Giroux (1983) maintains that resistance must not only include critical thinking and reflective action, but also the possibility of bringing together a

political struggle around issues of power and social determination. For a practice to qualify as resistance, some scholars argue, it must not replicate the existing social order, but rather offer possibilities of transforming unequal power relations and structures (Willis 1981). Another way of defining resistance is as “oppositional consciousness” or “a critical analysis of inequalities that links their everyday experiences of injustice to a structural analysis of social inequality and to an awareness of collective forms of action” (Kwon, 2008, p. 60). My research demonstrates that recognition and intent may not always form a part of everyday resistance; rather, these practices are born in the margins of awareness, often as subconscious reactions to the subtle workings of power. Indeed, conscientization often came later in the process of resistance for many of the youth I spoke with.

Taking subtle and subconscious acts into consideration when theorizing resistance shifts our analysis onto the relationship between power and agency and underscores the importance of incorporating affect into an investigation of resistance. When theorizing resistance in this way, it is important to contextualize micro-practices within their everyday environment. It is not the act itself which is necessarily resistant, but the context in which it is deployed that makes it resistance; as such, resistance is socially constructed (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004). Viewing citizenship as ‘ordinary’ shows how legal structures and social norms intersect with the everyday as people negotiate exclusion and marginalization (Staeheli, Ehrkamp, Leitner, & Nagel, 2012). Asef Bayat (2015), in analyzing the Arab Spring, terms this “quiet encroachment” where the poor slowly and steadily chip away at the holdings of the elite in order to ameliorate their lives. Various ethnographers have looked at youth resistance as everyday acts of resistance; for example

in identity formations, work practices, and oppositional culture against their subordinate status as working class or racialized youth (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Getrich, 2013; Kamete, 2013; Kwon, 2008; Nygreen, Kwon, & Sanchez, 2006; Willis, 1981). Using a definition of resistance which encompasses both extraordinary acts *and* rather ordinary or invisible micro-practices of resistance provides a more comprehensive vantage point from which to interrogate citizenship practices that challenge the status quo, disrupt dominant ideologies, envision alternate futures, and claim belonging. I also look at how emotions are connected to resistance. Emotions can work to foreclose action (Brown & Pickerill, 2009): burn-out, apathy, frustration, or withdrawal are common occurrences in activist circles. Jeanette Jouili (2009) describes how Muslim women in France and Germany navigate the tension between observing religious norms and handling societal disapproval of public displays of religiosity. As my research also demonstrates, the creative responses that arise out of this tension are often born out of deep reflection, sacrifice, humiliation, and a sense of loss. As such, these creative acts of resistance around belonging are accompanied by complex emotions.

In his work among peasants in Malaysia, Scott (1985) was the first to analyze the subtle undermining of power such as subterfuge or desertion. He brought a new scale of analysis to attention, diverging from other scholars' focus on bold, extra-ordinary practices of resistance. While some of the youth I worked with are involved in extra-ordinary "acts of citizenship" (Isin & Nielsen, 2008, p. 39) such as protesting, I was interested in examining the more ubiquitous yet infinitely more subtle everyday micro-practices of citizenship and resistance, such as talking back or subtle body language (Cruz, 2011). In addition to practices which are typically viewed as 'negative,' I also

investigate the ways in which youth engage proactively and constructively with individuals and the state, as well as forms of resistance which create alternatives to the status quo such as friendship. There are a multiplicity of ways that citizens engage with the state and their communities, regardless of whether normative social or state values consider these actions positive or negative (Kennelly, 2009a). I use quotes around ‘negative’ and ‘positive’ intentionally to question what is seen as ‘good’ and ‘bad’ or destructive and constructive.

The social construction of resistance also points to how resistance is intimately entangled with power. Social movement literature suggests that oppositional consciousness requires organizational resources and political opportunities for mobilization; however, the efficacy of youth resistance may be hampered by the lack of organizational spaces or opportunities for collective social action which precludes the very possibility of transforming this shift in awareness of the personal to the political into collective social action. This lack of opportunity structure is also an instrument of neoliberal governmentality, a mode of depoliticizing youth action, relegating it to youth ‘culture’ and individual responsibility (Kwon, 2008). It also demonstrates the tension between structure and agency. In her analysis of veiling practices in Cairo, Arlene Elowe MacLeod (1991) calls this “accommodating protest,” where actions are at once expressing dissatisfaction and acquiescence with the status quo. When analyzing Palestinian women’s practices of everyday resistance, Sophie Richter-Devroe (2011) notes how changing the physical and material reality is impossible, therefore Palestinian women focus on creating alternative ideational spaces. My research shows how youth absorb and enact normative societal values in order to resist ‘othering’ in ways that allow

them to push back from a position of relative safety. In the social context of second-class citizenship, *adapting in order to resist* may be a necessary form of self-preservation and survival, though it is often accompanied by prefigurative actions or ideations which imagine and enact a different world.

These practices of resistance are even more compelling because citizens' legal and normative status is very complex: from full members, precarious, or second-class citizens, to non-citizens or “post-citizens” (Soysal, 1994), at any given time, “...people often move in and out of status, and between different degrees of legal status” (Nyers, 2008, p. 165). My research demonstrates how citizenship, though often reified, is a fluid concept. On the one hand, second-generation youth have legal *de jure* citizenship in the country in which they are. On the other hand, if they look different than the dominant, white majority, their social membership, or *de facto* citizenship, is called into question. This leads to the precarity or contestation of citizenship. This is also a compelling site of inquiry because citizens move around while states that confer status stay relatively static creating an “...intensification of social relations through movements and flows [which has] generated new affinities, identifications, loyalties, animosities and hostilities across borders” (Isin 2008, p. 16). One does not need to be a formal citizen in order to be heard and seen politically. There are multiple examples of this happening in today's society, many of them urban-based: the No One is Illegal movement and the *Wij Zijn Hier* (We Are Here)⁴ movement of non-status migrants in the Netherlands are two examples. While my focus is on youth with legal *de jure* membership, recognizing that citizenship is more fluid than static is a reminder not to reify legal definitions of belonging.

⁴ *Wij Zijn Hier* is a group of undocumented refugees and migrants living in Amsterdam who are fighting for state recognition and assistance. <http://wijzijnhier.org/>

Building on feminist analyses of different ways of knowing, and being known by, the 'other' (Ahmed 2000; 2004b; Butler 2010), resistance is also a dialogical act or practice which "...actualizes or performs...a decision that is answerable to the Other" (Isin 2008, p. 30). In this way, acts and practices of resistance are a dialogue between full status citizens, those with precarious or contested citizenship, and those who are outside of the legal understanding of citizenship. It is this dialogical relationship that Isin and Nielsen (2008) elicit when describing performative acts of citizenship: "[t]o perform a 'deed' means politically and aesthetically to anticipate and thus partly shape the possibility of a rejoinder" (p. 4). Similar to Judith Butler's (2010) notion that there is no us without them, practices of resistance also look at how we engage in co-creating something new. Butler (*Ibid.*) states that life is grievable when someone makes a "claim of life" (p. 181). Our existence is defined or contoured by others, is fundamentally relational, and is, ultimately, a social project. In particular, existence is found outside of ourselves, in relation to other people; in essence, in relation to what we are not: "The body...is where we encounter a range of perspectives that may or may not be our own. How I am encountered, and how I am sustained, depends fundamentally on the social and political networks in which this body lives...I am already up against a world I never chose when I exercise my agency" (*Ibid.*, p. 53). Exercising agency is a fundamentally relational practice. In this way, I see practices of resistance as a practical application of Butler's (*Ibid.*) more philosophical engagement with strangers. Alternately subtle and confronting, everyday practices of resistance invite dominant members of society to engage with 'others' in ways that contest normative ideas of belonging, citizenship, and constructions of 'good' and 'bad.'

In conclusion, this section argues that neoliberalism has depoliticized identity categories and devolved responsibility for social ills to the individual level. Resistance – both large-scale “acts of citizenship” and micro, everyday practices – in neoliberal times must be creative, fluid, and nimble. I argue for a definition of everyday resistance which includes subtle practices which may be difficult to identify in the recognition that people are occupying a tight space between surviving and thriving. Often everyday resistance is intuitive and subconscious and works both with and against the workings of power. In Chapters five and six, I will analyze how second-generation Black and Muslim youth are enacting resistance in more detail. These actions occur as daily practices of assimilation in order to push back and resist, thus demonstrating dialogical creativity.

Conclusion

These three sections – emotional belonging, social and legal belonging, and negotiating belonging – have highlighted the theoretical considerations I use in my analysis of second-generation Black and Muslim youths’ experiences in the Netherlands. I use belonging as an umbrella concept to include emotional and interpersonal definitions, legal and normative constructions, as well as negotiated practices, strategies, and claims. I examine neoliberalism and tolerance as using the lens of discourse and discipline and in Chapters four, five and six I demonstrate how discursive and normalizing modes of governing impact second-generation youths’ practices of resistance. I examine resistance in a context of how second-generation Black and Muslim youth claim or negotiate a sense of belonging when their claims, and very being, are contested. In focusing on micro-level political acts there is a danger of advocating a neoliberal version of

resistance. Neoliberalism would have political subjects act solely based on a rational, cost-benefit calculation. By incorporating affect into questions of agency and structure, emotional belonging provides a counter-narrative to viewing individuals as economic actors. A focus on emotions also blurs the distinction between public and private, demonstrating how personal actions taken on a daily basis are political (Benhabib, 1993; Pitkin, 1981; Wood, 2013). Through emotional belonging, the lens of citizenship participation and resistance is widened to include heterogenous, intersectional, and emotive factors; a counter-narrative to neoliberalism. In Chapter four, discourse and discipline are explored in more detail by looking at the specific ways ‘othering’ takes place in Dutch society. Chapter five looks at emotional belonging and affect more in-depth, specifically examining how youth mobilize affect in response to their experiences of ‘othering.’ Finally, Chapter six investigates the practices and strategies of resistance employed by second-generation youth with specific attention to the ways in which their resistance is mediated by power. Before getting into these analytical chapters, I will provide some historical and social context of immigration in the Netherlands in the next chapter, followed by an overview of my methodology.

Chapter 2: A Brief History of Migration Practice, Policy, and Discourse in the Netherlands

This chapter provides a socio-political overview of migration in the Netherlands in order to situate my analysis of racism and Islamophobia experienced by second-generation youth within a historical and political context. Drawing on the work of scholars located in the Netherlands, I outline the history of migration, policy and discursive shifts, and significant socio-political moments in the Netherlands. Most studies on immigrants in the Netherlands focus on people with Turkish or Moroccan origins (Eijberts & Roggeband, 2016; Scheibelhofer, 2007; Waldring, Crul, & Ghorashi, 2015, 2018). My research differs from this trend by analyzing the intersections between anti-Black racism and Islamophobia. In so doing, the research gaze is turned up or back onto Dutch society; rather than focusing on the ‘other,’ the processes of ‘othering’ are the focus. In highlighting the experiences of the second-generation, this research focuses on the segment of the population which the Dutch government identifies as having a ‘migration background’ yet born in the Netherlands. While identity-based data collection in the Netherlands is challenging as there is no census and identity categories are determined and applied by the government, 2018 data suggest that 23% of the Dutch population has a ‘migration background,’ around 11% of which are considered second-generation (CBS, 2018, p. 3). The majority of Dutch citizens with non-Dutch background are identified as Turkish and Moroccan: in these two population groups, the second-generation comprises more than half of this demographic (*Ibid.*, p. 4). Other large groups are Surinamese and Antillean. Many of my participants identify as second-generation Somali-Dutch. While data on second-generation Somali-Dutch is not readily available, the number of Somalis officially registered as residing in the Netherlands rose from

20,000 in 2006 to 35,000 in 2013, with unofficial numbers estimated to be as much as 41,000 (OSF, 2014, p. 24).

As in other European countries, Dutch discourse around immigration, particularly of Muslims, is increasingly xenophobic (Ghorashi, 2014). Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) have all raised concerns about intolerance and discrimination in the Netherlands (De Zwart, 2012). This rise in Islamophobia takes place in a context where ongoing racism, most prominently anti-Blackness, continues to be a societal issue. For instance, in the Netherlands, the *Zwarte Piet is Racisme* (Black Peter is Racist) movement denounces the use of blackface in Dutch *Sinterklaas* traditions (Gario, 2012). These two forms of racism – Islamophobia and anti-Blackness – work together to ‘other’ certain bodies in the Netherlands. This atmosphere permeates my study, weaving throughout the context and setting the stage.

On a political level, in the Netherlands, right-wing nationalist parties such as Geert Wilders' Party for Freedom and Pim Fortuyn's List have made significant gains in popularity over the past two decades. In spite of this, the Netherlands is often still considered a model of multiculturalism and tolerance: an assessment which I will demonstrate is outdated, if it ever was applicable. For example, the Dutch integration law which passed in 1988 was the first of its kind in Europe and shifted from an emphasis on labour market success to cultural integration, placing the burden of success on migrants' ability to adapt and assimilate (Korteweg, 2013). Since this time, policies have shifted from addressing what was seen as the ‘backward’ economic position of migrants in education and the labour market, for example, to addressing integration strictly as a

cultural problem where Muslim culture is viewed as a barrier to integration and a problem for Dutch society (Roggeband & Verloo, 2007). This also displaces attention from discrimination and racism as structural problems, and prevents a self-critical lens where Dutch culture, society, and institutions could be interrogated for their potential barriers for migrants (Jones, 2016). Integration policies now also place a neoliberal emphasis on responsabilizing immigrants for their own success, rather than taking a broader view which would include the societal constraints to integration (Roggeband & Verloo, 2007; Schinkel, 2013; Trifu, 2014). This ‘culturalist’ turn is typical in ‘Western,’ liberal discourses about integration.

I will provide an overview of the different policy shifts and related discursive shifts below and discuss the apparent disconnect between the rise of populism and narratives of tolerance. In order to do so, I have organized this chapter around different historical and political periods in terms of migration. The periods are subdivided chronologically for ease of writing, yet in fact discourses shift in varying ways throughout time. The suggestion of dates should not be understood as firm delineations of specific trends, rather a helpful tool for locating strands of discourses within different socio-political developments. This background demonstrates how current policies and discourses around ‘others’ are historically situated in political events and socially constructed. I close by looking at discourses of tolerance more closely, with a focus on gender and the culturalist turn in migration rhetoric. I turn now to a look at different periods of migration in Dutch history and how discourses and policies were crafted around them.

History of migration

The Dutch Colonial and Imperial Era: 1600-1950

I begin the Dutch history of migration in the seventeenth century – what is known as the Dutch Golden Age – to demonstrate the links between the colonial past and current discourse around migration. During the Golden Age, Dutch ships sailed around the world and the East India and West India trading companies were at their peak. Their cargo included tea, coffee, spices, textiles, sugar, petroleum, minerals, and enslaved peoples.⁵ This was a time of colonial expansion, trade, and financial prosperity. The Dutch imperialist era existed from the 1600s until the independence of Indonesia in 1945 and Suriname in 1975. Though often claimed as reluctant imperialism: “...a mixture of innocent, unplanned actions that forced the Dutch, almost against their wish, to become colonizers, coupled with strong moral overtones of superiority and of a sacred mission” (Wekker, 2016, p. 161), at its peak, the Dutch imperial touch extended as far east as Indonesia and Japan, throughout India and West Africa, and as far west as the Caribbean and North America, calling into question the reluctance with which the Dutch engaged in imperialism. Without the Golden Age, the small country of the Netherlands could never have achieved such financial prosperity nor world power.

In the Netherlands, there is a melancholic nostalgia for this era, most publicly displayed in 2006 by then-Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende who praised the *VOC*⁶ mentality (Jordan, 2014; Oostindie, 2010). Drawing on Gilroy’s (2005) concept of

⁵ At the Black Europe Summer School in 2015, I was introduced to the term ‘enslaved’ and I use it instead of the term ‘slave’ to demonstrate that slavery was something imposed upon people who actively resisted, thereby pushing back against the reified concept that a ‘slave’ is something that people were by their very nature. This is a term promoted by the Afro-Dutch community and others. For further discussion see Dragtenstein, 2004 and Nimako et al., 2014.

⁶ *Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC)* is known as the Dutch East India Company in English.

postcolonial melancholia and Rosaldo's (1993) concept of imperial nostalgia, Gloria Wekker (2016) describes how in the Dutch colonial archive different affects existed for the East Indies and the West Indies which persist to this day: The East Indies (i.e. Indonesia) was (and still is) privileged and idealized, whereas the West Indies (i.e. the Caribbean) was (and is) criminalized and forgotten. Wekker (2016) argues that *Zwarte Piet*, the servant who accompanies *Sinterklaas* on December 5th⁷ and who is portrayed by people wearing blackface, black curly wigs, and large red lips, is one way the Dutch West Indies occupies a space in Dutch memory and culture. Along with this nostalgia, the Golden Age is credited with setting the Netherlands up with its current prosperity (Suvarierol, 2012). The tolerance discourse is taken up again in nostalgia about the Golden Age: a time when Catholics, French Huguenot Protestants, and Spanish and Portuguese Jews (many of them refugees) lived side-by-side in the Netherlands (Buruma, 2007; Korteweg, 2013). As early as the 1700s, there were enslaved people from Africa living in the Netherlands as well as free Black residents comprised of formerly enslaved peoples as well as (mostly) elite educational migrants from the Dutch Antilles in the Netherlands (Hondius, 2009, 2011; van Amersfoort & van Niekerk, 2006).

The negative history of the Golden Age is largely absent in Dutch discourse. Gloria Wekker (2016, p. 13) refers to Dutch imperialism as the "best-kept secret" and describes how her university students are often appalled when learning about the Dutch role in colonialism and the trade in enslaved people for the first time in her classes. Crediting the change due to high numbers of post-colonial migrants in the Netherlands, Oostindie (2012) states that the model of history now taught in primary and early

⁷ *Sinterklaas* is the celebration of Saint Nicholas' birthday and is a separate holiday from Christmas. On December 5th there are *Sinterklaas* parades and children receive gifts.

secondary school includes more emphasis on colonial history. Despite this change in curriculum, very little time is spent in schools teaching about Dutch involvement in colonialism, slavery and the trade in enslaved peoples (Nimako, Abdou, & Willemsen, 2014) and how this curriculum is taught is largely left up to individual teachers. Efforts to shed light on the extent of Dutch involvement in slavery are often met with dismissal (for example, see the conversation between Rossum & Fatah-Black, 2012 and Eltis, Emmer, & Lewis, 2016). This absence of deep talk about Dutch involvement in slavery and colonialism contributes to how the descendants of enslaved peoples and, I would add, current migrants are addressed in modern Dutch discourse (Nimako et al., 2014).

It is also important to note the legacy of the Holocaust insofar as it pertains to discussions of race in the Netherlands. While race was a common concept before World War II, it disappeared from the public lexicon after 1945, not only in the Netherlands but also in other Western European nations such as Germany and France, because of the negative connotations related to the Holocaust (Essed & Trienekens, 2008; Wodak, 2008). Discussions around race are often couched in terms of ‘ethnicity,’ and allegations of racism are equated with accusations of anti-Semitism. Additionally, there is no census in the Netherlands because of the Holocaust-related connotations census-taking carries; in lieu of self-reporting, the Dutch state unilaterally creates racial categories and determines racial identification (De Zwart, 2012). Though it is not my intent to conduct a genealogy of the term ‘race’ and its uses in the Netherlands here, it is important to note the connection between the Holocaust and Dutch concepts of race and racism, particularly for North American readers.

While I have briefly skimmed over 200 years of history here, others have written extensively about the Dutch imperialist period and its links to current-day migration and discourses about ‘others’ (Bosma, 2012; Jones, 2016; Jordan, 2014; Oostindie, 2010; Oostindie & Roitman, 2014; Stoler, 2002; van Amersfoort & van Niekerk, 2006; Wekker, 2014, 2016). For my purposes, it is important to highlight the connections between Dutch imperialism and current socio-political treatment of immigrants. This is evident in ongoing, persistent use of the figure of *Zwarte Piet* in Christmas celebrations (Brienen, 2014; Smith, 2014; Wekker, 2016), in overt sexualization of Black and ‘Orientalized’ women and ‘rescue’ or ‘saviour’ narratives (Bracke, 2011, 2012; de Leeuw & van Wichelen, 2005; Wekker, 2014), and ever-present racist terminology (Hondius, 2011, 2014) to name a few. In addition, from the 1850s until the 1950s, poor Dutch people were categorized as ‘anti-social’ and were sometimes even physically set up in ‘educational housing’ apart from the rest of society where they were expected to learn how to be proper model citizens. Dutch discourse around these ‘anti-socials’ was influenced by eugenics, similar to justifications for the enslavement of Africans. There was an elision between social and biological justifications for the creation of this categorization of ‘others’ which is echoed in how migrant workers from the Mediterranean were viewed in later years (Rath, 1991; Schols, n.d.). This type of social and moral re-education is echoed in social workers’ treatment of migrant families today, complete with home visits and paternalistic discourse around proper homemaking behaviour (van Houdt & Schinkel, 2013).

Temporary Guests: 1950-1975

Large migrant groups have been settling in the Netherlands since the 1940s and 1950s but only in the 1970s did the Dutch government develop a policy for immigrant integration. Before and up to this time, pluralism and tolerance for religious difference were taken for granted by dominant Dutch society (Essed & Nimako, 2006). Migrants during this time were largely brought under the guest worker program or were post-colonial migrants coming from former Dutch colonies such as Suriname or Indonesia. Guest worker programs were set up in other European countries as well, most notably Germany. In the 40s and 50s most guest workers came from southern Europe (Spain, Italy, Portugal, and Greece), though at this time these countries were not yet part of the European Economic Community (EEC – the precursor to the European Union). By the 60s and 70s, larger numbers were coming from outside Europe, specifically Turkey and Morocco. While both the East and West colonial territories were governed by a small, white Dutch elite, the citizenship regimes were markedly different between East and West. In 1892 a law was passed giving the West Indian population Dutch citizenship which was in line with the West Indian colonial policy of creating one linguistic and cultural community (governance through assimilation). In the East Indies there was a social and legal dualism between ‘Europeans’ and ‘Natives’ which fostered an apartheid-like division between the elite white Dutch rulers and their colonial subjects (Jones, 2012). Due to these citizenship laws, pro-independence discourse around Suriname in the Netherlands, for example, revolved around fears about mass migration of colonial citizens to the metropole; ironically, by the time independence became realized in 1975 almost one-third of the Surinamese population had moved to the Netherlands to preserve

their Dutch nationality (Jones, 2016). On the other hand, the Dutch in Indonesia often married Indonesians, creating a racially ambiguous – though legally Dutch – class of people called *Indos* (van Amersfoort & van Niekerk, 2006) who were temporarily stateless when Indonesia declared its independence from the Dutch in 1945. While Indonesian leader Sukarno read the Proclamation of Indonesian Independence on August 17, 1945, the Dutch did not formally acknowledge Indonesian independence until 1949, during which time they fought a protracted, and ultimately unsuccessful, war in Indonesia, euphemistically referred to as ‘police actions’ in the Netherlands.⁸ Both *Indos* and groups who supported the Dutch war in Indonesia such as the Moluccans (also known as the Ambonese) were not immediately offered the full social and legal citizenship that was promised to them by the Dutch. When large groups of Moluccan and Indo-Dutch migrants then came to the Netherlands, they were treated as outsiders (Captain, 2014) and, in the case of the Moluccans, placed in camps. Both types of migrants (labour and colonial) were considered temporary, hence the reluctance of the state to set up specific policies relating to migration (Duyvendak & Scholten, 2012).

At this time migrants were categorized by their country of origin; however, the term *allochtoon*⁹ also started to circulate in official policy documents. In a Dutch context, *allochtonen* and *autochtonen* are used to describe immigrants and ‘native’ white Dutch people. Though the term *allochtoon* literally means “coming from another land,” it is colloquially used to refer to non-white immigrants and their descendants. Tellingly, white

⁸ My paternal *Opa* (grandpa) fought in Indonesia for the Dutch in the late 40s. This history had, and still has, a latent presence in my family.

⁹ *Allochtoon* and its plural form, *allochtonen* literally mean ‘not from the land.’ Likewise, *autochtonen* is plural for *autochtoon*, and are originally geographical terms meaning ‘from the soil.’ For a global history of the term and its usage, see Geschiere (2009), Yuval-Davis (2011), and Yanow & Van Der Haar (2013).

foreigners are exempt from this designation. There is a racialized process at work behind these terms:

People of color will forever remain *allochtonen*, the official and supposedly innocuous term meaning “those who came from elsewhere,” racializing people of color for endless generations, never getting to belong to the Dutch nation. The counterpart of “*allochtonen*” is *autochtonen*, meaning “those who are from here,” which, as everyone knows, refers to white people. (Wekker, 2016, p. 15)

It is unclear when the term *allochtoon* first came into official use. Many scholars point to a 1971 report authored by sociologist Hilda Verwey-Jonker as the point when *allochtoon* entered into policy discourse; others note how the terms *allochtoon* and *autochtoon* were used in other reports for over a decade prior (Yanow & Van Der Haar, 2013). What is telling about the 1971 report is that Verwey-Jonker supposedly landed upon the term *allochtoon* in her effort to avoid using the word migrant (Geschiere, 2009; Rath, 1991). This falls in line with popular Dutch self-image and policy at the time which was that the Netherlands was not a country of migrants.

Dutch pluralism shifted to more explicit and formal regulation of minorities in response to the Moluccan revolts in the 1970s. Moluccans came to the Netherlands as political refugees who had fought with the Dutch colonial army, and who were awaiting liberation of the Moluccan Islands from Indonesia (for more details see Essed & Nimako, 2006; Jones, 2014; Wekker, 2016). In 1977, disappointed in the Dutch government’s failure to repatriate them to their original islands as had been promised, and after thirty years of living in secluded, temporary camps, some Moluccan-Dutch youth hijacked a train. This revolt and the subsequent media and political fall-out led to the creation of a

Department of Minorities Affairs and a policy note on minorities (Essed & Nimako, 2006).

Fears about immigration in the 70s were largely economic and tied to the oil crisis. These fears galvanized former guest workers from Turkey and Morocco to legalize their residency in the Netherlands and bring their families over. Unlike their peers from southern Europe who could move freely, they were motivated to consolidate their position in the Netherlands from the threat of borders closing (Lucassen & Lucassen, 2015). This resulted in a large influx of migration in the 70s under the guise of family reunification, yet Dutch society was still largely positive towards immigrants at this time and were unwilling to send workers back after their years of hard work. This positive attitude may have also been motivated by the strong ethical component of the secular revolution in the 60s and 70s, which threw off the strictures of conservative religion. During the secular revolution, the atrocities of the Second World War, the decolonization/liberation process of former colonies, and the atrocities of apartheid in South Africa were capturing the social imaginary and a strong link was made between the dangers of racism and discrimination and human rights abuses (Lucassen & Lucassen, 2015).

Minorities: 1975-1990

In addition to the family reunification taking place among former guest workers, in the mid-70s many migrants arrived from Suriname, following the decolonization process there. In the late 70s and early 80s, immigration was reconceptualized as a problem of participation and socio-cultural emancipation of ethnic or cultural minorities, for which the Dutch government felt a historical responsibility (see Rath, 2001, cited in

Duyvendak & Scholten, 2012). According to Duyvendak and Scholten (2012), this is the only period of Dutch immigration policy that can be accurately described as multicultural, though that appellation has stuck to Dutch society for a longer time. In fact, De Zwart (2012) argues that the Dutch citizenship regime known as multiculturalist should not be considered multiculturalism at all; rather it was a strategy to promote rapid and efficient redistribution of resources among ethnic groups to ensure their economic integration. Reacting to concerns around migration, immigration policy has since moved more towards integration (Entzinger, 2003; Sniderman & Hagendoorn, 2007). Drawing on Stuart Hall's notion of historical amnesia, Essed and Nimako (2006) argue that the 1980s were a crucial period for the development of "minority research" within the Netherlands which problematizes 'others' while simultaneously downplaying the impact of racism, the ongoing effects of colonial history, and the concomitant assumptions of superiority. The reflex of doing research *on* minorities persists into today, which creates and sustains the insider outsider / us versus them paradigm (*Ibid.*).

The 80s also saw a discursive shift from categorizing migrants by their country of origin to categorizing them as 'ethnic or cultural' minorities. Preservation of their cultural identities was perceived as integral to the successful integration of immigrants. While *etnische minderheden* (ethnic minority) was in official use, at this time the words *allochtoon* and *autochtoon* increased in circulation. These terms were not widely used until they became standard terms, or the discursive category, officially used for migrants by the *Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek* (CBS / Statistics Netherlands) in 1989 (Duyvendak & Scholten, 2012; Essed & Nimako, 2006; Keij, 2000; Yanow & Van Der Haar, 2013). At this time, the CBS replaced the category of minority or ethnic minority

with *allochtoon*. *Allochtonen* were categorized as such if 1) they *and* one parent were foreign-born, 2) when both parents were foreign-born, or 3) they *or* one parent was foreign-born (see Keij, 2000 cited in Yanow & Van Der Haar, 2013; Boersma & Schinkel, 2015). This discursive shift also reflected a shift away from an anthropological understanding of identity and supporting migrants in maintaining their own ethnic identity, towards a juridical-political understanding of identity and supporting them to experience and change their identity as they chose (van Reekum & Duyvendak, 2012).

Integration: 1990-2000

By the early 1990s immigration shifted once again to frame the immigrant ‘problem’ as one of socio-economic integration. This discursive shift reflects the broader neoliberal turn which occurred around the same time. In Europe, the late 80s and 90s saw a shift from a welfare state to economic neoliberalism; the Dutch state in particular was firmly entrenched in the social welfare model and by the early 90s it was becoming financially untenable due to global market challenges. In 1993 the Dutch government created the ‘Third Way,’ a model of economic liberalism between social welfare and the hardline American neoliberalism. These neoliberal reforms were later praised as the “Dutch miracle” (Visser & Hemerijck, 1997). In order for neoliberalism to work, citizens must be transformed into active citizen-workers who are minimally reliant on the state for job creation and maximally capable of adapting to labour market shifts (Bjornson, 2012). The categorization of ‘good’ and ‘active’ citizens is juxtaposed against ‘risky’ or ‘bad’ citizens – those who are unable to fit into the neoliberal model or, more importantly for this study, those who are imagined as ‘risky’ – and a further discursive jump is made from ‘risky’ communities to ‘risky’ population groups (van Houdt & Schinkel, 2013).

This was likewise reflected in immigration policy: the primary policy objective was to promote ‘good’ or ‘active’ citizens: responsabilizing migrants to live up to their civic rights and duties as well as to become economically independent citizens (Duyvendak & Scholten, 2012). Van Houdt and Schinkel (2013) argue that this happens through what they term “facilitative responsabilization” and “repressive responsabilization” – the latter necessitating interventions in population groups deemed to be high risk and in need of disciplinary interventions, harkening back to the rehabilitative and corrective social housing and lifestyle programs for poor people from the 1850s. Dutch society began to perceive the previous ideology of tolerance as too lenient and, simultaneously, as having created the problem it purported to fix (Bjornson, 2012). As such, welfare programs for migrants were slashed and *inburgering* (integration or citizenship) programs around language and culture became mandatory, with a view towards gaining employment (Bjornson, 2007). Here, the emphasis moved away from socio-cultural integration to socio-economic integration.

In 1999, the discursive categories of *allochtoon* and *autochtoon* were further divided between ‘Western’ *allochtoon* and ‘non-Western’ *allochtoon*, with ‘non-Western’ *allochtonen* being further sub-divided as first and second generation. The illogical split between ‘Western’ and ‘non-Western’ – Yanow and van der Haar (2013) rightfully argue that a logical linguistic split would be between ‘Western’ and ‘Eastern’ – implies a clear racial dimension to these categories.¹⁰ There was also discussion of categorizing people

¹⁰ As Yanow and van der Haar (2013) point out, the illogic spills into the mix-mash of nations and continents included in the definition of ‘Western’ and ‘non-Western’ *allochtonen*. ‘Western’ *allochtonen* includes people from Europe, North America, Oceania, Japan and Indonesia. This only extends to Dutch people born in Indonesia and *Indos*, not non-white Indonesians. I would assume, similarly, that it does not extend to Indigenous peoples from North America or Oceania, as the category of ‘Western’ is drawn for people with close socio-economic and cultural resemblance to the Dutch (*Ibid.*). ‘Non-Western’ *allochtonen* includes people from Turkey, Morocco, Africa, Latin America, and Asia.

as ‘non-Western’ *allochtonen* into the third generation (Alders & Keij, 2001 cited in Yanow & Van Der Haar, 2013; Geschiere, 2009). This discussion was alive and well when I undertook fieldwork in 2016-17; many of my participants wondered when these categories would end, when they would be considered fully Dutch. Alongside problematic top-down categorizations of ethnic groups (De Zwart, 2012), minority groups are persistently viewed as outsiders by the white majority, even two generations later (see Andriessen, Dagevos, Nievers, & Boog, 2007; Entzinger & Dourleijn, 2008 cited in De Zwart, 2012). The term *allochtoon* discursively and practically supports this notion, as the *CBS* formally categorizes people with one grandparent born outside of the Netherlands as ‘not from this soil.’

The Culturalist Turn: 2000-present

Until the end of the twentieth century, Dutch immigration policies still promoted fairly easy access to citizenship and a more pluralist outlook which recognized and supported cultural and religious institutions of migrants (Roggeband & Verloo, 2007). In the early 2000s, couched in the global climate of fear around 9/11, a hypothetical “clash of civilizations” (Huntington, 1997) and the war on terror, several notable political events have shaped discourse and practice around migration in the Netherlands. First, the assassination of right-wing leader Pim Fortuyn in 2002 bolstered his fledgling (and not so popular) party’s success in the subsequent elections. Fortuyn was killed by a white male Dutch environmental activist, so his assassination could not be blamed on immigrants. The connection to immigration comes from his political stance: he was the first Dutch politician to openly express Islamophobic sentiments and portrayed Islam as a threat to ‘Western’ (specifically sexual) values of freedom (de Leeuw & van Wichelen, 2005;

Mepschen, Duyvendak, & Tonkens, 2010; Pels, 2003; van der Veer, 2006). He was hugely popular for his frank, racist pronouncements. In 2004, Theo van Gogh, a sensationalist (and offensive, one might add) journalist and filmmaker was assassinated by a Dutch, Muslim man. Both these events increased the popularity of right-wing populist parties in the Netherlands as well as anti-immigrant rhetoric (de Leeuw & van Wichelen, 2005; van der Veer, 2006; Vink, 2007; Vossen, 2010).

At the beginning of the twenty first century, important changes occurred in the Dutch citizenship regime which signaled a discursive shift from the previous century. In the early 2000s, stricter controls were placed on immigration criteria and admission (Doomernik, 2005; Roggeband & Verloo, 2007). The Dutch immigration policy focus shifted in the early 2000s to a preoccupation with socio-cultural differences between migrants and white Dutch society. These differences were construed as a barrier to integration and a threat to Dutch national identity; simultaneously there was broader concern around social cohesion and preserving a Dutch national identity (Duyvendak & Scholten, 2012). Immigrants are now expected to assimilate into Dutch society, indicators of which are an individual's linguistic ability and identification with Dutch values (Trifu, 2014). This culturalist turn was galvanized by events that occurred on the national and world stage: scholars point to a Dutch debate on the 'multicultural tragedy' in 2000, the 9/11, London, and Madrid attacks, and the political assassinations of Fortuyn in 2002 and van Gogh in 2004 (Duyvendak & Scholten, 2012; Korteweg & Triadafilopoulos, 2015).

Now in the second decade of the 21st century, there is still a strong neoliberal tone to immigration policies (Bjornson, 2012; Schinkel & van Houdt, 2010). The discourse around integration has shifted towards a culturalist interpretation, where culture is seen as

the reason why immigrants have a hard time integrating. Their supposed ‘backwards’ culture is seen to be at odds with the liberal, progressive, tolerant values of Dutch society. Culture, then, becomes reified, static and monolithic. In 2003, language requirements for ‘non-Western’ migrants were introduced into citizenship tests (Bjornson, 2012), demonstrating the racialized nature of citizenship policies. What is more, prospective ‘non-Western’ migrants are expected to have attained a basic level of Dutch outside of the Netherlands in order to gain entry – an impressive feat. The civic integration program is paternalistic, teaches enough Dutch to get a labourer job, and places an emphasis on producing functional workers and schooling the ‘deviant’ culture (Bjornson, 2007; de Leeuw & van Wichelen, 2014; Eijberts & Ghorashi, 2017; Kirk & Suvarierol, 2014; Suvarierol, 2015; Suvarierol & Kirk, 2015; Trifu, 2014; van Reekum & van den Berg, 2015).

In the last decade, significant shifts have occurred around language. Until 2016, the *CBS* included people born in the Netherlands to one Dutch parent and one foreign-born parent in the category of *allochtoon*. On a practical level, this means that with integration and cross-cultural marriage and co-habitation more people were becoming less Dutch. In the last decade, there has been much public debate about whether the term *allochtoon* is stigmatizing (Schols, n.d.). An official move away from this language began with the Social and Cultural Planning Bureau (*Sociaal Cultureel Planbureau*, SCP) in 2009 which, at that time, stopped using the words *allochtoon* and *autochtoon*. In 2013, the municipality of Amsterdam, often a trend-setter in municipal politics, officially stopped using the words *allochtoon* and *autochtoon*, though in practice these words had been avoided by larger municipal organizations and at the state level since 2008 (Bovens,

Bokhorst, Jennisen, & Engbersen, 2016; Yanow & Van Der Haar, 2013). The Dutch parliament passed a motion to revise these terms in 2016. The subsequent report that was published (Bovens et al., 2016) by the Scientific Council for Government Policy (*Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid*, WRR) suggested replacing *allochtoon* and *autochtoon* with the more politically correct term *met immigratie achtergrond* (with an immigrant background) and its counterpart ‘of Dutch descent,’ though this too has faced criticism. The CBS implemented these changes in 2016. As I will discuss further in Chapter five, despite being out of official use, the terms *alloctonen* and *autoctonen* have a sustained presence in everyday life with stigmatizing effects for Black and Muslim people.

At the same time as these political shifts in language, Schols (n.d.) demonstrates how in the last few years there has been a marked opening to conversations around diversity, racism, and white privilege, particularly among ‘progressives.’ This is demonstrated by increased media use of terms such as ‘whiteness’ and ‘everyday racism’ and pop culture books and films such as *Hallo Witte Mensen* (Hello white people) (Nzume, 2017) and *Wit is ook een kleur* (White is also a colour) (Bergman, 2016). Popularized academic publications such as *Kapot moeilijk* (Broken Hard) (de Jong, 2007) and *Heb je een boze moslim voor mij?* (Do you have an angry Muslim for me?) (Papaikonomou & Dijkman, 2018) have also contributed to these public debates. The now year-round debate on *Zwarte Piet* and the tireless work of Black activists on this issue have also helped to bring conversations around racism to the fore (Gario, 2012). This too has only changed in the last decade: while protests against *Zwarte Piet* have gone on for decades (Wekker, 2016), only since 2013 has popular discourse shifted to

recognize the figure as controversial (Schols, n.d.). Other groups such as the New Urban Collective, the Black Archives, and the Black Heritage Tours are also bringing alternative discourses about race to public attention. Nevertheless, this occurs in a context of Dutch pride in ‘telling it like it is’; the particular brand of Dutch directness, to the point of rudeness, which gives licence for all sorts of discriminatory utterances (Korteweg, 2013).¹¹ Baukje Prins (2002) labels this the “new realism” which is characterized by the speaker daring to speak the ‘facts’ which have been covered up in mainstream discourse, the speaker setting themselves up as the spokesperson for the common (white) Dutch person, the suggestion that being straightforward, frank and realistic is characteristic of Dutch identity, and a resistance to the left. The Dutch realist narrative would appear to be in opposition to the Dutch self-image as tolerant. I turn now to an examination of Dutch tolerance and how it connects to the culturalist and realist turns.

A History of Dutch Tolerance

Tolerance is understood by the Dutch to have been a virtue of the Dutch Republic founded in the 1500s. In the Dutch Golden Era (also the height of the Dutch East and West India company and the trade in enslaved people), this tolerance enabled people from diverse backgrounds and beliefs to live beside each other in a European context that was elsewhere characterized by witch hunts and the Inquisition (Buruma, 2007; Korteweg, 2013). On an everyday level, this tolerance manifests as pragmatism,

¹¹ See, for example, the sexist ‘banter’ while discussing feminism during the interview with Nigerian novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie on *NPO (Nederlands Publiek Omroep / Dutch Public Broadcasting)* from October 16, 2016. https://www.npostart.nl/chimamanda-ngozi-adichie/16-10-2016/POMS_AVRO_5570248. Accessed December 10, 2018.

consensus, and negotiation; described as the “polder model” as collaboration was the only way to continuously push back the sea (Buruma, 2007; van der Veer, 2006).

The long history of tolerance that the Dutch pride themselves on also manifested as pillarization, an organizing feature of Dutch society (Fennema & Tillie, 1999; Lijphart, 1968; Maussen, 2012; Uitermark, Rossi, & van Houtum, 2005; van der Veer, 2006). Beginning in the late 1800s and early 1900s until the 1960s, pillarization refers to the time when Dutch society was organized into separate organizations (political parties, schools, churches, labour unions, sports clubs) representing different religious and secular identities. This meant that Protestants, Catholics, (leftist) liberals, and social democrats had their own separate institutions which all benefited from government subsidies and operated as closed communities.

I grew up in southern Ontario in a rural, Dutch-Canadian community. Like many of their peers, my maternal and paternal grandparents immigrated to Canada from the Netherlands during and after World War II. Growing up, I always felt that Protestant Dutch immigrants did not fully ‘integrate’ into Canadian society. As I stated in the introduction, motivated by their strong Protestant values, they established their own private Christian schools and their own Protestant denomination: the Christian Reformed Church. It was only while doing this research that I discovered that this was an organizing feature of Dutch society until the 1960s and clearly a form of governance and social organization which Dutch Protestant immigrants brought with them to the Americas. Establishing separate schools, churches, sports teams, political parties, shops, and social welfare organizations for different religious and ideological groups is a hallmark of pillarization (van der Veer, 2006). In this sense, Dutch immigrants to Canada

in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s actively worked at recreating certain aspects of the pillared Dutch society. This is more pronounced in the Protestant demographic, as Dutch Catholic immigrants tended to integrate into existing parishes in their new communities.

In the Netherlands, the goal of pillarization was to treat all groups equally and give them all equal opportunities. Pillarization resulted in the Dutch dealing with difference through separation – living next to but apart from each other – thus developing a tolerance of ‘others,’ but not an engagement with them (Bishop, 2004; Gans, 2014; Ghorashi, 2014). Jasmin, a Black Surinamese-Dutch student I interviewed, provides some context for the tolerance discourse within the history of the Netherlands:

[T]hey say that the Dutch are so tolerant, but I don’t think they were ever at all.

Yeah, they invited a lot of refugees. It was a country originally that was very welcoming to refugees, if you really look at 17th century like Spinoza, but they had Jewish neighbourhoods, and Christian neighbourhoods, so it was always divided, it was always segregated. Maybe for that time yes, it was tolerance, but I don’t see it as real tolerance. So maybe they always had a certain need to put people in boxes, like “Oh they’re there, [and] they’re there...” (Interview with Jasmin. March 16, 2017)

The tolerant and liberal self-image the Dutch have of themselves, and that other societies have of the Dutch, is increasingly questioned (Schinkel, 2013; Schinkel & van Houdt, 2010; Trifu, 2014; van Reekum, 2016). Nationalism is considered by many to be a backlash against multiculturalism yet van Reekum (2012, 2016) demonstrates that the narrative of a too-tolerant nation experiencing a backlash of nationalism is less an accurate portrayal of what is happening than a rhetorical flourish of what it means, and

ought to mean, to be Dutch. This self-image has prevented the Dutch from deeply examining societal problems around difference (Essed & Nimako, 2006; Lucassen & Lucassen, 2015; van Reekum, 2016; van Reekum & Duyvendak, 2012; Vink, 2007).

To demonstrate how tolerant Dutch society is, the following examples are commonly offered: the Netherlands was the first country to legalize gay marriage; a variety of marijuana products are sold at coffee shops; euthanasia is practiced, and Amsterdam's Red-Light District is home to a flourishing sex trade. While Dutch liberalism on these issues has brought material gains in terms of marriage equality, more humane treatment for addictions such as safe-injection sites and drug-maintenance programs as well as for end-of-life care, and increased safety for sex-trade workers, each of these examples operate under the guise of tolerance. For example, the latter three (marijuana, euthanasia and the sex trade) still operate within a legal grey zone (Buruma, 2007). This means that though they are not legal,¹² there are specific instances where law makers are advised to look the other way: one could argue that they are simply 'tolerated.' Similarly, many scholars point out how the gay Dutch identity has been depoliticized and is characterized by consumption and heteronormative values of domesticity, thus deeply connected to neo-nationalist and normative citizenship discourses (Bracke, 2012; Mepschen, 2016; Mepschen et al., 2010; Wekker, 2016). For instance, the Dutch image of gay men is white, solidly middle class, and in committed, monogamous relationships. This image leaves no room for alternative queer identities

¹² Sex-work was recently legalized. This exacerbated a series of social problems that were not perceived to be as severe as when sex-work was illegal but tolerated. As a result, certain practices are still 'tolerated' though not legal. Similarly, there are acts governing euthanasia but they are accompanied by lively public debate and differing legal interpretation which also results in much grey area. For more details see Buruma, (2007).

and lifestyles and excludes racialized ‘others’ from the possibility of being gay. Some have argued that Dutch progressiveness is a form of socially-enforced conformity which then positions Muslims as non-progressive and inherently non-conforming (Korteweg, 2013; Mepschen et al., 2010). This is obvious in portrayals of Muslims as sexually conservative and white Dutch as sexually progressive, the two then seen as being mutually exclusive (Bracke, 2011, 2012). Regarding LGBTQ issues, an area where the Netherlands is seen as a pioneer, one research participant who self-describes as queer had this to say:

The queer scene is not that easy to approach here at all. Never, ever have I met a queer person who would say, “Let’s go to the queer bar and head out.” And [going to queer bars] happens even in [my home country] and it’s a small, closed, scared community. I think it’s just the case of the Netherlands. It’s just a Netherland type of being gay. And maybe they are as gay tolerant as they are not racist. *[laughter]* You know? *[laughter]* A [Dutch] friend of mine...she says that it’s fairly hard...a lot of [Dutch people] are still not approving of their kids being gay. I thought I would come here and I would be inspired. But I’m not. I still didn’t come out to my family because they would forget about me. They will just remove me from the family tree...That was one of the main reasons I came here. Because I thought it would be different, but not much. (Identifying information withheld for protection purposes)

This participant, a first-generation immigrant, has been disappointed with the reality of living in the Netherlands as a queer-identifying individual. In practice, Dutch society is less accepting of alternative lifestyles, all the while promoting an image of progressive

tolerance. Similarly, when discussing the intolerance she faces during discussions about racism and Islamophobia, Zohra, a 29-year-old Somali-Dutch law student, points out how Dutch society has a difficult time letting go of its self-image of tolerance:

[The] Dutch are the most stubborn people ever! Ever! They have a certain mindset, “We’re not racist. We’re totally tolerant!” They have a certain self-idea of themselves...Not that long ago, it was known as the most tolerant country, one of the most tolerant countries, but now everyone is saying “Wait, hold on. That’s not really the case.” And people just need to acknowledge that. Just acknowledging it seems to be a huge thing! People are really scared of letting go of their ideas of the world and their self-worth. (Interview with Zohra. February 14, 2017)

The self-image of tolerance is actually a barrier to a deeper societal and personal engagement with racism, Islamophobia, homophobia, and sexism. Alongside this impeding self-perception of being tolerant is the now-fashionable Dutch-directness: speaking one’s mind regardless of the offense it may cause. The self-image of tolerance and the new Dutch realism work together to impede deeper engagement with contentious or taboo topics such as race.

In the 1960s the Dutch went through a rapid ‘deconfessionalization’ or secular revolution (Moors, 2009; van der Veer, 2006). At this time, it was considered oppositional to ‘be yourself’ and part of the counter-cultural movement was about being able to express yourself freely and go against mainstream society. By the 1990s ‘being yourself’ and freedom of expression was part of mainstream culture (see Houtman, 2008; cited in Moors, 2009) and is a strong component of what Prins (2002) labels the “new

Dutch realism” or ‘telling it like it is.’ Today, authenticity and freedom of expression are valued in Dutch society more than ever but “...this has to remain within the boundaries set by the majority society” (Moors, 2009, p. 407). This is also expressed in terms of sexual liberty and consumer values, both of which are perceived to be under threat from Islam (van der Veer, 2006). As unacceptable ‘others,’ Muslims are problematized and expected to assimilate and adjust to Dutch culture. While global terror attacks and discourses around Islam also influence how Muslim migrants are viewed, Dutch society problematizes Islam partly out of a reaction to the comparatively recent secularization of the Netherlands. White Dutch society remembers the ultra-conservative Christian era, particularly its strict views on sexuality and enjoyment, and views Muslim migrants as a threat to their newfound secular freedom (Mepschen, 2016; van der Veer, 2006).

Going deeper into the discourse of tolerance, Gloria Wekker’s (2016) analysis of the ten ways in which white Dutch people respond to protests around *Zwarte Piet* helps demonstrate how the self-image of tolerance plays into wider narratives about Dutch innocence. Some of these ten can be extrapolated to other situations where white Dutch people are confronted with their own racism: specifically, claiming foreigners have no right to make pronouncements on ‘our’ Dutch culture; denying that racism exists by suggesting it is just humour or hyperbole and therefore ‘innocent’; blaming the left (in a rhetorical turn) for spreading hate among the population because they were too tolerant; referring to the ‘facts’ to prove that something was not racist; and, claiming Blacks or Muslims are also racist and so white Dutch behaviour can be excused. These reactions to allegations of racism are part of what Wekker (*Ibid.*) describes as a larger Dutch self-image of innocence which deflects all criticisms of racism or Islamophobia. I argue that

the Dutch narrative of innocence is deeply connected to the culturalist turn in migration discourse where, in an ‘Orientalist’ move, Dutch culture is positioned as ‘good,’ ‘pure,’ and ‘better’ as compared to the ‘bad’ cultures that migrants are bringing with them. I turn now to an in-depth look at the culturalist turn in migration discourse, and how this disproportionately affects women.

The Culturalist Turn, Gender, and Migration

According to sociologist Willem Schinkel (2007, cited in de Leeuw & van Wichelen, 2014), culturalism, as a discursive tool, has several defining elements: a focus on general problems; an essentialist image of culture as stable; culture as the explanation for the aforementioned general problems; and, minority culture as inherently problematic and incompatible with dominant culture. To this, de Leeuw and van Wichelen (*Ibid.*) add that there is a civilizational pathos which hinges on the instrumentalization of religion. The culturalist turn in integration discourses has led to a specific preoccupation with Muslim women and gender equality. As I will show in Chapters four, five, and six, this focus has significant daily implications for many women who participated in my research.

By focusing policies and discourses on the supposed sexism and gender inequality inherent to Islam (and by extension all Muslim migrants), the ways in which gender inequality persists in mainstream Dutch society are obscured (de Leeuw & van Wichelen, 2005; Korteweg, 2013; Lettinga & Saharso, 2012). Simultaneously this promotes the acceptance of the idea that Muslims should be excluded from belonging in Dutch society on the grounds of gender inequality (Korteweg, 2013). Pointing out gender inequality elsewhere perpetuates the myth that the Netherlands has achieved women’s

emancipation, as the former Minister of Social Affairs, De Geus, declared at his inauguration in 2002 and on International Women's Day in 2003 (Bracke, 2012; van den Berg & Schinkel, 2009). Roggeband and Verloo (2007) point out how Dutch gender policies have shifted to focus exclusively on migrant women and how, simultaneously, migrant policies have shifted to focus on gender relations. This conflation of gender equality with migration demonstrates the culturalist turn in immigration discourse. Since 2003, Dutch policies related to women's emancipation are divided between policies aimed at Dutch women, who should become economically independent, and policies aimed at 'non-Western' immigrant women who are vulnerable and deprived (Lettinga & Saharso, 2012). At the same time, there was a shift in concern over the headscarf: previously politicians and the media were concerned that it may inspire discrimination towards Muslim women and girls on the job market; then it shifted to a perception that it symbolically portrayed Muslims' rejection of Dutch culture (Lettinga, 2011, cited in Korteweg, 2013). The headscarf has become a material symbol associated with the backwardness of Islam and its apparent gender inequality. As I will demonstrate in Chapter five, this has material, emotional, and spiritual consequences for young, second-generation Dutch Muslim women.

This overbearing preoccupation with gender issues as a Muslim problem obscures the fact that there is still much work to be done to achieve gender equality in the Netherlands more broadly. Within the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, Dutch women have historically been the least likely to be employed and, although labour market participation of Dutch women is currently one of the highest in Europe, many Dutch women work flexible, part-time jobs, with the

result that most of them are not economically independent (Bjornson, 2007; Lettinga & Saharso, 2012; Roggeband & Verloo, 2007; Wekker, 2016). Dutch welfare policies continue to emphasize a “1,5 breadwinner model” where women are part-time stay-at-home mothers and men work full-time (Lettinga & Saharso, 2012, p. 330). Women often proclaim, expressing a neoliberal, hyper-individual view, that this is their personal choice. The 1,5 breadwinner model leaves them more financially dependent in the case of divorce or retirement (Wekker, 2016, p. 114). At 16 weeks,¹³ maternity leave is on the shorter side within the European Union. Few people see this as a feminist issue. These issues are obscured by the focus on Muslim women as people in need of saving.

The example of Ayaan Hirsi Ali, a former Member of Parliament in the Netherlands, offers multiple insights into how the culturalist turn manipulates racism, Islamophobia, and sexism as well as the saviour narrative. A former Somali refugee and self-proclaimed atheist, Hirsi Ali has leveraged her position as an ‘insider’ to make pronouncements against Islam which turned her into a media darling and mouthpiece of conservative populist sentiment (Ghorashi, 2003). She presents Islam and Muslim migrants as a threat to the West, for example calling Islam the “new fascism” and “the cult of death” (Shome, 2012). Hirsi Ali positions herself as a knower of Islam and speaker for minority women (Roggeband & Lettinga, 2016), yet many women for whom she claims to speak (including participants in my study) reject her analysis (Bracke, 2012; de Leeuw & van Wichelen, 2005; Ghorashi, 2003). Hirsi Ali worked on the film

¹³ Women are entitled to 16 weeks maternity leave in the Netherlands: 4 weeks must be taken off before the due date, leaving 12 weeks maternity leave to stay at home with the newborn. Men are entitled to two days paternity leave. For a comparison, see: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2014/545695/EPRS_ATA\(2014\)545695_REV1_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2014/545695/EPRS_ATA(2014)545695_REV1_EN.pdf). Last accessed October 25, 2018.

Submission with filmmaker Theo Van Gogh, who was subsequently murdered by a racialized Dutch, Muslim man who also threatened Hirsi Ali. *Submission* purports to be critical of the treatment of women in Islamic societies, yet typifies the ‘othering’ of Muslim women through an Orientalized, exoticized gaze (de Leeuw & van Wichelen, 2005). Hirsi Ali made international news when she resigned her political position over allegations of misrepresentation on her asylum application, at which time her Dutch citizenship was briefly revoked. These allegations not only called Hirsi Ali's Dutch citizenship into question but also her ‘insider’ status. After she stepped down from Dutch politics, she moved to the United States, and later accepted a position at Harvard.

The example of Hirsi Ali demonstrates many layers of the culturalist turn and ‘othering’ in Dutch society that this study critiques: her credibility as an insider transforms her into a “tolerable other” because she has rejected “backward Islam” and fully embraced “modern/normal” ‘Western’ values and ideals – she is seen as “one of us” (de Leeuw & van Wichelen, 2005, p. 331). What complicates this matter, as de Leeuw and van Wichelen (*Ibid.*) point out, is that Hirsi Ali is a *brown* woman enmeshed in the saviour narrative that forms Orientalism’s foundation of “white men saving brown women from brown men” (Spivak, 1988, p. 305). This example highlights how the saviour narrative becomes even more effective, appealing, and instrumentalized when articulated by an insider – in this instance a woman of colour (Bracke, 2012; de Leeuw & van Wichelen, 2005) – which works to reify ‘Western’ culture as modern and progressive and solidify Muslims and Islam as a homogenous ‘backwards other’ in need of saving. The culturalist turn instrumentalizes affective assumptions and norms around ‘good’ and ‘bad’ cultures, cementing distinctions between ‘us’ and ‘them.’

Conclusion

This chapter examined the historical developments in the Netherlands relating to migration, looking specifically at discursive and political shifts over time, starting with the colonial era and ending with today's culturalist turn. For the purposes of my study, the most important analytical component to the culturalist turn is how it effectively elides, or conflates, biological and socio-cultural forms of racism. As I am studying the intersections of Islamophobia and anti-Black racism, it is important to note how different 'types' of racism operate in the same way: by claiming cultural, racial, biological, and moral superiority. Different scholars have described how the Dutch often argue that race is a non-scientific concept and, in a rhetorical flourish, that it is proof that racism does not exist in the Netherlands (Botman, Jouwe, & Wekker, 2001; Verkuyten, 1995). Often calling out racist behaviour or speech is met with assertions that the speaker was not racist because what (s)he said had nothing to do with skin colour. The culturalist turn disguises racism under the veil of cultural differences (van den Berg & Schinkel, 2009). Racism is often wrongly equated with discrimination solely based on phenotypical distinctions such as skin colour, yet this disguises the extent of power at play. Racism has always involved the maintenance of culture, class, and power differentials (Goldberg, 2015; Stoler, 2002, 2008; van Reekum, 2016). Indeed, Edward Said (1979) demonstrates this eloquently by describing how Orientalism is more about how the West perceives the East than about the reality of the East itself. In this way, Islamophobia is the current incarnation of binary 'us/them' thinking and stranger-making. The following chapters continue in the spirit of Edward Said's investigation of Orientalism: in focusing on

Islamophobia and anti-Black racism, I ultimately reveal more about the ‘Western’ gaze and modes of thinking than about ‘others.’ The next chapter gives an overview of my methodology and analyzes the utility of theatre as a methodology. Following this, Chapter four examines the practical ways in which ‘othering’ operates in a Dutch context and how this impacts second-generation youths’ sense of self. The following two chapters analyze how youth resist and navigate belonging and citizenship in a context of nationalism, where their actions and claims are intimately entangled with and circumscribed by relations of power.

Chapter 3: Theatre as Method: Ethics, Embodiment, and Social Transformation in Participatory Arts Research

The first section of this chapter outlines my methodology and research design, as well as ethical dilemmas I considered both in designing my research and conducting it. I also describe my theatre-research project. The second section of this chapter is more analytical in nature. Here, I examine the efficacy of Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) and specifically Forum Theatre as methods of data collection and research practice by analyzing my theatre-research project and how different aspects contributed to understanding resistance and fostering cross-racial dialogue. I will also analyze how effective theatre is as a tool to accomplish both research and social justice goals. First, I turn to a brief overview of the ethical underpinnings of my research design and thought process.

Research Ethics

Given that I am a white woman and that my research participants came from a wide variety of backgrounds, my approach had to be capable of negotiating racial, class, culture, religious, citizenship, and gendered differences. While it is difficult, if not impossible, to solve the deep power inequalities inherent to all research relationships, politically-engaged research requires an ethical framework from which to operate; what I term an *ethics of solidarity*. I use the term *ethics of solidarity* to describe the positioning that comes before the process: the ethics that frame the choices I make around research tools and methods (see Reynolds, 2014 for additional reading on ethical solidarity research approaches). Specifically, because I am a white woman, I interrogate whiteness

in research relationship. I argue that a critical awareness of whiteness (including white fragility, white guilt, and white privilege) and an understanding of its hegemonic, normative, and universalizing tendencies, is essential for white researchers who want to practice politically-engaged research, particularly across lines of difference. Such research may be undermined by white power: marking whiteness – as opposed to re-centering it – is essential for revealing normalized behaviours, ways of knowing, and hierarchies (Yancy, 2012). Drawing on Indigenous and decolonial research paradigms, among others, I use the following five strategies as a model for an ethics of solidarity in my own research: an awareness of positionality; interrogating epistemic assumptions; shifting asymmetrical dialogue; disrupting hierarchies of power; and practicing decolonizing research.

I articulate these five strategies as intentionalities recognizing that, given my positionality, they can be herculean tasks and I may slip up. First, I aim to maintain an awareness of my own positionality and that of others through incorporating a reflexivity that allows for multiple perspectives and world views (Pillow, 2003). Second, I attempt to practice interrogating my epistemic assumptions about my own knowledge and that of others by questioning my sense of rightness, giving credence to other statements, making room for multiple interpretations, and accepting alternative ways of knowing (Fricker, 2007; Harding, 1991; McKinnon, 2017; Medina, 2011; Pohlhaus, 2012; Vest, 2013). Third, I endeavour to shift asymmetrical dialogue by engaging in conversations as a listener, temporarily suspending my emotional reactions, and being vulnerable (Bubeck, 2000; DiAngelo, 2011; Lakey, 2010; Leonardo & Porter, 2010). Fourth, I aim to disrupt power hierarchies through collaboration and participation with research participants and

partners which will guide and shape our research project and disseminate the knowledge created in ways that speak to marginalized people (Chilisa, 2012; Guishard, 2015; Tuck & Guishard, 2013). Finally, I seek to contribute to decolonizing research by questioning which knowledges the academy has a right to and through honouring silences and refusals (Smith, 1999; Tuck & Yang, 2014).

As I continually learn more about my own positionality and researching across difference, I am aware that my *ethics of solidarity* approach is constantly in a state of growth. With research participants in the Netherlands, I felt that my position as an insider/outsider – as I was read as Dutch but not quite Dutch ‘enough’ – and my openness to candid conversations allowed participants to feel more comfortable expressing opinions and perspectives that dissented from normative Dutch values. While it did not engender perfect conversations, I felt that my growing grasp of the Dutch language and my unique positionality as a Dutch-Canadian enabled participants to open up more. As I described in the introduction, this elicited a lot of curiosity from participants about the integration experiences of Dutch immigrants abroad and provided some level of relatability. Moreover, North Americans are perceived to be more conversant on the topics of racism and Islamophobia. I presented myself and was read as a Dutch-Canadian, so participants could perhaps feel more free to speak frankly to me about racism and Islamophobia. This strategy was important to me in creating dialogue *about* power imbalances *across* power dynamics.

Embodied Knowledge, Storytelling, and Participatory Theatre

Storytelling is one way of foregrounding the experiences of marginalized people and making visible underrepresented experiences. Hannah Arendt (1968) claims, “We

humanize what is going on in the world and in ourselves only by speaking of it, and in the course of speaking of it we learn to be human” (p. 25). Through theatre, participants can tell the stories that matter to them, and share their knowledge with a wider audience. Observing young women performing theatre in India, Gallagher (2015) suggests that with storytelling “...we also re-find ourselves, our humanity, and re-examine our world” (p. 75). Stories help us make sense of the world. Sara Ahmed (2004a, 2004b), in her critical work on affect, posits that emotion does not reside within an individual, but rather circulates through encounters with ‘others.’ Theatre and other creative arts methodologies provide a space to play with emotion and a platform for strangers to encounter each other. Chris Hedges (2017), reflecting on his experience creating a script with African-American inmates, says: “It’s the power of your song. The power of your truth...here is the power of art as resistance. The authorities feared it. It affirmed what must be affirmed. It gave a voice to those who the dominant culture does not want to hear” (Timestamp 55:57). Storytelling is a powerful way of connecting with each other and speaking truth to power. Telling stories based on experience is a powerful critical social location from which to speak (hooks, 1990). In their work with street-involved youth in Toronto, Gallagher, Starkman, and Rhodes (2017) found that “[u]sing theatre methodologically does not simply create emotional situations, but also allows one to experiment with emotion in order to come to deeper understandings about difficult experiences in ‘real life’” (p. 229). Researching with arts-based methodologies such as storytelling and theatre has multiple points of knowledge-creation. Not only does it tap into tacit, embodied knowledge and engage in a dynamic way with multiple audiences, as

a workshop tool it also allows researchers and participants to learn together and from each other, and to create knowledge in collaboration.

There is a growing number of researchers using theatre as an arts-based method of inquiry. These projects include long-term research projects using theatre to explore social issues with youth (Gallagher, 2015; Gallagher et al., 2017; Lev-Aladgem, 2008; Sonn, Quayle, Belanji, & Baker, 2015), with marginalized communities (Jones, Hall, Thomson, Barrett, & Hanby, 2012; Perry, 2017), and within a workplace (Kumrai, Chauhan, & Hoy, 2011; Quinlan, 2009). Others have used interview data to create a play about social issues (Cavanagh, 2013; Pratt & Johnston, 2013, 2017), or have analyzed participatory performances such as legislative theatre (Howe, 2009; Kennelly, 2006) and street theatre (Johnston & Bajrange, 2013). Research-based, or research-informed, theatre is an umbrella term that encompasses many different strands of theatre including verbatim theatre, performance ethnography, playback theatre, documentary theatre, and ethnotheatre or ethnodrama. In this chapter, I focus more on projects that are explicitly drawing on elements of participatory theatre (PT) traditions which aim to transform social realities.

The literature around theatre and research tends to fall into two broad areas: art and social action. Research-based theatre focused on art tends to use theatre as a method of uncovering and representing embodied, kinesthetic knowledge and to discuss how aesthetic performances can tap into embodied realities, ultimately emphasizing the artistic or aesthetic elements (Butler, 1988; Cavanagh, 2013; Pratt & Johnston, 2007; Swift, 2016). Research-based theatre focused on social action leans towards instrumentalizing theatre primarily as a participatory action research (PAR) tool which leads to increased

awareness of social issues and leads to transformation of social realities (Abraham, 2017; Johnston & Bajrange, 2013; Jones et al., 2012). While some scholars situate themselves more predominantly in one area or the other, I argue alongside Beck, Belliveau, Lea, and Wager (2011) that there is a lot of overlap and synthesis between the two, and that these boundaries are not necessarily fixed. Given my history with PAR and popular education tools, my objective in using theatre came primarily from a desire to do research for social change. I am also drawn to arts-based research for the innovative and alternative ways of knowing that it accesses and shares, as well as its artistic merit. In the past, I have used photography, participatory video, mapping exercises and walking interviews, among other techniques. Gray and Kontos (2015) caution that using arts-based methods solely for the purpose of social justice will eventually result in the disappearance of art and aesthetics as noble purposes in their own right. This warning is important. In addition to tapping into the embodied, kinesthetic, and more tacit knowledges of participants, arts-based methods also provide a creative way of connecting social justice issues with a broader audience who may not be exposed to academic research on a regular basis. This creative connection should not be undermined or underestimated.

Researchers who use theatre as part of action research projects often draw on and adapt the work of late Brazilian popular educator and theatre director Augusto Boal. Developed in the popular education and liberation movements of the 1950s and 1960s, Boal's popular education approach is known as Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) (1979) and emerged alongside the work of Paulo Freire (2002). Both Boal and Freire developed popular pedagogy techniques for community development, primarily aimed at working with marginalized communities with low literacy levels. The idea behind these liberatory

pedagogical tools was to draw on the lived experiences of participants in order to learn about and change unjust social realities. Freire was a proponent of “learner-centered learning” (Freire, 2002; Kumrai et al., 2011). In this vein, popular education pedagogy aims to reproduce the spiral of learning which starts with participants’ lived experiences, connects these to broader social structures, intervenes for change, reflects, and starts again (Arnold, Burke, James, Martin, & Thomas, 1991; Tulinius & Hølge-Hazelton, 2011). Through interviews and theatre workshops, I was able to implement this spiral using creative and dialogical processes.

In addition to TO, Boal created Forum Theatre. Boal was inspired by the work of Bertolt Brecht (1964) who used theatre to awake critical consciousness in its audience (Quinlan, 2009). In Forum Theatre, Boal breaks with the traditional passive one-way communication with a theatre audience by inviting audience members to be ‘spect-actors’ through providing commentary and input on what they are seeing on stage and coming up on stage themselves to try out their suggestions. This demonstrates Boal’s goal of breaking down the ‘fourth wall’: the illusory barrier that exists between the audience and the actors (Quinlan & Duggleby, 2009; Tofteng & Husted, 2011). We used Forum Theatre for our final public performance.

Proponents of research-based theatre projects argue that it has a range of uses and outcomes: It incites personal expressiveness leading to critical action learning; it bridges the gap between practice-based and academic-based learning; it develops aesthetic spaces which can enable practitioners to share strategies for dealing with challenging and complex situations; it furthers capacity for critical reflection; it provides a forum for practicing skills and competencies needed to deal with inequalities in their everyday life;

and it emphasizes the social aspect of learning (Kumrai et al., 2011). It also provides a unique space for exploring embodied practices and tacit knowledge, particularly with people who are usually not deemed as “knowers” (Perry, 2017). Ethnographers have a tradition of exploring kinesthetic realities in a participatory way that treats the body as a site of knowledge, such as Wacquant’s (2006) immersion-study of boxers, Downey’s (2005) analysis of capoeira, and Samudra’s “thick participation” (2008) with martial artists. Performance ethnography is one term that is used when adapting these embodied knowledges for the stage (Cavanagh, 2013). Additionally, Chou, Gagnon, and Pruitt (2017) argue that theatre using spect-actors and breaking down the fourth wall prefigures, in a small way, a more participatory political community. Similarly, Johnston and Bajrange (2013) demonstrate that street theatre in Ahmedabad, India is about embodying resistance but also about practicing democratic politics. These scholars demonstrate that the benefits of participatory theatre include everything from personal expression to interpersonal group dynamics and political participation. Not only can participatory theatre address marginalization and social isolation by creating a sense of community and shared experiences, but it can also render visible experiences of oppression so as to explore and analyse how these power relations work in concrete situations (Erel, Reynolds, & Kaptani, 2017). Participatory theatre also addresses a number of concerns and objectives raised by PAR, namely that of collaborating with research participants, acting for social transformation, and producing and disseminating knowledge in ways that are accessible to the public and which address issues of ownership. As encountered in a participatory arts project with Somali-Finnish youth, creative arts methodologies may even help prevent the re-‘othering’ of researched minorities, as participants use the arts to

produce their own knowledge and influence audiences (Oikarinen-Jabai, 2015). Erel, Reynolds, and Kaptani (2017) point out another radical benefit that might be overlooked: “...in the research process, researchers and participants collaborate in sharing subjugated knowledge. Developing, making explicit and sharing such subjugated knowledge is already an important part of social transformation” (p. 311). Knowledge from marginally situated knowers gives a different perspective on the world and how things work, opening up the creative imagination to alternative possibilities. All of these benefits of participatory theatre may come into play at different times in the process. I turn now to a description of my research design, after which I will analyze the benefits and challenges of participatory theatre through the lens of my theatre research project.

Research Design and Data Analysis

My research project had two concurrent phases: semi-structured interviews with second generation young people and a fourteen-week participatory theatre school. The theatre school was entitled ‘Theatre School of Resistance’ to emphasize a focus on examining (thinking about) and practicing (doing) resistance using theatre. The theatre school culminated in a public performance of a co-created play using Forum Theatre as a way of involving the audience in the performance. Using Freirean popular education and PAR methods to collaborate with participants, the goals of this research were to create 1) an emotionally safe(r) space for participants to reflect and discuss oppression and belonging, 2) tools for advocacy and strategizing against oppression, 3) a public conversation around integration, belonging, and racism. I shared these goals with The

Seed,¹⁴ the creative-arts community-based organization in Rotterdam with which I partnered for the theatre project, as well as the theatre school participants. I articulated the goals in this way because, in my experience as a community organizer, I have noted that it is not common to have space or time to reflect on grassroots interventions in a structured way. Furthermore, I wanted to ensure that my research reached a public audience, not solely an academic one.

Following through on my commitment to participatory, collaborative research was not always straightforward. Indeed, as any researcher knows, the field work process is full of unexpected twists, turns, detours, and dead-ends. I started by following up with various connections and networks I had created from my previous time in the Netherlands and connecting with organizations suggested by my Dutch supervisor. These connections led to about half a dozen interviews. Once these were exhausted, I quickly felt my leads drying up. In conversations with different academics at the University of Amsterdam¹⁵ about my interest in participatory creative research, a fellow PhD candidate in Geography put me in touch with The Seed. I met with the founder and a volunteer to discuss some ideas. While they have some theatre projects, their work with youth focuses primarily on spoken word and hip hop. Initially based in Afrikanerbuurt, a neighbourhood in Rotterdam with a high concentration of immigrants, The Seed has now expanded into other neighbourhoods in Rotterdam. They saw this partnership as an opportunity to grow

¹⁴ As part of our partnership, The Seed asked to be identified in my research. In order to protect the confidentiality of my research participants, I changed the names of the participants in the theatre project and decided to give a second pseudonym for transcripts of the video of the final performance so that it is not possible to cross-reference the names from the video transcripts with the names from the written transcripts. In doing so, my intent is to make my participants no more identifiable than they would already be by participating in a public theatre performance.

¹⁵ I was a guest scholar in the Political Science department at the University of Amsterdam during my year of field work

the theatre component of their portfolio as well as to connect with a wider, international audience. Theatre was one creative, collaborative process with which I also felt comfortable, so we agreed to co-facilitate a theatre-research project. Together we developed the Theatre School of Resistance, a theatre program drawing on participatory popular education tools developed by Paulo Freire and Augusto Boal, among others (Boal, 1979; Freire, 2002), as well as theatre games drawn from our repertoire of experiences. At this point, my research really took off. The first eight weeks combined theatre games and training with interactive focus group discussions on issues around citizenship, belonging, intersectionality, and resistance. During this time, participants acted out various stories of oppression and resistance. Staff from The Seed and I then reworked these stories into a script with the goal of producing a public performance in the spirit of Boal's Forum Theatre, where audience members can intervene to influence an instance of oppression portrayed by the actors. During the last six weeks, participants rehearsed the script and put on a public performance.

My twelve years of experience as a community developer using popular education and theatre techniques in Ghana, Senegal, India, and Canada strongly influenced my research design. From the outset, I was committed to participatory, collaborative research but I was open to what form that could take. My goal, as espoused by popular educators, was to give primacy to the lived experiences of research participants and take my cues from them in terms of research direction. I had initially hoped to create an advisory body for this research project comprised of people with lived experience of these issues. I also was committed to involving participants as stakeholders at various stages throughout the research process. While I was not able to create an advisory body, working closely with

The Seed achieved a similar goal: I met with their core staff twice before starting the project and met regularly with the staff person who co-facilitated with me in order to plan and to debrief each workshop. These individuals were a sounding board and provided advice. In addition, though the theatre project is the nucleus of my research, the semi-structured interviews provided in-depth qualitative direction for the questions I asked and the directions I took in my theatre research project. I view these interviews not only as data, but also as consultations or learning conversations. Also known as information gathering, learning conversations are conducted with the goal of learning from people most affected by a particular problem or issue, and thereby constructing relevant research design and dissemination (Arnold et al., 1991; Lakey, 2010). In data generation, the goal of learning conversations is to find patterns and commonalities in the collective experience. I also used different focus group discussions during our theatre workshops to generate data on different thematic issues that were emerging. The interviews complemented and fed the theatre project and vice versa, acting as a built-in feedback loop. PAR aims to change social realities through collaborative research and action (Bergold & Thomas, 2012). This mode of learning – drawing on lived experiences, identifying patterns, and creating shared understandings of social reality – is a common practice in popular education and feeds into the spiral I discussed above. I employed these research tools, then, with the aim of facilitating a conversation around oppression and creating space to dialogue about solutions.

Creating a public performance also allowed us to put these learning conversations into action by expanding the conversation to include a wider audience. Knowledge co-creation is an essential component of PAR (Cooke & Kothari, 2001). In conversations

with The Seed, we were all keen to use theatre to host a public conversation on racism and Islamophobia. To this end, we decided to host a public theatre performance using Forum Theatre which was filmed and then turned into a short video. Additionally, I created a manual for theatre educators based on the eight workshops of Theatre School of Resistance (see Appendix A), which is publicly available, and I presented my research findings to the Municipality of Amsterdam, the University of Amsterdam, and The Seed. In this way, I attempted to mobilize multiple modes of knowledge sharing in order to disseminate the results of this research in an accessible way.

Recruiting participants for the theatre school was a challenge. About half the youth who participated were already involved with The Seed; the other half were recruited through our networks and via Facebook advertising. Not only did we struggle with recruiting participants, but it was also a challenge for all the youth to participate each week. This was in part due to timing; the scheduling of the theatre school was poorly timed with university exams and holidays. It was also due to the busy lives of these young people and the fact that some of them traveled from other cities such as Amsterdam or Utrecht. All the youth said that they were attracted to this project because of its focus on theatre as well as the topics of resistance and belonging.

Ten young people ultimately participated in the Theatre School of Resistance. They came from a wide variety of backgrounds: second-generation Angolan-, Moroccan-, Eritrean-, Cape-Verdean-, and Indian-Dutch.¹⁶ There were three participants who identified as white: one white Dutch woman, one Ukrainian woman and one Bulgarian woman. The latter two did not have Dutch citizenship. In addition, two participants were

¹⁶ All participants in both the theatre project and the interviews had the opportunity to talk about their family history of migration which is how these markers were identified.

bi-racial: one with a Somali mom and Dutch dad and another with a Rwandan mom and German dad. Out of the ten participants, three did not have Dutch citizenship; the Ukrainian and Bulgarian women and the bi-racial Rwandan-German man. One of them had been living in the Netherlands since the pre-teen years, while the other two came to the Netherlands for post-secondary studies. Since we had a difficult time recruiting, we welcomed as many people who wanted to attend. These ‘outside’ perspectives enriched the conversation and brought different insights. There were five men and five women in the theatre group. Participants ranged in age from 19 to 30.¹⁷

I complemented data from the theatre school, with semi-structured interviews with second-generation Black and Muslim Dutch youth in and around Amsterdam. Out of the fourteen interviews I conducted with young people, nine of them identified as second-generation Somali-Dutch, and one as first-generation Somali-Dutch. In addition, one identified as second-generation Ethiopian-Dutch, two as second-generation Moroccan-Dutch, and one as second-generation Black Surinamese-Dutch. Nine participants were women, four were men. Interview participants ranged in age from 19 to 32. I recruited these fourteen interview participants through my network in Amsterdam and via recommendations from interview participants themselves. I started by connecting with Somali organizations in Amsterdam and The Hague, based on recommendations from my Dutch supervisor. One organization had recently started a legal aid clinic for newcomers, staffed by student volunteers from law school. Most of these volunteers agreed to be interviewed and some put me in touch with friends or acquaintances they thought would be interested in being interviewed. Later, one interview participant invited me to a Youth

¹⁷ Though they range in age from 19-32, I refer to my participants as youth which is in keeping with Youth Studies literature.

Debate organized by university students leading up to the parliamentary elections in February 2017. This event was hosted by students of colour and attended primarily by other students of colour, many of whom were second-generation Dutch citizens. The organizers invited me to speak about my research and after the event I was able to connect with many young people, several of whom agreed to be interviewed. This invitation opened many doors for me. In the interviews, I began with a list of questions relating to belonging, resistance, and citizenship. As I became more comfortable with the interviews and had a sense of which lines of questioning were more promising, I used my scripted questions less.

Though I attained a B-level (intermediate) competency in Dutch during my field work, I conducted all of my research in English. Dutch youth are generally fluent in English and so were quite comfortable. In the theatre school, I offered to switch to Dutch, but the youth preferred to continue in English. Sometimes in interviews and the theatre project participants would use Dutch expressions for things that are difficult to translate into English.

Aside from the two bi-racial participants and the white Dutch, Bulgarian, and Ukrainian participants in the theatre school and the first-generation Somali-Dutch youth I interviewed, all participants were second-generation Dutch citizens, meaning their parents had migrated to Europe. Some were part of the 1.5 generation (Park, 1999), meaning that, though they were not born in the Netherlands, they came to the Netherlands at an early age and grew up here. For ease of writing, I refer to both groups as second-generation.

Though it is difficult to ascertain class, I posit that most of my research participants are middle-class. While I did not explicitly ask participants about their class background (perhaps further research could investigate which class participants identify with and how that impacts their sense of belonging), I looked for class markers such as parents' education levels, participants' education level, social networks, and the neighbourhoods they grew up in during conversations. For instance, Jasmin explained that her mom had come from Suriname to study undergrad in the Netherlands and then went back to Suriname. Now Jasmin is in the Netherlands studying undergrad. Another class marker was language: all my participants were fluent in English and comfortable discussing conceptually complex topics in English. They also frequently pointed out their ability to code-switch between working-class Dutch and high-class Dutch. In addition, all participants demonstrated high social mobility. For example, all of my participants were highly educated, either having completed or currently attending post-secondary institutions, and many of them were in the high-level tier of university (for a discussion of the Dutch post-secondary system, see Stam, T. 2018). This was partly due to my university-based network. It is important to recognize that several of them (Hamza, Anwar, Faith) made their way up through the different tiers of post-secondary education because at an early age the Dutch school system had shunted them to a lower level. This is a common occurrence among racialized young people. Though many of them came from blue-collar, working class families, they are not in blue-collar, working class professions themselves. Though unintentional, my focus on the experiences of middle-class second-generation youth ended up being a unique contribution to Dutch scholarship,

as most scholarship and funding on integration have tended to focus on working class communities.

In preparation for final data analysis, I transcribed 24 interviews with youth: 10 debriefing interviews held with all theatre school participants, and 14 semi-structured interviews with participants not connected to the theatre school. In addition, I met with six key informants: one young female Somali-Dutch activist; two people working with a non-governmental organization (NGO) on issues of Islamophobia in the Netherlands; one leader of an NGO working with Somali migrants; and three academics, two of whom work on Islamophobia and one who does research about Somali migrants in Europe. I transcribed a couple of these key informant meetings, but the others were more informal conversations where I took notes. I also transcribed eight theatre workshops. These workshops were audio-recorded and lasted from two to three hours each. I did not record or transcribe the six rehearsal sessions which followed the theatre workshops, as these were more technical in nature. In addition, my co-facilitator and I debriefed after each theatre workshop. I recorded and transcribed these eight debrief sessions which ranged in length from 15 to 45 minutes. We also met after the final performance for a longer debrief which lasted over two hours. Finally, The Seed video-recorded the final performance. I transcribed this video and worked with a professional filmmaker to produce a short four-minute synopsis of the final performance. Creating the *Manual for Educators* based on the theatre school became a form of data analysis as it gave me the opportunity to reflect more deeply on how effective different games and activities were in facilitating difficult conversations. Both the video of the final performance and the *Manual for Educators* can be found at valeriestam.com/theatre/ (and see Appendix A).

In the seventh theatre workshop, I set up a process of data verification with the theatre school participants. Prior to this workshop, I read through the transcripts of the previous workshops and pulled out interesting quotes and conversations. The themes that emerged were about belonging, Dutchness, whiteness, and racism. I collated these quotes and conversations into a separate document and brought copies to the theatre workshop for each participant. We then used Open Space Technology¹⁸ to determine which topics participants felt needed more attention. We first discussed the coded themes that emerged, and then added topics to the list that we felt we had not addressed adequately. One of these was Islamophobia. Participants then self-divided into smaller groups or individually on the topic that spoke the most to them, with the goal of creating a monologue or theatre sketch they wanted to share in the final performance. One large group worked on belonging – these participants (all racialized) felt strongly that whiteness did not need any more of their attention. Two people worked on their own to create monologues: one on Islamophobia and racism, the other on her experiences of being a white Eastern European in ‘Western’ Europe. Another smaller group worked on articulating expressions of Dutchness, which turned into a sketch on particularities of white Dutch racism. These performances ended up fostering some of the most profound and contentious experiences in the theatre school, some of which I will cover in detail in Chapters five and six.

Throughout my research I made analytic memos in the form of journaling where I reflected on and began interpreting the data I was collecting. As my research progressed, I used subsequent interviews and the theatre school to test my interpretations. For

¹⁸ www.openspaceworld.com/brief_history.htm. Accessed December 13, 2018.

example, the expression *doe normaal* was something I came across in everyday life and one that came up in interviews. I felt it was something worth exploring and so incorporated questions along these lines into interviews. As I will discuss in Chapter four, we also spent one theatre workshop exploring this concept in a kinesthetic manner.

Once the transcriptions were completed, I immersed myself in the data by reading and re-reading the transcripts, coding different elements and grouping them together according to the themes that were emerging. I later went back through each theme and subdivided the content into different categories. For example, I categorized the theme of resistance under more specific subsections such as passive and active (Hondius, 2014), defensive and constructive (Essed 1990), and personal and social in order to identify and analyze different practices of resistance more in depth. I presented preliminary findings at several conferences; these were opportunities to analyze certain categories of data and get feedback. The data categories provided content for the different analytical chapters that follow: processes of ‘othering’ in Dutch society, affect and belonging, and practices of everyday resistance. In May 2018, I presented preliminary findings to staff from the City of Amsterdam, which also acted as an unintentional form of data verification as many of them were second-generation Dutch youth themselves. More importantly, I offered participants the opportunity to verify my analysis in several ways. First, I sent each participant a copy of their interview transcript and invited them to clarify, change, or omit anything they chose. Second, I invited participants to presentations of this research in Amsterdam and Rotterdam. Third, I asked the theatre participants for their feedback on the video and theatre manual and sent them all a copy of the manual. Finally, one month prior to my defense I sent the final draft of my dissertation to all participants and asked

them for their feedback. Some participants followed up on these opportunities, but many did not. Overall the revisions they requested, if any, were minor. I do not think this necessarily indicates agreement with my analysis; rather, I believe this level of engagement speaks to their busy lives and the passing of time. Before delving into the analytical data chapters, I first turn to a description and analysis of the Theatre School of Resistance as a research method.

Theatre as Method

Augusto Boal, the creator of Theatre of the Oppressed, is credited with saying: “Theatre itself is not revolutionary. It is a rehearsal for the revolution.” This quote inspired The Seed and I to use theatre, and more specifically different tools from the Theatre of the Oppressed, to explore experiences of oppression and resistance in this research project. In this section, I detail the activities of the theatre school as well as provide some analysis of how effective theatre was as a method for revealing ideas about citizenship, power, and belonging and hosting a public conversation on these issues. For more analysis of this and how theatre may be effective as a tool of resistance and for cross-racial dialogue, see V. Stam, n.d..

The first five weeks of the theatre school were designed to generate dynamic conversations around the topics of this research project: belonging, citizenship, discrimination, and resistance. In the following three weeks, we had the group develop their stories into short theatre skits. We then used this material to develop a thirty-minute play. The last six weeks were devoted to rehearsing the play and hosting a public performance. I developed the workshops based on activities I had developed, led, or participated in for adult education trainings over seven years in Ottawa with the City for

All Women Initiative (CAWI) and the Community Development Framework (CDF) – both of which draw on Freirean popular education techniques – Augusto Boal’s (1997) *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, Gopal Midha’s (2010) manual for theatre educators, theatre games I knew of from participating in *The Vagina Monologues* and other amateur theatre, as well as Freirean techniques I learned while working for three years with skilled facilitators from Senegal and Nigeria.

The theme for the first week was belonging. We played some games to introduce ourselves to each other and get to know our expectations for the theatre school. We created a group agreement which included discussing how we wanted to have difficult conversations. Our thought activity for the day was a Thermometer exercise, also referred to as Value Lines (see Kennelly 2017), where participants line up along a thermometer depending on how strongly they agree (hot) or disagree (cold) with the statements read out by the facilitator. I discuss belonging and affect in Chapter five.

The theme of the second week was power and privilege. We started with a community bundle, in which participants created a community bundle made of personal objects they brought from home. Inspired by First Nations traditions, the objective of this activity, which I learned from a First Nations educator at a community facilitators’ training, is to symbolize collective strength (see CAWI’s Community Facilitation Guide: Weaving Threads of Inclusion 2012). One participant brought a Ukrainian pagan house djinn believed to protect people. This stuffed creature was a gift from her mother. We listened to a YouTube recording of Maya Angelou reciting her poem *I Rise*, a powerful symbol for another participant who is herself a poet. A young man taught us the meaning of the necklace he wears, a religious symbol which was gifted to him by an honorary

family member. Another participant described how his phone symbolizes community for him, as he uses it to connect with online communities and friends. Our thought activity for the day was the Power and Privilege Walk. This is more commonly known as the Privilege Walk,¹⁹ but I changed the name to reflect a number of new elements I added to the activity in response to my own perception of the traditional game teaching privileged people about their privilege at the expense of those with less privilege. These new elements look at power and privilege from a different direction, thinking about the alternative ways in which people may experience or wield privilege and power.

The third week's theme was citizenship. Participants brought a photo of what being Dutch meant to them. We then used Boal's Image Theatre to sculpt images of *normaal* and *niet normaal* citizens with our bodies, eventually changing the group sculpture to reflect our ideal image of 'normal.' Perry (2012) argues that Image Theatre is a tool of decolonisation in that it employs a "...counter-discursive embodied language....for the purpose of developing counter-hegemonic stories, identities, and subjectivities" (p. 103). Using our bodies to demonstrate and imagine what normal does and could look like gave us a different language to speak of these topics. Using a different language helped us to step out of the everyday in order to critically reflect on it. I discuss the Dutch concept of *normaal* more in-depth in Chapter four, and how youth are resisting *normaal* in Chapter six.

The fourth week was based on the theme of power and resistance. We used Boal's Newspaper Theatre (see Midha 2010) to dissect stories from the daily news and think about them in terms of power and resistance. The stories that emerged from these news

¹⁹ For example, see <http://timeandplace.ubc.ca/user-guide/theme-ii/privilege-walk-version-1/>. Accessed on December 10, 2018.

clips were surprising and powerful. One group chose a news article about space exploration, and then turned their skit into a powerful enactment of a woman of colour discovering that there were others out there like her and that there were planets where the power dynamics of earth did not apply. Another group used some negative news coverage of a mosque to show how Islamic-faith organizations are discriminated against through unfair distribution of funding for religious organizations. These skits demonstrated participants' critical understanding of the world, news coverage, and power.

The fifth week was devoted to more thought-based activities on resistance. Drawing on the Catalyst Centre's toolkit,²⁰ we hung powerful quotes about resistance around the room. Participants took some time to read the quotes and then were invited to stand next to the quote that resonated most strongly with them. We then invited conversation around resistance and change, and how change happens. Irina shared:

“Art is not a mirror with which to reflect the world but a hammer with which to shape it” by Vladimir Mayakovsky. I chose him because [of] the context during the [Russian] revolution...it's about how art can have an amazing power of transforming from soft power to hard power and how actually art can influence people's minds and visions in a really powerful way and sometimes [art] should...speak up and not just reflect what we see. So, art can be free to carry the ideas before something happens. (Theatre workshop. April 25, 2017)

Irina demonstrates how theatre participants valued both aesthetics and social transformation. Participants then individually thought of a time when they felt powerless.

²⁰ www.catalystcentre.ca/school-of-activism/resource-library/quotes-about-ethicsvaluesmorals/ Accessed December 13, 2018.

They got into groups and shared their stories and selected one to act out to the larger group. During these skits, we then transitioned into Forum Theatre, where the rest of the participants could make suggestions or replace a character to see how these situations of powerlessness and oppression could be transformed.

In week six we invited a guest facilitator, Shah Tabib, to give a workshop on storytelling. Shah has a one-man show in the Netherlands which describes his experience of coming to the Netherlands as a child refugee from Afghanistan. He chose to focus on the theme of belonging and invited everyone to create and perform a monologue about the first time they felt different than others. The stories that emerged from this session were powerful and moving. One man gave a short but emotive rendering of an emotional, almost violent, encounter outside of his house that happened when he was a small boy. Another man described how he felt at a family gathering the first time he talked to his Hindu family about being an atheist. A woman described not being able to go outside and play with her neighbours because of her mom's mental illness. This was the first time we gave monologues and they demonstrated the power of storytelling (Hedges, 2017; hooks, 1990) from personal experience.

For the seventh and eighth session, we invited Max Wright, who studied drama at university, to join our group and give feedback and acting tips. As described above, to verify emerging data categories, I adapted Open Space Technology to give participants the opportunity to reflect on the themes from the previous six weeks and decide what they wanted to develop into material for the final performance. To prepare more material for the final performance, in week eight participants were asked to get together in small groups and enact another story of oppression. Irina, a Ukrainian woman studying in the

Netherlands, reflected on the capacity of theatre to bring out barely conscious prejudices after we improvised a grocery store scene where stereotypes about Black people and fried chicken came up: “But I loved that there were some subconscious things, you know, which were brought up when we were acting and everybody would realize it only after we are done” (Interview with Irina. June 13, 2017). We then rehearsed these scenes using Forum Theatre techniques.

We took a break for week nine, during which time I and my co-facilitator drafted a script for the final performance based on the stories everyone had shared over the previous eight weeks. I had offered all participants confidentiality so we altered the stories so that people would not be able to know whose stories they were, unless they were already familiar with a participant’s story. The last four weeks were devoted to modifying and rehearsing the script. Participants made scenes their own by adding or changing small elements. The night before the final performance, they performed a dress rehearsal in front of volunteers and staff from The Seed. This was the first time we tried Forum Theatre with an audience who had no familiarity with the concept. It was a good opportunity for participants to try improvisation with audience members, an idea most of them found intimidating.

Given our theme of resistance, Forum Theatre was a natural choice for the final performance. In breaking down the “fourth wall” between actors and audience members (Quinlan & Duggleby, 2009; Swift, 2016; Tofteng & Husted, 2011), Forum Theatre specifically invites audience members to use theatre as a tool to explore different options for changing their world. In Forum Theatre the audience is invited to be spect-actors. Spect-actors are no longer merely spectating; they now have the opportunity to make

suggestions, offer input, and potentially replace the protagonist on stage, all in an effort to influence a scene of oppression. All suggestions are taken seriously to see what they can offer to influence the scene. The Joker facilitates the conversation between the actors and the spect-actors. The Joker's role is to encourage people to make suggestions or come up on stage themselves, and to also facilitate subsequent conversation (following an intervention by spect-actors) around what changed, why, how, and what could be done differently. Participants felt a little nervous about ceding control to the audience. Faith, a 30-year-old Eritrean-Dutch participant, encouraged other participants to have a human reaction to the feedback:

...I think this is more than just theatre. If you're talking about it like it is rehearsal for resistance, I think it is also important to let those emotions or feelings that come in that moment be and I don't think it is necessary to keep in that focus of the person that you were...because that's being a human right? You can switch whenever. (Theatre workshop. April 25, 2017)

In this sense, Augusto Boal's techniques, particularly Forum Theatre, are well suited to discussing racism and Islamophobia as they emphasize rehearsing resistance and changing situations of oppression, but also keeping a human, emotional reaction to different situations.

The final performance was held in Rotterdam *Noord* at The Seed's venue space. Over forty-five people attended. The event was posted on social media and participants invited friends and family. Audience members were primarily young people in their twenties and thirties. The audience reflected the racial diversity of the theatre participants. The event was scheduled to last for about two hours: the first half hour was

the performance and the following hour and a half was Forum Theatre where the audience was invited, facilitated by the Joker, to make suggestions or physically replace the protagonist in a scene of oppression.

My co-facilitator from The Seed played the role of the Joker. I was a stagehand during the initial performance and then was a participant-observer during the Forum Theatre. From personal observation, approximately seventy-five percent of the audience engaged at one point with the conversation, either through nodding or shaking their heads, speaking up, or replacing one of the actors on stage. This demonstrates how engaged the audience was in the conversation. There was a palpable energy in the room. At various points, spect-actors said: “I’ve experienced this” or “We’ve all been there” or “This happened to my brother.” For example, after the airport scene where a passenger was detained for an additional luggage check, there was a three-way exchange between a spect-actor, the Joker, and an actor:

Alex (spect-actor): Yes. He needs to keep his cool, because she is trying to get a reaction out of him. You understand.

The Joker: Yeah.

Hannah (actor): That’s true.

Alex: Because she’s making prejudice about him. So, what you should do, is lay out your stuff very quick. I’ve been in the same situation. Twice. When I went to America. So just lay out your stuff quick, you guys don’t need to detain me, and then leave. But just keep your cool. Stay quiet. Whatever they say.

Hannah: Let’s try that. (Performance. June 28, 2017)²¹

²¹ For a video synopsis of the final performance, see valeriestam.com/theatre/. This excerpt starts at time stamp 1:14.

These personal connections with the scenes being portrayed on stage demonstrated that the scenes of oppression really resonated with the spect-actors. Conversations continued in the aisles and seats for an hour and a half after the Forum Theatre wrapped up. We succeeded in creating a space for a public conversation around oppression. On the other hand, my co-facilitator who played the role of the Joker stated:

Being the Joker where you are sort of steering the conversation, it was difficult, highly frustrating...I think it could have been done a lot better...[I]t became more a discussion about what was happening on stage in reality rather than what on stage represents. Like [the actors] were justifying themselves continuously throughout the play like this is why I'm doing it when that [doesn't matter] and you know, that for me, that was my biggest baggage... (Debrief, July 6, 2017)

As this conversation demonstrates, using theatre to engage in public conversations about societal issues may not always achieve the intended outcome. Here, my co-facilitator felt that the actors and the spect-actors got caught up in defending their position, losing sight of the idea of rehearsing different suggestions. This could have been mitigated ahead of time by coaching the cast more on their role as practitioners of advice during the Forum part of the show. On the other hand, it demonstrates that both the cast and the audience were invested in their roles. Spect-actors felt comfortable sharing their opinions and disagreeing with each other. A number of people approached me and the co-facilitator afterwards saying they would like to do something similar. The cast and the spect-actors left feeling energized and having made connections. While it could be improved upon, our experience with Forum Theatre served the research goal of facilitating a public conversation on resistance and oppression.

Theatre as Resistance

In this section, I examine the efficacy of theatre as a tool for exploring resistance. In one workshop, participants were asked to perform a situation where they felt powerless (Theatre workshop. April 25, 2017). One story formed the basis for one of the sketches in the final performance: the story of being racially profiled during a luggage check at the airport, discussed above.²² The improvisation began with an argument between the airport ground staff and a Black traveler over his oversized luggage. It quickly escalated into a physical confrontation with security. The airport scene became possible after several weeks of group work, “container building” (Lakey, 2010), and theatre training. After their improvisation, other participants were invited to make suggestions to the actors about what could be done differently in the scene to positively impact the outcome. Gallagher, Starkman, and Rhoades (2017) describe this type of theatre as creative resilience which: “...in this context, encompasses the individual and group act of using drama to expose, critique, explore, claim, articulate, and rehearse strategies of survival and resistance” (p. 226). The idea of ‘rehearsing resistance’ became important to our group as we moved through the theatre school and decided what kind of conversation we wanted to host with the public in the final performance.

As stated earlier, The Seed and I chose theatre, and more specifically Forum Theatre, as our method because of the opportunities it offered to explore resistance. Thomas, a Rwandan-German participant, commented on how theatre was an apt method for exploring resistance as every day he plays different roles and wears different masks. He sees this as a form of resistance:

²² This sketch made it into the final performance. See valeriestam.com/theatre/ time stamp 0:51.

[T]he story of the slave...he had to put up an act, he had to put up a face, so he was acting in front of the slave master...You can never show that you are proud, that you have dignity. You keep that side for behind the stage. So, I think indeed it is a form of resistance to be able to play these roles because you have to use these roles every day... Even though your inner self is like “idiot” and you want to strangle them you kind of have to put on that mask again... (Theatre workshop, March 28, 2017)

Theatre, or performance, resonated with Thomas as a way to resist oppression. By themselves, theatre tools are not a solution to practicing resistance, but rather a way of starting conversation and reflection. Faith, an Eritrean-Dutch theatre participant who identifies as an activist, suggested that Theatre of the Oppressed would be a good training ground for activists:

[Theatre of the Oppressed is able] to give people a safe place to express, but also to try new things. To try new behaviours in a safer space. Because sometimes I talk to people and they tell me, “Sometimes I see things happen and I don’t know what to do.” So, I think that’s a good way to mobilize people. (Interview with Faith. August 7, 2017)

I could relate to this sentiment. As a privileged white middle-class woman, I have not had much experience with racial discomfort or confrontation. For me, theatre was a safe(r) space to rehearse potential scenarios and responses. Rehearsing also provided an opportunity to figure out what types of solidarity were effective. For example, following the first improvisation of the airport scene in a theatre workshop, the protagonist had the chance to implement suggestions made by other participants. In rehearsing this racially-

charged confrontation with airport security, the protagonist went from feeling very defensive and aggressive to feeling calmer and more supported as different strategies were suggested and employed by other theatre participants.

Lukas: Faith, how did you find this situation? Your addition to the situation?

Faith: I wanted to prove what their position was.

[laughter]

Protagonist: I have to say, it did make me feel better...the fact that more people came, like it made me feel like I just wasn't an idiot faced with these people...You still feel the oppression, but at least other people are seeing that this is not right. That makes a big difference. And he's like that's ok and I'm able to calm down and she's like ok then I'm not going on then, and I'm like ok, I have people behind me and people understanding this. And actually, that makes a big difference, the fact that you stand up and you give up or put up your privilege in order to benefit somebody else.

Valerie: That's really strong, actually. Because for me what it seemed like was that things were escalating, but knowing that still for you, your feelings changed in that moment, is a powerful knowledge. (Theatre workshop, April 25, 2017)

In contrast, the participants playing the airport security characters (the oppressors) transformed from feeling powerful to feeling useless (Chahni) or threatened (Anwar).

Anwar: Yeah, and I started to feel threatened because there were more people trying to take control over the situation.

[laughter]

Chahni: And I felt like I didn't have a point anymore.

Thomas: I'm the oppressor here!

Chahni: I was just a picture...And you were ignoring me. I was like lady, lady, lady!

Faith: I was trying to ignore you. (Theatre workshop. April 25, 2017)

This reflection demonstrates how the rehearsal of resistance can give people a sense of the possibilities that exist during oppression. Instead of closing off options, rehearsal opens up possibilities. This excerpt also demonstrates how power dynamics can shift or be completely inverted with different strategies. This scene resonated strongly with all participants and was one reason we decided to include it in the final performance.

Similarly, during the final performance, sometimes the 'oppressors' found that they had a harder time oppressing. The late-night talk show scene depicted an Islamophobic host interviewing a Muslim rapper. In response to an audience question about whether Sayeed felt different playing the Islamophobic host in the first round versus the subsequent round where spect-actors intervened, he replied:

Sayeed: I felt kind of limited now.

Spect-actor who replaced the protagonist on stage: Of course you were limited.

[He nods very self-assuredly]

[lots of laughter]

Sayeed: I was like shit, this is like harder for me!

[laughter]

The Joker: Please give these guys a hand.

[Applause] (Performance. June 28, 2017)²³

²³ This excerpt is available on the video of the final performance at valeriestam.com/theatre/. Time stamp 4:06

In addition to practicing different interventions and strategies on stage, it was particularly helpful to debrief afterwards about how people felt in their roles. Participants expressed that it was powerful to know that oppressors could feel restricted or subdued or sidelined. It also fomented ideas about how privilege or one's social location could be used to influence instances of oppression. For Faith, Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) represented a chance to see how privilege could be leveraged in oppressive situations. In particular, she was interested in seeing how forms of privilege could positively influence outcomes. When she tried it herself, she felt limited by her own positionality as a Black woman and by how people perceived her. She also felt she had a limited understanding of the power dynamics at play, which prevented her from fully intervening in the situation:

Faith: Yeah but also for me it was difficult because what you have in mind is different than how people perceive you and so I wanted to ask questions but I wasn't able to...I wish I could play someone that was privileged enough to get into that conversation and say something about it or ask for the manager and be in a position that people listen, but I'm not. So even if I want to pretend that I am –
Thomas: That's also a feeling of powerlessness.

Faith: ...[T]hat's why I was asking all these questions, like "Why is he there, and why are you there?" [T]rying to understand which privileges [are] here and what do you do because to know what to do you need to know which power structure is at work. (Theatre workshop. April 25, 2017)

The restrictions Faith points out are not only relevant to rehearsing resistance, they are real constraints that operate in daily life. Someone might feel, given their social position, that their intervention in a situation will not make as big a difference as they hope. Others

might feel uncertain about all the dynamics at play and uncertain about intervening. As Erel, Reynolds, and Kaptani (2017) point out, TO is less about getting marginalized people to conform to dominant ideas of who counts as a ‘good’ (or, in this case, normative) citizen, and more about social transformation. In this way, practicing different strategies and tactics might be helpful in exploring how marginalized people can tap into different sources of power and influence, as well as giving privileged people the opportunity to explore how their privilege can be used to mitigate oppression.

Theatre as Cross-Racial Dialogue

Cross-racial dialogue is often fraught with tension, due in part to white fragility (DiAngelo, 2011), where white people have a hard time talking about race in a productive manner. This may be accompanied by protestations of innocence, white tears, or jokes (Wekker 2016), and allegations of marginalized speakers being a “killjoy” (Ahmed, 2017a, 2017b). One barrier to frank conversations about race is ‘Western’ society’s emphasis on a normative good/bad binary from which follows the assumption that racism is consciously acted out by bad people (DiAngelo, 2015). This means that white people take accusations of racist behaviour or white privilege to mean that they are ‘bad’ people. This conflicts with their view of themselves as ‘progressive’ and at the same time obscures how racism manifests in subtle and systemic ways. Another barrier is that white discomfort is sometimes connected to what are perceived as angry conversations around race. Labelling interactions as angry should not be unproblematized given the trope around the ‘angry Black woman’ being applied to groups or individuals when they speak out and protest (Griffin, 2012; Matti, 2015). These reactions shut down constructive conversations and continue to render invisible the feelings of people of colour.

As the above excerpts demonstrate, our conversations were very rich. I believe this was due, in part, to the use of theatre as a tool. During each workshop, the group did a mixture of theatre games (some of which felt quite silly) and more introspective, interactive, workshop activities. Lewis (2010) argues that “Critically transformative laughing is a violently non-violent weapon of democracy that opens a new space of disidentification and dissensus with the given social allotment of roles and identities” (p. 642). The violence Lewis refers to points to a rupture with the everyday which works to create a space for thinking outside of the status quo. We designed the workshops to consecutively and intentionally build up a level of trust within the group. Not only was this important for performing; it was also important in building a strong group dynamic where participants felt they could express themselves, disagree, and have deep conversations. The combination of theatre and focus group discussions gave the group different ways of connecting and building trust. In popular education, this is referred to as “container building” (Lahey, 2010), or creating a strong group dynamic for ‘safe’ or ‘safe enough’ space in which to carry out difficult conversations (Reynolds, 2014; Richardson/Kianewesquao & Reynolds, 2014). I refer to this as safe(r) space, recognizing that safety may not look the same or be possible for everyone in these conversations. I see safety as a prerequisite for difficult conversations and the ability to be vulnerable; in effect, enabling participants to take risks and/or put themselves at risk (Lahey, 2010; Leonardo & Porter, 2010). When I talk about safe(r) space, I do not mean a space where white people’s comfort remains intact or one where white privilege remains unproblematized. Many people argue for whites to sit with discomfort as a way of learning about marginalization and their privilege (Adair Bonner, 2016; Carroll &

Zimmerman, 2014; Gonzales Milliken, 2015; Ziyad, 2015). When talking about safety it is also important to have a conversation around (dis)comfort. In the context of anti-racist spaces, these conversations and spaces should not feel safe for white people, rather they should feel safe enough to engage in risky behaviour – which people of colour have to do on a daily basis, albeit often without safety and with more risk. Practicing discomfort and taking risks is useful in moving beyond white fragility and white guilt.

Given that our group was racially diverse, I wanted to carefully set up a context in which participants were invited to practice discomfort. In this conversation, everyone had the opportunity to talk about what they needed from others and themselves in order to fully participate. In this spirit, at the beginning of the theatre school we set up a group agreement. Including myself, there were four white participants in the theatre school, all female. As such, it was important to acknowledge whiteness in an effort to name something that is normally invisible and normalized and, in so doing, disrupt power dynamics. I also talked about what it might mean to be a part of these conversations coming from a place of privilege other than race privilege. I encouraged participants to suspend knee-jerk reactions, sit with discomfort, and actively listen to those with different experiences from our own. *Being with* negative affect as a person from a dominant group is about opening oneself up to critique and *listening* to anger, rage, and frustration. These conversations are painful and uncomfortable. It is important to create a space where risk is encouraged, where frank conversations around anti-racism can be had, where privileged people willingly and repeatedly put themselves in a space of discomfort and vulnerability.

Talking about this was, of course, easier than practicing it. For instance, Anneke, a white Dutch participant studying to be a teacher, related her experience of confusing students of colour in her classroom and then played the role of a white teacher who constantly confused two Asian students. At first, Anneke's depiction of a racist teacher garnered a lot of sympathy from the other participants; they could identify with the story she was portraying. Perhaps feeling shame or guilt, Anneke attempted to justify why some teachers might confuse students of colour. She made the story no longer about race but about the teachers. This effectively re-centered whiteness in the conversation. One participant commented to me: "It's like I felt like she was kind of trying to make things about her... When, I mean, she has so many spaces to do that, except for there? I really hope she learned from that" (Interview. July 6, 2017). I will revisit this encounter in more detail in Chapter six; for now, I use these excerpts to demonstrate how difficult it can be to engage people, particularly people coming from positions of privilege, in conversations around oppression.

Having a conversation about safety, risk, and discomfort at the beginning of the theatre school reminded privileged participants to stick it out when conversations became difficult and they were confronted by their privilege or "ambushed by whiteness" (Yancy, 2008). This needs to be accompanied by self-awareness and a personal commitment to doing difficult, emotional work. For example, following a particularly intense exercise – the Privilege Walk – Lila, the white Bulgarian participant shared:

Lila: I just felt uncomfortable...[it] shut me down a little bit. I see it now because everybody's talking you know and I'm still there you know? My mind is not here.

Valerie: [I]t is a powerful exercise. Maybe I should have been more clear, but you can participate as much or as little as you want to. So, if anything does make you too uncomfortable, feel free to take a step back.

Lila: ...[B]ut it didn't make me feel uncomfortable in way that I felt like ok, this is pushing me to a place where...it's tougher than I thought, or where I actually [didn't] want to go....I just have to take my mind from that place...It touched me.

Valerie: Yeah. Thank you...I do think it's part of getting comfortable with being uncomfortable also.

Lila: That's what happened! I was there and I had a little moment where I was thinking you know...you can just go to the couch and sit and let them do it. But I was like, you didn't come to sit! And then I remembered what we wrote: sit with the discomfort, you know? You won't die! That's what I think. (Theatre workshop. April 4, 2017)

Participants referenced our conversation about getting comfortable with discomfort several times throughout the theatre school. It also gave them a way of processing what was going on for them within a lexicon of 'comfort and discomfort.' In this way, setting up a safe(r) space enabled conversations – though often tense, fraught or partial – to happen across privilege. While our conversations were imperfect and often inconclusive, the fun theatre games and trust-building exercises, combined with a conversation about practicing discomfort, created a little more easiness with frank conversations around difficult topics.

Learning to *sit* with uncomfortable feelings of guilt or shame is important work for privileged people. It is important to work through these feelings; yet this work should

not dominate racial dialogues. At times, as evidenced in Anneke's teacher skit and the subsequent discussions, white guilt and typical white Dutch responses to racism did dominate our conversations. Learning to *be* with 'negative' affect such as anger or frustration is an important task for people who claim to work in solidarity with marginalized people. White or privileged people may perceive anger as targeted towards them – particularly since they benefit from the oppressive system others are angry about – or they may feel marked as representative of the whole white race, a position people of colour are put in all the time. Anger could also be seen as a right response to injustice, or an attempt to engage, be vulnerable, and be recognized (Leonardo & Porter, 2010). These conversations are risky for all participants, but less so for white participants who, because of their privilege, get to police the manner and tone of 'acceptable' feedback. At the same time, it was important for us to learn that whiteness is not a monolithic category. The participants with Eastern European origins had a more nuanced experience of whiteness as they are often perceived as inferior in the Netherlands. Their contributions, like those of the mixed-race participants, enriched our understanding of racial categories and experiences. Due to (white) privilege, these conversations take place on an unequal playing field. While these conversations are asymmetrical, *how* conversations take place can help acknowledge and address power differentials (Bubeck, 2000). In a research context, opening up space for fraught, tense conversations, and not avoiding or shutting down critical space even when accompanied by negative affect, requires paying attention, listening, and, at times, taking action. Moving from emotional responses to a place of solidarity and action requires constant vigilance.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have sought to demonstrate that arts-based methods, specifically theatre, may have many benefits for researchers. In my project, theatre allowed for a more participatory and collaborative approach, achieving many of the philosophical goals of PAR such as the co-creation of knowledge and the disruption of researcher-participant hierarchies. It provided an alternative language to discuss embodied realities and subjugated knowledges. This embodied language was also helpful in practicing or rehearsing resistance to oppression and facilitating a dynamic public conversation on social justice issues. Tapping into the arts also allowed us to engage with a broader general audience in a fun and dynamic way. In a small way it prefigured a more socially-justice-oriented community.

It is important to note also that arts-based methodologies are not perfect. Though we aimed to disrupt them, our cross-racial conversations still reflected unjust societal power dynamics at play. At times, whiteness dominated our conversations. Researcher-participant hierarchies could have been further disrupted by involving participants in the design of the weekly workshops for the theatre school. Using theatre as method brought up insights and experiences that would not otherwise have happened and resulted in a lasting experience for participants. The final performance using Forum Theatre also created a unique space for second-generation Dutch youth to discuss issues common to them with their peers. Theatre as method allowed for a greater sense of play – for example, the playing we did with the concept of *doe normaal* – and gave me, as a researcher, the opportunity to delve into unfamiliar concepts more deeply. It also gave participants a chance to explore familiar concepts in unfamiliar ways thus disrupting

discourse and bringing embodied understandings to the fore. As a researcher, I continue to reflect on the stories and lessons that emerged from this experience. I am sure this experience has left the participants with much to reflect on as well. At times it was difficult to analyze the theatre school data: the creative energy and group dynamic created a different type of data from that of the direct one-on-one engagement of interviews. The semi-structured interviews complemented these creative dialogue exercises with direct talk. I intentionally chose not to analyze every element of the theatre school such as the intense and profound collective moments experienced during Forum Theatre at the final performance, recognizing that certain experiences and forms of knowledge are not necessarily for academic consumption (Tuck & Yang, 2014). While many elements of the theatre experience are difficult, if not impossible (or necessary) to put into words for academic analysis, theatre does provide a way of accessing embodied knowledge and creating collective understandings of different issues. The theatre school shaped the data by creating a space that was playful, interactive, and open-ended. On one level, this microcosm reflected Dutch society, including the unequal power dynamics at work; on another level, theatre held a space open to critically and collectively reflect on, and dialogue about, challenges in Dutch society.

The following chapters use the stories from the theatre school and conversations with interview participants to delve into a deeper analysis of the specific ways that ‘othering’ operates in a Dutch context, how affect and belonging intersect to shape second-generation Black and Muslim youths’ experiences of citizenship, and how their everyday practices of resistance are molded by the power dynamics at play in Dutch society.

Chapter 4: ‘Othering’ in a Dutch Context

This chapter provides a “thick description” (Geertz, 1994) of two processes of ‘othering’ in Dutch society, practices of making ‘normal’ and discourses of ‘othering,’ in order to investigate how exclusion operates in the Netherlands. Foregrounding quotes from our conversations and theatre workshops, this chapter discusses various practices that Philomena Essed (1990) terms everyday racism and demonstrates how these practices fit into a repertoire of governance practices of cultural and religious ‘others.’ For analytical purposes, I organize these practices of everyday racism into two different modes of operation: *doe normaal* (be normal) and the lexicon of ‘othering.’ To analyze these modes of operation, I draw on the concepts of discursive and disciplinary power (Foucault, 1982, 1995, 2008) as outlined in Chapter one. Discursive power is useful in analyzing how words and practices reinforce and perpetuate ‘normal’ and ‘delinquent’ categories and behaviours, thus contributing to our understanding of how social knowledge shapes and is shaped by discourses in the Netherlands today. Disciplinary power refers to practices of the state which enforce certain codes of conduct, such as traffic lights, whereby codes of conduct become normalized, internalized, and transform into self-discipline. In analyzing *doe normaal* and the lexicon around ‘us’ and ‘them,’ I demonstrate how normalizing and ‘othering’ discourses are modes of governing. In these pages, I use the insights coming out of conversations and theatre workshops with these second-generation Dutch youth combined with an analysis of both political and everyday speech acts to provide a contextual analysis of exclusion in Dutch society. A stronger understanding of taken-for-granted modes of exclusion helps to demystify ‘othering’ and increases our capacity to imagine and enact alternative possibilities.

In focusing on *de facto* citizenship – social belonging not legal status – this chapter looks at how ‘othering’ is a form of nation building. In nation-building projects, values around race, culture, religion, and sexual orientation come together to discursively typify the ideal citizen; people who do not fulfill this ideal are deemed unworthy of fully belonging in the national project. While the empirical material in this chapter and Chapters five and six may appear to speak most explicitly to racism, I extend my theoretical analysis to include Islamophobia. Dutch discourses around ‘othering’ draw interchangeably upon racial and cultural or religious signifiers. For example, Hamza, a gay second-generation Moroccan-Dutch youth, speaks frequently about racism, yet the processes of exclusion he describes are not only related to the colour of his skin but also to his religion, culture, and sexual orientation. Similarly, the many Somali-Dutch women I spoke with experience anti-Black racism combined with gendered forms of Islamophobia. It is important to bring an intersectional analysis to the issue of exclusion. The second-generation Black and Muslim youth with whom I spoke have a deep understanding of the intersectional nature of ‘othering’ processes at work in white Dutch society.

The thick description I provide of ‘othering’ in Dutch society contains marked similarities to how cultural and religious ‘others’ are governed in other ‘Western’ liberal democracies. Neoliberalism plays a role in these governing processes. On the one hand, neoliberalism has eroded social security systems, leading to increased precarity for national citizens, most notably the working class. This precarity feeds anxiety around the state of the nation and a perceived threat from immigrants, leading to an increase in white nationalism. The white majority, states Hage (2000), positions itself as the worrier of the

nation whereby it becomes the spatial manager determining who has the right to come in and how these newcomers should behave. Hage (*Ibid.*) argues that there is a bodily-spatial aspect to this nationalism:

It is also by inhabiting this [national] will that the imaginary body of the nationalist assumes its gigantic size, for the latter is the size of omnipresence, the size of those whose gaze has to be constantly policing and governing the nation. It is also, by the same token, the inability to represent and inhabit such a will which makes the other a national object. (p. 45-6)

These connections to the body underscore the importance of symbols and other identity markers for the question of belonging. Neoliberalism also works to devolve responsibility for risks to individuals. In this way, immigrants are made individually responsible for their own acculturation and economic success (de Leeuw & van Wichelen, 2012; Schinkel & van Houdt, 2010; Stasiulis, 2013b), leaving the dominant group free of any self-reflection or critique around accommodation, multiculturalism, tolerance, and national myth-making. The importance of the body also arises when thinking of disciplinary power, which Foucault saw "...as a 'relational' entity, as itself a 'relation', always running between two or more people (or sets of people) and carrying with it the possibility that one individual (or collectivity) will be able to achieve certain desirable effects in the thoughts and actions of another" (Sharp, Routledge, Philo, & Paddison, 2000, p. 14). I draw on observations made by scholars in the Netherlands and other 'Western,' liberal democracies to analyze these modes of operation. Because these examples are drawn from a very specific subset of those who experience 'othering' – second-generation, Black and Muslim youth – they offer specific insight into practices of

‘othering’ around racism and Islamophobia. They also offer more generalized insights into how ‘othering’ operates in white Dutch culture and provides insight into how exclusion operates in ‘Western’ liberal democracies more generally.

The use of specific terms and practices around ‘othering’ is highly political and part of the colonial project of denying or whitewashing history. For example, as I have shown in Chapter two, Dutch children learn very little about colonialism and the slave trade (Essed & Nimako, 2006; Nimako, 2012; Weiner, 2014, 2015; Wekker, 2016).

When this time period is referenced in popular culture, it is known as the Golden Age of Dutch history. The Golden Age is synonymous with wealth, artistic innovation, the birth of liberalism and liberal philosophies, and global power, but there is rarely mention of how colonialism and the slave trade enabled these advancements. This is one of the reasons that the general populace has little understanding of how extensive Dutch involvement was in the slave trade (Fatah-Black, 2017; Rossum & Fatah-Black, 2012). The colonial period is construed as a time when the Dutch were benevolent and well-intentioned and when their actions caused very little harm. Divorcing the current reality from the colonial past necessitates mental acrobatics. It also necessitates a willful blindness which gives rise to a dearth of language around naming harmful practices as racist and blocks constructive conversations or policies that could address racism, Islamophobia, and other forms of oppression.

Doe Normaal (Just be normal)

Doe normaal (be normal) or *doe maar gewoon* (just be normal already) are two sayings that are widely used throughout the Netherlands in a variety of different contexts:

from do not litter to conform to (dominant) opinions. They come from a longer saying: *Doe maar gewoon, dan doe je al gek genoeg* (Just act normal, it's already crazy enough). In this chapter, I argue that *doe normaal* is the discursive manifestation of normalization in the Netherlands, which forms part of processes of state and social exclusion. While discourses around normalization occur in many 'Western' liberal societies (Eijberts & Roggeband, 2016; Gideonse, 2015; Harris & Karimshah, 2018; Polkowski, 2017; Ryan, 2011; Söderberg & Nyhlén, 2014), what makes the Dutch case unique is the ubiquity of the idiom *doe normaal*. The ubiquity of this expression results in 'normal' becoming a type of "national knowledge" (van Dijk, 2003, p. 90), ensures its pervasive and tenacious circulation, and increases its strength. In her analysis of postwar Canadian youth and sexuality, Mary Louise Adams (2003) elaborates on the concept of normalization: the discourses and practices which produces 'normal' subjects who live 'normal' lives and who find it hard to imagine anything otherwise. Normalization, she argues, works to define and limit certain things as acceptable and other things as illegitimate, which defines and curtails the choices available to us. Not only does normalization operate discursively and institutionally, it also produces self-regulating citizens by conditioning our wants and desires. In the Netherlands, both *doe normaal* and another expression, *niet meer niet minder* (no more, no less), may be seen as benign cultural expressions; however, I argue they operate discursively to exclude certain groups of people from constructions of 'normal' and therefore 'Dutchness.'

Doe normaal and *niet meer niet minder* have many different meanings and applications in the Netherlands. These sayings are used in a wide range of contexts, from something as seemingly innocuous as exhortations to be yourself to more conformist

applications such as abide by the laws or control (excessive) emotions or behaviour. A Dutch-Canadian friend described to me how *doe normaal* is used with her children, to encourage them to play calmly or not act too crazy. Some scholars have observed an increase in conformity in Dutch society (Duyvendak & Hurenkamp, 2004 cited in Geshiere, 2009, p. 142-3). These practices centre around everyday life: clothing styles, consumer preferences, and career paths. *Doe normaal* and *niet meer niet minder* also reinforce conformity through a call to be average. For instance, getting average grades in school is encouraged and is referred to as the *zesjescultuur* (literally the little sixes culture, though also translated as a culture of mediocrity). With the *zesjescultuur*, students are not in competition with one another. People who do well might be perceived as bragging or promoting themselves. In the Dutch context, normality is a discursive expression that reinforces acceptable code of conduct: this is applied to more benign practices such as fashion or littering, but also to more insidious and profound beliefs on who gets to be 'normal' and belong to the nation. Foucault argues that power is something that pervades society and is incorporated into the actions of the everyday (Larruina & Ghorashi, 2016). Ghorashi and Sabelis (2013) describe how power is connected to processes of normalization of "...everyday behaviour, linguistic expressions and non-verbal, bodily interactions that are/become internalized and engrained in mind, body, and culture, and are difficult to pinpoint and transform" (p. 142). In this sense, *doe normaal* and *niet meer niet minder* also work to discipline the conduct of 'others' and reinforce ideals of 'good' citizenship. For example, drawing on Ruth Benedict's (1934) assertion that categories of normal and abnormal are culturally defined and that 'normal' becomes equated with societal morals, Theo Gideonse (2015) describes how only certain

ways of being gay are normalized in ‘Western’ societies. In the Netherlands, expressions of *doe normaal* contain racially-tinged and white-nationalist sentiment. It is applied to ‘non-Western’ cultures, which are seen as *niet normaal* (not normal); the logical flow is that being ‘normal’ or average is unavailable to ‘non-Western’ people. As discussed in Chapter four, immigrants from ‘non-Western’ cultures must change their behaviour, values, and perspectives in order to fit into the values and norms of mainstream Dutch society. Liesbeth Minnaard (2014) explains how standards around Dutch normality extend to cultural ‘others’:

[Dutch normality is] the state that tolerates cultural difference as long as it remains within the set, dominant boundaries of behavior.... On the one hand, cultural particularities are considered as intrinsic or natural aspects of a particular, non-dominant culture. On the other hand, they are seen as fundamentally inferior to particularities of the dominant culture. Thus “culture,” here, becomes synonymous to “race.” In its perceived capacity of a fixed, inherent feature it works to establish a “natural” hierarchy of difference. (p. 241)

The discursive expression *doe normaal* is instrumentalized to reinforce ‘us’ and ‘them’ binaries and to normalize dominant white Dutch culture. This “...demand for normality, and the intolerance that comes with it” (Essed & Hoving, 2014, p. 23) constructs an exclusionary society. Since *doe normaal* is a vague saying, it allows a powerful speaker to manipulate and adapt ‘normal’ to suit their own definition, thereby judging and controlling the behaviour of marginalized people. As Jennifer Lisa Vest (2013) describes in their autobiographical analysis of being gender non-conforming Black professor in an

American university, this plays out as a perpetual lack of epistemic credibility, or the ability to know, that marginalized people are confronted with:

What they say they know is always open to doubt and questioning. What they claim is real is undermined by their lack of epistemic authority to know. They are not deemed “knowers.” Their access to knowledge is marred somehow by their race and gender as if these aspects of themselves create blindfolds, separating them from the true nature of things. (p. 506)

In this same sense, Dutch normality has raced, gendered, and classed connotations which apply to social constructions of knowledge. Epistemic credibility is only conferred on certain bodies, and marginal speakers are deemed too ‘subjective’ to speak authoritatively about exclusion.

In one theatre workshop, we played with the concept of *doe normaal*. Here, two white, female Eastern European participants and two Black, male Dutch participants in the theatre school described the practices they associate with *doe normaal* and *niet meer niet minder* as:

Irina: Something like, mind your own business. Like you do only what everyone else is expecting you to do and not...

Lila: Not more or less.

Lukas: *Niet meer niet minder*.

Jake: Abide [by] the law.

Valerie: So, kind of average?

Irina: Average. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah! Don't get 9 if you can get 6 or 7.

(Theatre Workshop. April 10, 2017)

The youth in the theatre project connected the push to be mediocre with conforming to societal expectations around *doe normaal*. Sayings such as *doe normaal* and *niet meer, niet minder* are often applied to reinforce ‘Dutch normality,’ or the “taken-for-grantedness” (Adams, 2003, p. 95) of dominant white Dutch culture, values, and norms. In this case, theatre and storytelling allow for an analysis of society *and* give insight into how we and others experience society. Maria Lugones (1987) believes in the idea of play when traveling to someone’s “world” so “we can understand *what it is to be them and what it is to be ourselves in their eyes*” (p. 17, emphasis in original). Playing with the concept of *doe normaal* acts as a mirror for society. Hannah Arendt argues that storytelling “...bring[s] to light the incongruity between reality and the abstract concepts we hold” (paraphrased in Disch, 1993, p. 669). A ubiquitous concept like *doe normaal* can be critically analyzed using theatre because theatre takes us out of everyday life in order to explore what is known, reflect upon it, make it more explicit, and (potentially) break from it. Thinking with Arendt, storytelling invites listeners to train their imagination to go visiting (Disch, 1993), that is, to see others’ perspectives through our own eyes (Gallagher, 2015) so that our own critical analysis of society or events is enriched by multiple perspectives. For example, participants in the theatre project discussed what *doe normaal* and *niet meer niet minder* meant in the context of their lives. Here, three male participants, all people of colour, two of whom are Muslim, give some examples:

Anwar: [*Doe normaal* means] don’t overdo it. We set certain informal [and] formal rules and within this context everyone knows what we can expect from

each other and never go outside of these rules.... if you're going outside of that or beyond that, you're not being normal. It's like in this house we don't do that.

Valerie: So, kind of like staying within the...

Lukas: Within the boundaries...

Valerie: Stay in the box, sort of?

Jake: Yeah. Yeah.

Anwar: Stay inside the box. Thinking inside the box. [...]

Lukas: If you were to talk to someone on the street [about] *doe normaal*, it would most probably be for something like littering or insulting someone older.... you do have moments where like in mid conversation it's kind of like your political view or something of the sort is not consistent with your Caucasian counterpart so then in that instance *doe normaal* is to conform to my idea. (Theatre workshop. April 10, 2017).

Anwar's statement "In this house, we don't do that" draws on the metaphor of the nation as a home and belies a paternalistic or patronizing attitude towards outsiders. It suggests that if you don't follow the rules, you will be dealt with accordingly. Lukas elaborates on this paternalism to suggest that *doe normaal* even refers to policing the thoughts and perspectives of non-white people, particularly if these do not fall in line with normative white Dutch views. This heavy-handedness around conformity paints a picture of how social control is applied by mainstream white Dutch society to people perceived as 'other.' Theatre ruptures with everyday life, enabling exploration of these embodied, marginal perspectives and knowledges which can provide a counterpoint to commonplace or taken-for-granted knowledge and disrupt power dynamics.

Not only does society exercise social control through *doe normaal*; being ‘normal’ is such a pervasive tool of liberal social control in the Netherlands that language around normality is also used by political parties. Foucault (1984) posited that power is produced when widely held beliefs, as they gain acceptance and popularity, are eventually believed to be common knowledge. The more popularized and accepted beliefs become, the more belief systems gain power as their adherents propagate allegiance to a certain set of values and actions. *Doe normaal* is one such popularized belief that is now tacit or implicit national knowledge, ensuring an internalized self-discipline (Foucault, 2008). The taken-for-grantedness of white Dutch values, culture, and norms also reinforce and extend their power. While Geert Wilders’ Party for Freedom (*Partij voor de Vrijheid* – PVV) on the far-right is known for anti-immigrant and Islamophobic vitriol, other parties also use exclusionary language, demonstrating how ‘othering’ resonates with the general population. For instance, a centrist party, the People’s Party for Freedom and Democracy (*Partij voor de Vrijheid en Democratie* – VVD) led by Mark Rutte, used *doe normaal* for their campaign slogan leading up to the 2017 national elections. The slogan was instrumentalized in such a way so as to make it clear who is considered a ‘normal’ Dutch citizen and who is not. Rutte was the incumbent Prime Minister and his party went on to win the most seats in the *Tweede Kamer* (the Second House), though this proportion decreased from the previous election. Fatima, a female Moroccan-Dutch university student, discussed the rise of the far-right and how this language is used by other parties to gain votes:

Fatima: Parties such as [Wilders’] PVV and the *Front Nationale* in France...those populist parties are becoming [bigger] throughout Europe and also the US

obviously...So, other parties are trying to win votes as well by making such comments. For example, Rutte [and] *doe normaal*...That was really shocking. I also found, on the tram stop, some advertisement thingy with [the quote] *doe maar gewoon dan doe je al gek genoeg*...and *kop vodden*, which is...basically headscarves but said in a really rude...

Valerie: How does that make you feel when you see those things?

Fatima: It's kind of shocking.... It just shows what people in general are thinking.... And that's kind of frightening, too. (Interview. March 27, 2017)

Fatima went on to show me the photo of the *VVD*'s *doe normaal* ad that she saw at a tram stop (See Figure 1). I had also noticed this ad on one of my morning runs. This poster encouraged people to "Use your head. *Doe Normaal*" instead of having your "head in the sand" or wearing a "head clod" (a pejorative word for a headscarf). This ad asserts that voting for the *VVD* is normal, and it insinuates that a vote for the *VVD* confers normalcy on someone. Sara Ahmed's (2004b) explanation of the surplus of 'sticky' emotions described in Chapter one applies to these ads. Ahmed describes the ways emotions travel between – and stick to – signs and people and, by extension, groups of people to support specific configurations of power. In the *VVD* ad, the headscarf is instrumentalized because of how it has been constituted as a sign of Islam. In identifying the headscarf, the *VVD* invokes emotion because the headscarf has come to symbolize, materially, the 'backwardness' of Islam, specifically in relation to the perceived role of women in Muslim cultures. What is more, the headscarf has gained surplus affective value - connected to the varied emotions of fear, disgust, and pity - because of the history of association between 'Islam,' 'terrorism,' and 'immigration.' Says Ahmed (*Ibid.*): "The



Figure 1: VVD 2017 campaign ad at a tram stop

Translation: “Head clods. Head in the sand. Use your head. [Vote] VVD. Be. Normal.”

Used with permission.

sign is a ‘sticky sign’ as an effect of a history of articulation, which allows the sign to accumulate value. To use a sticky sign is to evoke other words, which have become intrinsic to the sign through past forms of association” (p. 92). As a ‘sticky’ sign, invoking the headscarf subtly brings up the specter of the ‘migrant’ and the ‘Islamic terrorist’ without needing to explicitly use these words because of the history of association between words and signs. This history of association is powerful, says Ahmed (*Ibid.*), because it is hidden: “...it is this concealment of such associations that allows such signs to accumulate value” (p. 92). As a ‘sticky’ sign connected to migration, Islam, and terrorism, the headscarf activates emotions, works to align and ‘stick’ together different publics and communities, and facilitates conflict. In placing a physical ad about the headscarf controversy at tram stops, not only is the controversy fed, but it is also created anew. By using the sticky sign of the headscarf, the *VVD* ad first aligns the nationalist Dutch subject with their political party thus creating a ‘group,’ and second portrays a vote for another party as a vote for migrants, Islam, and possibly terrorists—all without saying a word. Publicity helps create debates and controversies. The ads themselves become part of the controversy. The more conversation about a topic appears in the public domain, the more people will have an opinion about it, as they relate to the topic in question. Marres (2005) explains:

...the publicization of physical and material entities in the media should not only be understood in terms of institutional efforts to “govern,” though this is certainly an important aspect of it. It also presents a condition of possibility for public involvement in issues to the extent that the publicization of entities enables people to relate to them in their capacity as members of the “public.” (p. 185)

The tram stop ads discipline female Muslim bodies to conform in certain ways, but also create an issue and cause a scene, thus circulating and growing affect and opinions about headscarves and, by association, ‘others.’ When bodies and signs are connected, “[s]uch bodies become ‘blockages’ in the economy of disgust: they slow down or ‘clog up’ the movement between objects, as other objects and signs stick to them. This is how bodies become fetish objects” (Ahmed, 2004b, p. 92). The tram stop ad politicizes Muslim women’s bodies. Tram stop ads are highly visible and circulate messages rapidly and diffusely. They are also ephemeral. Tram stop ads in Amsterdam use a turning mechanism to rotate through multiple ads at one time and are frequently changed. When I went back a few days later to take a picture of the ad I had seen on my run, it had already been replaced by a new ad. Fatima later sent me this photo. The fleeting nature of this messaging makes it powerful in that the message circulates quickly and widely yet its rapidity makes it difficult to mobilize against. Fatima later used this example to talk about the racial and cultural segregation she notices in Dutch society. This is one example of how *doe normaal* as a technique of governmentality normalizes certain behaviours and bodies and delegitimizes other behaviours and bodies. By building on the saying of *doe normaal*, this political campaign works to exclude Muslims, particularly Muslim women who wear headscarves, from the national imagery and the very possibility of being Dutch and thus *normaal*. This campaign also aligns Dutch nationalists with the *VVD*, in essence ‘normalizing’ them, and delegitimizes potential critics of this ad and, by extension, Dutch nationals who do not vote for the *VVD* by positioning them as possible sympathizers with immigrants, Muslims, and terrorists.

Honig (2009) demonstrates that the foreigner as an oppositional device, such as a scapegoat, may be a necessary part of nation-building and, thus, foreigners become important figures in national projects. By lumping women who wear headscarves with people who have their head in the sand, this political campaign ad effectively categorizes hijab-wearing women as abnormal or delinquent: as bad citizens. Zeinab, a female Somali-Dutch university student, describes how the language surrounding the 2017 national elections worried her:

Oh, god! ...with the Dutch elections what really irritated me is that we have a very liberal culture in Holland. [The] culture, the people, very arrogantly proclaim that this is the best way of thinking and this is actually the answer to everything....[But] when you start making it normal for people to not be here, to make them feel excluded, to make them feel threatened, or make them feel the scapegoat, or whatever...there is a tendency that everyone who finds it normal to say *doe normaal* or to say “ You are not normal” or to say “There should be less people of this [colour] or Muslims.” That’s the thing that worried me. (Interview with Zeinab. June 8, 2017.)

Zeinab links the rise in popularity of the expression *doe normaal* with an increase and acceptance of exclusionary discourses, specifically of Muslims and people of colour. The transformation of exclusionary discourses into widespread, taken-for-granted, social or national knowledge is precisely both the trouble with normalizing discourses and what gives them power. *Doe normaal* is so effective precisely because of its ability to pass as ‘normal’ and go unquestioned. Hamza, a Moroccan-Dutch university student, describes how falling outside of the ‘norm’ subliminally affects self-worth and value:

A white person that is born and raised here and is of Dutch ancestry wakes up on Christmas morning and it's a day that's important for everybody because the shops are closed, they get days off from school. Those types of signals teach a person from a subliminal level, from a very early age on, that it's basically white privilege. *The norm of everything that he finds normal is the norm of the society...* And when it's one of our [Muslim] holidays most of the time we don't even get days off from work. Or school...[W]hen you venture out into society you find that everything that's important for you is not valued as important in the society. So that, on a very subliminal level, makes you aware of the fact that everything you stand for is less important. So that does something to your attitudes as well. (Interview with Hamza. April 19, 2017. Emphasis added.)

Falling into the category of 'normal' can feed a sense of rightness, confidence, and entitlement. Falling outside of 'normal' can diminish self-worth and confidence, and contributes to feeling like a "body out of place" (Ahmed, 2000, 2012) or a "space invader" (Puwar, 2004).

Ironically, the Netherlands is known for tolerance. As I described in Chapter two, this image of tolerance is rapidly deteriorating. I argue that tolerance and *doe normaal* are deeply connected. Specifically, tolerance is mustered as a discursive technique which accompanies normalization. Wendy Brown (2004, 2008) has argued that tolerance is a defining feature of 'Western' liberal democracies and their treatment of cultural and religious 'others.' I posit that *doe normaal* is one Dutch expression of the tolerance discourse. This connection is most evident in the culturalist turn described in Chapter two. In the culturalist turn, culture is perceived to be *the* barrier to immigrant integration.

'Non-Western' cultures are portrayed as inherently at odds with liberal, progressive Dutch values. Tolerance is viewed as a Dutch value and being tolerant is 'normal'; in contrast, 'non-Western' cultures are inherently intolerant and not 'normal.' Peter van der Veer (2006) argues that white Dutch society perceives Muslims as rejecting their newfound consumer values and sexual freedom; thus, they are perceived as a threat to Dutch values. This has historically typified discourse around 'us' and 'them' where: "...characterizations of the Dutch as being exceptionally modern, freedom-loving, uninhibited, forthright, democratic, civic-minded and egalitarian remain robustly at the forefront of how the cultural differences between the native population and the newcomers are conceived" (van Reekum & Duyvendak, 2012, p. 463).

To give one example, as in many other 'Western,' liberal democracies, acceptance of homosexuality is pitted against the presumption that 'barbaric,' 'non-Western' cultures do not accept homosexuality and are therefore not to be tolerated. Others have argued that Dutch progressiveness is a form of social conformity which in turn fosters the idea that all things Muslim are inherently non-conforming, as all things Muslim are seen as inferior and 'backwards' (Korteweg, 2013; Mepschen et al., 2010). Van Reekum and Duyvendak (2012) explain the connection between tolerance and normalization by describing two ways multiculturalism is denounced in the Netherlands, saying: "...there are those who are different – e.g. gays and lesbians – because they are Dutch, part of an open, dynamic, liberal culture which doesn't enforce one encompassing morality, and those who are different because they aren't Dutch" (p. 465). These statements could be seen as a double-standard: some differences are tolerated – even celebrated – and normalized because they epitomize the freedom-loving image the Dutch have of

themselves; other differences are shunned because they are perceived to go against the Dutch self-image of openness and freedom.

In addition to the *VVD*'s *doe normaal* campaign, Mark Rutte, the leader of the party and the Prime Minister of the country at the time, issued a public letter to all *allochtonous* Dutch people in February 2017 (See Figures 2 and 3). This letter suggested that people should abide by Dutch values and *doe normaal of ga weg* (be normal or leave). In the letter, Rutte discursively conflates being 'normal' with neoliberal notions of productive citizenship such as working for an income (not living off welfare), and with ideas of 'goodness,' such as being friendly, neighbourly, and polite. By suggesting readers should be normal or leave, he is specifically identifying non-white Dutch readers as engaging in problematic behaviour because they (supposedly) have somewhere else to go. In a discursive twist, he also suggests it is not 'normal' to call someone racist, thus preemptively suggesting that anyone who calls this letter racist should also leave. The choice of writing this message in letter form is also interesting. A letter suggests the possibility of a conversation. By writing a public letter, Rutte and the *VVD* maintain the *appearance* of being open to dialogue and, thus, reinforce the dominant Dutch self-image as rational, debate-loving citizens. However, the content of the letter makes it clear that conversation on these issues is not welcome. Anyone who opposes this letter can be called irrational and *niet normaal* because, after all, it is only discussing 'normal' behaviour. The letter-form of this message thus amplifies the white Dutch self-image of being 'tolerant' and open to dialogue while perpetuating exclusion.

This letter inflamed a lot of second- and third-generation citizens who have been born, raised, and educated in, and are contributing to, Dutch society. *Allochtonous* Dutch



Aan alle Nederlanders,

Er is iets aan de hand met ons land. Hoe komt het toch dat we als land zo welvarend zijn, maar sommige mensen zich zo armzalig gedragen? Mensen die in toenemende mate de stemming in ons land aan het bepalen zijn. Die bereid zijn om alles waar we als Nederland zo hard voor hebben gewerkt, omver te gooien. Dat laten we toch niet gebeuren?

Verreweg de meesten van ons zijn van goede wil. De stille meerderheid. We hebben het beste met ons land voor. We werken hard, helpen elkaar en vinden Nederland best een gaaf land. Maar we maken ons wel grote zorgen over hoe we met elkaar omgaan. Soms lijkt het wel alsof niemand meer normaal doet.

U herkent het vast wel. Mensen die zich steeds asociaal lijken te gedragen. In het verkeer, in het openbaar vervoer en op straat. Die van mening zijn dat ze altijd maar voorrang hebben. Die afval op straat dumpen. Die conducteurs bespuigen. Of die in groepjes rondhangen en mensen treiteren, bedreigen of zelfs mishandelen. Niet normaal.

We voelen een groeiend ongemak wanneer mensen onze vrijheid misbruiken om hier de boel te verstieren, terwijl ze juist naar ons land zijn gekomen voor die vrijheid. Mensen die zich niet willen aanpassen, afgeven op onze gewoontes en onze waarden afwijzen. Die homo's lastigvallen, vrouwen in korte rokjes uitjouwen of gewone Nederlanders uitmaken voor racisten. Ik begrijp heel goed dat mensen denken: als je ons land zo fundamenteel afwijst, heb ik liever dat je weggaat. Dat gevoel heb ik namelijk ook. Doe normaal of ga weg.

Dit gedrag mogen we nooit normaal vinden in ons land. De oplossing is niet om dan maar groepen mensen over één kam te scheren, uit te schelden of hele groepen simpelweg het land uit te zetten. Zo bouwen we toch geen samenleving met elkaar? De oplossing is vooral een mentaliteitskwestie. We zullen glashelder moeten blijven maken wat normaal is en wat niet normaal is in dit land. We zullen onze waarden actief moeten verdedigen.

In Nederland is het namelijk normaal dat je elkaar de hand schudt en gelijk behandelt. Het is normaal dat je van hulpverleners afblijft. Dat je leraren respecteert en mensen niet sart met vlogjes. Het is normaal dat je werkt voor je geld en het beste uit je leven probeert te halen. Elkaar helpt als het even moeilijk gaat en een arm om iemand heen slaat in zware tijden. Het is normaal dat je je inzet en niet wegloopt voor problemen. Dat je fatsoenlijk naar elkaar luistert. In plaats van elkaar te overschreeuwen als je het ergens niet mee eens bent.

De komende tijd is bepalend voor de koers van ons land. Er ligt slechts één vraag voor: wat voor land willen we zijn?

Laten we ervoor strijden dat we ons thuis blijven voelen in ons mooie land. Laten we duidelijk blijven maken wat hier normaal is en wat niet. Ik weet zeker dat we dit voor elkaar gaan krijgen. Dat we alles wat we met elkaar bereikt hebben samen overeind houden. U, ik, wij allemaal. Laten we samenwerken om dit land nóg beter te maken. Want echt, we zijn een ontzettend gaaf land. Ik zou nergens anders willen wonen. U wel?

Mark Rutte

VVD Normaal. Doen.

Praat vanavond mee om 19.00 uur tijdens een Facebook live sessie op www.facebook.nl/vvd

Figure 2: Letter from PM Mark Rutte “To all Dutch people”

Downloaded from <https://vvd.nl/content/uploads/2017/01/briefvanmark.pdf> Last accessed

February 25, 2019.

To all Dutchmen,

There's something wrong with our country. How is it possible that we, as a country, are so wealthy, but that some people behave so poorly? People who set the tone in our country more and more. Who are willing to overthrow everything we, the Netherlands, have worked so hard for. We can't let that happen!

Most people have good will. The silent majority. We want the best for our country. We work hard, help one another, and think the Netherlands are quite a cool country. But we do worry about the way we treat one another. Sometimes it seems like no-one behaves normally anymore.

You probably recognise it. People seem to behave more and more anti-socially. In traffic, in public transport, and in the streets. Who think they always have right of way. Who dump their garbage on the street. Who spit at conductors. Who hang around in groups and bully people, threaten them or even assault them. Not normal.

We feel increasingly uneasy when people abuse our freedom to undermine our country, even though they came to our country for that freedom. People who refuse to adapt, dislike our traditions and reject our values. Who harrass gays, cat-call women in short skirts, or call normal Dutchmen racist. I understand it all too well when people think: if you reject our country in such a fundamental manner, I'd rather have you leave. Because I feel the same. Behave normally or leave.

Never should we accept this behaviour as normal in our country. The solution is not to lump together groups of people, to insult them, or to simply deport whole groups of people. We can't build a society like that. The solution is mainly a matter of mentality. We should continue to make clear what is and what is not normal in this country. We have to defend our values actively.

For in the Netherlands, it's normal to shake hands and treat one another like equals. It is normal not to assault first-aid helpers. To treat teachers with respect and to not bully people with vlogs. It is normal to work for your money and try to make the best out of your life. To help one another when things are rough and hug people when times are tough. It is normal to do your best and not to walk away from your problems. That you listen to others. Rather than yell if you disagree with someone.

The near future will decide our country's direction. We only need to answer one question: what kind of country do we want to be?

Let us fight for being able to feel at home in our beautiful country. Let us make clear what is normal and what is not. I'm sure we can do that. That we can reinforce what we made together thus far. You, I, all of us. Let us cooperate to improve our country even better. Because we really are a really cool country. I wouldn't want to live anywhere else. Would you?

Mark Rutte

Figure 3: Translation of Mark Rutte's letter

Translated by Reddit user HomSig. Available at

[https://www.reddit.com/r/europe/comments/5pobl6/dutch_elections_ministerpresident_m
ark_ruttes/](https://www.reddit.com/r/europe/comments/5pobl6/dutch_elections_ministerpresident_mark_ruttes/) Last accessed February 25, 2019.

citizens were very aware that they were the target of this letter. Faith, an Eritrean-Dutch participant in the theatre project, stated the following:

Have you read the letter that our Prime Minister wrote? That was crazy! He was talking about us. About all the activists....[I]f you break it down it's really clear what he's saying....the more I think about Dutch history the more scared I get because if you were capable of doing all of that and you're insisting to not get over it then what is going to happen in the future? [I]t would be one thing to go through all of that and say: "We know what we have done, what our forefathers and mothers have done, but we want to do better." But that's not even happening. So, what gives me a guarantee that what happened to the Africans in West Africa and what happened to the Jews, it's not going to happen again? I don't have that guarantee... [with this letter] you're laying a foundation for unjust things to happen without people being shocked by it. [W]hen something happens to me on the street you would be like "Oh, that's one of those people. She deserved it." Like what they are doing in the States when a Black person is killed like maybe he was doing this. It's not a big shock any more. It's happening here as well with this language. So, that's why I'm happy that I can put away money now...so I can leave any moment. Really. (Interview. August 7, 2017)

Friends with dual nationality were similarly offended and outraged by this letter. I quote Faith at length because she makes a connection between the Holocaust, slavery, racism in the USA, and Rutte's political speech acts invoking *doe normaal*. As Brown (2008) points out, tolerance discourse is used to mask violent repression by the state, both internally and externally. In making a discursive connection between these disparate

historical and current events, I believe Faith is trying to unmask state repression and disturb the status quo. Discourses may produce certain social conditions, legitimize, maintain, and reproduce the status quo, and they may also "...be effective in transforming, dismantling or even destroying the status quo" (Wodak et al., 1999, p. 8). In the Netherlands, invoking the Holocaust is a serious undertaking. Similarly, as Reisigl and Wodak (2001) point out in their European genealogy of the word 'race,' this word is taboo in Germany and Austria precisely because of its connotations to the Holocaust. I posit that Faith's comments are deliberately sensationalist; she is intentionally trying to draw attention to the rise of xenophobia, nationalism and the violence and state repression towards anti-*Zwarte Piet* activists and migrants. Hamza, a gay Moroccan-Dutch university student, explained how the letter *doe normaal of ga weg* was implicitly directed at non-white Dutch people:

It's not just a *doe normaal* thing, it's the "and if you don't, you can leave." It's mostly the other part because we can get philosophical about it and ask what's normal, but to a certain extent we know what's normal, you know? For instance, it's normal to not throw garbage on the street and put it in a trash bin...But to say, if you don't do that then you can go away, it implies that a person that can go away came from another place. You know? So, it's obviously not directed at white people. It's directed at people that aren't from here...and you're telling them these are our norms, this is what we find normal, and if you don't agree with it, you can leave.... [Rutte's] obviously referring to other things like views on homosexuality...You know? Totally not taking into consideration that a person can be Muslim and gay. Or *allochtoon* and gay...It's like they're creating this

distinction of “This is what we are like. These are our norms and views.” And their norms are always superior to the others. It’s just a whole weird thing.

(Interview with Hamza. April 19, 2017)

Different aspects of Hamza’s identity as a gay, second-generation Moroccan-Dutch, Muslim man intersect with various strands of Dutch ‘othering’ discourses. Just like it is “not possible to be Dutch, Muslim and Black” (Interview with Iman. December 4, 2016), it is also impossible to be Dutch, gay, Muslim, and Brown. With these examples, it is evident *doe normaal* and tolerance operate as techniques of governmentality which define who gets to be part of the ‘we’ of the nation and who is excluded. With the discourse of *doe normaal*, Dutch society purports to treat individuals respectfully, so long as they fit in and modify their behaviour to suit mainstream Dutch expectations. It is a conditional acceptance of individuals, not groups. For example, the Somali-born Dutch politician Ayaan Hirsi Ali was accepted by mainstream white Dutch society precisely because of her rejection and vociferous critique of Islam (Ghorashi, 2003; van der Veer, 2006). Jasmin, a Black Surinamese-Dutch university student, describes this conditionality within the context of freedom of speech: “In the Netherlands it’s now very popular to say, “We have freedom of speech.” But you have freedom of speech if you agree with the general white Dutch opinion. If you don’t, even if it is not an extreme or weird opinion, you don’t have the right to push your opinion. So that also confuses me because then you can’t say you have freedom of speech” (Interview with Jasmin. March 16, 2017). *Doe normaal*, as a Dutch expression of the tolerance discourse found in other ‘Western’, liberal societies, “...produces and positions subjects, orchestrates meanings and practices of identity, marks bodies, and conditions political subjectivities” (Brown, 2008, p. 4). Normalization

also works to hide the ‘othering’ processes at work by being taken-for-granted or seen as a ‘normal’ part of daily life. Dutch normality not only acts as a form of social cohesion and control, it also belies fear and anxiety around difference and ‘others.’ Specifically, when placed in the context of *doe normaal*, the Dutch discourse around tolerance is revealed as a convenient label which serves to disguise intolerant practices. As Brown (*Ibid.*) states about the USA:

Tolerance discourse masks the role of the state in reproducing the dominance of certain groups and norms, and it does so at a historical moment when popular sensitivity to this role and this dominance is high, when those who have been historically excluded by norms of sex, race, ethnicity, and religion are vocal about such exclusion. (p. 84)

By claiming tolerance, the state and society are free to exercise intolerant, even violent, measures against ‘others’ while appearing benevolent and progressive. As an instrument of governmentality, *doe normaal*, which characterizes the Dutch tolerance discourse, appears benign and innocent: after all, what is wrong with being ‘normal?’ It is precisely its banal, benign character which gives it strength as a technique of ‘othering’ and an instrument of disciplinary and discursive power.

The Discourse of ‘Othering’

Like popular sayings such as *doe normaal*, words also play an important role in the project of ‘othering.’ Language and the evolution of terms provide insight into how societies approach different problems. In this section, I draw on Foucault’s notion of discursive power – how words and practices reinforce and perpetuate power differences –

to examine the effects of the lexicon and categories around cultural and religious ‘others’ in the Netherlands. I focus on ordinary, everyday speech around ‘othering’ as second-generation youth experience discrimination both institutionally and daily. I look at this through the lexicon that is used to distinguish difference and through the material and symbolic workings of power these words perform. I argue further that, in the Dutch context, words around ‘othering’ limit and stymie public conversation around difference.

Foucault (1995) posited that normalization and disciplinary institutions turn people into self-regulating citizens. For Foucault, categories and classifications result in certain people being normalized and others being categorized as delinquent or abnormal (Marshall, 1999). This occurs not only through important pronouncements, but also, as Marshall argues, through everyday speech acts. Similarly, Scott Austin (1962) argues that statements can do much more than describe: they can perform a function and, in so doing, constitute subjects. This happens through the categorization of individuals who eventually become convinced of their own categorization and subsequently perform correspondingly. Foucault (1995) nuances this process further by describing how institutions work to discipline and categorize individuals and behaviours. The words that develop around ‘othering’ demonstrate what becomes speakable or unspeakable, thinkable or unthinkable. In this sense, words also operate as a normalizing discourse in what they take for granted as ‘normal.’ Similar to the taken-for-grantedness of the normalizing discourse described in the previous section, the supposedly merely *descriptive* nature of words hides the institutional conditions and the underlying power/knowledge nexus at work, as well as the historical conditions and processes that germinated such categories (Marshall, 1999).

In the Netherlands this operates specifically through language around ‘others.’ As described in Chapter two, despite the terms *allochtonen/autochtonen* being officially out of use, in daily practice they continue to serve to distinguish between different levels of belonging. When asked “What would increase your sense of belonging?” Myriam, a Somali-Dutch university student, responds:

I think I would never feel that way anywhere, but I think it could be changed...especially *allochtoon*. They would have to stop using that word. And I think that word is out of the dictionary now. But people still use it...even if the government doesn’t say so, it’s the media and everyone around it. (Interview with Myriam. June 19, 2017)

The words *allochtoon* and *autochtoon* are still widely used to label ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders.’ The tenacity of these words calls to mind the ‘sticky’ power of words and emotions described in Chapter one, which can then generate and circulate emotions (Ahmed, 2004b). As Ahmed demonstrates, this stickiness also applies to words around belonging. The lexicon of *allochtoon* and *autochtoon* sticks, even though it is officially out of use. Jasmin, a Black Surinamese-Dutch university student, describes the impact of the stickiness of these words on her sense of belonging:

I’m not fully Surinamese anymore but Dutch people will never accept me. I will never be fully Dutch. It doesn’t matter if I live here for 50 years [or] I’m 6th or 7th generation... because even if you look at the words *allochtoon* and *autochtoon* and the whole discussion about that, technically, because I study law, [I know] if you are third or fourth generation, you are Dutch. It doesn’t matter what colour skin you have, what race you are, you’re just Dutch. Just as Dutch as they are. But

they will never address you as Dutch. And even if they change their terminology, like now it's *met imigratie achtergrond* [with an immigrant background] which I think is so dumb because it doesn't change anything! ... Yes, like legally you're just as Dutch, according to Dutch law, as any Dutch person. And if you even go to the history of the Dutch people the Dutch nation, what is a Dutch person? It's not like they even have [only] two origins, it's also like all over the world, all over Europe that [people have come into] the Dutch. So, then your own origins are not even [pure]...so then why that distinction? (Interview with Jasmin. March 16, 2017)

This speaks to the deep cultural context around belonging that shape the Dutch experience and myth-making about who gets to be the “rightful owner of the nation” (Hage, 2000). Sara Ahmed's (2000, 2004a, 2004b) theoretical analysis of the sticky power of emotions shows how individuals are *already recognized* as not belonging, whether through symbols or words or skin colour, which in turn sustains us/them binaries. In the Netherlands, this is explicitly articulated and taught in schools. Hamza, a Moroccan-Dutch university student, describes his elementary school experience:

...in maybe third or fourth grade elementary school...they taught us – and these were government-funded school books – they taught us the difference between *autochtoon*. And the distinction is basically original, genuine, authentic – that's the connotations connected to *autochtoon* – and false, not genuine, from another country are connected to *allochtoon*. I can just imagine you looking at that word *autochtoon* and knowing that you are an *autochtoon*. That does something to your sense of self-esteem, even if it's just on a subliminal level that you don't have any

insecurities regarding your ethnicity. And it does the opposite to a person that's not *autochtoon*, but *allochtoon*. (Interview with Hamza. April 19, 2017)

The discourse around *autochtoon* is connected to being original, genuine, authentic, and real. As in other 'Western', liberal nations, narratives about history and culture contribute to nationalism and a discourse of rightful national subjects and 'others.' They also contribute to the creation of a collective set of values which are juxtaposed against the inferior values of 'others' and imposed by the 'white worriers' upon perceived outsiders to the nation (Stasiulis, 2013b). Not only does this discourse affect white Dutch people's self-worth positively, it inversely affects the self-worth of people who are seen as 'other.' *Allochtonen* are perceived as false, not authentic or genuine, and from elsewhere. Hamza, again, demonstrates how patriotism and a sense of being the 'rightful owners of the nation' prevents white Dutch people from engaging in a productive conversation about privilege and equality:

I don't know if we ever will get there because there's like this strong feeling here of "We're the original inhabitants, this is our country – you're a guest here." Even though you were born here. And it's so strong even now that I'm not sure if we'll ever get there, but we might get there. (Interview with Hamza. April 19, 2017)

Positioning themselves as the 'original' inhabitants of the land confers legitimacy on their demands, values, and norms. In Australia, 'white worriers' position themselves as long-suffering and facing economic woes, while 'others' are "claiming special privileges or not playing fair" (Bulbeck, 2004, p. 257). In the Netherlands, Geschiere (2009, p. 37, 148) argues that the introduction of the concept *allochtonen* forced the Dutch to then

define themselves as *autochtonen* which turned out to be a difficult task. This search for common values led to the culturalist turn I describe in Chapter two.

When thinking about language, it is useful to critically interrogate the category of whiteness, both in terms of autochthony and how skin colour is identified. As Hamza pointed out, the counterpart to *allochtoon* is *autochtoon*, which literally means “from the land” or “from the soil” but can also be translated as indigenous or native.²⁴ The idea of indigeneity is common in the Netherlands and refers to ‘ethnic’ white Dutch. Alongside this term, the words ‘native Dutch’ are used. For me, coming from a settler-colonial nation, hearing the descendants of a former colonial power refer to themselves as ‘indigenous’ and ‘native’ sounded absurd and more than a little tone-deaf. In an effort to disrupt these power dynamics, Dutch activists, both white and of colour, sometimes use the word *inheems* (native or indigenous) in an effort to categorize white Dutch people as it has slightly more pejorative connotations.²⁵ Geschiere and Nyamnjoh (2000) argue that autochthony is an empty signifier as all it relies on is the claim to have come first. As an empty signifier, it is also pliable and easily manipulated by those in power. In addition, the discourse around autochthony in the Netherlands mirrors nativist discourse elsewhere, where anti-immigrant sentiment is justified by claims of ‘being here first’ and notions of

²⁴ There are assertions of indigeneity and autochthony all over the world, particularly in Asia, Latin America, Africa, and northern Europe, and in settler colonial states such as Canada, New Zealand, and Australia (Byrd & Rothberg, 2011; Gagnon, 2011; Pelican, 2009; Postero, 2013; Trigger & Dalley, 2010). In a global context, the words ‘indigenous,’ ‘native,’ and *autochtonen* have different signifiers depending on the context. In settler colonial nations such as Canada, the United States of America, and Australia these words are reserved for Inuit, First Nations, and Metis peoples to demonstrate their ties to the land as original inhabitants.

²⁵ A white Dutch activist friend of mine stopped using this word when someone outside of the Netherlands pointed out how insensitive it was to their own struggles for autonomy and recognition. For white Dutch people to use language around indigeneity is problematic, particularly for indigenous activists outside of the Netherlands who claim indigeneity and autochthony as a source of pride. Indigenous activists use these words to situate the conversation in a very different dynamic of power, displacement, and colonialism. In Canada, for example, indigeneity refers to Inuit, First Nations, and Metis. Their claims of indigeneity are also accompanied by struggles for recognition (Coulthard, 2014; Simpson, 2014).

the ideal imaginary national subject as white. For instance, Ignatiev (1995) describes how the Irish in North America overcame nativist racist hostility by emphasizing white racial identification. Regardless of how these terms are used elsewhere, the idea of ‘native’ Dutch is in itself problematic because, as Jasmin described earlier, this terminology is used to deny Dutchness by right of birth to people born in the Netherlands, purely along racial and cultural lines.

The use of nativist discourse also points to how mainstream white Dutch people see themselves and portray whiteness. Within the lexicon of ‘othering’ there also exists language around black and white. Tellingly, the word *wit* (white) is not commonly used to describe white skin colour; instead, people use the term *blank* which means blank or clean. Faith, a Black Eritrean Dutch participant in the theatre project stated: “*Blank* actually means pure and clean ...neutral basically. White people here are not used to saying that they are white. Because they never had to think about it” (Interview with Faith. August 7, 2017). In one theatre workshop, Anneke, a white Dutch participant, described what *blank* meant to her:

There is this word, *blank*, that we use for white. It’s not the same as in English, but when you have a blank page, like nothing on it, no history, nothing bad. So, they kind of say that when we use that word we are saying we are not of colour and therefore we are not in the wrong, in a way... (May 9, 2017).

Faith and Anneke’s comments reveal a common belief in white Dutch society. As Faith and Anneke describe, it posits white people as pure, neutral, blank, and clean, without baggage, bias, or blinders. The concomitant insinuation is that people of colour are biased or blind and have baggage and history: their perspective is subjective or impure. In her

study of everyday racism in the Netherlands and the USA, Essed (1990) confirms this, saying: “The black’s view of racism, coming from experiences that are verified again and again, is often written off as “subjective” and hence unreliable. What is really going on here is that the black’s view of the situation is not being taken seriously” (p. 260). This speaks to the lack of epistemological credibility given by dominant speakers to marginalized speakers.

Another way to view this technique is as a form of gaslighting (McKinnon, 2017): when marginally situated peoples’ experiences are deemed insignificant by a non-marginally situated person. This explicit misunderstanding of marginalized peoples’ experience is also called willful hermeneutical ignorance (Pohlhaus, 2012) or white ignorance. When discussing racism or Islamophobia, for example, in everyday conversation or even in academic circles, a person with firsthand experience dealing with these forms of oppression (i.e., a Black or Muslim person) is deemed to be too subjective and not able to offer an objective and therefore accurate understanding of the issue. The implication is that speaking or researching about these issues is best left to an ‘objective’ white person. Gaslighting and white ignorance demonstrate how certain bodies are imbued with “credibility excess” (Medina, 2011) and others with a credibility deficit. Gaslighting and white ignorance demonstrate a powerful willful ignorance of the situatedness and biases of whiteness and work through entitlement. In the Netherlands, this works in the following way:

...the entitlement to speak first in such a setting is a reflection of who has socially and culturally been empowered to think that their thoughts are always already enriching and highly pertinent to whatever the issue at hand might be....This is

militant, aggressive ignorance, posing as knowledge....No sensitivity is evident, neither a questioning attitude nor the slightest hint of an awareness that he might learn something here, merely the aggressive rejection and denial that is often characteristic of white men, even when they see themselves as politically progressive....white progressive women display anxiety, fear, and avoidance about broaching the topics of race and racism...neither reaction is helpful...

(Wekker, 2016, p. 171-2)

Wekker differentiates between the gendered responses of aggressive ignorance and avoidance in Dutch society. Avoidance is characteristic of white innocence in that it calls up soft, harmless qualities which are equally present in the term *blank*. The use of *blank* instead of *wit* perpetuates the myth that white Dutch people are pure, neutral, clean, and innocent. It also works (again) to shut down and foreclose any conversations that would lead to mutual learning or openness about understanding the lived experiences of people of colour. In comparison, *zwart*, the Dutch word for black, is often used to describe anyone who is not white, regardless of whether they identify as Black or not, as well as non-white or ethnically-diverse spaces, such as *zwarte scholen* which refer to schools with an ethnically-diverse composition. For instance, Hamza describes how this plays out in his neighbourhood and schools:

We call certain neighbourhoods *zwarte wijk*, *witte wijk*, [or certain schools] *zwarte scholen*, *witte scholen*. It's this binary opposition where a good school is a white school and it's white because it's attended by mostly white people. And a Black school doesn't really refer to being Black, but it refers to being not white. And the same applies to neighbourhoods. You'll see it in small things. I notice

when I go into Amstelveen or Amsterdam Zuid or the city centre, the way roads are paved. [Or] during Christmas I'll see lights everywhere in the southern part of Amsterdam. It's just more festive, more attended. When I get to my neighbourhood you don't see stuff like that. They invest less in those types [more ethnically diverse] of communities. Yeah. (Interview with Hamza. April 19, 2017)

As Hamza points out, the terms *zwart* and *wit* are applied to neighbourhoods and schools to describe areas or schools that are mostly white or areas or schools that are not entirely. There has been much public debate about the term *zwarte scholen* in recent years though this debate has not entered the academic sphere to the same degree²⁶ (but see Gramberg, 1998; Paille, 2002; Vedder, 2006; Waldring, 2017). Hamza describes how certain neighbourhoods receive more investments than others. This also is applied to schools, where *zwarte scholen* have a reputation for being poorer quality schools, though publicly funded like *witte scholen*. It should be noted that many ethnicities which make up the population of a *zwarte school* or a *zwarte wijk* do not identify as Black, such as the Turkish or Moroccan diaspora populations, and do not like the term applied to themselves. On the other hand, white is not a term that Dutch people apply to themselves, though it is used to describe majority-white, usually affluent, spaces such as neighbourhoods and schools. Mainstream white Dutch people prefer instead to call themselves *blank* or simply Dutch. Again, Hamza explains this dynamic:

[In my studies], they had no problem with me putting emphasis on the ethnicity of Dutch-Moroccans, but when I said Dutch white people, they were like, "But

²⁶ For instance, see Altinyelken et. al. (February 28, 2017) in de Volkskrant "Wetenschappers: stop met de termen 'zwarte' en 'witte' school" <https://www.volkskrant.nl/columns-opinie/wetenschappers-stop-met-de-termen-zwarte-en-witte-school~b05e7062/> Accessed January 2, 2019.

why white? Why not just Dutch people?” I said, “Because there’s different types of Dutch people and obviously for a reader to [know] this, we’d have to distinguish because he’s a Dutch person, but he’s a Dutch person of Moroccan origins and he’s a white Dutch person. If I would have just left it blank and just called him Dutch-Moroccan and him Dutch, that still would have left room for that person to be a Dutch-Turkish person or a Black person.” They didn’t look at it that way. They were like, “No, if you put the word Dutch we know it’s white. So, there’s no need for you to put white in front of it.” Yeah. And I took offense to it. (Interview with Hamza. April 19, 2017).

Here, the absence of qualifiers implies white Dutch, demonstrating how whiteness reproduces power through (in)visibility. In addition, the word *neger*, Dutch for “negro” is still commonly used in society, though there has been a push to change this terminology (Essed & Hoving, 2014). For instance, I was visiting family one weekend in Harderwijk and we went to the market. My cousin said she really wanted to buy some *negerzussen* (literally, “negro kisses” which refers to a sugary dessert) and giggled when she asked me if I knew what they were. The conversation then grew to include more relatives who, with much feigned outrage and grandiose humour, told me they were not supposed to use the word *neger* anymore, but *negerzussen* is what they are and *negerzussen* is what they will continue calling them. They claimed: “People are just too sensitive anyway.” It was obvious that my family knew they were repeating a sensitive word; their insistence in using it is part of what Gloria Wekker (2016) describes as “smug innocence” and what Philomena Essed (2013) describes as “entitlement racism.”

The lexicon around racial and cultural difference is not only fraught but very limited in the Netherlands resulting in fewer words with which to discuss social problems around difference. This gives an indication of how complex insider-outsider discourse can be in the Netherlands. For example, this excerpt came from a discussion with theatre participants about what it means to be Dutch, demonstrating how conversations about difference get slowed down by a lack of commonly accepted terms:

Jake: Yeah. Even the outsiders...not the outsiders...how do you say
allochtonen...like non-Dutch....

Anwar: Bi-cultural Dutch

Lukas: Non-native Dutch. Second generation...

Jake: Yeah, the non-native Dutch...or even... (Theatre workshop, April 10, 2017)

Tripping over terms is a common challenge in the Netherlands. This also leads to a limited lexicon from which to talk about these issues. *Allochtonen*, bi-cultural Dutch, non-native Dutch, second-generation: all these terms and others are used to describe people who have, at some point in their family's history, come from elsewhere. It is nuanced by the fact that these distinctions are not used to refer to other non-Dutch 'Western' Europeans: these terms are drawing distinctions based on race, culture, and religion. Hamza points out how these distinctions are essentially differentiating between being white and non-white:

But [these words are] basically the same; it's to distinguish between you and other people. And it, it's basically a racial thing, you know? Because the thing you're distinguishing is race. You're trying to say that these are people that are white and these are people that aren't. Yeah. And it's usually also, it's just white and not

white. It's not, oh, that person is Moroccan or Surinamese or from the Antilles or Turkish, it's just a big category for everything that's not white. (Interview with Hamza. April 19, 2017)

Words have power. Naming things as racist, for example, can reveal and demystify their power. Resisting the term racism, defending Dutch tolerance, and claiming victimization are just some strategies of denial that mainstream white Dutch society employs to liberate themselves from accountability and responsibility around racial and cultural discrimination (Essed & Nimako, 2006). The lack of a shared lexicon from which to engage in conversation around 'othering' stunts conversation around racism and Islamophobia, and limits how one can engage with these issues. The limited lexicon around 'othering' plays a role in this separation. For instance, among mainstream white Dutch society there is strong resistance to, and even denial of, identifying practices or language as racist. When the word 'racism' shuts down a conversation, it effectively forecloses any constructive engagement around oppression. Zohra, a Somali-Dutch university student who has lived in Canada and the USA, describes how conversations around racism and Islamophobia are shut down in the Netherlands:

Yeah, I think it's going to take a long time. A very long time. Like we're years behind America. They've been doing this forever! And we're totally behind that. There's no conversation at all. There's a conversation and they're like "Nope! There's nothing wrong." That's a problem. That's the most frustrating thing over here. Like people not acknowledging. I think that's the most frustrating thing. (Interview with Zohra. February 14, 2017)

While conversations around racism and Islamophobia are also fraught in Canada and the USA, in the Netherlands *denial* of racism and Islamophobia contributes to limited public dialogue about racism and Islamophobia. It also means that the lexicon of ‘othering’ is not widely analyzed or critiqued. When certain topics are considered taboo, societies fail to have explicit public conversations on these topics. In the Netherlands, this failure makes it even more difficult to discuss policy issues in these areas: “When explicit talk is silenced because of a societal (or wider) taboo, discussing the attributes of policy discourse and their implications is even more difficult. The taboo makes it impossible simply to name this a ‘racial’ discourse and analyse it as such” (Yanow & Van Der Haar, 2013, p. 251). Given the Dutch context of migration, fears around racialized ‘others,’ and compulsory integration requirements, there is a pressing need for public conversation on these issues. If the lexicon around ‘othering’ is not widely analyzed and racism is a taboo topic, then social policies directed at the issues of immigration, integration, and discrimination will also be partial and incomplete. In analyzing discourses around ethnic groups in Israel and the USA, Dvora Yanow (1998) argues that social policies cannot adequately address social issues of a category of people; “...in the absence of explicit talk about the qualities that constitute that category” (p. 194). When a society has no widely shared and commonly approved social or cultural lexicon (outside of racist language) for identifying differences in order to discuss societal problems, conversations about social issues can be sluggish and vague, getting held up with semantics and taking time away from explicitly addressing the issues of racism or Islamophobia.

Conclusion

This chapter used the concepts of discursive and disciplinary power to analyze Dutch constructions of ‘normal’ and the lexicon around ‘othering,’ in order to describe the context in which second-generation Black and Muslim youth in the Netherlands are living their lives. I have shown that the pervasive expression ‘*doe normaal*’ operates as a form of discursive power as it reinforces normative white Dutch notions of who belongs and works to exclude certain bodies, beliefs, and practices from categories of ‘normal.’ Normality is a form of governing rationality that defines what is normal and what is average, yet doing so necessitates a denial of, and willful blindness to, processes of exclusion and the creation of categories of ‘deviance.’ As shown in Rutte’s letter, Dutch ‘normality’ in this context is also aligned with the neoliberal citizen: earning a living, not causing trouble, and focusing on individual acts of care (being polite) rather than communal and political acts of citizenship. My analysis of the lexicon around ‘othering’ also demonstrates how preoccupied mainstream white Dutch society is with creating distinctions between ‘us’ and ‘them’ while simultaneously denying these distinctions have anything to do with race, thereby absolving themselves of racism. Navigating these terms, beliefs, and practices adds a layer of complexity to belonging for second-generation Dutch youth. While ‘othering’ discourses may appear awkward to outsiders, it feels normal and comfortable from the inside: it makes sense to, and is taken for granted by, dominant white Dutch people.

This chapter proves that changes need to occur in the Dutch lexicon in order to hold transformative public dialogue on issues of racism, Islamophobia, and belonging. As this chapter demonstrates, words are important and contribute to the wider discourse

around racial and cultural ‘others.’ What is crucial is *who* has the power to choose these words and give them meaning. In the Dutch context, the people most affected by these words are agitating for a better lexicon and for the power to change the terms of the debate. I argue that the best people to lead these changes are those who are affected by exclusion.

As I became aware of the language and distinctions around *wit*, *zwart*, and *blank*, I intentionally used loaded terms such as ‘black’ and ‘white’ in my conversations, writing, and research. I also brought up *doe normaal*, *allochtoon* and *autochtoon*, both to demonstrate my positionality on these current debates, but also to open up deeper conversations about race, inequality, and discrimination. In academic settings, I either received astounded silence or remarks that the language I was using was too North American and not appropriate to the Dutch context. This rationality is often used to deflect criticisms about race, as racism is seen as an American problem. Mepschen, Duyvendak, and Tonkens (2010) argue for dialogue between different expressions of cultural and sexual identity in the Netherlands in order to learn from one another. I, likewise, hope my research contributes to widening public dialogue and conversations within the Netherlands on race and Islamophobia. I also hope this research contributes to debate about language and the lexicon used around ‘othering.’

The next chapter investigates how Dutch youth who are ‘othered’ experience belonging in the Netherlands through expressions of affect. I look at how they negotiate fragmented experiences of belonging with emotional responses. The final chapter analyzes these youths’ practices of resistance, specifically how their expressions of agency are constrained and shaped by the societal context they operate in. Both these

chapters provide a thick description of these young people's experiences but, in doing so, they intentionally turn the research gaze back up to white mainstream Dutch society in order to analyze how power works to reinforce marginalization. By revealing the workings of power, we can better understand and dismantle oppressive systems.

Chapter 5: The Affective Representations and Experiences of Second-Generation Youth Negotiating Emotional Belonging in the Netherlands

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the notion that second-generation Black and Muslim youth belong in Dutch society is questioned daily: through ‘normal,’ daily encounters, political statements, and social structures. Citizenship and belonging, as experienced through social encounters, thus carry strong affective dimensions. Belonging to the nation is an emotional connection, argues Ho (2009): as citizenship is experienced through social relationships, it is likewise “constituted and contested through the emotions” (p. 789). This chapter looks at how affective aspects of belonging are intimately entangled with relational, spatial, and cultural landscapes for Black and Muslim Dutch youth.

As Dutch society employs ‘othering’ practices that question the belonging of Black and Muslim youth, it is perhaps not surprising that Black and Muslim youth themselves start to scrutinize their own belonging or feel ambivalent about it. My focus in this chapter is on how Black and Muslim youths’ feelings in relation to processes of ‘othering’ generate fragmented experiences of citizenship and belonging. This chapter approaches belonging through the emotions and affect: with this approach I think alongside other scholars who conceptualize belonging as a process rather than a stable category (Scheibelhofer, 2007). While youth often spoke openly to me about their emotions, I focus not only on what they said about their feelings of belonging or nonbelonging, but also on their “emotional subjectivities,” or how they negotiate the social world, in order to develop deeper insight into the power relations that govern belonging (Ho, 2009). The connection between affect and the social world in a context of

‘othering’ generates strong emotions such as apathy, indifference, anger, and frustration, but exploring this connection also provides insight into how experiences of, and critical thoughts about, ‘othering’ affect emotional responses and behaviours. By focusing on how practices of ‘othering’ negatively impact youths’ sense of belonging, I examine the conundrum second-generation youth face between never being Dutch ‘enough’ and trying to be successful ‘good’ citizens. They are navigating sticky affective discourses (Ahmed, 2000, 2004a) about the symbols of belonging – for example, the headscarf and what it means *to look like* you belong in Dutch society – and about the social construction of belonging – for instance *doe normaal* and expectations around integration such as what it means to be a ‘good’ Dutch citizen.

Second-generation Black and Muslim youth respond in alternately creative and conforming ways around what it means *to feel like* you belong in Dutch society. I start with a brief analysis of the affective dimensions of belonging: how youth represent belonging in a context of ‘othering’ that leaves them with an experience of citizenship as fragmented or partial. In this chapter, I use the terms belonging and citizenship interchangeably, as I am focused here on citizenship in terms of its *de facto* meaning: social membership. At times, youth refer to formal, legal citizenship: in those instances, I clarify that I am using citizenship in its *de jure* meaning. In this sense, I use the terms fragmented citizenship and fragmented belonging interchangeably to refer to the partial or disjointed experiences of social membership Black and Muslim Dutch youth experience. I then move to a deeper analysis of how youth subjectively experience belonging, thinking with Foucauldian scholars on how affect is used to discipline the conduct of young people of colour and the emotions that subsequently shape their

experience of fragmented belonging. This focus allows for a recentering of the research gaze back on to Dutch society and the power structures working to produce fragmented belonging. I end with a look at the responses of second-generation youth to a fragmented sense of belonging: how they are navigating discourses and feelings through affective claims and strategies.

Representations and Experiences of Emotional Belonging

This section engages with Ho's (2009) conceptions of emotional representations and subjectivities: the ways youth describe and give meaning to belonging, and how youth emotionally negotiate the power dynamics of fragmented citizenship. Since the affective dimension is paramount in constituting national belonging, some scholars posit that belonging is primarily constructed at the level of family, social networks, and neighbourhoods (den Besten, 2010; Ho, 2009; Stasiulis, 2013a). Yuval-Davis (2006, 2011a) contends that national belonging is established and reaffirmed through relationships to people and the physical world, particularly family relationships. Emotional belonging is understood here as an embodied phenomenon contoured by the places, people and policies that shape our lives. As such, though national belonging is experienced subjectively through one's emotions it is a site of political struggle deeply shaped by social conditions. Taking my cues from Ho and Yuval-Davis, I investigate, then, how belonging is constructed through the emotions and relationships, but also how emotions, affect, and bodies re-marginalize youth of colour.

Yuval-Davis (2006) suggests that belonging is about emotional investments and desire for attachment. In this sense, migration and citizenship are deeply entangled with

affect. Reflections on citizenship governance, then, should not only analyze power, but also how power and emotions mingle. This is evident through the discourses used to create insider/outsider distinctions. In the Netherlands, “dialogical Dutchness,” a representation of Dutch identity as being distinctly anti-nationalist and open to discussing difference, actually works to identify certain people as completely Dutch and others as *allochtonen* or “not yet” Dutch (van Reekum & van den Berg, 2015). The act of debating and discussing the values, norms, and problems of living in a multicultural society in a tolerant and consensus-seeking way is seen as performing Dutchness. This discursive pivoting perpetuates a national self-image of tolerance and accommodation of difference while simultaneously identifying and reinforcing ideas of who does not belong (van Reekum, 2012, 2016). In this way, discourse works to identify bodies as “out of place” (Ahmed, 2000, 2012). A delineated understanding of what it means to be Dutch works to exclude people based on appearances and limits identity to one-dimensional, monolithic, and homogenous categorizations. These processes of exclusion work similarly throughout Europe:

Contemporary constructions of “us,” those constructed as belonging to Europe, and “them,” those constructed as not belonging, though the specific groups targeted vary over time, still keep following that basic Manichean logic. This entails the fundamental impossibility of being both European, constructed to mean being white and Christian, and being black-Muslim-migrant-refugee. (Wekker 2016, p. 21)

Daily social membership, or what I describe as *de facto* citizenship in earlier chapters, then becomes precarious as it can be alternately questioned and/or bestowed by

mainstream society. In this context, social belonging then feels fragmented as it must be justified and negotiated daily by second-generation Black and Muslim youth.

Belonging often gets articulated in terms of affect, wherever you get that “warm feeling,” as Aliyah, a 20-year-old Ethiopian-Dutch law student, describes it (Interview with Aliyah. December 2, 2016). As such, it is experienced contextually: it is a flexible, fluid, and dynamic feeling that shifts with, and in, space, time, and relationships. Many youth in this study affirmed the importance of relationships for belonging: where they felt they most belonged was with their families and certain circles of friends. Myriam, a Somali-Dutch university student, describes how she cultivates a sense of belonging by actively seeking out relationships with other African or Arab students: “But it’s also a feeling of now belonging and you can connect on that level as well because we all don’t belong” (Interview with Myriam. June 19, 2017). In this context, Myriam’s feeling of belonging arises from a shared sense of *not* belonging; cultivating specific relationships is an affective response to feelings of exclusion. In response to constraints on belonging, Zeinab, another Somali-Dutch student, portrays herself as inhabiting a “luxury position”—her language, culture, and skin colour give her the ability to appear to be from any number of countries:

I see that with a lot of friends of mine. We always say we have a luxury position because we can be whoever we want to be, and white people don’t always have that privilege...if you have an attribute of a culture then people recognize that culture very easily, then you have a very big advantage of it. You’re one step ahead of them somehow. So, you can also see it very positive. (Interview with Zeinab. June 8, 2017)

Zeinab expresses agency by claiming a “luxury position” in the context of exclusion. The ability to be ‘at home’ in many settings arises because Zeinab and her friends are not fully ‘at home’ in the Netherlands: they are identified as ‘not Dutch.’ This demonstrates how experiences of material, spatial, and relational exclusion translate into agency around citizenship participation. Though confronted by oppression, Zeinab and her friends feel they have the option of using different aspects of their identity to their advantage, thus expressing agency in the face of discrimination. They have found a silver lining. As such, a “luxury position” is also a protective strategy against fragmented belonging: a way of finding the good in a bad situation:

I can say I’m American. I can say I’m from the UK. I can say I’m from Holland. I can also say I’m from France or from Germany...I speak those languages, so it would be even more confusing for them...I think that’s actually my luxury position...Yeah, if you don’t look at it economically or socially in that context, then yeah...It’s a step ahead if you go outside of the box of Holland, but...you don’t have such a step forward if you’re here in Holland because it only applies to you knowing the [Dutch] language and then going up the ladder here. (*Ibid.*)

In this light, a “luxury position” is both a response to exclusion and a claiming of a heterogeneous identity and heritage. Zeinab’s agency is nuanced. While there are positive attributes to not being white, Zeinab also points out that economically and socially white Dutch people are at an advantage. Class and gender dynamics may also limit Zeinab’s “luxury position.” Later in the interview, Zeinab stated how she would like to travel and study abroad but feels constrained financially as well as by her gender and gendered expectations from her Muslim community. Reflecting individualistic ideas about

belonging, Jasmin, a Surinamese-Dutch law student, states: “Belonging is the freedom to belong wherever you choose to be. To me belonging is flexible” (Interview with Jasmin. March 16, 2017). Wood (2013) argues that youth citizenship participation in New Zealand is not just an individual act but something that is “thoroughly social, relational, and infused with emotion” (p. 56). In Dutch society, as in other ‘Western’, liberal democracies, these agential feelings of freedom expressed by Aliyah, Myriam, Zeinab and Jasmin are constrained and shaped by the practices of ‘othering’ at work: the discursive and material workings of power.

Many second-generation youth reproduced dominant ‘Western’ liberal and, at times, neoliberal ideas about citizenship and the self during my research. At the same time, they critiqued Dutch society, power dynamics, and demonstrated how they negotiate and navigate power and non-belonging. Second-generation youth occupy a space in Dutch society where they are forced to defend, justify, and respond to their continued exclusion. For example, Iman, the Somali-Dutch woman who provided the inspiration for the title of this dissertation, states: “It is not an identity crisis. It is just complex. For some people, it is not possible to be Dutch, and Muslim, and Black” (Interview with Iman. December 4, 2016). Iman is very clear that she is not facing an identity crisis – *she* has not internalized the problem – rather, she is pointing to a societal issue where constructs of Dutchness exclude Muslims and people of colour. In this case, Iman is also pushing back on the assumption that this is *her* problem by saying, “It is not an identity crisis.” With this comment, Iman moves this issue from the personal into the political realm. She demonstrates that identity and belonging are broader societal problems. While the problem has material consequences for Iman, she deflects

responsibility from the individual to a system-level. Likewise, Bilal who, unlike most of my participants, is a first-generation Somali-Dutch immigrant, describes how this construction of Dutchness has material consequences for his life:

[In] the law there is equality, in the job market, and in education. I feel that I have the same protection as every Dutch [person]. If I call the police they are going to respond in the same way and if I go to the hospital I will be treated the same way. But, I don't know, if I apply for a job, if I would be treated very well. (Interview with Bilal. March 17, 2017)

This demonstrates a lack of consonance between what is said on the one hand (all are equal) and what is enacted on the other (only white people belong). Scholars have started to critique the pervasive academic portrayal of the second generation as caught between their parents' and the wider society's culture (Poynting, Noble, Tabar, & Collins, 2004; Scheibelhofer, 2007). Rather, they posit that the second generation is navigating conflicting and exclusionary discourses of what it means to be Dutch in opposition to what it means to be an 'Orientalized other.' Youth employ different emotional strategies to deal with this dissonance, such as ambivalence, ambiguity, and reciprocal rejection.

Faced with the impossibility of being both European *and* 'other,' second-generation youth express ambivalent or ambiguous feelings around belonging. These feelings are influenced by various social, economic, and political factors. For example, Aliyah describes her experiences recently visiting Ethiopia:

[W]hen I went [to Ethiopia] they approached me as a Dutch person because I don't speak the language and everything. So, there I am basically an immigrant.

Here I am an immigrant. I have basically no home. (Interview with Aliyah. December 2, 2016)

The ambiguity surrounding Aliyah's sense of belonging leaves her feeling that she does not have a place she can truly call home. For others, it maps on to their sense of self-worth. Zohra, a 29-year-old second-generation Somali-Dutch woman studying law, connects belonging to feeling valued and accepted:

[T]he older I get, the less Dutch I feel.... Because I feel like I'm not accepted by Dutch society. And it's not directly, day to day, people that I meet but it's more media, politicians, and the topics that are discussed...*Like I'm not valued as much as the white Dutch person.* (Interview with Zohra. February 14, 2017, emphasis added)

For Zohra, feeling less valued than her white Dutch peers transforms into ambivalence regarding her future: she alternately wants to stay in the Netherlands or explore opportunities elsewhere. This ambiguity is expressed through Zohra's detachment from Dutch society on the one hand, but then her claims of being Dutch on the other. This feeds a sense of frustration and futility as being read as Dutch and being read as an 'Orientalized' or Black 'other' are seen as mutually exclusive things. For Hamza, a Moroccan-Dutch university student, frustrated belonging transforms into rejecting the Dutch community and embracing his Moroccan heritage, what I term reciprocal rejection:

But it's voluntarily so that has a lot of positive things in it. I think here in Europe it's mostly that feeling of rejection that creates another feeling of, well, you know what? I don't want to be part of your community. (Interview with Hamza. April 19, 2017)

Reciprocal rejection is a response to the dissonance between what is said and what is done. Youth born and raised in the Netherlands expect all the promises of equality and universality to apply to them. When these promises do not materialize or are partial, they respond by rejecting Dutch society and embracing the heritage of their parents. There are many positive attributes from this connection such as rootedness and strength.

Importantly, youth note that this connection to, and search for, heritage is born out of being rejected in Dutch society. It is not a natural by-product of being second-generation; rather, it comes from feeling unaccepted. As these youth demonstrate, the dilemma of non-belonging is primarily experienced through *affect* and has strong social and material consequences which they address through emotional coping strategies of ambivalence, ambiguity, and reciprocal rejection.

Surprise! Confrontations with the ‘Other’

One way the impossibility of being both Dutch and Black and/or Muslim manifests is through white articulations of surprise when confronted with bodies which do not match normative ideas around belonging in the Netherlands. The affect of surprise is a form of “disciplining the conduct” (Foucault, 1995) of bodies that do not fit into white Dutch ideas of belonging. Dutch society produces typologies of ‘others’ which are identifiable based on material and physical characteristics and thus deemed not eligible as national subjects. Sara Ahmed (2000) states “...the stranger is *some-body* whom we have *already recognised* in the very moment in which they are ‘seen’ or ‘faced’ as a stranger.... Strangers are not simply those who are not known in this dwelling, but those who are, in their very proximity, *already recognised as not belonging*, as being out of place” (p. 21, emphasis in original). A large number of second-generation youth reported

that one technique of “differentiating between the familiar and the strange” (*Ibid.*, p. 37) was articulated by white Dutch people either being amazed at, or questioning, their ability to speak Dutch. Leila, a 20-year-old Somali-Dutch student, related an incident that happened to her and her mom on the street in a mid-sized city in the Netherlands:

There was a lady, I think she was Christian and she was talking about God...She said first “Do you guys speak Dutch?” I said “Yeah, duh, I am born and raised here so obviously I speak Dutch.” She was shocked. They kind of assume you don't speak Dutch based on your skin colour or your headscarf but I don't know why they think that because it is pretty hard to survive here without Dutch.

(Interview with Leila. December 16, 2016)

Similar stories were repeated frequently by youth in other interviews. This amazement/questioning works to identify the other as an ‘other’ and reinforces boundaries between supposedly ‘normal’ white Dutch and everyone else. The discursive performance of surprise is a way of making visible the categories of white Dutch and *allochtonen* and, subsequently, reinforcing spatial, material, and relational boundaries. Iman, a Somali-Dutch university student, gives an example: “The biggest barrier to not belonging is the little comments. Like “You speak very good Dutch.” It is even more annoying because they always mean it well, it is good intentioned.” (Interview with Iman. December 4, 2016). Myriam, a Somali-Dutch university student who went to a suburban elite high school and lives in a posh neighbourhood, describes how she is constantly faced with surprised white reactions as a “body out of place:”

I've had a million questions, like, "How come your Dutch is so [good]?" I'm from this neighbourhood where there's a lot of rich people... [Even] in the Bijlmer,²⁷ I would get this question from Black people: "How come your Dutch is so posh? Like, are you adopted?" That's the questions I get! Or, like, "Wow, you speak really good Dutch!" Or comments from older people: "What do you do?" I'm like, "I study law." "Whoa! I did not expect that." That doesn't make sense to them, I guess. (Interview with Myriam. June 19, 2017)

Myriam's mother has lived in the Netherlands for 25 years, during which time she has built up a lot of social and cultural capital which she has passed along to her daughter. The ability to anticipate strangers, to describe them before a meeting has even taken place, allows white Dutch people to make strangers of 'others' of a certain type, regardless of their class background. These exclamations of surprise work to discipline Black and Muslim bodies back into the inferior role Dutch society has assigned them. This particular kind of 'othering' makes strangers identifiable based on appearance and techniques of "...reading the bodies of others we come to face" (Ahmed, 2000, p. 21). Leila, Iman, and Myriam work doubly hard at proving their Dutchness; their fluent Dutch is not enough to pass. In 'Western,' liberal democracies certain bodies are marked as out of place and 'not from here.' This process creates insider-outsider or us-them binaries.

While surprise and amazement are discursive strategies which discipline other bodies, these discourses can also turn into self-discipline. For example, it is also evident from Myriam's comments that some Black people have internalized this messaging: they

²⁷ The Bijlmer is a district in Amsterdam housing primarily Black people.

also register surprise at her “posh” Dutch. Similarly, Hamza describes how fellow Dutch Moroccans have internalized this feeling of being a second-class citizen:

[My friends] weren't really resisting, they were like, “What's wrong with calling me an *allochtoon*? That's what I am.” ...[M]ost of my friends, because it happened so subliminally, they just settled with being less. I was like, look:

“From a very early age on, you've been taught that you were less and it made you be comfortable with [it].” (Interview with Hamza. April 19, 2017)

This internalization of being “less” is a technique of discursive power as identified by Foucault: when systems of governing difference and concepts around difference are pervasive, over time institutionalized individuals absorb this messaging so that norms, customs, and rules become normalized and unquestioned (Larruina & Ghorashi, 2016). This transforms into the self-discipline of conduct, as well as the internalization of categories of ‘normal’ and ‘delinquent’ or ‘abnormal.’ This taken-for-grantedness is, to paraphrase Mary Louise Adams (2003), precisely what gives normalization its power.

Spatial Belonging

Exclamations of surprise serve to recognize and discipline bodies that are “out of place” (Ahmed, 2000). This operates not only discursively, but also materially and physically. Feelings of belonging and exclusion have a spatial dimension which means that affect around belonging is fluid, changing, and impermanent. A study of New Zealand high schools demonstrates how youths' emotions around citizenship are shaped by spatial and relational interactions (Wood, 2013). Research with Canadian-born Chinese youth demonstrates how belonging is spatially and contextually differentiated, meaning that youth change their behaviour to be more or less ‘Chinese’ or ‘Canadian’

depending on their surroundings (Kobayashi & Preston, 2014). A fluid sense of spatial belonging is evidenced in nuanced feelings of home. Myriam describes her sense of home, saying:

I do feel at home in this country. I know for a hundred percent if I would go somewhere else I would be like, “Oh, I miss my home.” ...But still, you don’t feel Dutch in the way that you’re made aware of your skin colour. [Y]ou don’t fit into that Dutch [way of] looking...I think it’s two separate things. Like, I do belong here. I know that because if I were to go to Somalia...I would just be like, “Oh my God, I need to go home.” We belong here. It is your space. But you don’t belong to the group. (Interview with Myriam. June 19, 2017)

Myriam claims a spatial belonging in the Netherlands but points out how her sense of belonging is mitigated by pervasive social beliefs which equate being Dutch with being white. It is interesting to note that earlier in the interview Myriam said she was from Somalia and later she clarifies that she has never actually been there. At times, Myriam claims a Somali identity (i.e. when meeting other students from the Horn of Africa: “Oh my god! I’m from Somalia!”), and other times she claims a grounded belonging in the Netherlands (i.e. “We do belong here. It is your space.”) Schiebelhofer (2007) argues that narratives of belonging change in different biographical periods; I add that feelings of belonging can also change in different spatial locations. Myriam’s claims of belonging shift depending on the context she is working in, who she is talking to, and what affect she wants to present. Hamza, a Moroccan-Dutch university student, articulates his sense of belonging as connected to specific spatial locations. When asked, “Are there places or spaces where you do feel a sense of belonging?” Hamza pointed to:

Places that are filled with people that look like me. [chuckles] Neighbourhoods that are more ethnically diverse or not so diverse but more akin to my ethnicity than others... [There I experience] not being different. In a negative way, because you can be different in a positive way. You can belong to the elite. You know? Then you are different from the majority of people, but it's a plus. We're different in a negative way, not in a good way. (Interview with Hamza. April 19, 2017)

Hamza demonstrates how exclusion has a spatial dimension and affects bodily movement. In this interview, Hamza also describes how belonging is contextually class-based: as part of a community (Moroccans) who are perceived to be working class, negotiating a sense of place in various upper-class settings requires additional effort and varied tactics, such as code-switching between his 'working-class' Dutch and 'posh' Dutch at university. In ethnically diverse neighbourhoods, Hamza does not need to make a big effort to feel a sense of belonging.

Theatre allowed us to play with the idea of belonging in a more visceral, embodied way, thus revealing deeper insights about how belonging is created. In one workshop, four participants created a very powerful skit on the theme of belonging. In the skit, four people met for a meal and discussed their respective trips back 'home' to the country of their parents. During the warm and open conversation, they discover common experiences about how they were welcomed and made to feel like part of a family or community. At the end of the skit, they introduce themselves to each other, thus revealing that none of the four knew each other prior to the meal, despite the instant connection. They explained their rationale for the skit, saying:

Thomas: Yeah, we spoke about a lot of different things. Some poets, actually. We tried to fit them in a great quote...to be...

Anwar: To be an us for once instead of a them

Thomas: So, we tried the us.

Anwar: Us, like including everyone. Instead of a them. (Theatre workshop. May 9, 2017)

There are two important learnings from their skit. First, they demonstrate how belonging shifts according to space and context and, more importantly, how spatial belonging is something they can actively create under specific circumstances. Second, the creation of other possibilities of belonging was facilitated by theatre as storytelling. Theatre as method allows for both a critique of the social world as well as the creation of new possibilities, what Ortega (2016) refers to as both a diagnostic project and a creative project. The participants stated that they intentionally wanted to show how belonging can be created from shared experiences and telling stories, instead of the typical introductions in 'Western' society about names, work, school, where you live, and where you are from. In *performing* an alternative scenario, the participants prefigured, imagined, and created other spaces and possibilities of belonging and carried their audience with them.

Second-generation youth navigate the various social contexts that make them 'other' discursively, materially, and physically. These social discourses change depending on their spatial location, with whom they are speaking, and when they are speaking, demonstrating how belonging is a fluid and spatialized process that is constantly being worked out. Nagel (2011) argues that both dominant and subordinate

groups spatialize belonging in a myriad of ways. Theatre opens space for storytelling, imagining, and creating alternative spaces of belonging.

Unbalanced belonging: negotiating headscarves

As stated earlier, ambivalence and ambiguity are common feelings connected to citizenship. This is evident in the ways in which youth vacillate between feelings of belonging and not belonging, creating a sense of disequilibrium. As described in Chapter four, categories of belonging in the Netherlands are constructed, in part, through symbols such as the headscarf or other objects that might identify someone as a religious or cultural ‘other.’ Sara Ahmed (2000, p.128) describes how emotions work by binding or sticking figures together that would not normally be cohesive which then creates collective groups, borders, and boundaries. For example, all women wearing a head covering are grouped under the same rubric of oppressed and backwards, regardless of their background, religiosity, class, and other identity markers. In this sense, scarves and hijabs become objects of hate and fear because of their symbolic connection to Islam. On a practical level, this means dominant groups notice people who cover their heads or wear different Islamic symbols. Leila, a 20-year-old Somali-Dutch law student who wore the headscarf for eight years and then decided not to wear it, describes her challenges in navigating these affective boundaries around belonging:

I think I would wear [the headscarf] again if I was a little bit stronger because at the time, I was very influenced by feelings that would overwhelm me and people being so judgmental. It kind of got the best of me so I thought I’m just going to take it off and see how it goes. To be honest, after a couple months I kind of regretted it because I’m kind of pleasing the other side, like the Dutch culture. I’m

pleasing them by taking off my headscarf. I always feel that you are never fully Dutch, like I said before so even if I took off my headscarf I would never be fully accepted because I am still Somali and still Muslim so it's kind of hard to find the right balance. (Interview with Leila. December 16, 2016)

Leila demonstrates how trying to fit in or be 'normal' by taking off a symbol of her religion was insufficient in terms of belonging. Leila is left feeling unbalanced. Like Iman, the Somali-Dutch woman who was quoted earlier, she expresses the impossibility, from white Dutch society, of being at once Dutch, Muslim and Black. Iman does not wear the headscarf, yet she described to me an incident that happened one day when she went to work with a fashionable scarf on her head and got a strange reaction from her white Dutch colleague:

He was surprised that I wore it and he kept asking me why. Why, why, why? And the only reason was because I was in a rush and it was easier. I didn't want to put a lot of energy into my hair. And once I told him that, he was relieved. And when he was relieved—that gave me a very awkward feeling. Because we also have other coworkers who do wear the hijab, so I know that it is not a problem, but it doesn't explain why he was relieved. I do see that I don't get the same treatment that other women do get who do wear the hijab. So, it's very strange. (Interview with Iman. December 4, 2016).

The reaction of her colleague threw Iman off balance. Similarly, Aliyah, an Ethiopian-Dutch woman, age 20, describes an interview that she thought was going well.

Afterwards, the manager called her to say that she could have the job if she agreed to work behind the scenes so that her headscarf would not be seen. Aliyah states: "I was

kind of shocked by this because it is just a fabric on my head. I represent a religion, but it is not all that I am.” (Interview with Aliyah. December 2, 2016). In claiming multiple identities (Dutch, Muslim, Ethiopian, etc.), Aliyah embodies and claims multiple identity markers that are too complex for societal constructs of what it means to be Dutch. Being offered a job, or a job in line with their qualifications, is a common challenge for women who choose to wear the headscarf in the Netherlands (Eijberts & Roggeband, 2016; Korteweg, 2013). According to Ahmed (2000, p. 124), it is the failure of emotions to have a fixed object that allows emotions to slide between different objects, signs, and bodies and “stick” to all of them, which then reproduces and spreads certain affects such as fear or hate. For instance, the headscarf, as a gendered symbol of Islam, groups Aliyah and Leila together as identifiable Muslims and the emotions connected to Islam in the Netherlands – such as fear, disgust, or pity – then work to label Aliyah and Leila as victimized or fearsome ‘others,’ creating ‘us/them’ distinctions. It is the sticky power of emotion that works to individuals with communities, whether it is a national community (in this case, Dutch) or an objectified community (here, Muslim women).

While I intentionally did not bring up headscarves, they repeatedly came up in interviews with women whether they wore a headscarf or not, demonstrating how politicized it is. The headscarf is a specifically gendered way of experiencing belonging and the processes of ‘othering.’ Eve Haque (2010) describes how Muslim women’s bodies are the battleground between “civilized, secular, modern” nations and “pre-modern, religious fundamentalisms:” their bodies “...are always the limit case for tolerance of the Other within the nation” (p. 80). This is more pronounced, states Haque, when the women in question are second-generation citizens because it then gives rise to

questions around the efficacy and success of official integration policies. The ‘Western’ gaze has long been interested in Muslim bodies, in particular their sexuality (Jouili, 2009; Macdonald, 2006; Nguyen, 2011; Partridge, 2012; Pham, 2011; Puar, 2007). The ‘Orientalist’ gaze (Said, 1979) also allows ‘Western’ societies to position themselves as ‘progressive’ and ‘tolerant’ in opposition to ‘non-Western’ societies that need saving. Muslim women, particularly those who wear a headscarf, are positioned as ‘backward’ in relation to ‘liberal,’ ‘Western’ women. This dynamic is part of what Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988) described as the structural motivations around white men (and women) saving brown women from brown men and it continues to play out in current times (de Leeuw & van Wichelen, 2005).

Leila, the young woman who chose to take off her headscarf, feels that she can never please both the dominant white Dutch culture and the Somali culture. She is forced to choose between presenting herself as a ‘good’ Dutch citizen and uncovering her head, or as a ‘good’ Somali woman and wearing a headscarf. One of the central tensions that Leila must navigate here is that these two typologies of ‘goodness’ are at odds with each other. Leila recognizes that navigation of in- and out- group membership is complex: she will never be fully accepted by Dutch society even as she tries to conform to their norms and expectations, creating an unbalanced feeling. This inability to satisfy either the in-group or the out-group plays out in second-generation youths’ ambivalent sense of belonging. Many young women, like Leila, expressed frustration with having to choose between two ‘sides.’ Those who chose not to wear a headcovering were cognizant of the privileges that it afforded them. For instance, Leila describes how she found people to be friendlier after she stopped wearing the headscarf:

I definitely experienced racism with [the headscarf], or Islamophobia, because when I took [it] off people were a lot friendlier to me, in shops, and in buses and trains. People were even saying hi to me when they never said it before, so it was kind of a shock to me. (Interview with Leila. December 16, 2016).

Other participants describe having more job prospects because they were not immediately identifiable as Muslim without their headscarf. Studying Muslim women's practices of taking on and off the headscarf in different public and private spaces in France, Jouili (2009) argues that different tactics and performances such as taking on or off the headscarf can be read as "an extremely creative employment of body and space, subverting in multiple ways the constraints of secular public spheres which seem to render impossible the exercise of one's religious duties" (p. 467). Jouilli reminds us that these creative practices involve significant and painful sacrifices, what she terms "tragic micro-practices" (*Ibid.*) Negotiating belonging can involve humiliation, guilt, loss of job opportunities or advancement, or public sanctions. For second-generation Muslim women, it is deeply political work to navigate and sustain their lives. Negotiating whether or not to wear the headscarf is an example of the disequilibrium second-generation Dutch youth regularly face; dilemmas which white Dutch youth do not have to consider.

Responses to Fragmented Citizenship

The discourses of 'othering' (as described in Chapter four) and the sticky power of symbols (described above) also point to more practical dilemmas around belonging that second-generation youth regularly consider. I turn now to an in-depth examination of three affective strategies employed by Black and Muslim Dutch youth: not giving a shit,

cosmopolitanism, and being ‘good.’ Similarly shown by youth in New Zealand, these expressions of affect demonstrate the “socially constructed and situated nature of their responses” (Wood, 2014) to fragmented or disjointed experiences of social citizenship.

“Not giving a shit”

The socio-cultural context of the Netherlands impacts how second-generation young people negotiate other strictures of their religion or culture. For instance, Muslim youth are faced with hard choices around finances and economic advancement. Zeinab, a Muslim woman who came to the Netherlands from Somalia with her parents as a refugee when she was young, describes how neoliberal policies affect her access to education. In 2015, the Dutch government replaced student grants with student loans: this is typical of the neoliberal trends that have eroded once strong Dutch state supports of social programs (Bjornson, 2007, 2012). Because of Islamic prohibition against taking loans with interest, accessing post-secondary education now has additional barriers for Muslim youth and their families, as well as working class youth. Zeinab describes how she and her friends navigate these barriers:

[My friends and I] call it giving a shit about a subject. So, if you give a shit about your home situation, then you won’t necessarily take that step. The next step would be, then, finding financial means. Yeah ok, interest rates. Do you give a shit? If you do, then you’re not going to do that...I was thinking I can either give myself a relief...I worked so hard every time just to maintain everything, and the house, and the school, and everything, I just thought, let me give myself a breather. And not worry about the finances. And worry about all the other things. So, I decided not to give a shit. [laughs] (Interview with Zeinab. June 8, 2017)

While Zeinab gives a fierce rendition of how she and her friends came to this decision, it is clear that “not giving a shit” is one way to care for herself. Deciding to sustain her life in this way came with a major discerning process. It involved a lot of deep reflection, compromise, and possibly was accompanied by feelings of guilt, humiliation, and pain as Zeinab sought a “breather.” What may be otherwise banal decisions for white Dutch youth, such as what to wear and how to pay for education, are complicated by the multiple socio-cultural contexts second-generation youth navigate. In “not giving a shit” about taking a loan for post-secondary education, Zeinab feels she is leading the way for others.

The Dutch cultural context and, often, the expectations of second-generation youths’ parents, demand simplicity in terms of identity. Hamza describes the quandary in which second-generation youth find themselves when they claim either a Dutch identity or a diasporic identity:

I read an article about a girl that had the same issue...[S]he was always the person to be like, “No, I’m Dutch, I’m not Moroccan.” ...and then noticing that it didn’t matter because there was a stamp put on her because of the way she looked. At one point she was like, “Why am I trying so hard to fit into a society that is constantly rejecting me?” She wrote this piece titled, “This is why I don’t want to be a Dutch person and why I am not a Dutch person.” It’s so confusing because you have a lot of white people commenting and being like “Oh, but you were born and raised here, so you’re Dutch, you’re not Moroccan.” And I was like, “What the fuck?!” This person gets to hear her whole life “No, you’re not Dutch, you’re Moroccan.” And then when you’re like, “Okay, fuck it! I don’t want to be Dutch,

I'm Moroccan" then you're an ingrate. "Oh, this country gave you all these opportunities...If you really think it's better in Morocco than in Holland, then [go back home]." So, you can't win either way. (Interview with Hamza. April 19, 2017)

Second-generation youth face a no-win situation: if they claim a Dutch identity, they are made to feel not Dutch enough, but if they claim a diasporic identity, they are told they are ungrateful. This is crazy-making. Like "not giving a shit," Hamza and the woman he quotes here say "fuck it!" Expressing apathy or disengagement is a strategy for deflecting the pain of not belonging.

Belonging to a national identity is often portrayed as a binary, either you are Dutch or 'other,' yet second-generation youth claim, embody, and navigate multiple identities. As discussed in Chapter four, *doe normaal* is one way a homogenous identity is promoted in Dutch society. Jake, a 26-year-old Angolan-Dutch man in the theatre project expresses his indifference to the concept of *doe normaal*: "Yeah, so I struck this pose because it kind of represents not caring and not being normal" (Theatre workshop. April 10, 2017). Not caring is an affective response to not fitting in. It is also oppositional: it is not necessarily about fitting in (or not), it expresses indifference or detachment from the whole construct of normal-making. These youths' identities are not dichotomous; rather, they encompass multiple aspects. Likewise, Saado, a Somali-Dutch woman working for an international corporation, expresses how her identity shifts depending on the context – on how 'other' she is.

I don't feel like I belong to the Somali group, or the Dutch group. I'm just me.
[B]elonging depends on who I'm with. If I'm with my family I'm more Dutch.

When I'm with my Dutch friends, I'm Somali. If I'm with people of the same age I'm a millennial... When I'm at my company, I'm Somali because it's very white. Everybody knows me. When I think now what I belong to, it's not Somali. It's not Dutch. I don't care. (Interview with Saado. April 4, 2017)

Saado seems to inhabit multiple identities with practiced ease yet her comment "I don't care," belies a practiced nonchalance: a form of self-defence against the most difficult feelings or experiences of racism and not belonging. Like other second-generation youth, Saado cannot simply be Dutch *and* embody all her multiple identities at once. Saado's sense of identity is highly defined by the context she finds herself in. She moves in and out of these situations fluidly though her fluidity appears to have come with lots of practice. Saado is navigating complex terrain wrought from racism, Islamophobia, ageism, and sexism, among others. Like "not giving a shit," or "fuck it!" Saado and Jake are responding to the quandary of not fully belonging by saying "I don't care." Checking out is an affective, oppositional response to the impossibilities that second-generation youth are confronted with. At times the work of belonging involves apathy, disengagement, or checking out as a way of negotiating difficult ethical and moral choices, of claiming feelings of belonging to something other than Dutch society (which rejects them), and of navigating various social contexts where different aspects of their identity are amplified. These conversations show how difficult and relentless these negotiations can be: "not giving a shit" is a form of emotional self-preservation.

Cosmopolitanism

Another way second-generation youth respond to the experience of fragmented belonging is through claiming a broader identity beyond Dutch borders, both as a defense

mechanism and to access feelings of connectedness. Migration studies usually portray this either as cosmopolitanism (Appiah, 2010), the ideology that all people belong to a single community based on shared relationships of mutual respect; reactive transnationalism (Itzigsohn & Giorguli Saucedo, 2002, 2005), the transnational linkages that are developed when first- or second-generation citizens have a negative experience of integration and thus maintain or strengthen connections to their ‘home’ country; or, flexible citizenship (Ong, 1999), a utilitarian, political-economic approach to legal citizenship deployed by global elites who use their mobility privilege to take advantage of international economic markets. None of these concepts fully describe the affective nature of the type of cosmopolitanism my participants articulated. Here, I understand cosmopolitanism in the sense of a cultural phenomenon where people claim a global citizenship, lifestyle, and identity. I use the word cosmopolitanism rather than transnationalism because many second-generation youth claim a broader identity which is not necessarily attached to their parents’ country of origin. Their cosmopolitanism is an articulation of fragmented social belonging and as such is grounded in their experiences in the Netherlands. This is an affective and embodied response to non-belonging with deep class and gender demarcations.

When asked about their legal citizenship identification, several youth called themselves “cosmopolitan” or “citizens of the world.” Fatima, a Moroccan-Dutch university student, called herself cosmopolitan:

I’m not really sure about whether I want to stick around here. I could easily live somewhere else. Or move somewhere else. I see that happening...just because I have more of a cosmopolitan mindset. I’m more international as well. And people

here aren't really. Even though they seem so. It's not so cosmopolitan. I could move more easily [also] because I don't really have the feeling that I particularly belong here. So, it makes it easier as well. (Interview with Fatima. March 27, 2017)

Feelings of cosmopolitanism are partially connected to a fragmented sense of belonging. Similarly, Ahmed, a 32-year-old Somali-Dutch man, states: "For example in the Netherlands I am here but I see myself as international, I don't see borders. So, the world is for us all." (Interview with Ahmed. January 11, 2017). While Ahmed expresses agency by not acknowledging borders, borders place very real mobility restrictions on youth of colour, which are also circumscribed by class and gender. For example, in conversation with Faith, a 30-year-old Eritrean-Dutch participant in the theatre project, we compared our experiences of security in the Netherlands. Faith always carries her Dutch passport with her, out of a recognition that she could be stopped at any time and asked for her papers and her legal justification/permission for being in the country, even though she has lived here since she was one year old. I, on the other hand, a new migrant to the country, felt safer keeping my Dutch passport at home in case it got stolen or lost. I carried my Canadian driver's license with me, though it would not legally suffice if I was asked for my papers. The chances of me (being white) and Faith (being Black) getting stopped on the street are radically different. Claiming to be a "citizen of the world" in the face of very real material and physical restrictions on mobility demonstrates how neoliberal ideas around individualism have permeated young peoples' thinking. Fatima and Ahmed's claims to cosmopolitanism demonstrates a common feeling that came out in interviews. Youth manifested ideas of cosmopolitan or global citizenship as a coping strategy to their

sense of fragmented belonging. For example, Jasmin describes how she feels like a “citizen of the world” because she feels like she does not belong in the Netherlands and no longer belongs in Suriname (Interview with Jasmin. March 16, 2017). She describes this as a “weird” position to occupy. Claiming cosmopolitanism is a fallback, protective mechanism to claim a sense of belonging beyond the fragmented feeling Black and Muslim Dutch youth find in Dutch society.

As a fallback mechanism, cosmopolitanism was often accompanied by expressions of affect. Participants often portrayed Dutch (or European) legal citizenship as a means to an end, while simultaneously expressing an emotional bond to other sides of their identity, and other places. For example, during one theatre workshop (April 10, 2017), we problematized citizenship. Youth were asked to take a picture of what it meant to them to be Dutch and share it with the group. All four male participants present in this workshop stated that for them Dutch citizenship was quickly narrowed down to a piece of paper – the legal identification that comes with different rights and responsibilities – and two of them took pictures of their passports. Though we did not explore the gendered dynamics at play more deeply in this workshop, this may suggest that men are more pragmatic regarding citizenship and may also have more avenues for mobility open to them because of their gender. There was a utilitarian undertone to their categorization of being Dutch as legal paperwork. Thomas suggested he is happy for his German/European Union citizenship because of the doors it opens up for him, but that he is emotionally more connected to his African heritage. Jake, an Angolan-Dutch man, said he identifies primarily as Angolan, though he was born and raised in Rotterdam. Like Thomas and Jake, participants often demonstrate a deeply emotional connection to non-Dutch aspects

of their identity, perhaps in part because connecting emotionally to other countries is less risky – they are not experiencing daily micro-aggressions in these places.

Cosmopolitanism is mediated by class and gender. It is mainly middle- and upper-class second-generation youth who are claiming a cosmopolitan identity to take advantage of opportunities that may exist elsewhere. Often times this form of cosmopolitanism is expressed as tough talk – a bravado that the speaker *could* leave if (s)he chooses – this tough talk is often circumscribed by class and/or gender. Zohra, a 30-year-old Somali-Dutch woman who is also a mature student, waffles between claiming her space in Dutch society and actively looking for opportunities in Africa:

Like I am even thinking, I see my future in Africa. Not even here in Europe. So, it's like I don't really feel like I belong here. But at the same time there is a part of me that is hardheaded. I have that pride. That is like, forget you guys, I am still Dutch. And it's just as much my country as it is you guys'. So, it's like a struggle. One day I lean towards this side, and one day...you know? I can't even explain it...I'm like if you guys don't accept me, why would I force myself upon you. I'll take my talents somewhere else and use it there, you know? (Interview with Zohra. February 14, 2017)

Zohra experiences belonging as a fraught, emotional process; her cosmopolitanism is clearly a reaction to negative experiences of belonging and possibly hurt pride. Since she has lived in Canada, the United States, and recently completed a study abroad in South Africa, cosmopolitanism is very tangible to Zohra – her class background has offered mobility opportunities; however, she had no concrete plans to move, perhaps because of her circumstances as a single mother. At the same time, Zohra expressed her hope to

work for the Dutch Department of Foreign Affairs when she finishes her law degree.

Though she strongly claims cosmopolitanism as a defense mechanism, these competing interests and power dynamics affect Zohra's material ability to move.

As the experiences of these youth demonstrate, claiming an 'other' identity is a response to exclusion. Like Zohra, many people I interviewed expressed an interest in working internationally. However, cosmopolitanism may not transform from tough talk to reality, which suggests that more research is needed on how gender and class influence practices of cosmopolitanism. While participants claimed multiple citizenships or a cosmopolitanism (in part) as a response to racist experiences, it is also an affirmation of a heterogenous identity and heritage. As these quotes show, second-generation youth portray cosmopolitanism as a privilege, an emotional attachment, an out or escape route, an option, choice or possibility, and part of their social capital. Looking at cosmopolitanism through an affective lens suggests that second-generation youth approach substantive citizenship with fluidity and flexibility, which allows them to make sense of discrimination in creative and adaptive ways. Cosmopolitanism allows second-generation youth to deploy different aspects of their identity depending on the (often hostile) context in which they find themselves. It is also the freedom to claim and honour multiple aspects of their identity rather than having to conform to or deny different parts of their identity in order to satisfy racist restrictions on what it means to be a 'good' Dutch citizen. These responses are mediated by class, gender, and race in addition to the socio-political context.

'Goodness' and the Model Minority

Another practical dilemma second-generation youth face is pressure to be 'good' representatives of their community, partly as a response to the 'bad' stereotype that exists and partly to fit in. These conflicting pressures typify the fragmented experience of citizenship and belonging—second-generation youth are *both* trying to fully incorporate into mainstream Dutch culture *and* trying to prove stereotypes wrong. Young people's reactions to these pressures are, at times, conflicting and at odds with each other. In other 'Western' liberal democracies such as Canada and the United States, normative ideas around what constitutes a 'good' citizen or model minority play into nation building narratives (Kennelly, 2009a; Ong, 2003; Thobani, 2007). Likewise, second-generation youth face pressure to conform to mainstream Dutch behaviours, practices, and points of view. They are disciplined through ideals of normality and goodness. In the Netherlands, minorities also face pressure to perform to certain expectations around education and economic success. In this section, I will look at how these two, conflicting pressures – to belong and to prove stereotypes wrong – play into Black and Muslim second-generation young people's fragmented sense of belonging in the Netherlands.

Examining the notion of the model minority helps unpack how typologies of 'others' are created and sustained in national imaginaries and why they are so destructive. Drawing on Aihwa Ong's (1987) definition of *capitalist discipline*, Lisa Sun-Hee Park (2008) describes how the model minority myth is a form of disciplining certain bodies with specific political, social, and economic objectives. However, the model minority trope leaves no room for individual and class differences and serves to create and sustain racism (Yeh, 2014). It is the opposite of the "acting white" dilemma, where Black youth

are met with disbelief regarding their high achievements (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). The idea of model minority originates in the United States and relates primarily to Asian immigrants. In the Netherlands, the model minority applies in similar, but different, ways; the notion does not apply to Asian immigrants, whose success may be more due to geographic dispersion, cultural adaptation and miscegenation (Essed & Trienekens, 2008). Rather, young people of colour feel pressure to be the best, both in order to fit in and be accepted, but also to prove stereotypes about their community wrong. This is a zero-sum game: racialized bodies are praised when they stay within assigned roles (whether positive or negative roles) and punished when they do not meet expectations (whether positive or negative expectations). This is a complex terrain to navigate. Elias, a 28-year-old Somali-Dutch man working in government, describes the pressure that comes with this typologizing:

Elias: Sometimes when I go to a network event where I see only white people, I feel like I have to pretend or do more my best [to prove] that I am there also. And I don't know why. It's maybe automatically. Because I feel like I am a representation of the people of my background. When I go home I'm like "How come you're doing...? Be yourself man!" But it comes automatically. I don't know why.

Valerie: So, you feel this pressure to be a good representative?

Elias: Yep. Yeah. Yeah. (Interview with Elias. March 30, 2017)

Elias demonstrates how he has assumed expectations around being a 'good' minority, giving a tangible face to Foucault's (2008) idea of disciplinary power where dominant scripts become internalized leading to self-discipline of conduct. Disciplinary power

works through ideas and actions that are taken for granted in everyday life, leading to the acquisition and internalization of norms, customs, and rules that then appear normal to the institutionalized individual (Larruina & Ghorashi, 2016). Elias is frustrated with himself for acting this way. The good/bad binary serves to reinforce commonly held stereotypes about different immigrant communities (de Leeuw & van Wichelen, 2005; Eijberts & Roggeband, 2016; Mepschen, 2016; Yurdakul & Korteweg, 2013).

As my research shows, the reverse is also true: if a second-generation youth is seen as successful or ‘good,’ this is also seen as an aberration or exceptional, as opposed to indicative of the entire community. In Elias’ example, he is seen as exceptional: like his earlier quote where colleagues are surprised at his excellent Dutch, it is a surprise that he is in this room with only white people. Elias is a “body out of place” (Ahmed, 2000). Youth aim to be a model minority in order to fit in and belong, to prove they deserve to be there. Typecasting ‘others’ is a no-win situation: both failing and succeeding results in the disciplining of bodies. The pressure to be a model minority means young people are held to certain standards of success and achievement. Leila, a 20-year-old Somali-Dutch woman, further describes this:

It's kind of weird because at that moment they forget that you are an immigrant and they say you are Dutch, you know? I feel like you are only getting the label Dutch if you are like a model, like the perfect immigrant...someone who finishes higher education, well educated, well mannered, adopts Dutch culture completely, assimilating, I guess, not being too religious because that kind of scares the Dutch people. Someone who agrees with the Dutch nationalism. (Interview with Leila. December 16, 2016)

According to Leila, it is not enough to simply be Dutch, second-generation youth have to be hyper-Dutch and negate other religions or cultures – often important aspects of their identity. Second-generation youth have to tamp down different facets of their multi-faceted identity in order to fit in. Iman, a Somali-Dutch university student, says: “We always [have] to prove ourselves that we fit in and belong” (Interview with Iman, December 4, 2016).

Manipulating different aspects of their identity to satisfy mainstream Dutch society’s requirements around what is normal requires a lot of emotional labour. For example, after presenting my research results to staff at the City of Amsterdam, many of whom had personal experiences of immigration themselves, they, like my research participants, talked about having to constantly prove their Dutchness: “You don’t want your Dutchness taken away from you, so you come up with arguments for why you are Dutch. It takes lots of energy” (Conversation following the presentation at the City of Amsterdam, May 31, 2018). Efforts to resist or accommodate typologies of goodness are exhausting because it is a no-win situation. The emotional labour required of second-generation youth is one of the costs of fragmented belonging. In addition, pressure to be high-achieving and successful is a “damned if you do, damned if you don’t” situation for second-generation youth. Their success is always met with surprise, and their failures are always read as indicative of their entire community. Their ‘good’ will never be ‘good enough’ to once and for all become a full member of Dutch society; it is a constant pressure to exceed expectations. Like the model minority myth which “reinforces established racial inequalities and places second-generation Asian Americans within a precarious defensive dilemma in which they must constantly prove their worth as “real”

Americans” (Park 2008, p. 136), second-generation Dutch youth similarly find themselves within a precarious defensive dilemma through constantly having to prove both that they are Dutch enough and successful.

The narrative around ‘good’ and ‘bad’ citizens allows white people to be seen as individuals while marginalized people are viewed as representatives of their race, religion, or culture (Thobani, 2007). For example, scholars have assessed how the media portrays young male Moroccan-Dutch and Turkish-Dutch as dangerous, anti-social, and criminal (Dijk, 2000; Korteweg & Yurdakul, 2009). Additionally, emotions circulate around the good/bad binary, creating sticky affective discourses (Ahmed, 2004a, 2004b) around ‘us’ and ‘them.’ When notions of ‘goodness’ and ‘badness’ stick to particular groups, emotions are mobilized to fortify ideas of a homogenous, coherent nation-state and to further marginalize people of colour. Myriam, a young Somali-Dutch university student who I met at a youth elections debate that she organized, explains how entire groups of people are cast as ‘bad’ when someone commits a crime, but individuals are claimed as ‘one of us’ and ‘good’ when they accomplish something.

If a person of colour commits a crime it’s always “Oh, the Moroccan guy did this.” If the Dutch national group wins the World Cup or whatever, and they’re all Black people or Surinamese people, they would be the first to say, “Oh, our Dutch boys” ...Just keep it one way. Either we’re Dutch or we’re not. (Interview with Myriam. June 19, 2017)

Myriam questions the language around ‘us’ and ‘them’ and the construction of ‘others.’ In this example, masculine, athletic, high-achieving men get to represent the nation even if they are Black, but everyday young people who do not embody exceptional qualities do

not. Dangerous ‘others’ are created and sustained in national narratives using inverse practices: for example, crime is associated with Moroccans.²⁸ These examples demonstrate how belonging has class, gender, and racial constrictions. Jasmin, a young Black Surinamese-Dutch university law student who co-organized the youth elections debate with Myriam, describes how fear is created around certain groups of people:

With everything, they’re like “Oh, what does this group of migrants think? What does this [group think]? What does this [group think]?” and it really becomes them against us...[I]f you look at the totality of those certain ethnic groups involved in crime against the white Dutch people involved in crime you still have more white Dutch young people involved in crime but they never bring it [up] that way. They just say “no Moroccans” and everybody is afraid of Moroccan people. But just go to the [University of Amsterdam] you have a lot of [Moroccans] who are becoming doctors, lawyers... (Interview with Jasmin. March 16, 2017)

Jasmin’s comments highlight how (in this case) Moroccan-Dutch male youth are criminalized and stigmatized as a group while young white Dutch youth who are statistically more involved in criminal activity are seen as individuals. Further articulating the connection between encountering ‘others’ and generating a climate of fear, Ahmed (2004a) demonstrates how connecting strangers with fear and danger creates a generalized environment of fear and creates the space for governments to capitalize on this fear and enact discriminatory legislation. The double standard serves to discipline

²⁸ Similarly, there are many examples of violent acts committed by young men in Canadian society, yet the media casts some as terrorists and others as mentally unstable. For example, following the 2014 shooting on Parliament Hill, Michael Zihaf-Bibeau quickly became labelled as a terrorist though he had a history of mental illness. Justin Bourque, a young, white man who went on a shooting spree of RCMP officers in Moncton, New Brunswick in 2014 was described as someone with mental health issues, not as a terrorist, even though he explicitly stated that he wanted to harm the oil industry and government officials.

bodies and keep them in place. The subjugated position of ‘other’ is created and sustained through narratives about ‘good’ and ‘bad’ national subjects.

Conclusion

This chapter examines how fragmented and disjointed experiences of social citizenship and belonging results in different affective feelings and responses among second-generation Black and Muslim youth. In ‘Western,’ liberal democracies, racialized bodies are marked as ‘being out of place’ (Ahmed, 2004b, 2004a); in Dutch society this works through disciplining certain bodies through surprise, spatial and economic immobility, and concepts of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ citizens. Second-generation youth expend a lot of energy responding to, and dealing with, this racialization and discipline in their everyday lives, as youth are constantly justifying their Dutchness within the construct of the impossibility of being “Dutch, Muslim, and Black.” As I have shown, affective responses to this impossible situation center around apathy and disengagement, ambiguity and ambivalence, and reciprocal rejection. Emotional strategies for dealing with this fragmented sense of belonging include checking out (“fuck it!”), claiming a cosmopolitan identity, and being ‘good.’ While Dutch society claims to be diverse and tolerant, second-generation youths’ experiences would suggest otherwise. As demonstrated in Chapter four, this complexity is reflected in the discourse around citizenship: words like *allochtoon*, bi-cultural Dutch, non-native Dutch, and second-generation are all used to describe racialized people with perceived multiple affiliations. In this sense, discourses around social membership are experienced as racism. As this chapter demonstrates,

belonging and citizenship are complex, *affective* subjects for second-generation youth due to the fragmented and partial nature of their belonging in Dutch society.

Looking at citizenship and belonging through the lens of affect highlights how spatial, material, and discursive contexts shape and constrain young people's agency. Claiming an identity, or multiple identities, in a context of contestation is fraught and complicated. In the Dutch context, some Black and Muslim youth endeavor to hold on to all facets of their identity through cosmopolitanism, whether by discursively talking tough about seeking opportunities outside of the Netherlands, or by actively availing themselves of international opportunities. They also seek out spatial locations where they feel like they belong. More research is needed to determine how cosmopolitanism may be bounded not only by race but also by class and gender. Second-generation Black and Muslim youth also have internalized messaging around 'goodness' and try to be model minorities so that they can finally fit in and belong. This is a no-win situation as successful and unsuccessful individuals are both disciplined: the successful ones as unique, 'model citizens' who have 'made it,' and the unsuccessful ones as fulfilling negative stereotypes of their entire community. The stories contained in this chapter eloquently demonstrate the impossible conundrum with which second-generation Black and Muslim Dutch youth find themselves grappling in the everyday: how to claim and feel belonging in a context of fragmented citizenship? This chapter portrays the web of social, material, and spatial relationships that entangle with affect and influence citizenship and belonging.

The next chapter examines how second-generation Dutch youth are resisting this impossible conundrum, specifically interrogating their practices and strategies of

everyday resistance: the micro actions or non-actions that might otherwise be unremarkable. By focusing on the everyday, the entanglements between power and resistance are thrown into relief. Black and Muslim youth's practices of resistance are alternately creative and conformist: what can be at times a form of resistance through assimilation. A focus on power and resistance allows us to turn the analytical gaze back on to Dutch society and the power dynamics at play. Analyzing everyday resistance provides a window into the nuanced, fraught, complex, and ambiguous decisions second-generation youth take within a context of fragmented belonging.

Chapter 6: Practices of Resistance: (Anti)Conformity, Comeback Girls, Bubbles, and the Responses of White Society

This chapter looks at the ways that second-generation Black and Muslim youth are resisting processes of ‘othering’ through practices of what I term ‘adaptive resistance.’ I specifically examine how their strategies of adaptive resistance are shaped and constrained by the cultural and social context in which they find themselves, thus mitigating or rendering partial certain practices of their resistance. Nagel (2011) refers to resistance as “negotiating belonging.” In the previous chapter, I demonstrated how a fragmented sense of belonging leads to different affective strategies such as being ‘good,’ claiming cosmopolitanism, and checking out. In the context of precarious or contested citizenship, where certain bodies are cast as “impossible subjects” (Ngai, 2004), declarations of citizenship can become acts of resistance. Resistance is shaped by the shifting power relations at work in a given context and as such an analysis of resistance requires an examination of power (Lilja, Baaz, Schulz, & Vinthagen, 2017; Sharp, Routledge, Philo, & Paddison, 2000). With nationalism, second-generation youth navigate the constant tension of being cast as ‘others’ and being told to be ‘good,’ self-governing citizens in order to succeed. Surviving and thriving in this context of impossibility requires strategically employing different tools of resistance and making astute calculations about when and how to engage. I examine how youth use different tools of resistance to alternately confront and survive in a system which upholds exclusionary practices and beliefs.

Resistance is multi-scalar: from the macro-politics of legal citizenship to the micro-practices of daily survival. In this chapter, I focus on temporal, spatial practices

and strategies of resistance. These practices can include *extraordinary* or *exceptional* acts of resistance which take people out of their daily routine in an effort to disrupt normative practices and ways of thinking: I focus here on the daily *ordinary* practices and strategies youth employ both to survive and to push back. I take up the scholarship on “everyday resistance” (Scott, 1985) that refers to micro-practices or quotidian strategies such as avoidance, false compliance, or secrecy. Though extraordinary acts are more commonly categorized as practices of resistance, I am more interested in the daily tactics youth employ which may normally be unremarkable. This level of engagement is pertinent because racism and Islamophobia, while often visible at a national scale, are experienced subjectively through daily micro-practices of discrimination. Belonging can become politicized when it is threatened, or when promises of universality are not applied equally (Gest, 2010; Yuval-Davis, 2011). While practices of resistance are often seen as primarily anti-social actions, I try to avoid this dichotomous analysis by examining how resistance and power are entangled and interwoven (Lilja et al., 2017; Sharp et al., 2000). I am interested in seeing how youth push back against the insidious, daily, micro-aggressions that they face in a way which claims space, identity, and belonging – but which can also involve compromises and contradictions. Examining everyday resistance provides a counterweight to the examination of “everyday racism” (Essed, 1990) and the structures of power and discrimination. Examining the ordinary also allows us to “research up” (Chilisa, 2012; Smith, 1999; Tuck & Yang, 2014) as structural and institutional oppression are not exceptional, but continual. It is the embodied, lived experiences which shape, mold, and define how youth decide to react both to daily “ordinary” acts of oppression and macro-level “extra-ordinary” events or practices (Staeheli et al., 2012).

While I come to this analysis through interviews and the theatre project with second generation young people, their reflections allow me to widen the conversation beyond an ‘us’ and ‘them’ binary by providing an entry point into examining the social relations and practices which constitute everyday encounters: both for second-generation Dutch youth of colour and white Dutch society.

First, I analyze the daily practices and strategies of resistance that second-generation youth employ and the power relations at work that shape these practices. This analysis is centered around three different modes of resistance that I have identified: practices of (anti)conformism; talking back; and, cultivating safe relationships. Youth thought through resistance with me in interviews and we collectively explored practices of resistance through the Theatre School of Resistance. Their narratives also allow for an examination of white Dutch responses to racism and how these responses shape and constrain practices of everyday resistance, demonstrating how resistance and power are deeply woven – this analysis forms the latter half of this chapter. This narrative is set in the context of everyday encounters: the social relations which define and contour power and resistance. I begin by providing a definition of resistance.

Everyday Resistance

In an ideal world, resistance could be clearly defined as a process of becoming both self-aware and politically-aware – this process includes linking personal troubles to structural oppression – and working towards social transformation and change (Giroux, 1983; Hollander & Einwohner, 2004; Kwon, 2008). I argue that practices of everyday resistance are caught up in, and deeply enmeshed with, material and discursive constructs

of power and can be murky and difficult to identify. They operate within specific social, cultural, economic and political contexts. As such, they are defined and created in dialogue with the context in which they operate. As discussed in Chapter one, neoliberalism and modes of governmentality and discipline function to constrain and hamper young people's political action. This chapter examines second-generation Black and Muslim youths' practices of resistance in the Netherlands while also analyzing the social, cultural, and political context in which they take place, and how this context shapes and constrains practices of resistance. It also demonstrates the tension between structure and agency. Affect may open up new possibilities for the exploration of resistance as emotions reveal how resistance is grounded in spatial, relational, and discursive contexts. In arguing for an examination of power and resistance through affect, Maria Hynes (2013) states:

[R]esistance also has an affective dimension that operates beneath and between both individual and collective struggles – a more-than-reactive, barely recognizable, less-than-conscious mobilization of bodily potentials, which is an exploitation of the margins of openness in every situation, an activation of new capacities of bodies and an interruption of our more determinant modes of sociality. (p. 573)

I attempt to bring the affective element of resistance to the surface.

In contrast to large acts of resistance such as protest, everyday resistance refers to actions of resistance that are harder to categorize as such because they are subtle, hidden, or micro. James Scott (1985) coined the term "everyday resistance" to refer to actions such as foot-dragging, sabotage, and false compliance. Enlarging Scott's concept,

everyday resistance might be pro- or anti-social, positive or negative. Indeed, Hynes (2013) argues that resistance is more often seen as negative or oppositional because it is more readily identifiable in these forms. Solely viewing resistance as oppositional may reify power structures as primary and pre-established (M. Rose, 2002). Building on Scott's work, other scholars have further broadened the concept of everyday resistance further (Johansson & Vinthagen, 2014; Lilja, Baaz, & Vinthagen, 2013; Lilja & Vinthagen, 2018). In his class analysis of the Arab Spring, Asef Bayat (2015) describes a "quiet encroachment of the ordinary" where the urban poor silently, steadily, and constantly chip away at the holdings of the elite in order to survive and ameliorate their lives. These actions are insidious and subtle; as such, they may not be readily identified as resistance. In *Living a Feminist Life*, Sara Ahmed (2017b) also talks about feminist work as chipping away at the walls. Thinking with Bayat and Ahmed, practices of everyday resistance might be better seen as slow erosion rather than extraordinary events. Some scholars have looked at refusals or "not doings" – non-actions – as resistance (Kärki, 2018; Ortner, 1995; Tuck & Yang, 2014). A group of scholars in Sweden have theorized more deliberately around the concept of everyday resistance (Johansson & Vinthagen, 2014, 2015; Lilja et al., 2017). Their contributions specifically connect an analysis of resistance to an analysis of technologies of power by encouraging careful consideration of entanglements and connections between the two. Picking up from geographers Sharp, Routledge, Philo, and Paddison (2000), these scholars invite us to look at how resistance and power are intimately entangled, calling for analyses which investigate practices of resistance and technologies of power simultaneously. As Hollander and Einwohner (2004) state: "Resistance is not always pure" (p. 549), meaning

that it can be co-opted, tempered, and influenced by the power it seeks to resist. In this sense, my analysis looks at how second-generation youth's practices of everyday resistance are entangled with power and littered with compromises and contradictions. Paying attention to the details of the everyday provides an interesting window to think through: it reveals how resistance is not purely oppositional by recognizing the subtle and insidious effects of power on everyday practices of resistance and how resistance may, in fact, be more complex and complicated than oppositional binaries would suggest. I analyze how specific forms of power – nationalism and whiteness – influence everyday resistance. I also investigate how practices of resistance, created and sustained in the margins (hooks, 1990), are not constructed solely in opposition to power but are a third space of transforming and envisioning new possibilities.

Adaptive Resistance: (Anti)Conformism and Being 'Model Minorities'

As discussed in Chapters four and five, Black and Muslim Dutch youth face pressure to conform. This operates through the discourse of *doe normaal* and disciplining citizens to be 'good.' The presence of these techniques of governmentality mean that youths' practices of resistance are deeply enmeshed with the workings of power. Second-generation youth are *both* actively resisting 'othering' through non-conformist practices *and* trying to succeed in the Dutch context. Like Arlene Elowe MacLoed's (1991) thinking around "accommodating protest," this tension reflects how youth adapt into the dominant culture in order to resist. Adaptive resistance is often ambivalent and demonstrates the difficult choices and sacrifices Black and Muslim Dutch youth make in order to make the Dutch context work for them.

Doe normaal belies a certain level of fear and anxiety around ‘others.’

Commenting on the politics of belonging, Yuval-Davis (2011) argues that there is a strong connection between the state’s need for social cohesion, the process of ‘othering,’ and justifications for the global ‘war on terror.’ Similarly, *doe normaal* is mobilized to build social cohesion, but also to create fear of ‘others.’ Through the saying *doe normaal* and all that it encapsulates, participants’ racialized bodies are excluded from the category of ‘normal.’ One response is for youth to accentuate their resistance to normalization through performances of the body: their clothing, hair, career choices, and life paths. Feminist scholars have demonstrated how marginalized groups practice resistance through the body. For instance, some fat bodies resist the disciplining of women’s bodies through norms related to body size, image, and desirability (Braziel & LeBesco, 2001; LeBesco, 2004; Orbach, 1998). Other embodied practices of resistance include performances of language, hairstyles, and clothing (Kobayashi & Preston, 2014; Sun, 2016; Weitz, 2001). Bodily practices of resistance are not necessarily straightforward. One response to ‘othering’ is for youth to achieve high levels of academic and economic success in order to prove wrong the negative stereotypes about them. Similar to the model minority trope, this pressure to succeed means Black and Muslim Dutch youth have to work twice as hard as their peers to justify their presence in elite institutions. The pressure to be ‘good’ and successful acts as social discipline.

In the theatre project, we spent one workshop focused on the term *doe normaal*. Anwar, a Moroccan-Dutch university student, stated how even though he does not identify with culturally Dutch characteristics, he realizes he has been socialized to behave rationally, coldly, sensibly, and calmly.

Anwar: *Lekker nuchter*²⁹...I think its really characterizes Dutch identity...and on a level, I can see myself being like that. Especially when I compare myself to non-Dutch people...[But] I don't necessarily see myself like that at all.

Jake: But if you're hanging around a lot of Dutch folk you tend to...

Lila: Become a little like that.

Anwar and Jake: Yeah.

Jake: Especially if you are raised with Dutch people.

Lila and Anwar: Yeah. (Theatre Workshop. April 10, 2017)

On the one hand, assimilation happens organically and without conscious thought. Though Anwar cognitively resists being culturally Dutch, his socialization in white Dutch society influences his character. Anwar believes that fitting in can “limit you to be yourself,” but he and the others demonstrate how they become influenced by their context. Their feelings about this socialization seem to be ambivalent; it is neither good nor bad, but merely a fact.

After this conversation, we used Boal's Two Images exercise (also known as a Living Sculpture) to play with the concept of *doe normaal*. First, participants positioned their bodies to demonstrate what *doe normaal* meant to them. They described what they saw represented in other people's bodies around the room as: “...layers...nobody seems really relaxed. Everybody is somehow reserved...boundaries...box...within these limits...confusing...self-control...” (*Ibid.*). After discussing these portrayals, participants then sculpted their bodies into what an ideal situation would be.

²⁹ Alternately translates as “be sober, sensible, down-to-earth, or level-headed.”

Anwar: A seat at the table, I think kind of claiming. Instead of letting others decide where you sit and what your place is and what your spot is, without compromising...and not waiting until it's getting handed to you. [I]nstead of being talked about and hearing what others say about you and who you are, getting the spot and the seat at the table where that is being discussed and trying to define it for ourselves. It's maybe very deep, and... [Everybody laughs]

Lukas: Very thought-provoking. (*Ibid.*)

This sculpture speaks to the protest slogan “nothing about us without us is for us.”³⁰

Anwar makes an agential claim when he takes a seat at the table. He wants the ability to set the terms of the debate about himself as an ‘other’ and influence the terms of the discussion; however, getting *to* the table necessitates some degree of cooperation or assimilation. In an interview, Hamza, a Moroccan-Dutch university student, makes a similar argument:

[T]he *CBS* are the ones that come up with these terms and it is always white men of a certain age that are giving groups of people names. After a certain amount of time people start to notice that people are resisting those words. Like they did with *allochtoon*.... [N]ow they're trying a new word, but I find it very offensive. Still. And I think as people of whatever type of culture or ethnicity, there's a certain amount of autonomy and agency that people possess and should be granted to at least give themselves the names that they want to be called. Yeah?

(Interview with Hamza. April 19, 2017)

³⁰ This slogan is attributed to South African disability rights and youth activists.

The fulfillment of Anwar and Hamza's wish is mediated by factors such as class, race, gender, and social capital. This may soften the practices of resistance that are readily available to Black and Muslim youth. These images represent an ideal world and a playing field that is easily leveled by sculpting bodies into different positions. How do these practices of claiming work in real life?

In conversations about *doe normaal*, descriptions of resistance took many forms. Jake, a 26-year-old, Black, Muslim man who participated in the theatre project, is very intentional about his resistance to *doe normaal*. Though he appears to have grown up without a lot of class privilege, his high-level education is in finances and management and he landed a student placement with a prestigious, cutting-edge, international company. Yet Jake intentionally leads a simpler life which includes volunteering for a local community organization. During the Two Images theatre exercises where participants sculpted their bodies into a representation of what *doe normaal* meant to them, Jake described his image as follows:

I basically see myself as not being normal. If you see my whole posture and the way I dress wearing a fisher's hat...but still being a bit a part of society...I didn't really know what pose to strike because I already am an embodiment of not being normal. And not conforming to what the outside perspective is of what people see of me. For example, when people say "Oh, a financial manager or financial leader," they're immediately visualising someone with a suit and everything and a good car...everything is nice. Nice shoes. Quality! But I am totally opposite of that, which already puts me on the category of he's not normal. (Theatre workshop, April 10, 2017).

Jake feels not ‘normal’ because of his race and religion – as he says, he is already an “embodiment” of *niet normaal* – but he consciously accentuates these differences by his clothing choices and demeanour. These embodied practices of resistance challenge class stereotypes about what a financial manager should look like. Jake’s class privilege appears to have increased from his younger years – this might enable his practices of resistance by giving him more status and respect, thereby incurring less risk in pushing back. Accumulating class capital may open doors for practices of resistance.

Similarly, many youth described their efforts to succeed in education and career as a practice of resistance. In this way, youth are assimilating normative values in order to resist the negative stereotypes of them. This often means taking on affect associated with the white, middle class in order to succeed. For instance, when I asked Myriam, a 22-year-old Somali Dutch woman, what keeps her going, she said she finds strength in proving people wrong:

Myriam: Just work on yourself and prove them wrong...I think it’s really, always good to defy the stereotype, you know? [It’s] really important to...actually be excellent in whatever you’re doing.

Valerie: It’s a lot of pressure also.

Myriam: Yeah, but I think that it’s necessary. And I think every person of colour feels that way. And it’s not just pressure from outside, I think you also want to make your parents proud. I mean, they came all the way here, so. (Interview with Myriam. June 19, 2017)

The pressure to succeed comes both from the families of second-generation youth and from a desire to prove stereotypes wrong. This puts a big burden on Black and Muslim

youth. They must exceed societal expectations despite numerous institutional barriers. They must also conform bodily and affectively to certain standards of white, middle-class comportment. Regarding diversity in institutions, Sara Ahmed (2017b) states that “...proximity to whiteness often translates as proximity to a certain style of respectable middle-class conduct” (p. 128) which allows for a certain ability to pass. These soft practices of resistance do not mean the institutions themselves are changing, rather it demonstrates the limited ability of adaptive resistance to effect change on the structural level. This also shows how youth are conforming to Dutch societal expectations of success, which may close off opportunities for exploring other ways of being in the world. Similarly, Jasmin, a Black, Surinamese-Dutch university student, also feels this pressure to prove people wrong. As a Black student, she feels galvanized by studying in a mostly white environment at the University of Amsterdam:

Jasmin: [O]ne thing that gives me strength is how white the university is. It’s extremely white. You almost don’t see any ethnic groups and especially not Surinamese or other Black people...So, when you see another Black student, you’re like “Whoa!” So, why does that empower me? Because I’m like yes! I’m educated, and if I’m educated it will inspire other people from a migrant background to reach for bigger and better goals. Because we’re out there a lot, but we also get pushed down a lot. So that empowers me...

Valerie: So, you wanna get right in there, kind of?

Jasmin: Yeah, they inspire me in fight mode. (Interview with Jasmin. March 16, 2017)

Jasmin's "fight mode" is born out of a context of inequality. Notably, Jasmin has incorporated neoliberal ideas about individualism and self-determination into her dreams for success. Again, Jasmin's personal success, while it might inspire other young people as she hopes, is not likely to dramatically change structures and institutions. Instead, it more likely to contribute to a slow erosion or chipping away (Ahmed, 2017b; Bayat, 2015) of structural racism. Similarly, Zohra, a 29-year-old, Somali-Dutch woman studying law, feels her education allows her to claim a certain belonging:

My law study [is] a way of proving that I belong. Like I'm being a productive member of society. Like us being criminals or just taking money from the government, being the opposite of that. That's like me proving, "Hey, I am integrated into society. I'm doing what you want me to do, so what's the problem?" (Interview with Zohra. February 14, 2017)

Zohra's efforts to prove stereotypes wrong are heavily influenced by neoliberal values about who are 'deserving citizens.' 'Deserving' or 'worthy' citizens are those who contribute to society, particularly economically (Katz, 2005; Kennelly, 2011a). Proving they belong through being successful, educated, productive citizens demonstrates how profoundly youth must adapt in order to resist. Zohra's options are presented as either being a criminal or being a lawyer – a hyper-successful member of society. There is not a lot of wiggle room for second-generation youth to just be: their bodies are disciplined in hyper-negative or hyper-positive ways. Here I build on Arlene Elowe MacLeod's (1991) analysis of women's veiling practices in Cairo and her concept of "accommodating protest" which draws attention to the ways in which people simultaneously oppose and comply with dominant power structures. With the notion *adapting to resist* I explore how

people absorb and promote dominant norms and values in order to push back. In order to push back, Myriam, Jasmin, and Zohra assimilate societal standards of success, which restricts, molds, and shapes their resistance. While articulating a positive form of resistance in their desire to succeed and ‘prove them wrong,’ all three women simultaneously describe what it is like to be a “space invader” (Puwar, 2004) where their bodies are recognized as being out of place in (mostly) white institutions or locations (Ahmed, 2012, 2017b). These women *are* proving that negative stereotypes are wrong. Yet in order to do so they are simultaneously reinforcing the typecasting of ‘others’ by being *exceptional*; they cannot simply just be. The pressure to be a model minority is doubly intense in neoliberal societies, as Zohra, Jasmin, and Myriam are made personally responsible for overcoming the challenges they face in society, which obscures structural injustice. While these young women describe the pride and fierceness they get from succeeding and seeing others succeed, the institutional context in which they operate continues to work to make them the exception rather than the norm.

“Comeback Girls” and the Use of Humour

The most common form of resistance employed by second-generation youth was talking back – what one of my participants referred to as being a “comeback girl” – where youth address racism by speaking up and confronting racist speech acts. Talking back is complicated by structural oppression and dominant white Dutch society’s use of humour to foreclose conversations about oppression through deflections such as “Can’t you take a joke?” or “I didn’t mean anything by it.” Flipping the script, youth are also using humour to push back. They do so in two ways: first, as a coping strategy and a

practice of resistance in the way that they play with identity markers; and second, to call out racism while simultaneously deflecting aggressive responses. In deflecting aggressive responses, humour operates precisely in the same way as when used by white Dutch speakers.

Comeback Girls

Talking back came up in the theatre project as well as in almost every interview. Young people will often speak up when confronted with racist or Islamophobic words or jokes. They also speak up on social media: through blogs, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Myriam, a young Somali-Dutch woman, described herself as a “comeback girl” who would always speak up about racism when she attended a mostly-white, affluent suburban high school:

[Laughs] I was really a comeback girl. Almost preaching. [laughter] Yeah, I was really passionate about it. But I feel that I had to be because I was the only Black girl in my year. And then next to being a Black girl, also Muslim. So, it’s like a jackpot, you know? I would just have to. And then also you’re a girl; it’s just a lot of jabbing so I just had to be outspoken. Otherwise I would just get walked over.

(Interview with Myriam. June 19, 2017)

In her research with LGBTQ youth in the United States, Cindy Cruz (2011) describes talking back and subtle body language as “resistance in tight spaces” (p. 553). Similarly, Myriam describes how she felt she needed to speak out because she was the only Black, Muslim girl in her year. The white, middle-class, suburban school she attended was a “tight space.” In describing herself as a comeback girl, Myriam shows how she was

constantly defending herself, preaching, and being outspoken. She gives the impression that she always had a quick retort ready.

Many young, Black, Muslim women I interviewed felt that they faced multiple points of oppression because of their skin colour, religion, and gender. Speaking out is one way of re-centering the conversation and “changing the script” (Cruz, 2011, p. 553).

Zohra, a 29-year-old Somali-Dutch woman, is also a comeback girl:

I'm very vocal. It doesn't matter who is around, I'm always politically vocal. My friends complain about me because that seems like the main topic when you're around me. I try to make other people aware.... that these are my experiences and what they can do is to acknowledge them. That's something huge, like just acknowledge that. So, I think that's my way of constantly doing something.

(Interview with Zohra. February 14, 2017)

Here, Zohra describes how others' acknowledgement of her experiences is important to her. She constantly speaks up so that other people can be aware of her realities. In doing so, Zohra is re-centering the conversation on her so that her experiences, normally invisible, will be acknowledged. Recentring marginalized discourses is important, fraught work, as others have shown (Crenshaw, 1989). Sara Ahmed (2017a) describes the role of someone who speaks up about these things as a “feminist killjoy”:

When violence disappears from view, and violence is often reproduced by not coming into view; then to speak of violence is to make violence appear. And then you do appear violent, as if you are forcing something unpleasant onto others, even being mean to others.... The feminist killjoy is a manifesto. She makes violence manifest; she brings violence that is already in the room to surface

because of what she says, because of what she does. (Intro to Killjoys@Work Panel, para 6, 8)

Like “feminist killjoys,” comeback girls surface the latent violence that is circulating through racist and Islamophobic words and jokes. For instance, Jasmin, a Black Surinamese-Dutch student, describes being a comeback girl as a practice of resistance by constantly confronting people with their own stereotypes:

When people say ignorant things to me, I school them by letting them know that what they are saying is ignorant. Like, I hear “You’re so well spoken.” I hear that so much. Almost every student says that to me because they have stereotypes of Black people in their head because of American media and stuff so I must be really loud and aggressive and stupid stereotypes but then I’m well spoken, and they’re like “Oh, wow!” Like, one girl actually said to me once, “Oh, wow, when I first saw you, I was afraid of you. We were put together and I was really sad because I didn’t want to work with you. Like, she’s probably going to slap me or something” and I was like, “Did you ever get assaulted by a Black person or something?” and she was like “Oh, no but I just thought that...but then you are so normal!” But they think it’s ok to say that and they think it’s a compliment. They honestly think it is a compliment! So that’s a form of resistance as well.

Confronting people with their own biases. (Interview with Jasmin. March 16, 2017)

Jasmin confronts stereotypes by speaking up in unexpected ways; she intentionally and unintentionally embodies the opposite of the stereotype. Ahmed (2017b) describes how speaking up is a complex endeavor. It is complicated by different emotions: “Becoming a

killjoy can feel, sometimes, like making your life harder than it needs to be...disapproval can be expressed in sideways glances, the sighs, the eyes rolling; stop struggling, adjust, accept. And you can also feel this yourself: that by noticing certain things you are making it harder for yourself” (*Ibid.*, p. 235). It may also include feelings of regret or shame if you feel you did not say or do enough. Anwar, a Moroccan-Dutch Muslim participant in the theatre project, describes some of the thoughts he has when he is confronted by oppression:

When you’re with friends and you hear them say sexist or homophobic things, you try to say as much as possible about it. But sometimes you don’t say anything and then later you’re regretting it...You think about it first before you – and it depends who you’re talking to. Like, if you’re comfortable talking to someone about it, I will start talking about it. But sometimes you still feel like “I can’t go fully.” (Interview with Anwar. July 6, 2017)

This excerpt demonstrates how “coming back” or being a “killjoy” involves reflection and an astute reading of each context. Anwar expresses regret about not speaking up all the time. Similarly, Aliyah, the young Ethiopian-Dutch university student who, in Chapter five, described a recent job interview she had at a large hotel chain, is ambivalent about following up. She felt the interview went well, but later received a call saying they would love to hire her, but only if she agreed to work “behind the scenes” because of her headscarf. Aliyah declined the job but then wanted to follow up with the company:

Yeah, it went all so weird. I was just thinking; I still have to send a message...It is not like I want to work there because of what they said to me. I don't want to represent a hotel or anything else that is like that. But maybe there is another

Muslim girl who is going for a job interview and I don't want her to experience the same thing I did...So, I want to send a message to the person and say what you are doing is not right. So, I still need to do that. (Interview with Aliyah. December 2, 2016)

Here, Aliyah pinpoints her motivation for responding to racism as an effort to improve the situation for other Muslim girls who might come after her. Our interview reminded Aliyah that she “still needs to do that”: the conversation was one she had put off.

Confronting racist ideologies and being a comeback girl is a practice which involves negotiating intricate power dynamics, relationships, and emotions; as such, youth make complex cost-benefit analyses of when and how to engage and disengage. This next section looks at humour both as a complicating factor in being a comeback girl when deployed by dominant white Dutch speakers and, in flipping the script, as a strategy of resistance when deployed by marginalized speakers.

Humour

Humour comes up frequently in the everyday, both as a strategy in white Dutch society to disguise racism and as a practice of Black and Muslim youth to push back against racism in ways that are more palatable to racist speakers. Many participants found that the use of humour by dominant white Dutch speakers foreclosed any effective response they could have made without looking like a “killjoy.” Participants repeatedly described how difficult it was to cope with and address racism when it is disguised as a joke. For example, Iman, a Somali-Dutch university student, says: “The hardest time for me is when someone makes a joke” (Interview with Iman. December 4, 2016). Other people brushed off joking culture as not ill-intended. Aliyah explains: “My friends don't

really discriminate or anything. They just make jokes about it, but they are really kind people” (Interview with Aliyah. December 2, 2016). Regardless, joking forecloses and deflects any real conversations around race. Racism is not the only form of discrimination disguised by humour; sexism and homophobia also are covered up with claims of humour. When someone speaks up, humour is also used to deflect responsibility. The use of humor is one manner in which racism is disguised, making it difficult to address. This mode of deflecting criticism is used publicly by the media and is also common in everyday life. Zohra, a 30-year-old Somali-Dutch woman, describes how insidious and subtle these everyday encounters are:

Growing up I was the token Black person. And they would make a lot of jokes but look at me like, “You're one of us, you're not part of it.” Dutch people are really good at that. Like jokes about like race and stuff like that and put it in a way that you really can't get mad because the person is joking and if you get mad you are being dramatic, so it's like, how am I supposed to respond to that? You know, like stuff like that. Little subtle things like that. And it's a daily thing. Like little nudges. (Interview with Zohra. February 14, 2017)

Zohra describes not only the everyday racism that she faces, but also how people cloak racism under the guise of humour. In this way, racism is perpetrated in such a way as to deny her a response. Gloria Wekker (2016) expands on this type of racism, labeling it as irony:

Irony is usually understood as saying one thing but meaning the opposite. In this case, the good listener would immediately understand that [the speaker who made the joke] cannot possibly mean what he is saying. He means the opposite....This

is a self-flattering reading, which is in line with dominant self-representation:

“We are not racist.” (p. 33-4)

Disguising racism as humour allows the speaker, when called on his/her racism, to deflect criticism by claiming they were just being ironic: “it was just a joke.” People who do speak up are told to lighten up. When people of colour use the same type of humour to point out racist behavior, it is considered inappropriate. White Dutch people can position themselves as the rightful owners of the nation, those who have “...the power to have a legitimate view regarding who should ‘feel at home’ in the nation and how, and who should be in and who should be out, as well as what constitutes ‘too many’” (Hage, 2000, p. 46). This means, in turn, that they are the people who get to determine what is and is not acceptable speech. In contrast, Black and Muslim second-generation youth are cast as second-class citizens who are unable to be the rightful owners of the nation.

One skit in the final theatre performance highlights this tension.³¹ The participants in the theatre project had wanted to discuss Islamophobia; specifically, how the media consistently focuses on stereotypes of Muslims and denying Muslims more complex identities. They came up with a skit of a talk show. The scene unfolds as follows: We are on the set of a popular television talk show. The host “Geert”³² is interviewing two guests, both local rap stars. One happens to be Muslim. The conversation quickly turns to terrorism and jokes that the Muslim rapper might blow up the set. First, the rapper speaks up, calling out the racism. He’s told not to take things too

³¹ Elements of this skit are included in the video of the final performance. See valeriestam.com/theatre/ starting at time stamp 2:25

³² This is a play on names for Geert Wilders, the leader of the ult-right nationalist party. The participant playing the role of “Geert” (a Moroccan-Dutch Muslim man) even showed up to the final performance wearing a blond wig resembling Geert Wilders’ white hair. The audience immediately made the connection.

seriously: It was just a joke. Next, the rapper jokes back to see whether joking, or going along with it, would lead to a better conversation. As soon as he jokes that he might just try to blow up the set, the host and the other guest become serious. He is told not to talk that way. *He* is not allowed to make light of such a serious topic, though white speakers can. Here, the actors portray how white nationalism gets perpetuated: white speakers position themselves as the rightful police of the nation, determining what is acceptable and what is unacceptable. White nationalism also manifests as positioning oneself as someone with the national governmental right to be worried about the nation and govern those cast as ‘others’ (Hage, 2000). White worry appears materially and discursively in talk about national values, conceptions of what constitutes a ‘good’ citizen, and moral contracts regarding behaviour (Bulbeck, 2004; Stasiulis, 2013b). Similar to white worry, humour is one way for the owners of the nation (Bulbeck, 2004; Hage, 2000; Stasiulis, 2013b) to control narratives about ‘others’ and to limit the types of responses available to ‘others.’

In the conversation following the theatre performance, the youth, both in the audience and amongst the performers, described how frustrating it was to see their role models reduced to one aspect of their identity. They also felt that this type of behavior occurred regularly in the media and contributed to narrow stereotypes of Muslims and Blacks. It is a particular kind of humour that is wrapped up in the new “Dutch realist” discourse (Prins, 2002) of telling it like it is. This performance resonated with the audience as they related that they frequently see media personalities steering the conversation towards (ignorant) stereotypes about race, gender, or Islam when the guest

is there to talk about their work. Disguising racism as humour makes it challenging to push back without looking like a spoilsport or “killjoy.”

We then transitioned into Forum Theatre (Boal, 1979), where the audience is invited to make suggestions to improve the outcome of the scene. Audience members suggested several strategies for the protagonist to try out, including *refusing* to talk about certain topics, *recentering* the marginalized speaker’s experience by consistently returning to the topic of the interview (in this case, music) in a way that points out the silliness of the host’s persistence in talking about something else, and *recusing* themselves from the situation by leaving the set. The audience also pointed out that this situation was exceptional: here the protagonist has a relative position of power vis-à-vis his/her interlocuter because (s)he is a famous musician so there are additional creative possibilities of resistance available to him/her. In most everyday situations, the power dynamics are not skewed in favour of the person of colour. Power imbalances make conversations very complex. Young people make serious cost benefit analyses before engaging as in the case of comeback girls. This challenge was acknowledged by the audience.

With the rise of nationalism, xenophobia, and what Baukje Prins (2002) has called the “new Dutch realism” which glorifies speaking one’s mind at whatever cost, speaking up has become more complicated. For instance, during an interview, Leila, a young Somali-Dutch university student, describes how social media has enabled people to feel more entitled to voice anti-immigrant sentiments:

If they are very loud and becoming very aggressive and passionate about their subject, I definitely say what I want...because I feel like I need to educate these

people because they are being ignorant...in the hopes that they might change their perspective. [I]t's kind of hard because Facebook helps with giving [people] some sense of it is ok to say these things, being *ultrarecht* - very right wing...It's kind of like the nationalist feeling. (Interview with Leila. December 16, 2016)

Leila astutely connects her difficulties in being a comeback girl with the rise in nationalism and white worriers. Speaking up is complicated by a rise in the sense of entitlement to voice racist or nationalistic ideas (Prins, 2002). In addition, white worry and white nationalism are often disguised as humour which denies the object of the humour the ability to talk back.

On the other hand, second-generation youth also use humour as a tool of resistance. When faced with daily instances of oppression, most youth said that they will almost always speak up, though this can be hard. Sometimes in a playful manner, they flip words and concepts back onto the original speakers to point out discriminatory beliefs and practices. For example, when confronted with patronizing or racist comments around belonging, such as a white speaker registering surprise at a non-white person's ability to speak Dutch, participants reported engaging in such a way as to demonstrate belonging and heritage in the Netherlands. For example, Saado, a 28-year-old Somali-Dutch woman working for a large Dutch multinational company, plays with her citizenship markers to push membership boundaries: "I was talking to a colleague today and she said something about Somalia and I said, "Oh, I don't know." And she said, "But you're Somali, right?" And I said, "No, no, I'm Dutch", but then I said, "Whenever I feel like it." [laughter]" (Interview with Saado. April 4, 2017). Throughout her interview, Saado used humour to talk about racism and Islamophobia. This is not to say she did not

take oppression seriously; rather, humor was a strategy or tool that she used both to cope, but also to push back. Humour allows youth to speak up in a way that reduces the negative consequences of speaking up. Elias, a 28-year-old Somali-Dutch man working in government, describes how he plays with humour to point out racist assumptions:

With lots of managers and directors, they are also white, they are always telling me: “Elias, your Dutch is good. It’s great!” And I also tell them, “Your Dutch is also very good.” And they start laughing...So, that’s how I play...that’s how I communicate with them so they can also work on their point of reference.

(Interview with Elias. March 30, 2017)

Both Saado and Elias work at large, white, institutions. Strategically using humor and deploying different aspects of their identity gives them the ability to subtly engage with and contest discrimination in an environment with heavy power dynamics. Building on the affect of surprise described in Chapter five, Elias uses humour to engage with this racially-charged insult in a way that turns it into a teachable moment without appearing like a “killjoy.” Elias demonstrates his cultural and linguistic competency in the way that he makes this charged moment light-hearted. In doing so, Elias is able to address the issue while avoiding white protestations of ignorance or “I didn’t mean it that way.”

Gloria Wekker (2016) analyses Dutch racism through the prism of history and colonialism and describes it as white innocence. This claim to innocence allows people to perpetuate racism while claiming (false) ignorance or no ill-intent. Wekker (*Ibid.*) states:

Innocence...thickly describes part of a dominant Dutch way of being in the world... [It] contains not-knowing, but also not wanting to know [...] innocence speaks not only of soft, harmless, childlike qualities, although those are the

characteristics that most Dutch people would wholeheartedly subscribe to; it is strongly connected to privilege, entitlement, and violence that are deeply disavowed. Loss of innocence, that is, knowing and acknowledging the work of race, does not automatically entail guilt, repentance, restitution, recognition, responsibility, and solidarity but can call up racist violence, and often results in the continued cover-up of structural racism. (p. 17-18)

Elias effectively forecloses a violent response by keeping the moment lighthearted. He simultaneously reveals how the speaker's comment held racist assumptions by reminding them that he, like them, grew up here. In this way, Elias pushes back: the speaker is no longer able to claim innocence or ignorance.

Being a comeback girl and using humour are two ways second-generation youth push back against racism and Islamophobia. Experiences of speaking up show how whiteness manifests on a daily level: in jokes and stereotypes by those who position themselves as the rightful owners of the nation (Hage, 2000). The tight spaces (Cruz, 2011) of white institutions or work-place hierarchy, for example, constrain and shape how youth respond to racism and Islamophobia. These practices demonstrate how youth must dexterously pivot to respond or assert themselves in ways that are appropriate to each context. As a tool of oppression, humour and its counterpart of innocence complicate come backs and speaking up; Black and Muslim youth must nimbly pivot between different modes of talking back to adjust to power differentials. When employed as a form of resistance, humour may be a subtler form of speaking up which does not disturb the status quo as much as being a comeback girl: it allows youth to respond in situations where the power dynamics are heavily skewed against them.

Bubbles and Safe Relationships

Many youth, both when prompted to talk about where they felt they most belonged, and when talking about their practices of resistance, mentioned how they surround themselves with like-minded people. The constant pressure that comes with being a comeback girl can be intense. Sara Ahmed (2017b) takes issue with the critique of self-care, safe spaces, and trigger warnings as coddling the weak. As a feminist killjoy, “[y]ou become wary of being worn. You know the energy it involves: you know that some battles are not worth your energy, because you just keep coming up against the same thing” (Ahmed, 2017b, p. 173). In response to these pressures, second generation youth are judiciously choosing when, where, and with whom to expend their energy so that they do not wear out. For example, Irina demonstrates how she consciously creates friendships: “Mostly all of my friends and people who surround me are from the same bubble. You know? And I really realize it and I approve of it. I’m a huge escapist, you know. I prefer my peoples in a special way, you know. [laughter]” (Interview with Irina. June 13, 2017). On the one hand, these bubbles are “not doings” (Kärki, 2018), where youth intentionally avoid relationships with certain people in order to minimize the amount of time and effort they spend resisting racism and Islamophobia. On the other hand, friendship bubbles are consciously cultivated and developed as a way of regulating and managing conflict and ambivalence (Harris, 2018) and of increasing a sense of belonging and connection. In the theatre workshop on *doe normaal*, Irina sculpted herself into a scene at a party to describe how she chooses which bubbles she will associate with (or not). For Irina, the pressure to conform to ‘normal’ is linked to fitting in to certain bubbles. She exercises her agency by consciously choosing to engage on her own terms.

She uses the metaphor of the party where she chooses to socialize “in her own way” without “drinking or smoking” because she is “not afraid of being called not normal” (Theatre workshop. April 10, 2017). Similarly, Hamza, a Moroccan-Dutch university student, feels his connections come much more naturally, just from having a lot more in common with fellow Moroccans who have grown up in the diaspora:

I find myself not having a lot in common with Moroccans from Morocco...I find it very hard to talk to them, to kid with them, joke with them...[T]he funny thing is when I meet a Moroccan from the diaspora, from another country like France or Israel or the US, there’s an automatic connection. You know? It’s the fact that you grew up in a ‘Western’ society, but there are these little quirks that we all had as children growing up – certain foods we ate, certain music our parents listened to, jokes they made. (Interview with Hamza. April 19, 2017)

These instant “clicks” can happen naturally through a sense of shared history but are also cultivated intentionally. Myriam, the Somali-Dutch woman who said she used to be a comeback girl at her affluent, white high school, now, both subconsciously and intentionally, surrounds herself by people who see and experience the world the way she does:

[After] high school, I met a lot of people of colour and you just have this instant click...[I]t’s a very unique bond. I have that very much with African people. Or Arabs, because our culture is so close to each other and also Islam brings us together...I always look for my Somali friends and I always talk to them in my own language...Even if I see an African in the library, or someone who is close, like a Kenyan or Eritrean, I’ll be like, “Oh, are you from Eritrea? Oh, my God.

I'm Somali!" and then you have this instant connection which I might not necessarily have with another person. (Interview with Myriam. June 19, 2017)

Hamza and Myriam get a sense of belonging from the shared experience of exclusion. The word 'bubble' usually implies a small-world mentality or parochialism. In this light, it is tempting to see bubbles as a form of avoidance or accommodation because they do not challenge the power structure of social segregation. Rose Weitz (2001), in her study of women's hair in the United States, defines accommodation as: "...actions that accept subordination, by either adopting or simply not challenging the ideologies that support subordination" (p. 670). Bubbles are also resistance because they express dissatisfaction with racist and Islamophobic ideologies. Like "accommodating protest" (MacLeod, 1991) these actions "...simultaneously express dissatisfaction with and acquiescence to current power relations" (Weitz, 2001, p. 675). White Dutch youth also live in bubbles, but these bubbles are not problematized as escapism or avoidance. Bubbles are a form of 'adaptive resistance' in that youth are accepting and recreating social membership boundaries in order to cultivate relationships that nurture and protect themselves from harm. In this sense, bubbles are similar to what Peter Sloterdijk (Sloterdijk, 2011) calls "spheres," or spaces of coexistence which form "'climate zones' within which the temperature, and human comfort more generally, can be regulated" (Dijstelbloem & Walters, 2019, p. 5). In 'regulating their comfort,' second-generation Dutch youth demonstrate the multiple ways they surround themselves with support and caring relationships. The etymology of the word comfort suggests a "strengthening-with" – a safe environment with nurturing relationships (Brighenti & Pavoni, 2017, p. 12). Sara Ahmed (2017b) encourages us to see these moments of retreat not as self-indulgent, but as instances of action:

This kind of caring for oneself is not about caring for one's own happiness. It is about finding ways to exist in a world that makes it difficult to exist. This is why, this is how: those who do not have to struggle for their own survival can very easily and rather quickly dismiss those who attend to their own survival as being self-indulgent. They do not need to attend to themselves; the world does it for them. *For those who have to insist they matter to matter, self-care is warfare.* (p. 239, emphasis added)

Reading bubbles and other moments of pulling back as a practice of resistance or even “warfare” reveals a more complex understanding of the societal structures that second-generation youth are up against. When certain bodies constantly need to “insist they matter to matter,” self-care is a question of building strength for the battles yet to come. While Myriam lives in a bubble because of the “instant click” she gets with other people from similar cultures to her own, she also describes it as a defense mechanism because she is tired of dealing with discriminatory comments: “I really have a low tolerance for racism or discriminatory statements. *I think maybe it was subconsciously an intentional decision.* I don't want to be confronted with that kind of thought and always having to deal with it because I'm also tired of preaching all the time. Like, I don't feel like I have to tell an adult, “Oh you know, that's not okay.” (Interview with Myriam. June 19, 2017. Emphasis added.) Interestingly, Myriam describes how her bubbles happen subconsciously *and* intentionally. Myriam is activating reactive yet barely conscious capacities for pushing back, which speaks to the affective dimension of resistance (Hynes, 2013). It sounds like Myriam hardly recognized what she was doing at first. Now, having grown these possibilities of resistance in the margins, Myriam cultivates the

mode of resistance intentionally. These barely-conscious decisions speak to the fragility that comes with being a body “out of place” (Ahmed, 2000, 2012) and tap into emotive impulses which intuitively and almost indiscernibly shape practices of resistance. As Myriam attests, fragility can manifest itself in feeling depleted. On feeling depleted, Ahmed (2017b) describes “...a material as well as embodied phenomenon: of not having the energy to keep going in the face of what you come up against....how some bodies become depleted because of what is required to go somewhere, to be somewhere, to stay somewhere” (p. 163-4). Bubbles are simultaneously a protective mechanism *and* a form of resistance. As practices of resistance, bubbles speak to nourishing and sustaining the difficult work of resistance: “...that space of refusal, where one can say no to the colonizer...is located in the margins” (hooks, 1990, p. 150). While bubbles appear to assimilate broader, structural norms around insiders and outsiders, this practice of adaptive resistance may be a necessary function of everyday resistance within the context of deep divides in Dutch society. Pulling away from negative encounters and embracing the margins provides nourishment to resist oppressive structures. This practice of resistance is not without its challenges. Jake, a Black Muslim participant in the theatre school, talks about how he avoids racism by hanging with a particular crowd: “I avoid it. I avoid it...I mostly hang out with people that I would say are already clear minded. And do not have an ignorant way of thinking...I really filter my social contacts, which sounds like I do not know a lot of people, but I know a lot of people” (Interview with Jake. July 6, 2017). By “filtering” out people who will not change their responses, Jake has created a more positive community for himself. Later in our interview, Jake points out that it takes more than one intervention to change opinions and attitudes: he hopes there are

other people similarly calling out racism so that, collectively, their assertions will change attitudes. While bubbles are a necessary practice of resistance, they also draw attention to the necessity of engaging with discrimination from time to time so that racist ideologies do not go unchecked. Bubbles give second-generation youth encouragement, strength, and affirmation. On the other hand, bubbles allow white Dutch youth to insulate themselves from encounters with the ‘other’ and perpetuate the ‘normalization’ of segregated social relations. If bubbles are not accompanied with encounters between ‘us’ and ‘them’ they also enable the majority white population to avoid confronting racist ideologies and remain comfortable.

The solution to encountering the ‘other’ may lie with bubbles themselves. First, while bubbles may seem like avoidance, they are a necessary form of resistance. They provide nourishment and respite while being sites of creativity and imagining. These relationships not only nourish but provide transformative language and energy to imagine and create alternative worlds. Many participants were involved in social actions that, I believe, arose out of informal bubbles. For example, one theatre participant started her own blog interviewing Europeans from the African diaspora. Myriam and Jasmin held a youth election debate that was attended primarily by youth from the margins, allowing for dynamic and honest conversations. The Seed started with the idea of giving marginalized youth a professional platform from which to showcase their artistic work. Second, as a ‘safe’ space, bubbles may actually hold the possibility of getting comfortable with being uncomfortable or sitting with discomfort by inviting people into this third space to think with and from the margins. While she acknowledges the margin is a site of deprivation, bell hooks (1990) argues “...it is also the site of radical

possibility, a space of resistance....It offers one the possibility of radical perspective from which to see and create, to imagine alternatives, new worlds” (p. 149-50). hooks then invites oppressors to join her in this space of radical transformation to learn, think, and act together. In thinking about “urban being-togetherness,” Brighenti and Pavoni (2017, p. 13) argue for a return to the original meaning of the word comfort as a process of strengthening-with or being together with others in ways that increases our comfort with discomfort. The possibility that bubbles contain for imagining and enacting alternate worlds - and inviting dominant people to enter in as a world-traveler in the spirit of solidarity and transformative social change - is a phenomenon that requires further research.

Responses to allegations of racism

I turn now to an analysis of responses to allegations of racism, both how mainstream white Dutch people respond to allegations of racism, and how second-generation youth respond to everyday racist speech acts. Holding these analyses side by side allows for a deeper understanding of how power and resistance are entangled. It also permits thinking through which tactics of resistance might be more or less effective and why. White Dutch society tends to portray itself as an aggrieved victim when confronted with allegations of racism – these victim narratives can also turn quite aggressive. In response, Black and Muslim youth tend to apologize for or gloss over the racism of their peers which may allow conversations to continue, albeit watered down. Both white Dutch people and youth of colour respond emotionally to racism, albeit with widely different levels of risk.

As described by Gloria Wekker (2016), when confronted by allegations of racism, many mainstream white Dutch people would say they are being oppressed and losing their culture, particularly during heated debates about *Zwarte Piet*,³³ in doing so they present themselves as victims. Ghorashi (2014) peels back the victim narrative one layer further: “[The Dutch] see migrants as ungrateful of the tolerance and openness of Dutch society....the Dutch feel victims of their own tolerance now that ethnic minorities are so ungrateful” (p. 104). The victim narrative also carries strong paternalistic undertones:

...we (white Dutch) have become victims of our own goodness. It is not unlikely that the idea of being victimized, captivated, and abused by minorities, also gives some relief. It liberates the dominant group from accountability and responsibility for existing racial-ethnic marginalization, while licensing defense (if not offence), ‘by all (legal) means possible.’ (Essed & Nimako, 2006, p. 288-9. Emphasis in original.)

Immigrants and, by extension, their children should express gratitude to the Netherlands for opening up their doors to them and allowing them to come in. Second-generation youth grow up to expect the same treatment and opportunities as their white Dutch peers; feeling grateful is not an emotion with which they identify. Zohra explains:

I also think it's the generation coming up now. The generation of my parents, they were more thankful, grateful, you know? This generation they're like, “We belong here. What do I have to be grateful for?” They're more like stubborn and just claiming their place in society. I think that kind of irks certain people the wrong way, you know? (Interview with Zohra. February 14, 2017)

³³ See chapter four for a discussion of *Zwarte Piet*.

A sense of benevolence positions white Dutch as the saviours of supposedly ‘backwards’ cultures. This ‘Orientalist’ approach gives ‘Westerners’ a feeling of moral superiority, alongside which comes a sense of entitlement to be the “saviours of the nation” (Essed & Hoving, 2014; Gilroy, 2012; Hage, 2000). It is interesting to note how the role of the victim gets turned upside-down when discussions of racism arise. Instead of being self-reflective, the person doing or saying racist things portrays themselves as a victim, but they can also do so in a very aggressive way. This is one example of white fragility (DiAngelo, 2011, 2015), which acts as a powerful deflection for deeper engagement with harmful ‘othering’ practices.

In addition to the victim narrative, white Dutch people tend to be dismissive and become very aggressive in these conversations. Essed (2013) terms this “entitlement racism” which works alongside Dutch directness to enable a speaker to express him or herself publicly in whatever way they feel. In this long quote, Hamza eloquently describes the dismissive, aggressive attitude of white Dutch people that he has to face, alongside the incessant, insidious micro-practices of ‘othering’ that he endures:

People, especially white people, tend to act like you’re over-exaggerating. Everything that annoys me, that bothers me and affects my life here in the Netherlands, to them is reduced to an item on a late-night talk show or a news program... When they get tired of it, they can just flip the channel, turn off the TV, and the problem doesn’t exist. Those issues they see on television? I live with those issues...[A]ll those ideas people have about Moroccans and Muslims and about how bad and wrong we are, they affect my job possibilities. They affect me while shopping. They affect me even on a subliminal level when I enter a

restaurant or a café that's filled with only white people. You know? You automatically feel out of place. So, for white people it's easy to dismiss it as like, "Oh, you're being *dingen verzinnen*."³⁴ It's like you're just nagging. Being overly sensitive. They find it very easy to take a very aggressive stance in the discussion because after the discussion's done, they're done... They don't approach the subject with sensitivity, with rationality, because it's just a topic of debate for them. They can be as aggressive as they like and when the debate's done, they just go about their merry own lives, but those public debates affect us. (Interview with Hamza. April 19, 2017)

The irony in white Dutch society's aggressive affective response hinges on rationality: when confronted with allegations of racism, white Dutch people tend to become irrationally angry, dismissive, or aggrieved; yet they simultaneously accuse Black and Muslim people of over-exaggeration, bias, and making things up. This affective response is also a display of power: white Dutch people have the ability not only to turn off their TVs, but also to shut down conversations about racism and equality. Essed and Hoving (2014) make an argument that entitlement racism is connected to neoliberal politics "...and the highly competitive consumption society where sentiments such as solidarity, empathy, and civility have less value than individual expression and rights to be claimed" (p. 15). While this line of inquiry requires more investigation, it appears as though the heavy neoliberal emphasis on individualism and self-responsibility may reduce societal empathy. Typical white Dutch responses to racism and Islamophobia tend to deflect, shut

³⁴ Translates as "making things up" or "misconstruing things."

down, and avoid any constructive engagement with privilege and equality, in alternately aggressive or aggrieved and injured tones.

In many conversations with participants, the statements “they are not racist” or “white Dutch people can’t be blamed because it’s all they know,” came up frequently. Second-generation youth frequently apologized for or glossed over white racism. For example, Myriam states: “I tend to see that some people, they may not be racist, but they still say some stuff or think some sort of way that really angers me, and I just can’t get along with you. [Y]ou could be the nicest person, but I just can’t” (Interview with Myriam. June 19, 2017). This is another example of adapting to resist – the compromises youth are faced with to make their situation work for them. For instance, Hamza says he does not blame white Dutch society for their response to the *Zwarte Piet* debate:

[P]eople were so used to our parents being the way they were [as recent immigrants] ... Those aren’t the type of people that take offense to *Zwarte Piet*... because the only thing in their mind is “I have to make ends meet. I don’t feel like I’m really Dutch because I wasn’t born here...” But their children were born and raised here, and people were used to not hearing anything from that group [for so long] and now they’re starting to feel and hear resistance. It’s only natural that the first initial reaction is to be surprised and to be dismissive of the things we have to say. You know? (Interview with Hamza. April 19, 2017)

Hamza accommodates white Dutch attitudes and responses to allegations of racism; this allows him to approach conversations around race more softly. Similarly, Myriam repeatedly reassures me that the white Dutch community she grew up in was “not racist”:

But still, they weren't racist, and I knew that, but they had a lot of ways in which they didn't realize was kind of racist. Like comments. Just some stuff, like, "Oh, yeah, but you're different." You know? [T]hey're not really mean comments and you wouldn't say that they are racist comments, but they are slick comments... You know, some people now even when I speak to them, they're like, "Oh, yeah, you know I never really knew anything about it and I wasn't really aware." And you can't blame them because you know they are surrounded with their own folks. [I]t's unfair to blame them, but you do open their eyes I guess sometimes. (Interview with Myriam. June 19, 2017)

With this ambivalent categorization of white Dutch racism as "slick," Myriam avoids blaming her peers for their own attitudes and perceptions. Glossing over white racism shows how the affect of ambivalence, which forms part of fragmented belonging discussed in the previous chapter, also permeates practices of everyday resistance: Black and Muslim Dutch youth are hesitant to label racist speech as racist. Within the context of white innocence, doing so can result in aggressive, aggrieved, irrational responses. Similarly, Zohra, in this excerpt, flip flops between a desire for white Dutch people to acknowledge their racism and a reticence to identify them or their practices as racist. This ambiguity occupies the space between resistance and accommodation:

[W]hen people talk about things like this they automatically jump to "Oh, but I'm not racist." Nobody's calling you racist! Just be more open-minded... They feel like people are calling them racist. I don't think the majority of Dutch people are racist. At all! I think they are unaware. They're very privileged so that gives them

the luxury to be unaware, but not racist. You know? But they don't get that.

People don't get it. (Interview with Zohra. February 14, 2017)

On the one hand, Hamza, Myriam, and Zohra demonstrate an astute understanding of the social context of their peers. Not labeling things as racist allows conversations to continue. On the other hand, dismissing discriminatory attitudes and micro-aggressions as not really “mean” or “racist” participates in the ongoing coverup of racism and allows white Dutch speakers to continue avoiding responsibility for racism. What is lost in conversations about race when race cannot be addressed explicitly?

As discussed in Chapter four, avoidance of terms such as race to discuss social problems ignores fundamental power relations at play and limits public conversation and change on these issues. Gloria Wekker (2016) describes how Dutch pragmatism is mobilized to avoid difficult conversations around power: “...the fundamental issue, racism, is obfuscated and instead practical measures are proposed, which may take away some of the sharpest edges of a problem, but certainly do not go to the heart of it” (p. 144). Avoiding words like race softens discourses of resistance – this may be a problematic but at times necessary tactic for dealing with white innocence. Back in Canada after my field work, I had a telling conversation about *Zwarte Piet* in my Dutch class.³⁵ I stated that I felt the practice was racist, but I could feel the resistance in the room. It was not until I brought in examples from my own research where participants had mentioned racial slurs in relation to *Zwarte Piet*, and only after I made the statement “Whether or not it is meant as racism, it is still experienced as racist,” could I feel the

³⁵ The conversation around the table was typical: *Zwarte Piet* is black from coming down the chimney; it is not racist; *Zwarte Piet* is not a slave (indeed, he is treated well); no one gets hurt; it is a cute event for children, etc.

room collectively emit a sigh of relief. The fact that people need reassurance that they themselves are not racist in order to have a conversation around racism is a sign of white fragility. While this is deeply problematic, as it does not allow for complicity in structural and institutional racism, it *did* allow my perspective to be voiced without shutting down the conversation. My own experiences echoed that of the youth I spoke with. Reflecting on their comments, it is clear that their apologetic tone is adopted in order to keep conversations about racism and Islamophobia alive rather than shut them down. A study on prejudice reduction interventions proved that short, in-person conversations where people were asked to imagine the world from someone else's perspective can dramatically reduce prejudice (Broockman & Kalla, 2016; Denizet-Lewis, 2016). In this study, the tone of the conversation was essential for people to open up, reflect on their own experiences of stigma, and then relate to and empathize with the experiences of stigmatized groups. Hamza hits upon this point, saying: "Ah, dear white people. [laughter] I would like to say that I understand that they're not aware of their privilege because it's something that is just there, you know? And they don't know about our experiences because they don't go through them. Yeah?" (Interview with Hamza. April 19, 2017) Getting privileged people to relate to diverse experiences of stigma and empathize could challenge privilege and prejudice. Like the processes at work around the limited lexicon for discussing race and Islamophobia analyzed in Chapter four, calling out racism in the Netherlands shuts down important conversations about discrimination. Youth have learned to cope with this by avoiding overt allegations of racism or apologizing for white racism in order to keep conversations open. On the one hand, this allows them to honour and recenter their experiences of discrimination and second-class

citizenship. On the other hand, this leads to watered down conversations around racism and allows white Dutch people to continue to avoid taking responsibility for their words and actions. This tension is part of the compromise youth make in adapting in order to resist. If we were to approach these conversations with the idea of fostering empathy and relatability as in the study above, perhaps more attitudes would shift. In order to effectively dismantle racism and racist structures, it is necessary for white people to take responsibility for their thoughts, words, and actions. If no one is responsible for racist thoughts, it could logically follow that racism does not exist. This perpetuates gaslighting (McKinnon, 2017; Vest, 2013), allowing people to continue to dismiss allegations of racism as being ‘all in your head.’

I end this section with a reflection about an encounter with whiteness that occurred in one theatre workshop (May 9, 2017). I engage with this encounter for what it reveals about whiteness, and Dutch whiteness in particular, and also what it can tell us about the limits of theatre and storytelling for critical analysis. As described briefly in Chapter three, Anneke, the only white Dutch participant in the theatre program, gave an interesting skit on her experiences as a teacher. Based on a real story, in her skit Anneke confuses the names of the two Asian boys in her class. After her performance, which was well received, many people in the group said they identified with the experience of the two boys. Following this, Anneke felt the need to defend herself and give what she called a teacher’s “perspective.” She went on to say that she often mixed students up – not just students of colour, even blonde girls, she hastened to add – and that people should be more understanding because teachers have a lot to remember. I bring up this point because Anneke portrays herself as an unusual white Dutch person in that she is

progressive and interested in learning about racism. In this case, Anneke – though she first attempted to display an instance of her own racism in the classroom – found herself “ambushed by whiteness” (Yancy, 2008), feeling the need to defend and distance herself from allegations of racism. When I addressed the conflict privately with Anneke, she continuously returned to the point that she was just giving an objective point of view: “So I thought maybe if I tried to explain, not trying to take away the experience, but just explaining, “Hey, this might not be racism” ...I mean if some things are just in your mind...” (Interview with Anneke. June 17, 2017). This is an example of how allegations of racism are labelled as exaggeration and dismissed. The Dutch obsession with ‘facts’ obfuscates a real engagement with unequal power dynamics and, in fact, people of colour are assumed to be too biased to have an objective point of view about racism. On this point, Wekker (2016) writes: “[T]he debate...remains firmly couched within a positivistic framework: “If only we can get the facts right,” while no attention is paid to power/knowledge” (p. 155). Other participants saw Anneke’s response as indicative of a larger problem around racial dialogue in the Netherlands. In the following week of the Theatre School, we revisited this play:

Faith: [I]n this country in general it’s not really possible to talk about racism without bringing in all this other stuff. So, if you tried to talk about oppression of people of colour, there’s always this other narrative that needs to be put next to it. [For example] a sketch of white people being racist against people of colour, but then, oh! We also have to put black people who are being racist to each other.

Anwar: [laughs] Equated.

Faith: Yeah, and then we also have to talk about women. And then we also have to [say] that we do the same with white children....

Chahni: [When] discussing racism, a lot of times [if you take] a not nice subject then you make it discussable, make it comfortable to talk about it. And it leaves out the thing that it is about! (Theatre workshop. May 16, 2016)

There is a proclivity in Dutch society to ‘soften’ allegations of racism by equating racism with other incidents of discrimination which shuts down conversations around the real issue at stake. Also, Anneke’s tone throughout the exchange was one of innocent curiosity. It is interesting to note that the mood in the room, before Anneke started defending herself, was quite appreciative of her openness to starting this conversation and being introspective. Had Anneke been able to open herself up to self-critique, I believe she would have found the ensuing conversation very affirming and encouraging. As it was, the atmosphere quickly became frustrated and tense. With her supposedly innocent curiosity, Anneke displayed the “white innocence” (Wekker, 2016) characteristic of Dutch society. By hiding behind her questions, Anneke protects herself from a deeper engagement with her own racist behaviour and bigger issues of power and privilege. In this case, theatre fell short of creating bridges of cross-racial understanding and solidarity. While theatre and storytelling allow for traveling between worlds (Lugones, 1987), Mariana Ortega (2016) argues for a *critical* world-traveling and cautions against:

...political excursions, a type of politically correct tourism—fleeting moments of experimenting with being political while not really being committed to effecting change....for members of dominant groups, world-traveling might become just

that—play, a sort of game in which one learns some interesting things about the “other” but that ultimately has no real consequences for the practitioner. (p. 141)

There is a danger that if critical storytelling and theatre is not accompanied by a commitment to solidarity and fighting oppression then it becomes merely an intellectual exercise of curiosity and voyeurism. As practitioners of theatre as method we need to be vigilant of our own attitudes and prejudices, as well as intentional about what we invest personally and materially to the risky exercise of imagining and prefiguring a more socially just world.

Conclusion

A definition of resistance which includes clear self- and political-awareness, as well as the possibility of social change (Giroux, 1983; Hollander & Einwohner, 2004; Kwon, 2008), limits our understanding of resistance and how young people of colour are coping, thriving, and pushing back against systems of domination. As my research shows, awareness and intent are often partial or not premeditated, which confirms the importance of emotions for shaping and growing practices of resistance, often beginning in imperceptible or barely conscious ways. During interviews, many youth had a difficult time thinking of ways they perform resistance in their daily life. This block may be due to terminology; if I gave an example, they quickly grasped the concept. Once they thought of one practice of resistance, usually many more followed. The inability to readily identify resistance demonstrates that youth are adapting and pushing back both intuitively and intentionally. In this sense, I do not believe resistance has to be intentional, but it might grow into a more conscious intent. On the other hand, in order for a practice to

qualify as resistance, Willis (1981, p. 60) argues that it must not replicate the existing social order, but rather offer possibilities of transforming unequal power relations and structures. As I have shown, the transformative possibilities of practices of resistance are often circumscribed by socio-political power dynamics. Navigating this challenge is what I term adapting to resist. Some practices of resistance do not hold within them the possibility of broad social transformation; rather, youth are finding small ways of improving their lives, what Bayat (2015) terms a “quiet encroachment of the ordinary” (p. S34). I argue for a definition of resistance which recognizes that slow erosion of structures and institutions may also be an effective tactic for pushing back, albeit one that may not see profound transformative social and structural change, but rather one that allows people to affectively cope with situations of oppression and incrementally improve their lives. Indeed, in contexts of precarious citizenship, erosion may be the safest and most effective form of resistance. I define everyday resistance, then, as a process of learning to survive and thrive and push back in contexts of oppression. These are practices which can improve one’s own personal circumstances and, by slowly chipping away and with enough critical mass, may eventually lead to broader social transformation.

To paraphrase the words of Judith Butler (2010, p. 53), it is evident that young people are already up against a world they did not choose when they exercise their agency. I have shown how power and resistance are entangled, but it is not to say that Black and Muslim Dutch youths’ practices of resistance are overly pre-determined. Both power and resistance can utilize affect but looking at resistance specifically in this way allows for an understanding of a third space (hooks, 1990), where possibility and

imagination take over. It is in this affective dimension, I argue, that young people's subconscious yearnings and longings take on a larger form by feeding off a collective energy and becoming something other than individual or collective. I describe this as bubbles: how safe relationships foster a collective energy and a space to emotionally prepare for being in the world: others refer to this as relational agency (Kennelly, 2009a, 2009b). Rooted in individual subjectivities and collective experiences, it is a space of possibilities and imaginings which provides energy to build something different. Second-generation Dutch youth's practices of coming back, humour, and bubbles not only demonstrate how they adapt in order to resist, but also point to the need to hold conversations which keep dialogue open across privilege whilst being clear about the discrimination and prejudice at work in society. To paraphrase Myriam (Interview. June 19, 2017), Black and Muslim Dutch youth clearly feel that they *do* belong, and the Netherlands *is* their space. Their everyday practices of resistance are born out of a deeply felt sense of belonging. Rather than attempting to 'belong' to the white Dutch in-group, they are carving out alternative forms of community which foster their own development and growth and create a third space of innovation and alternate futures.

Concluding Reflections

This research interrogates normative constructs of citizenship by investigating how second-generation Black and Muslim youth in the Netherlands resist and subvert processes of ‘othering’ in order to claim belonging in a context of rising xenophobia and nationalism. Starting with the experiences of second-generation Dutch youth, I based my analysis in experiences of the everyday. This focus on the everyday is out of a recognition that while racism and Islamophobia operate structurally and are experienced as exceptions, they also operate on a daily societal level and are experienced as constant. A focus on the everyday additionally reveals how youth grapple with complex yet mundane dilemmas, make sense of their daily experiences, and react in unscripted moments. The everyday level of analysis, along with utilizing theatre as a participatory research method, allows me to theorize more unconscious or intuitive practices – the embodied, affective responses of second-generation Black and Muslim Dutch youth to their environment. In summary, this research 1) reveals the everyday processes of ‘othering’ at work in the Netherlands through two different systems – in the popular expression *doe normaal* and the lexicon around ‘othering’; 2) investigates how affect is both a tool for ‘othering’ and for coping; and 3) demonstrates the deep connection between power and agency which results in practices of everyday adaptive resistance that are mediated and tempered by practices of assimilation, yet nourish, imagine, and create alternate possibilities.

This thick description of ‘othering’ in the Netherlands points to the need for Dutch society to develop more ‘comfort with discomfort’ in order to foster public dialogue about difference and categories of ‘us’ and ‘them.’ Effective public dialogue

will require revisiting discourse around ‘othering’ and a re-exploration of Dutch history with particular attention to how the “colonial archive” (Wekker, 2016) impacts Dutch society today. In addition, in describing how second-generation Dutch youth adapt in order to resist, this research contributes to the concept of everyday resistance by theorizing how people may need to adapt dominant, mainstream values and norms in order to resist. In this case, resistance is influenced by neoliberal ideas of productivity, individualism, success, and ‘goodness.’ Like Bayat’s (2015) “quiet encroachment of the ordinary” and MacLeod’s (1991) “accommodating protest,” ‘adaptive resistance’ demonstrates how people survive and thrive in contexts of oppression by subtly and incrementally pushing back.

Objectives and Overview

The goal of this research was to critically examine the concept of belonging through the lens of those experiencing it as second-class citizens. This goal led to a focus on the societal processes which create and sustain second-class citizens as well as how youth categorized as second-class citizens respond and resist. Chapter one gave a theoretical account of how belonging is constructed both through the emotions and through social and political realities and how neoliberalism influences ideas of belonging and citizenship. I also looked at how discursive and disciplinary power, two elements of governmentality, can shape citizenship and resistance by examining the concept of tolerance. I further nuanced the discussion of resistance by incorporating a theoretical analysis of how power and resistance are intertwined and introduced the concept of ‘adaptive resistance.’

In Chapter two, I provided a historical overview of the policy and discursive shifts around migration in the Netherlands which reveals that the culturalist turn – typical in ‘Western,’ liberal democracies – problematizes integration in terms of the supposed disjuncture between ‘Western’ and ‘non-Western’ values. Muslim culture in particular is perceived by dominant white Dutch society as inherently incompatible with Dutch values of sexual freedom and consumerism (van der Veer, 2006). The culturalist turn has specific gendered implications for Muslim women: ongoing ‘Orientalist’ saviour narratives (Spivak, 1988) result in their bodies becoming the symbolic and material terrain on which this conflict plays out. The whitewashing of colonial history results in the ongoing disavowal of anti-Black racism and protestations of white innocence (Wekker, 2016), most notably evident in the vitriolic discourse around *Zwarte Piet*. Both the culturalist turn and whitewashing of colonial history shore up the white Dutch idea that tolerance is a national Dutch value; in turn this works to sustain binary divisions between the ‘tolerant nation’ and ‘intolerant others’ as well as justify intolerance towards those who are not part of the tolerant ‘us.’

To avoid “rescue research” (Tuck & Yang, 2014) and practice solidarity research (Reynolds, 2014), my specific objectives were to foster safe(r) space for participants to reflect on and discuss oppression, to develop advocacy tools and strategies against oppression, and to facilitate a public conversation around integration, belonging, and racism. I operationalized these objectives through a research design that intentionally incorporated participation and theatre. While imperfect, as I discuss in Chapter three, the 14-week Theatre School of Resistance did create a space for discussion and reflection and resulted in the theatre manual for educators as well as a video of the final performance,

both available for public use. The final performance used Forum Theatre (Boal, 1979) to “rehearse resistance” (*Ibid.*) with audience members and try out new ideas for dealing with oppression. While theatre has its limits, it is one way of creating space for public dialogue. In the theatre workshops, we found that critical discussions of racism were limited by the replications of dominant discourses around whiteness found in mainstream white Dutch society; we also felt that our final performance attracted an audience of like-minded peers. While this did succeed at creating a safe(r) space for reflection and discussion of oppression, it did not engage mainstream white Dutch society in these conversations, perhaps mirroring the safe relationship ‘bubbles’ that I discuss as a practice of adapting to resist in Chapter six. Finally, while theatre accesses embodied knowledge and co-creates knowledge in a participatory manner, there are many aspects of theatre that cannot be adequately captured for academic consumption. For example, the energy created by the audience and performers during and after the final performance was very profound and generative. I did not attempt to describe or analyze this academically as I felt not only incapable of doing it justice but also that it would somehow diminish the experience; however, I did create a video synopsis of the performance which is available for public viewing.

Chapter four looked at discourses around normalization and the lexicon of ‘othering.’ In analyzing the popular expression *doe normaal*, it is evident that normalization works very explicitly in Dutch society to create and perpetuate categories of ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders.’ On a daily level, *normaal* is used to reinforce societal standards and white nationalism. Political parties and politicians instrumentalize the concept of normal to mark differences between *de jure* and *de facto* citizenship, thereby

creating a tier of second-class citizenship. As I have shown in Chapter four, this demonstrates how normalizing is part of nation-building projects. I have also shown how words for ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ such as *autochtonen* and *allochtonen* are used as part of discursive power to create ‘sticky’ categories (Ahmed, 2004b, 2004a) that work to further distinctions between ‘us’ and ‘them.’ *Normaal*, *autochtoon*, and *allochtoon* are empty signifiers which can be manipulated and shifted depending on the social and political context and the whims of the dominant speaker. This dissertation demonstrates how ‘othering’ practices of normalizing and language usage reinforce white power and create hierarchies of belonging.

In Chapter five I described in detail the dilemmas second-generation youth face in terms of fitting in to Dutch society. Faced with the impossibility of being Dutch, Muslim, and Black, second-generation Dutch youth cannot simply be; they must be hyper-Dutch, or hyper-‘good,’ in order to be an exception to the ‘good/bad’ citizen construct informed by neoliberalism. The pressure to hyper-perform also simultaneously reinforces the ‘good/bad’ citizen binary, demonstrating again how power and agency intersect. There are several affective strategies that youth employ to respond to this feeling of fragmented, or partial, belonging: not giving a shit (checking out), cosmopolitanism, and being ‘model minorities.’ All of these affective responses are circumscribed by gendered, classed, and racial dimensions and are therefore mediated responses that require creativity and an astute reading of context to determine how and when to respond in these ways.

In Chapter six, I investigated youths’ practices of everyday resistance: these practices include (anti)conformism and being the model minority; being ‘comeback girls’

who always talk back and who sometimes use humour to point out oppression; and creating safe relationship ‘bubbles.’ I pointed out how their resistance is caught up in, and tempered by, the norms and values of dominant white Dutch society, which I call ‘adaptive resistance’; in doing so, I identified how Black and Muslim Dutch youth are absorbing elements of mainstream white Dutch society in order to minimize risk, but also to slowly erode the systems of oppression. Adapting to resist is one way of surviving and pushing back. I contextualized their practices of resistance by illustrating how mainstream white Dutch society responds to allegations of racism and how adaptive resistance is thus a necessary method for confronting and dealing with white innocence.

Findings

Three findings have emerged from my research that I believe are particularly noteworthy. The first concerns the possibilities and limits of theatre as a method for promoting critical understanding and prefiguring alternate worlds. The Theatre School of Resistance both fostered conversations about exclusion and, as a public dialogue, was an object of analysis itself. Theatre brings embodied, visceral, and marginal knowledges to the fore and as such is a tool of knowledge production that could be more widely used by academics seeking to practice solidarity in their work. Theatre also ruptures with the everyday and, in doing so, provides distance for critically reflecting on utterances and occurrences that are seen as ‘normal.’ As a tool of ‘rehearsing resistance,’ Forum Theatre allows for participants and spect-actors to imagine and create different realities, prefiguring – in a small way – more socially just societies. Techniques from Theatre of the Oppressed such as Image Theatre or Forum Theatre bring together multiple

perspectives and ideas, thus illustrating Hannah Arendt's approach to storytelling: the "situated impartiality" of telling a story through "a plurality of contesting standpoints" (Disch, 1993, p. 166). Arendt's (1982) concept of visiting or Lugones' (1987) concept of 'world'-traveling come to life with theatre because it is through storytelling that we can imagine what the world looks like from other vantage points and imagine what we look like from other perspectives, thus bringing a critical understanding to our principles and positions that acknowledges complexity and ambiguity and welcomes disagreement. Storytelling as a critical practice holds the promise of affirming and expanding life in the margins; however, this comes with the risk that dominant group members might engage in 'world-traveling' for the sake of pain tourism or as an exercise in self-promotion (to gain activist 'points,' for example) (Ortega, 2016). Critical theatre praxis invites dominant group members to personally invest in transforming realities, putting into practice what I term an 'ethics of solidarity.' bell hooks (1990) invites us to "...that space in the margin that is a site of creativity and power, that inclusive space where we recover ourselves, where we move in solidarity to erase the category colonized/colonizer. Marginality as a site of resistance. Enter that space. Let us meet there. Enter that space. We greet you as liberators" (p. 152). Thinking with hooks, theatre creates a third space where we can tell stories in a spirit of solidarity and decolonization. While not without limitations, using theatre as method to enact conversations and experiment with how we can behave and interact differently, is an invitation to travel to that marginal, liminal, third space, and invites solidarity and transformative action.

While I have focused on theatre as a way of accessing 'third spaces' of encounter, perhaps there are other platforms, media, or avenues which could open up third spaces

where people could meet across difference. It would be particularly useful to think through and work with different fora which may help white Dutch people engage in the difficult work of getting comfortable with discomfort on conversations related to racism and Islamophobia. This is equally important for white people in other places such as Canada, and also important for conversations across other intersections of privilege and oppression such as ability and sexual orientation. Additionally, given that my participants were mostly middle-class, it would be important to think through how these conversations could take place across class differences as well.

The second finding is the urgent need for public conversation on issues of racism, Islamophobia, and exclusion in the Netherlands and beyond. In my analysis of the language and discourses around ‘othering,’ I found that there are two ways in which words serve to reinforce the status quo and prevent these difficult conversations from happening. First, specific words such as *blank* instead of *wit*, to name one example, are used to obscure racism, unequal power dynamics, whitewash colonial history, and perpetuate the idea of “white innocence” (Wekker, 2016). Second, the absence of agreed upon terms for discussing difference results in the inability for ‘real talk’ about racism and Islamophobia. Both doings work to foreclose deep conversations around difference, thus pointing to a need in Dutch society for a public dialogue around discourse in order to find better language in which to have conversations about ‘us’ and ‘them.’ This process should be led by people who have been categorized as ‘other’ so that they are making decisions about themselves for themselves. Iman, the Somali-Dutch participant who provided the inspiration for the title of this dissertation, argues for a different construction of the ‘we’ of the nation: “I do not like using the terms ‘us’ and ‘them.’ In these

conversations it is a way of saying the them is either Muslim or someone who is not originally from here. It makes me wonder, “When do I fall under ‘us?’” (Interview with Iman. December 4, 2016). In identifying what is meant by ‘us’ and ‘them,’ Iman pushes readers to think about when and how ‘othering’ might end – at what point do ‘they’ turn into ‘us?’ This question is also a call for public debate. As discussed in Chapter four, public dialogue about difference should be placed within the larger context of European fears around migration and the social history of the concepts of race and culture (Essed & Hoving, 2014; Essed & Nimako, 2006; Nimako & Willemsen, 2011; Schinkel & van Houdt, 2010). It is only through having these difficult public conversations that societies can begin to imagine alternative constructs of ‘us.’ My research invites white people to grow their ability to get comfortable with discomfort in order to engage in public dialogue on these difficult issues.

The third noteworthy research finding builds on this invitation to sit with discomfort and challenges notions of what type of exchange is necessary or effective for calling out racism. This research calls for white Dutch citizens to increase their fluency with difficult conversations and invites them to sit with discomfort. Analyzing my participants’ reluctance to explicitly name things as racist led me to reflect on my own experiences and feelings around the ‘call-out’ culture that so commonly surrounds anti-racism discourses in North America. In my own journey around understanding white privilege, I have found it very helpful to acknowledge the moments when I do or say something that is racist. Acknowledgement allows me not only to analyze more deeply what was going on in that moment and unpack the social conditioning that was present, but also to be intentional about apologizing and not repeating the same behaviour in the

future. Admittedly, it took me a long time to build up enough comfort to acknowledge my own weaknesses and shortcomings, as well as my complicity in structures of oppression – indeed, this is a journey that continues. My research demonstrates how racialized Dutch youth avoid identifying people and practices as racist even when they are explicitly racist, both to keep conversations around racism open and to protect themselves from aggressive, aggrieved, or emotional responses that are typical in mainstream white Dutch society. This approach is problematic in that it perpetuates mainstream white Dutch feelings of ‘innocence’ and their belief that racism is something that ‘does not exist’ in Dutch society. In this way, avoiding ‘calling out’ racism enables and perpetuates racism. While problematic, this practice of ‘adaptive resistance’ does allow difficult conversations around racism and Islamophobia to continue in a modified form instead of shutting them down completely. I believe these conversations remain open partly by not falling into the trap of ‘good/bad’ binary thinking. What ‘call-out’ culture emphasizes is binary thinking around ‘good’ and ‘bad’ which leads to the trap of thinking racism is something committed by ‘bad’ people (Brooks, 2019; DiAngelo, 2015; DiAngelo & Sensoy, 2014). Indeed, call-out culture puts people on pedestals as ‘good’ activists and, when they mess up, destroys their credibility and reputation. The call-out culture in North America has been critiqued for performative grand-standing and pitting marginalized people against each other (Ahmad, 2015; Rodriguez-Cayro, 2018; Stryker, 2016). While avoiding the word ‘racist’ comes with dangers as described above, perhaps what ‘adaptive resistance’ can offer to this conversation is an acknowledgement, often repeated by second-generation youth, that white Dutch people are not ‘bad’ people. While there is a danger of absolving white Dutch people of responsibility, it does allow

for more nuanced conversations which avoids binary thinking around ‘good’ and ‘bad.’ It remains to be seen how racism can be explicitly brought back into the conversation whilst avoiding the ‘good/bad’ dichotomy, thus wedging open enough space for white Dutch people to slowly increase their comfort with discomfort around conversations about racism and Islamophobia. Sitting with discomfort is a necessary, though difficult, challenge.

Implications

This study on belonging calls attention to the need for ongoing public dialogue on racism and Islamophobia. This public dialogue should be accompanied by an invitation to ‘sit with discomfort’ and a commitment to interrogating and dismantling the harmful lexicon and discourses around ‘othering’ in an effort to re-constitute conversations around difference and the very construction of ‘us’ and ‘them.’ The lack of accepted words to discuss difference in the Netherlands obfuscates the workings of whiteness and shuts down difficult conversations before they can start.

My research also demonstrates the potential of ‘bubbles’ and third spaces to nourish individuals and communities and to envision, create, and prefigure alternate futures. It is important that social movements, youth workers, teachers, and activists actively cultivate and build on these spaces to energize systemic change. Second-generation Dutch youth are actively defining what it means to be Dutch today and are creating alternative futures. For mainstream white Dutch people, being a part of this future will mean relinquishing control of defining ‘in’ and ‘out’ groups and coming to terms with their role in perpetuating racism and Islamophobia. Notably, white Dutch

people also live in bubbles; however these are not problematized. Activists, youth workers, teachers, social movements, and others may find thinking from the margins a provocative place from which to imagine and create possible futures.

Theatre provides space for the Arendtian push to train one's imagination to go 'visiting' (Arendt, 1982) and open up to multiple ways of viewing the world. Social justice researchers may find theatre a creative and unique method of bringing embodied knowledges to the fore and involving participants more directly in the research process. Theatre also creates a third space where people can rehearse resistance and imagine and enact alternate futures, demonstrating potential also for social justice movements, policy makers, and educators. Storytelling is an act of "remembering that serves to illuminate and transform the present" (hooks, 1990, p. 147). Storytelling politicizes memory and instrumentalizes it in service of the future. By encountering others' perspectives, public storytelling opens participants up to critical thinking and questions dominant narratives. Storytelling, theatre, and other forms of visiting across 'worlds' can be used to inform scholarship and public policies on current issues.

Using the Netherlands as a case study, this dissertation looks at what it means to belong in a society where your daily sense of belonging is questioned. In 'Western', liberal democracies, citizenship is increasingly contested and precarious. The creation of second-class citizens, growing nationalism and right-wing populism, the monitoring of certain bodies deemed to be 'other,' heightened fears associated with particular religions or appearances, increased security and the circulation of fear: all these factors play a role in generating contested citizenship and raising larger questions of belonging. Neoliberalism also affects ideas of 'goodness' and citizenship. Second-generation youth

hold a particularly fraught place in this discourse. Having grown up *de jure* legal citizens of their home country, they have come to expect all the rights and responsibilities that come with Dutch citizenship; however, their *de facto* citizenship, or social membership, is questioned. The perspectives and experiences of second-generation youth in the Netherlands provide examples from which to theorize precarious citizenship and belonging and understand what is happening in other ‘Western,’ liberal democracies. My project looks at how the dehumanizing nature of contested citizenship plays out for young people in the Netherlands and the ways in which they reclaim a place in the nation. This research provides insight into the ‘othering’ that happens within the project of contested citizenship in the hopes that by knowing more about how oppressive systems operate, more can be done to dismantle them.

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Appendix A: Theatre School of Resistance: A Manual for Educators

(insert manual here)