

Teaching About ‘Race’ and Racism in Civic Education

An Examination of the Challenges and Promise Tied to Existing
Teaching



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Abstract

Although the Dutch tend to see themselves as color-blind and anti-racist, the workings of ‘race’ and racism continue to impact Dutch society (Wekker, 2016). In order to transform this reality, active efforts to make visible – and combat – the workings of ‘race’ and racism are needed. This thesis explores Dutch secondary schools as sites in which such efforts may be made, zeroing in on teaching about ‘race’ and racism in civic education (‘maatschappijleer’). The central question that this thesis examines is: how do civic education teachers navigate teaching about ‘race’ and racism at Dutch mixed secondary schools, and how might critical approaches to (teaching about) ‘race’ and racism be used as a lens to examine the challenges and promise tied to existing teaching about ‘race’ and racism in civic education? In order to establish how civic education teachers navigate teaching about ‘race’ and racism, interviews were conducted with six civic education teachers who teach at different mixed secondary schools in Rotterdam and Amsterdam. A thematic analysis was performed in order to analyze the interview data and construct an overview of how teachers navigate various factors in teaching about ‘race’ and racism and the challenges that teachers face therein. Subsequently, this thesis’ theoretical lens, primarily consisting of critical race, postcolonial, and anti-racist contributions regarding (teaching about) ‘race’ and racism, was employed to examine the challenges and the promise tied to current teaching about ‘race’ and racism in civic education. Ultimately, this thesis’ main contributions lie in offering a deeper understanding of the challenges that civic education teachers face in teaching about ‘race’ and racism and presenting various possible ways forward for teachers seeking to teach about ‘race’ and racism in a critical, anti-racist manner that are both practice-based and theoretically grounded.

Keywords: teaching, ‘race,’ racism, civic education, interviews, anti-racism

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Introduction

Although the Dutch generally believe that they are color-blind and anti-racist, the workings of ‘race’ and racism continue to have a significant impact in the Dutch postcolonial present (Wekker, 2016). Their lasting impact shows, for instance, in that ‘race’ continues to shape Dutch institutional practices (Wekker, 2016) and racism based upon the color of people’s skin as well as racism based upon different groups’ religion or culture persist in the Netherlands (Vasta, 2007). The 2020 Black Lives Matter protests have added a sense of urgency to deal with the workings of ‘race’ and racism, emphasizing that ‘race talk’ can no longer be avoided in the Dutch context (Hondius, 2014). Evidently, active efforts to address, unveil, and counter the workings of ‘race’ and racism must be made.

This thesis will explore Dutch secondary schools as sites in which such efforts may be made – sites which may, in teaching critically about ‘race’ and racism, hold the potential to contribute to promoting anti-racist futures. Yet, in order for Dutch secondary schools to fulfill this potential, a great deal of work appears to be necessary. The petition started by Lakiescha Tol, Sohna Sumbunu, and Veronika Vygon (n.d.) that was signed by over 60,000 people last year, corroborates this idea. This petition explicitly called for racism to become a compulsory topic in Dutch primary and secondary education, thereby suggesting that current ways of addressing racism in the Dutch educational domain are lacking. To tackle this issue in Dutch secondary education, one of Tol, Sumbunu, and Vygon’s (n.d.) propositions was to incorporate racism into existing courses such as philosophy of life (‘levensbeschouwing’) and civic education (‘maatschappijleer’).

This thesis works from the idea that it not only matters *that* ‘race’ and racism are addressed in such secondary school courses, but it also matters *how* these topics are addressed. Accordingly, this thesis seeks to examine how secondary school teachers currently navigate teaching about ‘race’ and racism, using critical approaches to (teaching about) ‘race’ and racism as a lens. Although ‘race’ and racism can – and arguably should – be addressed in different secondary school courses, this thesis will focus on civic education. Civic education is a promising course to focus on, as all Dutch students must take this course in secondary school (SLO, 2017). Additionally, the topics of ‘race’ and racism fit well into the civic education curriculum, particularly considering that one of the five exam components for the course concerns the Dutch ‘pluriform society’ (College voor Toetsen en Examens, n.d.).

More specifically, the central research question that I will explore in this thesis is: how do civic education teachers navigate teaching about ‘race’ and racism at Dutch mixed secondary

schools, and how might critical approaches to (teaching about) ‘race’ and racism be used as a lens to examine the challenges and promise tied to existing teaching about ‘race’ and racism in civic education? In exploring how civic education teachers navigate teaching about ‘race’ and racism – the first part of this thesis’ central research question – I will focus on how teachers navigate course content, the national curriculum, course materials, teaching methods, pedagogy, the school context, and their own identity and beliefs regarding ‘race’ and racism. In examining how teachers navigate these factors in teaching about ‘race’ and racism, I aim to gain insight into the choices that teachers make when teaching about ‘race’ and racism, what motivates them to make these choices, and the challenges that teachers face in teaching about the topics.

In relation to the second part of this thesis’ central research question, my first main objective is to better understand the challenges that teachers face in teaching about ‘race’ and racism by employing the lens of critical approaches to (teaching about) ‘race’ and racism. I also seek to gain insight into how teachers currently navigate these challenges and, if possible, formulate ways in which teachers might navigate some of these challenges in the future. My second main objective is to grasp the promise of existing teaching about ‘race’ and racism by analyzing current teaching through the lens of critical approaches to (teaching about) ‘race’ and racism. By building upon how different teachers navigate the themes of ‘race’ and racism in the classroom and using critical approaches to teaching about ‘race’ and racism as a lens, I will identify a number of possible ways forward for teachers who seek to commit to a critical, anti-racist approach to teaching about ‘race’ and racism. In doing so, I will corroborate the promise of particular facets of existing teaching and highlight certain approaches, angles, and topics that may be explored in the future to advance the promise of current teaching in line with anti-racist aims.

Whilst related Dutch research exists, studies that focus specifically on how the topics of ‘race’ and racism are addressed in civic education are lacking. Examples of previous, related Dutch research include Weiner’s (2016; 2018) works on racialized classroom practices and the representation of immigrants, multiculturalism, and tolerance in Dutch history textbooks, Sincer, Severiens, and Volman’s (2019) study of secondary school teachers’ context-associated understandings of, and approaches to, teaching about diversity within the framework of citizenship education, and Turcatti’s (2018) research on Moroccan-Dutch secondary school students’ educational experiences. Whilst these studies do specifically focus on the Dutch educational domain and explore diversity- and ‘race’-related issues therein, they neither offer insight into teaching about ‘race’ and racism specifically, nor zero in on civic education as a

course. In examining how civic education teachers navigate teaching about ‘race’ and racism, then, this thesis fills a gap in research that is not only relevant academically, but also crucial socially, given the continuing impact of the workings of ‘race’ and racism. More specifically, this thesis’ social value primarily lies within illuminating different ways in which Dutch civic education teachers may approach teaching about ‘race’ and racism in a critical, anti-racist manner, which could help teachers who seek to contribute to dismantling the workings of ‘race’ and racism to do so. This way, the present thesis may help to further the promise of existing teaching about ‘race’ and racism in line with the aim of promoting anti-racist futures.

Finally, in terms of structure, this thesis will consist of five main chapters. In the first chapter, the context chapter, I will offer a historical perspective on the diversity that typifies the present multicultural Dutch context and illuminate how the nation’s increasing diversity has been dealt with over time. Additionally, I will explore the present workings of ‘race’ and racism in the Dutch context and how the Dutch tend to deal with ‘race’ and racism today. I will also offer a brief background of civic education as a course, since this thesis’ research focus lies with this course. In the second chapter, I will outline this thesis’ theoretical framework, which mainly consists of critical race, anti-racist, and postcolonial perspectives on (teaching about) ‘race’ and racism. This theoretical framework, then, will later be used as a lens to study current teaching about ‘race’ and racism in civic education. In the third chapter, the methodological chapter, I will outline my methodological approach for this thesis, focusing on the interviews that I conducted with civic education teachers and my thematic analysis of the interview data. Next, in the fourth chapter, I will examine the themes that emerged from my thematic analysis through the lens of critical approaches to (teaching about) ‘race’ and racism, concentrating on the challenges and promise tied to existing teaching about ‘race’ and racism in civic education. In the closing chapter, I will offer some final reflections upon what I have found in examining this thesis’ central research question, address this project’s contributions and limitations, and offer several directions for future research.

Context

I. The Multicultural Dutch Context: A Historical Perspective

Today's multicultural Dutch society is characterized by great diversity, which is particularly noticeable in cities such as Amsterdam and Rotterdam (Weiner, 2018; Van den Bulk, 2018). In order to better understand today's multicultural Dutch context, it is helpful to reflect upon how Dutch society's present multicultural character has come into being and how the Dutch have dealt with their nation's changing diversity over time. Before commencing my reflection upon these issues, I wish to clarify that, in characterizing today's Dutch society as 'multicultural,' I seek to highlight both Dutch society's cultural diversity as well as its 'racial'/ethnic diversity. The term 'multicultural' lends itself well to highlighting both of these facets of diversity, as the term points directly at cultural diversity and can also be used to refer to a society's "demographic ethnic/racial diversity" (Verkuyten & Yogeewaran, 2020, p. 1).

Over the last half of the previous century, different waves of migration entered the Netherlands (Vasta, 2007). Between 1945 and the beginning of the 1960s, migrants mainly came from the former Dutch East Indies. Subsequently, in the 1960s and the early years of the 1970s, migrants arrived from Southern European countries, Turkey, and Morocco. These migrant groups were recruited as 'guest workers' and were generally assumed to only stay for a while (Vasta, 2007; Yanow & Van der Haar, 2013). As we know today, however, they stayed significantly longer than anticipated. Additionally, in this period, Surinamese and Antillean migrants came to the Netherlands – another group of migrants from former Dutch colonies (Vasta, 2007). Later, starting at the end of the 1980s, different groups of refugees and asylum seekers also came to the Netherlands. During the last half of the previous century, the Dutch population's diversity thus began to increase significantly, a dynamic which has continued up until the present day, shaping the Netherlands into a highly diverse contemporary context (Van den Bulk, 2018).

In providing a historical background of today's multicultural Dutch context, it is also key to offer insight into the different ways in which the Dutch have dealt with their nation's changing diversity across the period from the first wave of migration after the Second World War until the 21st century (Vasta, 2007). During the period from the Second World War until approximately the 1960s, the pillarized system was still in place, a Dutch tradition that arose in the nineteenth century and served as a means of dealing with – or 'tolerating' – different religious groups and political ideologies (Vasta, 2007; Ghorashi, 2014). The pillarized system consisted of four pillars: the Catholic, Protestant, Socialist, and Liberal pillar (Schrover, 2010). These

pillars were allowed to have their own “social, religious, and educational organizations” (Weiner, 2018, p. 154), thereby allowing them to maintain their individuality. Accordingly, each pillar could apply for government funding for its own schools, organizations, or religious facilities (Schrover, 2010). Crucially, in allowing groups to construct their ‘own worlds,’ the system fostered a clear sense of ‘us’ and ‘them’ (Ghorashi, 2014). This dichotomous way of thinking would shape how diversity was later dealt with in the Dutch context, as the impact of the pillarized system did not disappear when Dutch society depillarized.

The lasting impact of the pillarized system showed most clearly in the case of Islamic migrants, who were seen as constituting a separate pillar (Ghorashi, 2014). More broadly, the legacy of the pillarized system brought fixed ideas regarding the cultures of migrants as well as ‘Dutch culture’ (Schrover, 2010). Thinking through the lens of pillars, then, made separating individual migrants from their cultures and/or ethnicities nearly impossible and set the stage for ‘minority thinking’ (Ghorashi, 2014). Such minority thinking truly became apparent in the *Ethnic Minorities Policy*, which was introduced in 1983, when the Dutch had realized that their ‘guests’ were not going to leave (Vasta, 2007; Ghorashi, 2014). This policy was a welfare policy that served to help certain “segregated social groups” (Vasta, 2007, p. 716). These ‘segregated groups’ – now marked as ‘ethnic minorities’ (Schrover, 2010) – were “Turks, Moroccans, Southern Europeans, Moluccans, Surinamese, Antillians, refugees, Roma and Sintis, and caravan dwellers” (Vasta, 2007, p. 716). In addition to displaying minority thinking, the welfare policy showed a continuation of pillarization in that the former groups could obtain government funding for their own religious sites and media, *inter alia* (Vasta, 2007). This way, migrants could use their own institutions to maintain their cultures. Hence, in this period, migrants were given quite some freedom to preserve their cultures rather than strongly being stimulated to ‘fit into’ Dutch society.

However, this approach to dealing with migrant groups and their cultures was going to change. Around the late 1980s and the start of the 1990s, the *Ethnic Minorities Policy* objectives were judged as having been failed (Vasta, 2007). Social realities such as housing segregation and migrant children’s poor performance at school elicited this perception. Eventually, then, discourse that problematized ‘non-integrating’ migrants came into existence. In 1994, the Dutch introduced the *Integration Policy*, which was aimed at “improving the inclusion of immigrants in mainstream services in order to move away from the ethno-specific provision popularly associated with a policy of multiculturalism” (Vasta, 2007, p. 717). Not only were settled citizens with a migrant background stimulated to ‘integrate’ more so than before, but new migrants also increasingly faced stricter demands in terms of getting acquainted with Dutch

language, culture, and society. This showed in the *Civic Integration of Newcomers Act* that was introduced in 1998, which initiated obligatory programs for new migrants, including Dutch language lessons and social coaching (Vasta, 2007).

Such efforts to stimulate the integration of migrants into Dutch society evolved into the 21st century, as opinion leaders, most notably writer Paul Scheffer, called Dutch society a ‘multicultural drama’ (Aouragh, 2014; Schrover, 2010). Today, rather than the state facilitating migrants’ integration, it is seen as the responsibility of individuals to integrate (Wekker, 2016). In that, migrants “should not only know the key values of Dutch society, but should also *internalize them*” (Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid, as cited in Wekker, 2016, p. 55). Among these supposed ‘key Dutch values’ are “the acceptance of homosexuality and the equality of women” (Wekker, 2016, p. 55), which are also reflected in today’s integration exam that newcomers must pass (Wekker, 2016; De Leeuw & van Wichelen, 2014). Interestingly, whilst these values are not necessarily held by all Dutch citizens, they “are presented as normative and nonnegotiable to newcomers,” as Wekker (2016, p. 7) points out. This shows that the integration exam is “not so much about what Dutchness *really is*, but rather, what the government wants Dutchness *not to be or not to become*,” as De Leeuw and van Wichelen (2014, p. 341) clarify. Clearly, then, the Dutch demand for ‘integration’ is a strong one, one that barely leaves any room for cultural difference in order to preserve ‘Dutchness’ (De Leeuw & van Wichelen, 2014).

As Muslim citizens are “constructed as the ultimate other” (Wekker, 2016, p. 23), this group’s cultural/religious difference appears to particularly be viewed as problematic today. Alongside the 9/11 attacks, the murders of Dutch politician Pim Fortuyn and filmmaker Theo van Gogh – two well-known Dutch critics of Islam – in the early 2000s played a key role in shaping this perception, resulting in a severe Dutch anti-Islam discourse (Ghorashi, 2020; Aouragh, 2014). Today, Dutch anti-Islam discourse has hardened in such a way that “Muslim bashing has become the new normal,” as Essed and Hoving (2014, p. 16) note. Anti-Islam political parties have also gained a significant number of parliamentary seats, most notably the political parties *Party for Freedom* and *Forum for Democracy* (Ghorashi, 2020).

Beyond Muslim citizens, there has been a general tendency to focus on the ‘unassimilability’ of migrants’ cultures, which are seen as backward (Wekker, 2016). Today, the Dutch tend to see migrant groups as ungrateful of Dutch tolerance and themselves as “victims of their own tolerance” (Ghorashi, 2014, p. 104). The Dutch, then, tend to blame migrants without critically reflecting upon themselves or their actions (Vasta, 2014). Such critical self-reflection could certainly be valuable for the Dutch, in that it could, for instance,

increase their awareness of the double standard that is operative in the reality that, whilst they criticize migrants for protecting their cultures, it is acceptable for them to defend their culture (Ghorashi, 2014). Ultimately, migrants are simply expected to integrate – or assimilate – into Dutch culture. Yet, despite their best efforts to ‘integrate,’ the reality is that ‘Dutchness’ remains ascribed exclusively to “white Christian Europeans born in The Netherlands” (Weiner, 2015, p. 576), which highlights that both citizens’ ‘race’/ethnicity and their culture/religion matter in today’s Dutch context. In the present Dutch context, then, some people tend to be seen as ‘more Dutch’ than others, irrespective of their integration into Dutch society or the extent to which they hold the values that are seen as ‘typically Dutch.’

II. ‘Race’ and Racism in the Present Dutch Context

Having offered a historical perspective on the present multicultural Dutch context, I will now zero in on the workings of ‘race’ and racism in today’s Dutch context and how these tend to be dealt with. In today’s multicultural Dutch context, racism is an everyday phenomenon that is inherent to the routine elements of people’s lives (Essed, 1991; Schaap & Essed, 2017). Different kinds of racism characterize Dutch society, some more explicit than others. Essed and Hoving (2014) note that a highly explicit form of racism is Dutch ‘entitlement racism,’ whereby people feel that they have the “right to offend” (p. 18) others without having to apologize for it. This way, racism as it occurs between individuals can be highly overt and unapologetic in the Dutch context, using the Dutch freedom of speech as a justification (Schaap & Essed, 2017). Racism can also be expressed through ‘humor’ (Wekker, 2014). Wekker (2014), for instance, reflects upon how, in 2008, a white, male television host ‘humorously’ expressed his fear regarding his daughter’s possible future partner in stating: “suppose she brings a big negro home” (p. 162). Whilst this comment evidently has a racist undertone, no one called it out as racist, which shows how rather overt racist statements can be accepted under the veil of ‘humor’ in the Dutch context.

Other forms of racism that prevail in the Dutch context operate in rather concealed ways. In today’s Dutch context, we see the presence of “racism without races” (Balibar, 2007, p. 84; Vasta, 2007), in which the language of ‘race’ is not invoked, but racism persists and racist expressions continue to be made (Goldberg, 2008; Balibar, 2007). More generally, the Dutch tend to avoid ‘race’ and discuss difference by referring to ‘culture’ or ‘ethnicity’ instead, terms that are seen as ‘softer’ (Hondius, 2014; Wekker, 2016). The idea of ‘racism without races,’

then, points to the reality that, whilst the Dutch “don’t do race” (Hondius, 2014, p. 274), racism persists (Vasta, 2007; Weiner, 2018). ‘Racism without races’ presents itself, for instance, in that migrant groups are blamed for their perceived inability to ‘integrate’ into Dutch society (Vasta, 2014; Weiner, 2018). Clearly, then, in seemingly ‘innocent’ debates surrounding migrants’ integration that do not explicitly refer to ‘race,’ racism may be at play.

Moreover, it is important to note that avoiding ‘race’ and using alternative terms to discuss difference does not prevent the workings of ‘race’ from ordering reality (Wekker, 2016). For instance, in the Dutch classification of ‘allochtonen,’ a term commonly used to talk about migrant groups in opposition to ‘autochtonen’ – which refers to white Dutch citizens – ‘race’ is there implicitly (Wekker, 2016; Yanow & Van der Haar, 2013), dividing citizens into a binary order. Through this racializing classification, white Dutch citizens are positioned as belonging to the Dutch nation, whilst particular migrant groups are positioned as outsiders, as ‘people out of place’ (Yanow & Van der Haar, 2013; Weiner, 2015; Wekker, 2016). Crucially, not all people with a migrant background are necessarily positioned as ‘allochtonen.’ As Wekker (2016) explains, migrants who are white and can “phenotypically pass as Dutch” (p. 7) hold a ‘better’ position as compared to non-white migrants, in that the former group’s claim to Dutchness may be accepted. The distinction between ‘autochtonen’ and ‘allochtonen,’ thus, can be read in distinctly ‘racial’ terms, distinguishing between white Dutch citizens and Dutch citizens of color. This example, then, illustrates how ‘race’ may order reality in concealed ways and work to establish who belongs to the Dutch nation and who does not.

Despite the continued presence of the workings of ‘race’ and racism, both are denied in the Netherlands (Essed & Hoving, 2014; Wekker, 2016), making it seem as though “there is a mandate to be a post-racial society” (Smith, 2014, p. 233). Not only do the Dutch avoid talking about ‘race’ and racism (Hondius, 2014), then, but there is also a tendency to deny racial realities and racial injustice. This makes it incredibly difficult to discuss ‘race’ and racism, let alone to begin to challenge their workings (Smith, 2014). Moreover, in coining the term ‘white innocence,’ Wekker (2016) has effectively characterized the Dutch’ self-perception of being innocent, anti-racist, tolerant, and color-blind. This self-perception can be seen as another obstacle to making visible and challenging the workings of ‘race’ and racism in the Netherlands. This is because the “claim of innocence” does not only entail a lack of knowledge about the workings of ‘race’ and racism, but also involves a sense of “not wanting to know” (Wekker, 2016, p. 17). Essed and Hoving (2014) have referred to this dynamic as ‘smug ignorance;’ that is, “(aggressively) rejecting the possibility to know” (p. 24). Racism is simply seen as an issue that has no relevance in today’s Dutch context (Goldberg, 2014; Essed & Hoving, 2014). The

dominant belief regarding racism in the Dutch context can thus be outlined as follows: as we, the Dutch, are innocent and tolerant (Wekker, 2016), racism simply does not – and could not – exist here (Goldberg, 2014). Unfortunately, and crucially, this belief does not hold, as Dutch racism can be seen to work precisely through the discourse of tolerance (Essed, 1991). Ultimately, then, as long as the Dutch hold on to their ‘white innocence’ and remain unaware of the workings of ‘race’ and racism in today’s Dutch context, tackling both will remain a significant challenge.

Another key issue to address is that the Dutch’ refusal to learn more about racism also includes a refusal to recognize the connection between the Dutch colonial past and contemporary forms of racism (Goldberg, 2014). Consequently, the historical underpinnings of today’s workings of ‘race’ and racism generally are neither acknowledged nor comprehended. The Dutch’ ‘white innocence’ may also play a role herein, as the Dutch’ perception of themselves as innocent – both in the past and in the present – arguably can only be upheld by omitting Dutch colonial violence from the dominant national story about the past, which is indeed what tends to happen (Wekker, 2016). Beyond the fact that the tendency to omit their colonial past allows the Dutch to uphold their self-perception as innocent and disregard the historical underpinnings of contemporary forms of racism, it is crucial to point out that this tendency may also have a detrimental impact on certain migrant groups’ belonging to the Dutch nation. As Wekker (2016) explains, as long as the Dutch colonial past is not part of Dutch common knowledge and “as long as general knowledge about the exclusionary processes involved in producing the Dutch nation does not circulate more widely, multiculturalism now cannot be realized, either” (p. 15).

The nation can be seen as a community that is imagined, as Benedict Anderson (1983/2006) has famously argued. However, as Jordan (2014) explains, “If the nation is indeed an imagined community, then its enunciation will necessarily draw on a limited identification with a particular people and historical events” (p. 214). Such limited identification also becomes apparent in the Dutch case, in that, whereas the Dutch do identify with and actively remember their victimhood during the Second World War, this does not hold for the violence tied to the nation’s colonial past (Wekker, 2016). This limited historical identification, then, not only works to exclude certain histories as a basis upon which the nation may build to imagine itself, but it also may have implications in terms of *whom* the nation imagines as part of itself. When the Dutch nation does not imagine the Dutch colonial past as part of itself, it fails to recognize the histories of postcolonial citizens, thereby leaving their histories out of the historical basis upon which the nation is imagined. Indirectly, then, this mechanism may work to exclude these

citizens from the nation as it is imagined. Actively remembering the Dutch colonial past, then, is vital step for the Dutch to take not only to better understand the historical underpinnings of the present workings of ‘race’ and racism, but also to promote more inclusive imaginations of the nation.

Promisingly, the 2020 Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests have sparked a change in the dynamics surrounding the avoidance and denial of ‘race’ and racism (Ghorashi, 2020). Whilst BLM, of course, cannot be assumed to have radically transformed the way in which *all* Dutch citizens deal with ‘race’ and racism, it has sparked more visible, critically engaged discussions about ‘race’ and racism – also stimulating people to discuss racism in structural terms (Ghorashi, 2020). As Ghorashi (2020) explains, before BLM, “institutional forms of structural racism had never been addressed so widely in the Dutch public space and within institutions” (p. 4). Another promising aspect of BLM, as Ghorashi (2020) illuminates, is the solidarity that was displayed among different Dutch citizens – also white Dutch citizens – in collectively confronting issues of racism. This way, BLM has offered an optimal opportunity for the Dutch to finally begin to transform their “‘innocence’ into critical self-reflection and actions towards the inclusion of diverse groups by addressing institutional racism beyond ‘good intentions’,” as Ghorashi (2020, p. 4) powerfully states. Indeed, it is crucial that the Dutch pursue such a transformative approach and prevent themselves from returning to their old ways – that is, to avoiding active, critical engagement with ‘race’ and racism.

III. The Dutch Educational Domain: Unveiling Dominant Patterns

In the Dutch educational domain, working towards transformative change appears to be imperative as well. To commence, certain students have been found to experience discrimination and racism at Dutch schools, both from fellow students and from teachers (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, 2020; Turcatti, 2018). Turcatti (2018), for instance, found that Moroccan-Dutch secondary school students face microaggressions from white Dutch students and are not perceived as completely Dutch by their white Dutch peers as well as by teachers. Furthermore, a key discriminatory pattern in the Dutch educational domain lies within the recommendation of secondary educational tracks that primary school students receive when heading to secondary school (Weiner, 2015). The Dutch educational system consists of three main educational tracks: *vmbo*, *havo*, and *vwo*, listed from ‘lowest’ to ‘highest.’ When Dutch students reach the final year of primary school, their teachers advise a certain track to them,

which plays a key role in determining their eventual track assignment alongside their CITO test score – a standardized, national test that all primary school students must take when finishing school. Problematically, teachers prove to asymmetrically recommend the lowest educational tracks to minoritized students (Weiner, 2015). This pattern contributes to the reality that “three quarters of Moroccan and Turkish, and over two thirds of Surinamese and Antillean students [are] educated in *vmbo* schools, compared to only half of white Dutch students” (Weiner, 2015, p. 586). Clearly, then, there is an unequal distribution across Dutch secondary school educational tracks, and discriminatory patterns play a role in shaping this reality.

Other problematic patterns within the Dutch educational domain are tied to the textbooks that are used, as Dutch textbooks have been found to contain certain questionable messages and omissions. Weiner (2018), for instance, illuminates that history textbooks published in the years 1980 to 2011 present migrants as outsiders and do not adequately address issues of discrimination and racism. Moreover, textbooks proved to display a Eurocentric master narrative, which, according to Weiner (2018), serves to perpetuate “the Dutch myth of a homogenous nation tolerant of differences where racism does not exist” (p. 149). Weiner (2018) adds that most textbooks fail to offer insight into migrants’ “histories, cultures, [and] worldviews” (p. 162). Dutch textbooks’ tendency to represent the Dutch colonial past in distorted and limited ways is a specific example that confirms that this dynamic is a wider reality – and should not come as a surprise considering the Dutch’ ‘white innocence’ (Wekker, 2016). Van Stipriaan’s (as cited in Nimako, Abdou, & Willemsen, 2014, p. 37) study of history books used in Dutch primary and secondary schools, for instance, revealed that more attention is paid to abolition than to slavery and slavery is mainly discussed in relation to Northern America, *inter alia*. Such narratives may be judged as problematic in that they sketch an incomplete picture of Dutch colonial violence, thereby failing to properly acknowledge postcolonial citizens’ histories. Such a lack of acknowledgement through particular absences in textbooks may lead minoritized students to become disengaged (Weiner, 2018). Additionally, through their limited representation of the Dutch colonial past, textbooks arguably fail to adequately offer insight into the historical roots of today’s workings of ‘race’ and racism in the Netherlands, which are inextricably tied together with the Dutch colonial past (Wekker, 2016).

When Dutch students neither obtain in-depth knowledge about issues of ‘race’ and racism, nor learn about the shared violent histories that lie at the root of the contemporary workings of ‘race’ and racism, this is bound to have consequences. Among these consequences may be limited racial understanding among Dutch students and “the continued colonization of

many Dutch minds inhibiting large-scale social movements seeking racial justice,” as Weiner (2018, p. 163) explains. Hence, as long as Dutch textbooks continue to display a Eurocentric narrative and selectively focus on the perspectives and (his)stories of the white, ‘native Dutch’ majority, they cannot serve as tools that contribute to fostering a critical understanding of the present workings of ‘race’ and racism in the Netherlands and promoting racial justice. Given the reality that textbooks may occupy a leading role not only in courses such as civic education more broadly (NLVM, 2018) but also in “perpetuating the dominant racialized political order” (Weiner, 2018, p. 164), reworking Dutch textbooks is a vital task. Considering this reality, one of this thesis’ main objectives is to gain insight into how civic education teachers navigate textbooks and how helpful and/or leading textbooks are when teaching about ‘race’ and racism.

All in all, there are clear signs of the need to transform certain dominant patterns within Dutch secondary schools and their teaching materials. It must be acknowledged, however, that the Dutch have attempted to deepen students’ knowledge about ‘race’-related issues. In 2006, for instance, a national history canon was introduced that included topics related to colonialism, slavery, and slave trade (Wekker, 2016). Yet, ultimately, the canon failed to have a meaningful impact, as it was defunded – and, therefore, abolished – in 2014 (Weiner, 2015). Beyond its rapid abolishment, the canon does not appear to have led history textbooks to offer a critical, in-depth account of the Dutch colonial past, as van Stipriaan’s (as cited in Nimako, Abdou, & Willemsen, 2014, p. 37) study suggests. Future efforts to rework existing teaching materials should thus move beyond good intentions and ensure not only the presence of ‘race’-related content in itself, but also content that sketches a thorough and critically engaged picture of the past and the present.

IV. Civic Education: Then and Now

As this thesis focuses on teaching about ‘race’ and racism in the context of civic education, I will now move from the broader Dutch educational domain to civic education specifically and offer a brief background of the course. The origins of civic education lie in the *Mammoetwet* of 1968, which marked the course’s introduction to Dutch secondary education (SLO, 2017). In the 1960s and 1970s, people generally were highly critical of societal dynamics, critiquing issues such as capitalist relations and men’s dominant position. This critical social climate shaped the goals and content of civic education in its early years. Additionally, organizing the course from the student’s perspective was deemed to be important, moving away from

‘authoritarian’ education (SLO, 2017). Moreover, in its early years, civic education lacked a sense of structure. No books were used, and teachers generally determined the class topics, sometimes together with their students. This lack of structure resulted in the course being perceived as rather vague.

Around the end of the 1970s, however, the following six themes were developed, providing a more specific framework for the course: *primary forms of cohabitation* (‘primaire samenlevingsvormen’); *socialization, among which mass media* (‘socialisatie, waaronder massamedia’); *politics* (‘politiek’); *labor and capital* (‘arbeid en kapitaal’); *criminality and criminal law* (‘criminaliteit en strafrecht’); and *international relations* (‘internationale verhoudingen’) (SLO, 2017). Subsequently, in the 1980s, active efforts were made to introduce civic education as a final exam course. Eventually, civic education became a regular, elective exam course in the year 1990, which improved the status of the course. The main themes of the course then evolved into: *politics* (‘politiek’); *labor and leisure* (‘arbeid en vrije tijd’); *primary forms of cohabitation* (‘primaire samenlevingsvormen’); *criminality* (‘criminaliteit’); *mass media* (‘massamedia’); and *international relations* (‘internationale betrekkingen’) (SLO, 2017).

In 1998, civic education finally obtained its place in the shared part of the second phase of the Dutch *havo* and *vwo* educational tracks, the two tracks that this thesis focuses on (see *Methodology/Methods*). The year 1998 also marked the start of the incorporation of students’ final grades for the course into the so-called ‘combination grade’ (‘combinatiecijfer’) that plays a role in determining whether or not Dutch students graduate from secondary school (SLO, 2017). Additionally, *parliamentary democracy* (‘parlementaire democratie’), *constitutional state* (‘rechtsstaat’), *welfare state* (‘verzorgingsstaat’), and *pluriform society* (‘pluriforme samenleving’) were introduced as the four domains that would together form the framework for civic education in the *havo* and *vwo* tracks (SLO, 2017). Still today, these four domains structure the national exam program of the course, alongside the domain ‘skills’ (‘vaardigheden’) (College voor Toetsen en Examens, n.d.).

As the status of civic education improved when the course became an official exam course, different textbooks also started to be developed (SLO, 2017). Accordingly, today, Dutch secondary schools can choose from a variety of textbooks, showing a clear difference from how the course was set up in its early years. Yet, despite the improved status of the course, the number of hours devoted to civic education remains rather limited. In the Dutch *havo* and *vwo* tracks, students generally follow 120 teaching hours of civic education, which usually translates into two teaching hours per week when the course is taught in one year (SLO, 2017).

Moreover, today, civic education can be placed within the wider domain of *People and Society* ('Mens en Maatschappij'), which joins together economics, geography, history, and civic education as courses about people and the world around them (NLVM, 2018). Civic education, then, tends to specifically draw from the disciplines of sociology and political science, which distinguishes it from the other courses in the overarching domain. Other distinguishing factors include its focus on current issues, its tradition of promoting discussion and debate, and its attention to the theme of citizenship (NLVM, 2018; SLO, 2017). The latter point is important to emphasize, as, since 2006, Dutch secondary schools have been obliged to incorporate citizenship education as part of the curriculum (Turcatti, 2018). Although citizenship education exceeds civic education as a course (Munniksma et al., 2017), the course proves to have a strong link to citizenship (NLVM, 2018), thereby contributing to schools' fulfilment of their citizenship task. Citizenship can be understood to revolve around how people live together in different relations beyond the family context, both on the micro level and in the context of the wider society and the state (Munniksma et al., 2017) and involves "knowledge about difference and living with difference" (Leeman, as cited in Turcatti, 2018, p. 535). Accordingly, one key facet of Dutch secondary schools' citizenship task is "teaching students to deal with diversity" (Sincer et al., 2019, p. 183). Considering this take on citizenship and the impact of the workings of 'race' and racism in today's multicultural Dutch context, 'race' and racism arguably are essential topics to address in civic education as part of the course's contribution to fulfilling secondary schools' citizenship task. Yet, as schools possess quite some freedom regarding how they incorporate citizenship education (Turcatti, 2018), addressing 'race' and racism currently is not mandatory.

The national exam program of the course further corroborates the importance of addressing 'race' and racism in civic education. As explained, alongside *skills*, the four core domains of the national civic education exam program are: *parliamentary democracy*, *constitutional state*, *welfare state*, and *pluriform society* (College voor Toetsen en Examens, n.d.). Although one could address 'race' and racism in each of these domains, addressing 'race' and racism arguably is vital in the context of the domain *pluriform society*. Studying the Dutch pluriform society simply cannot adequately be done without addressing 'race' and racism, as both prove to play a key role in today's Dutch society. However, when examining whether 'race' and racism are explicitly present in the description of the domain *pluriform society* – or any of the other domains – in the exam program (College voor Toetsen en Examens, n.d.), one finds that this is not the case. In the domain *pluriform society*, the themes 'race' and racism could, for instance, be tied to students' ability to describe characteristics of a pluriform society

or connect Dutch fundamental rights tied to the pluriform society to articles of the Dutch constitution; yet, the themes are not explicitly addressed. The national exam program, then, does not explicitly support the need for all civic education teachers to address these topics, nor does it offer a clear framework for teachers who seek to address issues of ‘race’ and racism in their classes. Hence, although the issues of ‘race’ and racism certainly are valuable – if not imperative – to address in civic education, both because of the course’s link to citizenship and the domain *pluriform society*, a clear national framework is lacking. Considering this reality, one of this thesis’ key aims is to establish how civic education teachers navigate the national curriculum.

Finally, it is relevant to note that, alongside civic education, the course ‘social sciences’ (‘maatschappijwetenschappen’) is also taught at some Dutch secondary schools (NLVM, 2018). This is an elective course that *havo/vwo* students who seek to go into more depth can take. Whilst exploring how teachers approach teaching about ‘race’ and racism in this course would also have been interesting, I opted for civic education as a research focus because of its compulsory nature, which means that this course holds the power to shape all Dutch secondary school students’ learning about ‘race’ and racism.

V. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have offered a sense of context. First, I illuminated how the present multicultural Dutch society has come into being and how the nation’s changing diversity has been dealt with over time. Subsequently, I explored the workings of ‘race’ and racism – and how they tend to be dealt with – in today’s Dutch context. Then, I offered insight into various problematic patterns in the Dutch educational domain more broadly, in order to make visible the need for transformative change therein. Finally, I zeroed in on the course of civic education, offering insight into how the course has evolved over time and clarifying the place and focus of the course today. In the next chapter, I will present my theoretical framework, which will later be used as a lens to analyze the challenges and promise tied to existing teaching about ‘race’ and racism in civic education.

Theoretical Framework

I. Introducing the Contributing Perspectives

This thesis' theoretical framework is primarily built upon anti-racist, critical race, and postcolonial contributions. Together, these contributions offer insight into how teachers may critically approach teaching about 'race' and racism, both in terms of addressing the concepts of 'race' and 'racism' as well as in terms of pedagogy and teaching methods. Additionally, these contributions help one grasp some of the potential challenges, risks, and pitfalls that teachers may face when teaching about 'race' and racism. Before diving into the various contributions, I will briefly introduce the fields of critical race theory (CRT) and postcolonial theory as well as anti-racism as an approach to 'race' and racism in order to offer insight into why these contributions were selected to help construct this thesis' analytical lens.

In outlining what anti-racism stands for as an approach to 'race' and racism, it is crucial to clarify from the outset that there is no universally shared definition thereof (Paradies, 2016). In fact, a multiplicity of anti-racisms and anti-racist approaches exists, which only makes sense – and is valuable – as racism takes different forms and is ever-changing (Paradies, 2016; Gillborn, 2006; Alemanji, 2018). Yet, it is possible to outline certain key facets that typify anti-racism and anti-racist education. At its core, anti-racism is aimed at understanding the roots of racism (Alemanji, 2018) and subverting racism's impact on both people and institutions (Ohito, 2020). In that, anti-racism takes 'race' and racism as phenomena that affect both the micro- and the macro level (Alemanji, 2018; King & Chandler, 2016).

Crucially, anti-racism should be distinguished from non-racism, as the two “have fundamentally different goals and practices premised on radically different understandings of race and racism” (King & Chandler, 2016, p. 8). Unlike anti-racism's approach to racism as a phenomenon that exists on both the micro- and the macro level, non-racism selectively approaches racism as the extreme, overt behavior of certain individuals (King & Chandler, 2016). Accordingly, non-racism focuses its analysis of racism solely on the micro level. In doing so, non-racism does not account for racism in its systemic, institutional forms. Moreover, non-racism does not actively incorporate a historical perspective on racism, is accepting of color-blindness, and takes racial innocence as possible, *inter alia* (King & Chandler, 2016). These facets of non-racism are all potentially problematic, in that they risk sketching an uncritical and incomplete picture of 'race' and racism. Whilst a commitment to non-racism may thus be based upon good intentions – in committing to a rejection of overtly racist behaviors – non-racism's failure to provide a historically grounded, multi-level, and critical take on 'race'

and racism is rather troublesome. An anti-racist approach to ‘race’ and racism, thus, should be pursued to thoroughly grasp – and challenge – the workings of ‘race’ and racism and their effects.

When placed in the educational domain, anti-racism can be defined as “a practical and pragmatic approach to combat issues of power and social hierarchies that produce diverse forms of racism,” as Alemanji (2018, p. 7) states. In the former definition, the acknowledgement that different forms of racism exist is clearly visible, alongside the aim to combat these diverse forms of racism. Questions of power and hierarchy also prove to be key in anti-racism. Building upon this point, it is valuable to highlight that anti-racist approaches to education may not only involve critically interrogating power relations in society but also within schools themselves (Alemanji, 2018). Through such critical engagement with power relations within schools and in the wider society, then, anti-racist education holds the potential to counter these relations. Ultimately, “the gains of antiracism lie in the knowing and in the hope of a better future,” as Alemanji and Seikkula (2018, p. 190) note. In approaching ‘race’ and racism in an anti-racist manner, thus, lies a sense of hope to work towards a future in which the detrimental workings of ‘race’ and racism have no place. Both in anti-racism’s critical, multi-level approach to ‘race’ and racism and in the hope that it offers for the future, then, lie the main reasons why I have chosen to include anti-racist perspectives on (teaching about) ‘race’ and racism in this thesis’ theoretical framework.

Another key facet of the theoretical framework is formed by critical race perspectives from the Dutch context and beyond, inspired by Gillborn’s (2006) call for a “conscious and reflexive engagement between anti-racism and CRT” (p. 26). Such an engagement is productive, as Gillborn (2006) illuminates, as both approaches are committed to igniting change and are involved in practice. Such a commitment and involvement fit this project and its aims particularly well, given this project’s focus on teaching practice – teaching about ‘race’ and racism – and its aim to employ the lens of critical approaches to (teaching about) ‘race’ and racism to identify particular promising facets of existing teaching and imagine possible ways to further develop the promise of current teaching. Additionally, like anti-racism, CRT does not merely take racism as an individual problem, but rather as a “systemic structural problem that is constructed and maintained by the collective acts of many individuals” (Vaught & Castagno, 2008, p. 101). Anti-racism and critical race theory can thus be seen to share particular perspectives and commitments, strengthening one another in their critical, multi-level, and transformative approach to ‘race’ and racism.

Yet, illuminating what sets critical race theory apart is imperative as well. Crucially, CRT has distinct origins, which lie within the legal field (Kishimoto, 2018). More recently, however, critical race perspectives have also been applied to the educational domain (Hiraldo, 2010). In that, research has often been guided by CRT's central tenets (see, e.g., Hiraldo, 2010; Yosso, 2002), which will also play a crucial role in shaping this thesis' theoretical framework. More specifically, CRT's central tenets will help me to formulate a number of ways in which the topics of 'race' and racism may be taught in a critical, potentially transformative, manner. These will include sharing and legitimating experiential knowledge about 'race' and racism, defining 'race' as socially constructed, and critiquing color-blindness and the objectivity of knowledge (Smith-Maddox & Solorzano, 2002; Dixson & Anderson, 2018; Gillborn, 2006; Kishimoto, 2018).

Moreover, it is crucial to emphasize that the experiences of people of color take center stage in CRT (Alderman, Narro Perez, Eaves, Klein, & Muñoz, 2019). Still, CRT "is a powerful tool for understanding how race affects *all of us* [emphasis added] on a daily basis" (Bergerson, 2003, p. 61). This shows in that both exclusion and privilege, for instance, are issues that CRT engages with (Hiraldo, 2010). Additionally, it is key to clarify that, whilst the majority of critical race theory concentrates on the American context, the insights offered by CRT can also be used productively in European contexts (Gillborn, 2006). Still, to account for the Dutch context's specificity, this thesis' theoretical framework also incorporates critical race perspectives originating from – and focused on – the Dutch context specifically. Essed and Hoving's (2014) *Dutch Racism*, which includes the contributions of various critical (race) scholars, is key in this regard.

Finally, in order to strengthen the historical perspective on 'race' and racism that is vital to incorporate when teaching about 'race' and racism in today's Dutch postcolonial context, this thesis' theoretical framework also builds upon postcolonial perspectives on 'race' and racism. To clarify, the term 'postcolonial' is not simply a temporal concept that refers to the period after colonization, signifying a break from this period (Wallaschek, 2015). Rather, in the field of postcolonial studies, the term 'postcolonial' accounts for the present reality in which the impact of colonization has continued into postcolonial societies. Postcolonial critique, then, is aimed at challenging the legacies of colonialism (Stam & Shohat, 2012).

Edward Said, Homi K. Bhabha, and Gayatri C. Spivak are generally positioned as the three central protagonists of the field (Wallaschek, 2015). Out of the former three scholars' work, Said's (1978) *Orientalism*, which offers valuable insight into how the Orient was constructed as the West's Other, is seen as the work that truly set in motion the postcolonial

field of study in the academy (Wallaschek, 2015). Still today, however, the discipline of postcolonial studies does not have a very solid grounding in the Netherlands (Wekker, 2016). Whilst some postcolonial work written by Dutch scholars exists, the field does not have many Dutch practitioners. Among the few Dutch researchers operating in this field, Gloria Wekker (2016) is a key scholar, whose work convincingly demonstrates how the traces of the Dutch colonial past impact today's Dutch postcolonial context. This thesis' theoretical framework, then, builds upon Wekker's (2016) writings on the colonial underpinnings of the present workings of 'race' and racism in the Netherlands in order to add a sense of context-specificity and incorporate an invaluable postcolonial angle into this thesis' analytical lens.

In sum, anti-racist, critical race, and postcolonial contributions will lay the foundation for this thesis' analytical lens, joined together as 'critical approaches to (teaching about) 'race' and racism.' I will use the former contributions to construct the following four main sections of this thesis' theoretical framework: *Approaching 'Race'; Approaching Racism; Critical, Anti-racist Approaches to Teaching;* and *Challenges, Risks, and Pitfalls in Teaching About 'Race' and Racism*. Together, these four sections will constitute the lens through which I will analyze the interview data as a means to answer the second part of this thesis' research question: how might critical approaches to (teaching about) 'race' and racism be used to examine the challenges and promise tied to existing teaching about 'race' and racism in civic education?

II. Approaching 'Race'

To commence, I will offer a set of key anti-racist, postcolonial, and critical race perspectives on 'race.' Building upon the former perspectives, a first vital idea regarding 'race' is that 'race' is a social construct (Bryan, 2012). Historically, some people have perceived the existence of different 'races' as a biological reality and have even made active efforts to 'scientifically' support this perception (Bryan, 2012; King & Chandler, 2016). However, such separate racial groups do not exist as a biological reality (King & Chandler, 2016). Instead, 'race' is socially constructed; it is a hegemonic mechanism through which society is organized, which benefits some and harms others. This also holds for the Dutch context, as Wekker (2016) explains, noting that 'race' is a "fundamental organizing grammar in Dutch society" (p. 23).

Inherent to the way in which society organizes reality according to 'race' is the mechanism of categorization – more specifically, hierarchical categorization. As Mbembe (2017) explains, "Historically, race has always been a more or less coded way of dividing and

organizing a multiplicity, of fixing and distributing it according to a hierarchy” (p. 35). Reflecting upon this, ‘race’ also concerns the inferiority and superiority of different racialized groups. In the Netherlands, Weiner (2015) notes that the existing racial hierarchy positions white, native Dutch citizens at the top, postcolonial citizens such as Surinamese-Dutch citizens in the middle, and Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch citizens at the bottom. This hierarchy, then, shapes the access to certain resources and opportunities that different citizens have. In addition to involving hierarchies, categories may also transform into dichotomies, which can have a restricting effect (Ghorashi, 2014). The restrictive effect of ‘race’ also becomes apparent in its function as a “security device” (Mbembe, 2017, p. 35), organizing people into categories in line with their perceived danger or risk. ‘Risky’ racial groups, then, become groups that society seeks to contain or control, restricting their circulation to maintain ‘safety’ (Mbembe, 2017), which may significantly impact these groups’ lived realities. Thus, whilst ‘race’ is socially constructed and, therefore, is not real in a biological sense, its impact on people certainly is real and tangible. Conveying this message, then, may serve as a valuable way for teachers to not only denaturalize ‘race’ but also acknowledge the realities of those who are impacted by its workings.

Additionally, the classification ‘socially constructed’ implies that ‘race’ is time- and context-bound, and so are racial categories (King & Chandler, 2016; Wekker, 2016). This shows in that, over time, racial categories have shifted, and groups of people have moved in and out of certain categories. Ignatiev’s (1995/2009) work, for instance, illuminates how Irish people have ‘become white’ over time in the American context. Moreover, diverse racial classifications can be attributed to the same group of people across different places. For instance, King and Chandler (2016) highlight that, when Portuguese immigrants arrived in the United States in the nineteenth century, they were regarded as white there, whilst they were not considered to be white elsewhere. Evidently, then, ‘race’ is malleable rather than fixed, and racial categories do not hold universally across different times and spaces (King & Chandler, 2016). Illuminating this reality, then, may allow teachers to make visible the constructed nature of ‘race.’

In addition to addressing the changeability of ‘race’ and racial categories over time, discussing the reality that the *workings* of ‘race’ can continue for a significant period of time may also be valuable. Considering that CRT contests ahistoricism (Gillborn, 2006), it may be imperative for teachers who seek to commit to a critical race perspective on ‘race’ to study ‘race’ from a historical perspective. Wekker’s (2016) work on today’s Dutch postcolonial context further corroborates the idea that, in order to grasp the present workings of ‘race’ in the

Netherlands, one cannot ignore their historical roots – more specifically, their colonial roots. Wekker (2016) convinces readers of this idea by offering insight into the lasting impact of ‘the cultural archive’ – defined as “the memories, the knowledge, and affect with regard to race that were deposited within metropolitan populations, and the power relations embedded within them” (p. 19). To clarify, the cultural archive is not an archive that can be found in a specific archival site. Rather, Wekker (2016) explains, it “is located in many things, in the way we think, do things, and look at the world” (p. 19). Hence, the cultural archive contains certain ideas and affects regarding ‘race’ that have been with the Dutch since the colonial era and continue to shape today’s Dutch postcolonial context in the sense of impacting how the Dutch think, perceive the world around them, and go about things. In other words, the cultural archive stands for “the presence of the past in the present” (Bourdieu, as cited in Wekker, 2016, p. 20).

The cultural archive and the colonial ideas and affects regarding ‘race’ that it contains, then, structure which meanings are given to different groups of people in the Dutch context today (Wekker, 2016). In that, ‘race’ also intersects with other markers of identity, such as gender. One example that Wekker (2016) offers thereof is the hierarchy that exists among different women in the Netherlands, in which white women are seen as emancipated, whilst black, migrant, and refugee women are deemed to not be ‘there yet.’ The cultural archive, thus, motivates the perceptions tied to different groups of women, which is exemplary of its impact on how the Dutch perceive the world around them. Beyond emphasizing the value of incorporating a postcolonial perspective on ‘race,’ this example highlights that examining how ‘race’ interacts with other markers of difference is also key. The concept of ‘intersectionality,’ coined by critical race theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw, addresses “how multiple forms of inequality and identity inter-relate in different contexts and over time” (Gillborn, 2015, p. 278). Building upon the concept of ‘intersectionality,’ then, may allow teachers to illuminate how ‘race’ intersects with other markers of difference, such as gender and class, which proves to be an insightful approach to ‘race.’

Additionally, as part of the lasting impact of the cultural archive, ‘race’ “also becomes transparent in practices, in the way things are organized and done,” as Wekker (2016, p. 51) explains. To illustrate this point, Wekker (2016) reflects upon the ways in which ‘race’ silently structures institutional practices, such as those in the government and the academy. For instance, building upon Ann Stoler’s work, Wekker (2016) explains that, still today, the metropole and the colonies are generally treated as “separate worlds” (p. 25). To prevent their teaching from reproducing this wider pattern, then, teachers may include a historical

perspective on ‘race’ that conveys how Dutch colonialism and the workings of ‘race’ in today’s Dutch context are inextricably tied together.

Another issue that Wekker (2016) illuminates in relation to ‘race’ and racism in the Dutch context is the dominant Dutch self-perception. Wekker (2016) employs the concept of ‘white innocence’ to characterize the Dutch self-image, which points at the belief that the Dutch are “a small, but just, ethical nation; color-blind, thus free of racism” (p. 2). From a critical race and anti-racist perspective, it is key to critique the color-blindness component of the Dutch self-image (see, e.g., Bergerson, 2003), as color-blindness is not as innocent as it may sound. In line with the idea of color-blindness, people may argue that they treat everyone the same, no matter the color of their skin (Montgomery, 2013; Bergerson, 2003). In this sense, people’s support of color-blindness may be based upon good intentions. Yet, crucially, color-blindness can serve to deny racism (Montgomery, 2013), pretend that it no longer exists (Rodriguez, 2009), and make racism – and, I would add, the workings of ‘race’ – invisible (Kishimoto, 2018). In this sense, color-blindness can help to perpetuate the workings of ‘race’ and racism rather than help to tackle them (Kishimoto, 2018).

Additionally, those who support color-blindness may believe that decisions should be made without taking people’s skin color into account (Bergerson, 2003). Choosing, as a society, to not take the color of people’s skin into account in decision-making – in policy-making, for instance – certainly will not help to win the battle against the inequity and oppression that people of color face, as these are “historical artifacts that will not easily be remedied by ignoring race” (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004, p. 29). Moreover, it is key to point out that, when skin color is taken to be unimportant, people of color’s experiences of racism may also be considered as insignificant (Hondius, 2014). Neglecting people of color’s experiences is problematic from a critical race point of view, as CRT centralizes their experiences (Alderman et al., 2019). All in all, teachers who seek to commit to a critical, anti-racist – rather than a non-racist – approach to ‘race’ (King & Chandler, 2016) may thus consider critically interrogating color-blindness, also as it is part of the dominant Dutch self-perception (Wekker, 2016).

Moreover, Wekker’s (2016) work illuminates that ‘race,’ as part of the cultural archive, not only guides how the nation perceives itself – ‘us’ – but also shapes how the nation perceives those outside of the nation – ‘them’ – thereby having implications in terms of who belongs and who does not belong to the nation. In the Dutch context, the nation is generally constructed as the “innocent, fragile, emancipated white Dutch self” (Wekker, 2016, p. 15), while its Others are constructed as uncivilized and barbaric. Not only, then, is the Dutch self racialized as white, but those outside of the nation are also portrayed as uncivilized, barbaric Others. These Others,

who do not fit into the dominant picture of the Dutch self as white, then, do not properly belong. As illuminated in the context chapter, the racialized distinction between ‘autochtonen’ – white Dutch citizens – and ‘allochtonen’ – non-white citizens “who came from elsewhere” (Wekker, 2016, p. 15) – may help make visible how ‘race’ works to draw boundaries around the Dutch nation. Dutchness, thus, is defined in a racialized and exclusionary manner, which can be valuable for teachers to illuminate in order to help students understand the relationship between ‘race’ and belonging.

In reflecting upon this relationship, it is also crucial to point out that, today, Islamic citizens tend to be viewed as the quintessential Other of the Dutch nation (Wekker, 2016). In addition to citizens’ non-whiteness, then, citizens’ ‘deviant’ culture/religion may also function as a ground for being perceived as an Other by the Dutch nation, which tends to view the self not only as white but also as Christian (Wekker, 2016). In considering this point, it is helpful to dive deeper into how ‘race’ relates to culture/religion. In today’s Dutch context, as established in the context chapter, there is a tendency to avoid ‘race talk’ and use safer, softer terms instead (Hondius, 2014; Wekker, 2016). In avoiding ‘race,’ then, the Dutch may talk about people’s ‘culture.’ However, the avoidance of explicitly naming ‘race’ has not eliminated its workings (Wekker, 2016). Today, as Mbembe (2017) notes, ‘race’ can be “expressed through the sign of religion or culture” (p. 35). More specifically, in today’s Dutch context, ‘culture’ can operate like ‘race,’ in that the term has been used in such roughened ways that ‘culture’ has also become read as a highly stable difference (Wekker, 2016). In the move away from ‘race’ toward terms such as ‘ethnicity’ and ‘culture,’ then, the workings of ‘race’ still continue (Wekker, 2016), being more concealed than ever.

To illustrate, whilst the beforementioned Dutch distinction between ‘autochtonen’ and ‘allochtonen’ does not explicitly name ‘race’ or ‘racial difference,’ ‘race’ is very much present in this binary distinction (Wekker, 2016). Therefore, it may be valuable for teachers to reflect upon how the workings of ‘race’ may lie concealed behind discussions around ‘culture’ and ‘ethnicity,’ making visible that these are not necessarily innocent or neutral terms. Additionally, teachers may consider illuminating the implications of not naming ‘race.’ For instance, using ‘ethnicity’ instead of ‘race,’ Weiner (2018) notes, “fails to account for hierarchical power implications central to racial identities and racialization processes embedded in Dutch society” (p. 150).

Finally, whiteness and white privilege also prove to be relevant themes to address. In the Dutch context, whiteness acts as the norm, which means that whiteness functions as a position of privilege and power (Wekker, 2016). The term ‘white privilege,’ then, is used to

describe the “system of opportunities and benefits conferred upon people simply because they are White” (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 27). Particularly problematic is that whiteness functions as an *invisible* norm (Wekker, 2016). Dutch people tend to see whiteness as ‘ordinary’ and do not recognize it “as a racialized/ethnicized positioning at all” (Wekker, 2016, p. 2). This reality is problematic, since, as long as whiteness remains invisible, it will remain the norm, it will remain a position of power. This is because the reproduction of whiteness as a position of power occurs precisely by whiteness staying invisible, by not being named, for it generally does not need to name – let alone interrogate – itself (Wekker, 2016). The key to transforming this reality, then, is to make visible, and critically examine, whiteness.

Accordingly, for teachers who seek to contribute to transforming this reality, actively *and* critically engaging with whiteness and white privilege may be key. Doing so may also be a way for teachers to involve the positions of white students rather than merely those of students of color in teaching about ‘race,’ which can be judged as valuable in itself from an anti-racist perspective. This is because, as Alemanji (2018) notes, “Antiracism programs should be the mirror that everyone must look into to see themselves—their power and its effect on others, their privilege against that of others, and their position in the hierarchical structure of things against the position of others” (p. 6). Carr (2016) also corroborates the value of addressing white students’ positions, in stating that: “for there to be any serious hope of attaining social justice, it is critical for White people to be understood as being fully part of the racial equation” (p. 54).

III. Approaching Racism

I will commence my discussion of critical race and anti-racist perspectives on racism by pointing out that ‘racism’ is a “fuzzy concept” that has different meanings (Armila, Rannikko, & Sotkasiira, 2018, p. 127). Not only do different people attach different meanings to the concept, but the phenomenon of racism is also multifaceted and complex. From an anti-racist perspective, then, it is vital for teachers to make students grasp the complexities of racism in order for the different forms of racism that exist to be countered (Aveling, 2007). Alemanji and Mafi (2018) also clarify that it is crucial for anti-racist educators to ask themselves which forms of racism they aim to address, as different forms of racism may require different approaches. In the upcoming section, I will outline different forms and facets of racism that teachers may address in approaching racism in a critical, anti-racist manner.

First, racism may be approached as a phenomenon that does not only occur on – and affect – the individual or micro level, but also occurs on – and affects – the macro level (King & Chandler, 2016). This way, racism may be conceptualized along the lines of “the result of a complex interplay of individual attitudes, social values and institutional practices” (Department of Education and Training, as cited in Aveling, 2007, p. 70). As explained when distinguishing anti-racism from non-racism, racism encompasses much more than the racist acts of “a few bad apples” (Alemanji & Seikkula, 2018, p. 183) or overt forms of racism (King & Chandler, 2016). In focusing merely on these forms of racism, teachers risk sketching an incomplete picture of the role of racism in contemporary society. Addressing both racism as it occurs between individuals as well as racism in its macro-level forms may thus be valuable in order to help students to fully grasp racism and its impact.

Linked to the point that racism does not just entail individual, overt racist acts, the question of intent also proves to be relevant to address – particularly the idea that intent is not a necessary element of racism (Essed, 1991). Regarding this point, Dutch critical race scholar Philomena Essed (1991) states that “It is not the nature of specific acts or beliefs that determines whether these are mechanisms of racism but the context in which these beliefs and acts operate” (p. 45). In other words, context should be prioritized over intent in determining whether racist mechanisms are at play. Moreover, in relating the question of intent to institutional racism, Vasta (2014) notes that this form of racism is not about intent, but rather about “the systematic cultural and institutional detrimental effect it can have on particular groups in the society” (p. 393). Furthermore, when racism is expressed in a covert manner, it can be difficult to pinpoint racist intentions (Essed, 1991). Rather than focusing on whether or not a certain practice is intended as racist, then, it may be more helpful or important to look at its effects. Ultimately, then, moving beyond intent as a necessary element of racism may be valuable, allowing students to grasp alternative ways of determining the presence of racism.

Next, the concept of “racism without races” (Mbembe, 2017, p. 7; Balibar, 2007, p. 84) helps to describe racism in the Dutch context, as illuminated in the context chapter. This concept is helpful in illuminating how, although the Dutch “don’t do race” (Hondius, 2014, p. 274), racism persists (Vasta, 2007; Weiner, 2018). In other words, racism does not necessarily rely on the language or concept of ‘race’ (Balibar, 2007). Specific to ‘racism without races,’ then, is that its main theme is “the insurmountability of cultural differences” (Balibar, 2007, p. 84). Today, as cultural, ethnic, and religious groups are racialized (De Koning, 2020; Vasta, 2007), these groups may also face racism, and the color of people’s skin is not the only ground for racism (Vasta, 2007). Balibar (2007) termed this cultural form of racism as ‘neo-racism’ –

racism based on “naturalized and essentialized notions of cultural incompatibility” (Bonjour & Duyvendak, 2018, p. 897). Here, we see that this form of racism builds upon culture’s present role as a highly stable difference (Wekker, 2016), showing that racism can adjust itself according to sociocultural changes, in line with what Vaught and Castagno (2008) suggest.

In the Dutch context, such cultural or ‘neo-racism’ can be observed in that certain migrant groups are blamed for their perceived inability to integrate – or assimilate – into Dutch society (Vasta, 2014; Weiner, 2018). Arguably, Islamic Dutch citizens particularly face such racism today, in being constructed as the quintessential Other of the Dutch nation (Wekker, 2016). Adding to the complexity of this form of racism is that, since discussions around migrant groups can be believed to revolve around ‘culture’ rather than ‘race,’ such racism may not be acknowledged as racism (Ghorashi, 2014). In order to allow students to understand that this form of racism exists – and acknowledge students’ potential experiences with such racism – it may be valuable for teachers to address cultural forms of racism.

Another facet of racism that is valuable to address from a critical race perspective is racism’s normality (Ladson-Billings, 1998) and everydayness (Essed, 1991). More generally, the premise that racism is a ‘normal’ part of society lies at the core of CRT (Rodriguez, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 1998). As racism is strongly engrained in contemporary society, racism *appears* as normal to people (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Zeroing in on the Dutch context, Essed’s (1991) concept of ‘everyday racism’ illuminates the everydayness of racism in the Netherlands, adding specificity to the idea that racism is ‘normal.’ In employing the concept of ‘everyday racism,’ Essed (1991) points at a process whereby racism is integrated “into everyday situations through practices ... that activate underlying power relations” (p. 50). Essed (1991) explains that everyday racism does not exist in the form of isolated events, but should rather be seen as “a complex—as interrelated instantiations of racism” (p. 52). Moreover, in line with anti-racist and critical race takes on racism, everyday racism encompasses both the micro- and the macro level. In the case of everyday racism, the micro- and macro level actually are interdependent (Essed, 1991). Additionally, the concept of ‘everyday racism’ points out that racism does not merely involve remarkable and highly explicit moments, but also surfaces in the repetitive, routine elements of Dutch people’s lives (Schaap & Essed, 2017). In fact, what distinguishes everyday racism from other racisms is “the reproduction of racism through routine and familiar practices” (Essed, 1991, p. 53).

Returning to the general idea that racism is taken to be normal, the term ‘everyday’ in ‘everyday racism’ points out that this form of racism by definition is part of what is seen as normal or expected in Dutch society (Essed, 1991; Goldberg, 2014). Herein lies a true

challenge; the very everydayness of everyday racism is what makes this form of racism incredibly difficult to confront (Goldberg, 2014). The everyday quality of racism, then, might also be valuable for teachers to address in order to make visible the system of interrelated, routine practices that is in place and de-normalize it, which could be a first step towards dismantling everyday racism.

A final, and crucial, idea regarding everyday racism is that people are involved differently therein, depending on their gender, class, and other elements that shape their everyday lives (Essed, 1991). Clearly, then, it is helpful to incorporate an intersectional perspective to grasp how individuals participate in everyday racism. More generally, from a critical race perspective, it is key to approach racism in an intersectional manner (Yosso, 2002), as also highlighted in connection to ‘race.’ Whilst CRT has faced critiques for centralizing ‘race’ and racism (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004), it certainly acknowledges that racism interacts with other forms of subordination (Yosso, 2002) and social forces (Dixson & Anderson, 2018). Additionally, as critical race scholar David Gillborn (2015) clarifies, “To understand how racism works, we need to appreciate how race intersects with other axes of oppression at different times and in different contexts” (p. 279).

Another facet of Dutch racism that is valuable to highlight, as briefly mentioned in the context chapter, is ‘entitlement racism.’ With this term, Essed and Hoving (2014) aim to convey that, in the Dutch context, people feel entitled to make racist comments without having to offer any kind of apology for them. In other words, people feel that they have “the right to offend” others with racist remarks (Essed & Hoving, 2014, p. 18). This sentiment is grounded in the Dutch freedom of speech, in the sense that people make racist remarks in the name of this freedom (Schaap & Essed, 2017). The concept of ‘entitlement racism,’ then, is particularly helpful to understand certain Dutch cases of explicit racism occurring on the individual level.

Concerning language, the avoidance of explicit talk about ‘racism’ and its replacement by – again – a ‘softer’ term in the Dutch context, ‘discrimination’ (Hondius, 2014), is important to point out. The use of ‘discrimination’ can be judged as problematic, in that when Dutch people only explicitly refer to ‘discrimination,’ the specificity of racism and its specific roots may be lost. As Vasta (2007) states, if one solely names racism as discrimination, this does not allow one to “understand the specific types and forms of discrimination based on a person's or groups’ race/ethnicity or cultural background for the simple reason that, although all forms of discrimination are based on unequal power relations, their roots are different” (p. 727). It may, therefore, be valuable for teachers to not only intentionally use the term ‘racism’ to discuss racism, but also to explicitly distinguish ‘racism’ from ‘discrimination.’

Finally, it may be valuable for teachers to acknowledge that, whilst racism is a system of unequal power relations that privileges white people and tends to oppress minority groups (Bryan, 2012; Alemanji & Seikkula, 2018), no one should be seen as a fixed victim (Alemanji & Seikkula, 2018). Whilst racism certainly hurts some more than others, resistance to the system also occurs (Alemanji & Seikkula, 2018) – which the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests have promisingly shown. Discussing such anti-racist efforts, then, may allow teachers to include the perspective of resistance when addressing racism. Yet, it may be useful for teachers to move beyond such highly public anti-racist struggles and also define resistance in terms of more subtle, everyday practices such as survival and oral stories (Kishimoto, 2018). Highlighting such different types of resistance contains great promise in that “Learning about the agency of people of color is often very empowering for students” (Kishimoto, 2018, p. 545). Hence, alongside discussing the detrimental effects of racism, teachers may also bring in the element of resistance to offer a sense of empowerment and hope to those affected by it.

IV. Critical, Anti-racist Approaches to Teaching

In the upcoming section, I will zero in on critical, anti-racist approaches to teaching that relate to pedagogy and teaching methods. A first point that is relevant to address involves teachers’ approach to knowledge. To commence, a critical, anti-racist approach to knowledge critiques ideas of objectivity and neutrality – also specifically within the educational system (Kishimoto, 2018; Smith-Maddox & Solórzano, 2002). This critique is grounded in the idea that ‘neutrality’ is often equated to whiteness and, therefore, is not really neutral, *inter alia* (Bergerson, 2003). Additionally, adopting a critical, anti-racist approach to knowledge may entail critically interrogating what counts as legitimate knowledge – or *whose* knowledge is considered as legitimate (Kishimoto, 2018). In doing so, teachers may, for instance, examine whose stories have been omitted from curricula. This way, teachers may establish the ‘null curriculum,’ defined as “knowledge that is excluded or silenced” (Brunsma, Brown, & Placier, 2012, p. 725).

Furthermore, from a critical, anti-racist perspective, one particularly valuable approach to knowledge related to ‘race’ and racism specifically is to build upon experiential knowledge about ‘race’ and racism – mainly that of students of color – and position this knowledge as legitimate and valuable (Alemanji, 2018; Bergerson, 2003; Smith-Maddox & Solórzano, 2002; Yosso, 2002). The value of this approach is multifold. First, as Dewey (as cited in Miller & Tanner, 2019) states, “it is only in experience that any theory has vital and verifiable

significance” (p. 2). Students’ experiences may thus serve to corroborate the value of specific theoretical perspectives on ‘race’ and racism. Second, sharing experiential knowledge in the classroom can be seen as a form of counter-storytelling (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004). Counter-storytelling, a key facet of CRT, involves telling stories that seek to “cast doubt on the validity of accepted premises or myths, especially ones held by the majority” (Delgado & Stefancic, as cited in DeCuir & Dixson, 2004, p. 27). DeCuir and Dixson (2004) add that counter-storytelling can help to contest hegemonic discourses and give voice to marginalized groups – voices that are usually omitted from the “official ... version of the truth” (King & Chandler, 2016, p. 17). In that, counter-storytelling can help people see “what life is like for others” (Delgado & Stefancic, as cited in DeCuir & Dixson, 2004, p. 27). This way, when students of color get to share their experiences in class, white students may be enabled to better comprehend their worlds and the place of ‘race’ and racism therein. An additional valuable aspect of counter-storytelling lies in that, for students of color, counter-storytelling can help to legitimize their experiences and be a source of bonding (Bergerson, 2003). Hence, when seen through the lens of counter-storytelling, the value of incorporating experiential knowledge proves to be significant for all students.

Moreover, the existing literature on anti-racist education positions self-reflection by both teachers (Kishimoto, 2018) and students (Alemanji & Seikkula, 2018) as another valuable element to include in teaching about ‘race’ and racism. Overall, an anti-racist approach to teaching commences with teachers’ “awareness and self-reflection of their social position and leads to the application of this analysis” in their teaching, as Kishimoto (2018, p. 540) notes. Hence, teachers’ self-reflection – which may thus entail reflection upon their social position but also more specific reflection upon their intersecting identities and how these may impact their teaching (Kishimoto, 2018) – is a necessary first step for teachers who seek to incorporate a self-reflective analysis in their teaching. Additionally, teachers’ self-reflection is vital in order to stimulate students to self-reflect, for they cannot demand self-reflection of their students if they are not willing to do so themselves (Kishimoto, 2018). Additionally, by making their own process of self-reflection visible to students, teachers may set the example for the kind of self-reflection that they hope to ignite in students (Smith, Kashubeck-West, Payton, & Adams, 2017).

In stimulating self-reflection in students, then, students may be “encouraged to make connections to, and see themselves as part of, the topics being discussed” (Kishimoto, 2018, p. 547) – in this case, ‘race’ and racism. Kishimoto (2018) notes that teachers may make students more aware of their social positions by illuminating the complexity of people’s identities and

by critically interrogating the dichotomy between the oppressor and the oppressed. For white students specifically, it is valuable for them to “deconstruct and examine critically their own White racial identity, racial privilege, and their personal role in perpetuating racism” (Yeung & Spanierman, 2013, p. 27). In other words, through self-reflection, white students may begin to ‘work through’ their whiteness. Overall, then, for teachers who seek to teach critically about ‘race’ and racism, the element of self-reflection can be valuable to incorporate.

Another critical, anti-racist approach to teaching is the decentering of authority and the fostering of community (Kishimoto, 2018). In relation to this approach to teaching, emphasizing mutual learning is a valuable component that teachers may include in their teaching, which entails teachers acknowledging that, like their students, they are also still learning. This kind of vulnerability on teachers’ behalf can create a sense of community in the classroom and break down the top-down perspective in which teachers are well-informed and it is solely students who need to become more aware of certain issues (Kishimoto, 2018). In positioning themselves as a learner, then, teachers may contribute to equalizing the difference in power that usually typifies the classroom setting and decenter authority. Another valuable practice may be to not always provide ‘the answer’ but rather facilitate discussions and help students to deepen their own analyses (Kishimoto, 2018). Additionally, to foster a sense of community, Kishimoto (2018) notes that teachers may stimulate “collaborative learning rather than individualistic, competitive learning styles” (p. 549).

A further point that is relevant to consider is the creation of a ‘safe space.’ Creating a safe space is generally deemed essential to foster a suitable environment for difficult conversations (Kishimoto, 2018). For teachers who seek to challenge dominant beliefs about ‘race’ and racism, it may thus be helpful to strive to create a safe space that is conducive to having such conversations. However, it is important to note that a safe space cannot always be a comfortable space (Kishimoto, 2018). If maintaining a safe space, for instance, is prioritized over having difficult conversations, leading teachers to avoid potentially difficult topics, a commitment to creating a safe space may be problematic. In order to critically engage with difficult topics, pushing students out of their comfort zones may be necessary (Kishimoto, 2018). Therefore, teachers may also consider creating a ‘brave space’ (Smith, 2020). In such a space, “students are encouraged to consider the perspectives and ideas that may be new, difficult, and discomfiting to their preconceived values and beliefs” (Smith, 2020, p. 63). Whilst a brave space may thus not always be comfortable for students, such a space holds great potential in stimulating students to consider perspectives that challenge or expand their ideas. In considering the value of both ‘safe spaces’ and ‘brave spaces,’ it may be valuable for teachers

to ask themselves whether the space that they seek to create is conducive to the goals that they have in mind and the conversations that they seek to have about ‘race’ and racism and intentionally create a space that is a good fit.

Another important point to raise is that, from an anti-racist perspective, it is key to integrate the topics of ‘race’ and racism throughout the curriculum (Kishimoto, 2018). Such a consistent approach to the topics may be judged as vital in order to provide the opportunity for students to engage with these topics in an in-depth manner and facilitate students’ growth. As Kishimoto (2018) explains, “one challenging moment in class does not necessarily lead to student growth” (p. 549). Finally, alongside developing a cognitive understanding of racism, it may be valuable for teachers to bring ‘the body’ into their teaching (Ohito, 2020; Vlieghe, 2014). This is because the body can be seen as a source of meaning in itself and “forms a condition of possibility for relating to the world in a meaningful way” (Vlieghe, 2014, p. 25). Bringing ‘the body’ into one’s teaching, then, implies that teachers go beyond merely offering students theoretical knowledge about ‘race’ and racism and actively attempt to facilitate students’ learning about these topics through their bodies.

V. Challenges, Risks, and Pitfalls in Teaching About ‘Race’ and Racism

Given the complexity of the topics, teaching about ‘race’ and racism can be a challenge in itself. Additionally, teachers who seek to incorporate critical, anti-racist approaches to teaching about ‘race’ and racism may face various challenges, risks, and pitfalls that are specific to these approaches. In the next section, I will illuminate a number of challenges, risks, and pitfalls tied to teaching about ‘race’ and racism more generally as well as some that are tied to incorporating critical, anti-racist approaches to teaching about these topics. This section, then, will offer a lens through which I hope to be able to better understand some of the challenges that teachers currently face in teaching about ‘race’ and racism in civic education or might face in moving towards critical, anti-racist teaching about these themes.

First, a general challenge that teachers may face in teaching about ‘race’ and racism is tied to the impossibility of neutrality. As a teacher, one cannot be neutral when focusing on ‘race’ and racism (Dervin, 2018). Whilst taking a stance may not be a challenge for all teachers, this can be the case for teachers who aim to be ‘neutral,’ those who are “Entrenched in a position that views the classroom space as necessarily neutral and apolitical” (Montgomery, 2013, p. 11). Not only, then, might the impossibility of neutrality be a challenge for such teachers, but

their possible attempts to stay ‘more neutral’ may also come with the risk that they could adopt a less critical stance. Adopting such a stance may not be conducive to fostering critical discussions about ‘race’ and racism.

Moreover, there is the issue of denial – an issue that has proved to be prevalent in the Dutch context (Wekker, 2016; Essed & Hoving, 2014). Different forms of denial may oversimplify racism and its consequences (Montgomery, 2013). Denial may also reduce racism to something that only occurs elsewhere or only occurred in the past (Montgomery, 2013), thereby displacing racism (Wekker, 2016). Teachers, then, may have to deal with such denial among students, which can form an obstacle to stimulating students to critically engage with ‘race’ and racism. Also, teachers might have to deal with their own denial regarding the workings of ‘race’ and racism, as teachers’ learning about these issues should not be seen as complete (Stanley, as cited in Montgomery, 2013).

In addition, both teachers and students may experience emotional discomfort during classes about ‘race’ and racism. Teachers may experience fear that students will respond in a certain emotional way or that they lack appropriate knowledge about ‘race’ and racism to teach about these matters (Smith, 2020). Also, in being aware that they are still learners themselves, teachers may experience self-doubt and ask themselves: “Who am I to be teaching this class?” (Smith et al., 2017, p. 656). Additionally, the very presence of minority students may intensify teachers’ fears when teaching about ‘race’ and racism (Bryan, 2012) – particularly for white teachers, I would specify. For students, feelings of anger, fear, discomfort, and even guilt may arise – particularly for white students – when engaging in critical discussions about ‘race’ and racism (Smith, 2020; Ohito, 2020). In discussing the position of white students specifically, DiAngelo (as cited in Smith, 2020) uses the concept of ‘white fragility’ to describe a state wherein “even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves” (p. 61). Emotional responses may thus follow from white students’ ‘white fragility’ in classes that critically engage with ‘race’ and racism. For white students, it may be painful to comprehend the racialized power structure that is in place, in which they are the beneficiaries, the privileged (Alemanji & Seikkula, 2018). Transforming white students’ thought patterns, then, may pose a challenge for teachers, as there is something at stake for them in sticking to these patterns and change may be painful. Indeed, white students may actively attempt to preserve their own innocence and their not-knowing about racism to avoid being complicit and feeling guilty (Rodriguez, 2009). Lastly, in the Dutch context, for both students and teachers, the wider avoidance of ‘race talk’ (Hondius, 2014) may make discussing ‘race’ and racism in explicit terms a source of discomfort.

Teachers' own race/ethnicity may also come with certain challenges and pitfalls. For white teachers, their own investments in whiteness may not always be visible to them, and they may want to position themselves as 'good whites' (Thompson, 2003). This implies that, whereas teachers may be able to acknowledge white racism in general, it is more difficult to recognize their own racism. Herein lies a potential pitfall, as teachers who aim to distance themselves from 'bad,' racist whites may shift the responsibility and focus to "whites who *really* have a problem" (Thompson, 2003, p. 9). Another pitfall for white teachers lies in possible attempts to 'disappear' when seeking to decenter authority (Kishimoto, 2018). Whilst such a move of disappearance may be well-intended, this essentially is a move of power and privilege and should, thus, be avoided (Kishimoto, 2018).

For teachers of color, insecurity may be an issue, which Kishimoto (2018) explains can be caused by "their presumed incompetency because of their race and/or gender" (p. 544). As a result, teachers of color may become highly authoritarian, which is not only incongruent with critical, anti-racist pedagogy but also may limit students' ability to ask questions or critique certain ideas (Kishimoto, 2018). Additionally, important to emphasize is the 'and/or gender' element in the former quote, as both 'race' and gender may play a role in defining the difficulty that teachers might have in terms of decentering authority or sharing power. A white, male teacher, for instance, may comparatively experience little difficulty, as his authority is likely to be firmly established (Kishimoto, 2018). Issues concerning authority, then, may form key challenges for teachers of color (Alexander-Floyd, 2008), which may also arise specifically when incorporating particular facets of anti-racist pedagogy such as decentering authority. Additionally, Kishimoto (2018) explains that teachers of color may be required to engage in self-disclosure more than white teachers. Whilst such self-disclosure takes effort, it may also be an opportunity to set the example for students' self-reflection (Smith et al., 2017) and stimulate students to step out of their comfort zones (Kishimoto, 2018).

Moreover, significant challenges may be found within the existing educational system. Whilst the classroom may seem like an ideal space to engage in critical discussions, most classrooms have been organized in such a way that critical discussions about 'race' are avoided (Harris & Watson-Vandiver, 2020). Additionally, contemporary assessments tend to focus on 'end results' rather than the process of learning (Kishimoto, 2018). To be able to commit to anti-racist teaching, then, anti-racist assessments that concentrate on the process of learning are also needed. Moreover, Galloway, Callin, James, Vimegnon, and McCall (2019) highlight that "educational policies are often silent on addressing racism" (p. 486). Consequently, teachers who seek to critically engage with racism may lack a supportive framework. Dutch policy-

makers' preference for the term 'discrimination' over 'racism' (Vasta, 2007) only increases the likelihood of a lack of explicit reference to 'racism' in educational policy, thereby exacerbating the risk that such a supportive framework is lacking.

Furthermore, the selectivity of the curriculum – and textbooks as the main channels thereof – may pose a challenge, in that both the curriculum and textbooks exclude certain knowledges (Bryan, 2012) and generally promote the dominant group's interests (Weiner, 2018). Bell's (as cited in Smith, 2020) concept of 'interest convergence' helps one understand that white people – the dominant group in the Netherlands (Ghorashi, 2020) – will solely advance people of color's interests when they are in line with their own. Combining this concept with the reality that “any attempt to place race and racism on the agenda, let alone at the *center* of debate, is deeply unpopular” (Gillborn, 2015, p. 277), the curriculum and textbooks arguably are likely to exclude issues of 'race' and racism – particularly critical, transformative knowledge about these topics that challenges white people's privilege, for instance. Therefore, teachers who seek to incorporate critical knowledge about 'race' and racism or the knowledge of marginalized groups may have to put in significant effort.

For teachers attempting to overcome the limitations of existing course materials such as textbooks, other challenges may lie in the selection of alternative resources. Linked to academic resources, for instance, one challenge that teachers may encounter lies within the reality that certain fields of study are grounded in a largely white perspective, dedicating little attention to how people of color interpret racism (Essed, 1991). Moving from textbooks that promote the dominant group's interests to academic resources grounded in the same group's ideas, of course, is not necessarily helpful. Moreover, whilst moving images can be a valuable alternative, as they tend to capture students' attention (Van Kempen, 2018), selecting moving images that contribute to one's overall approach to teaching about 'race' and racism may not be straightforward.

Teachers may also search for alternative teaching methods, which – although promising – may come with their own challenges and pitfalls. School visits by anti-racist professionals, for instance, may simply serve as “exotic excursions” that only disrupt everyday school routines very briefly (Armila, Rannikko, & Sotkasiira, 2018, p. 139). Such anti-racist interventions from the outside, then, cannot easily transform institutional structures. Other promising alternatives to learning from textbooks are forms of role play or experiments in which students are stimulated to walk in someone else's shoes (Montgomery, 2013; Mikander & Hummelstedt-Djedou, 2018). This way, teachers may bring 'the body' into their teaching and allow students to gain some insight into another person's position. However, if a role play is structured in such

a way that students are made to walk in the shoes of either ‘the victim’ or ‘the oppressor,’ this may distract them from their own positions (Mikander & Hummelstedt-Djedou, 2018). Consequently, no real self-reflection is stimulated.

Moreover, a key challenge lies within the reality that learning about ‘race’ and racism also occurs outside of schools. Students’ families, friends, and the media, *inter alia*, also guide students’ learning about ‘race’ and racism (Bryan, 2012) and may teach students to think in certain stereotypical ways, which teachers will need to combat (Sommier & Roiha, 2018). The reality that schools are part of a wider system of learning, then, may pose a challenge. To truly transform the racial status quo, simply incorporating ‘good’ ideas about ‘race’ and racism into school curricula thus is not enough (Bryan, 2012).

Furthermore, several pitfalls are tied to navigating students’ experiential knowledge about ‘race’ and racism. First, it is key to be careful about assuming that students of color are bound to be more ‘racially aware’ (Cabrera, 2018). Indeed, from a critical race perspective, students of color’s perspectives on ‘race’ and racism are highly valuable. Yet, in assuming that all students of color necessarily are more ‘racially aware,’ teachers run the risk of engaging in racial essentialism. Such essentializing moves should be avoided, in line with CRT’s commitment to anti-essentialism (Cabrera, 2018). Second, teachers should aim to avoid ‘tokenizing’ when asking about students of color’s experiences with the workings of ‘race’ and racism, as this puts a grave burden on them to speak for all persons of color (Kishimoto, 2018). One way in which teachers may avoid doing so is by illuminating the heterogeneity within the experiences of students of color.

Finally, a challenge that is tied specifically to incorporating an anti-racist approach to teaching about ‘race’ and racism is that there is no anti-racist approach that works universally. As Alderman et al. (2019) explain, depending on teachers’ identity, knowledge, familiarity with anti-racist pedagogy, and the context in which they teach, anti-racist teaching will entail different things. Additionally, anti-racist approaches may change over time, since they must adapt to racism’s ever-changing nature (Gillborn, 2006). Ultimately, then, there is no single model for teaching in an anti-racist manner that works for every teacher, in every place, in every context. Teachers, therefore, must find out what works best for them as a teacher and for the goals that they have in mind, which can certainly be a challenge.

VI. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have outlined this thesis' theoretical framework. First, I offered some broader insight into the fields of critical race theory and postcolonial studies as well as anti-racism as an approach to 'race' and racism – the three main contributing facets of this thesis' theoretical framework. Next, I illuminated how 'race' may be approached in line with critical race, postcolonial, and anti-racist perspectives. Subsequently, I outlined a set of key critical, anti-racist approaches to racism. Having established how 'race' and racism may be approached in a critical, anti-racist manner, I then moved to critical, anti-racist approaches to teaching, focusing on pedagogy and teaching methods. Finally, I offered insight into the challenges that teachers may face in teaching about 'race' and racism – both more generally and specifically when incorporating a critical, anti-racist approach to teaching about the topics – and illuminated some of the potential risks and pitfalls tied to different facets of teaching about 'race' and racism. In the next chapter, I will outline the methodological approach that I took for this thesis.

Methodology/Methods

I. Data Collection

Semi-structured Interviews

In order to grasp how civic education teachers navigate course content, the national curriculum, course materials, teaching methods, pedagogy, the school context, and their own identity and beliefs regarding ‘race’ and racism in teaching about ‘race’ and racism, I relied upon semi-structured interviewing. A semi-structured approach to interviewing was selected to ensure that the beforementioned issues would be discussed, whilst also allowing for other topics to surface spontaneously (Hesse-Biber, 2007). An interview guide was prepared in advance of the interviews to lay a consistent foundation for the interviews, which can be found in Appendix A.¹ In the interview guide, I included a collection of questions that I deemed necessary to ask in order to answer this thesis’ central research question. These questions, then, were asked in all interviews. Additionally, I included several questions that were intended to help me obtain additional detail or clarification, which were solely asked if additional depth was deemed necessary and/or sufficient time was left to ask them. Moreover, as the first interviews progressed, I added several questions and topics to the original interview guide, allowing the interviewees’ input and my experience with interviewing to expand the guide.

Furthermore, in constructing and reshaping the interview guide, I also paid attention to creating a logical sequence of questions. Yet, the interviews did not necessarily progress in line with the sequence of questions outlined in the interview guide. If a certain topic surfaced naturally within the conversation, I chose to further explore this topic rather than change the topic of conversation to a topic listed higher up the interview guide. This way, the conversations with the interviewees were kept as natural as possible. Overall, then, the interview guide did not serve as a document that had to be followed strictly, in line with Kallio, Pietilä, Johnson, and Kangasniemi’s (2016) and Hesse-Biber’s (2007) takes on the function of semi-structured interview guides. Rather, the interview guide mainly served as a reminder of the topics that needed to be addressed in order to gather similar information across the interviews that would help me answer this thesis’ central research question.

More generally, the rationale behind my choice for interviews was to allow for the voices of civic education teachers to be given appropriate space. During the interviews, civic education teachers could answer questions as elaborately as they wished to and explain their

¹ To clarify, as the interviews were conducted in Dutch, the interview guide was written in Dutch as well.

views on the research topic in their own words (Hesse-Biber, 2007). This way, the interviews allowed me to obtain in-depth insight into Dutch civic education teachers' experiences with, and visions on, teaching about 'race' and racism. Yet, I must acknowledge that, in addition to interviewing civic education teachers about their teaching, it would have been valuable to interview students in order to establish how they experience current teaching about 'race' and racism in civic education. Combining both students' and teachers' perspectives on current teaching about 'race' and racism would have sketched a more complete picture of existing teaching about these topics. Moreover, from a feminist and critical race point of view (Hesse-Biber, 2007; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002), I originally judged a project aimed at uncovering how students – particularly students of color – experience current teaching about 'race' and racism in civic education as particularly valuable, as such a project would have allowed me to build upon knowledge that often lies concealed and work towards social change by reimagining teaching about 'race' and racism using a bottom-up approach. Ultimately, given the complex teaching situation at Dutch secondary schools in times of the corona pandemic, it was deemed more feasible to obtain, and thus focus on, the perspectives of civic education teachers.

Whilst I was aware that this research focus, thus, would not allow me to sketch a complete picture of existing teaching about 'race' and racism in civic education or reimagine current teaching in a bottom-up manner, I still deemed teachers' perspectives as highly valuable to explore. This is because teachers "are influential actors in schools" (Sincer et al., 2019, p. 184) and hold the power to shape students' learning about 'race' and racism – in both promising or transformative ways as well as in ways that may be uncritical or lacking. Ultimately, then, teachers' use of their position of power arguably plays a key role in determining the extent to which courses such as civic education fulfill their potential to contribute to shaping anti-racist futures. Therefore, I viewed exploring how teachers navigate the topics 'race' and racism as highly valuable. My choice to focus on teachers' perspectives, then, has led this thesis to concentrate on teaching practice. In addition to taking center stage in this thesis' overarching research question, this focus is also reflected in this thesis' theoretical framework, for instance, which not only builds upon texts that critically engage with 'race' and racism but also incorporates texts that deal with critical, anti-racist *teaching about* these issues specifically.

The Research Sample and the Sampling Method

In narrowing down the research sample, I opted for a local focus and decided to conduct interviews with civic education teachers who currently teach at different secondary schools located in Rotterdam and Amsterdam specifically. The cities of Rotterdam and Amsterdam

were selected as local contexts, since their populations are both highly diverse; as of now, 52,3% of Rotterdam's population and 55,6% of Amsterdam's population has a migrant background (CBS, n.d.). Ultimately, then, I judged these cities as suitable local contexts to study how civic education teachers navigate teaching about 'race' and racism at Dutch *mixed* secondary schools – the type of secondary schools that I have chosen to focus on in this thesis in order to narrow down my research focus. Important to note is that my research focus on teachers who teach at mixed secondary schools located in Rotterdam and Amsterdam implies that the research sample is not representative of all Dutch civic education teachers. Beyond the fact that this thesis' limited scope did not allow me to interview a sufficient number of teachers to adequately represent all Dutch civic education teachers, I also did not strive for such a representative sample. After outlining my sampling method, I will offer insight into why this project's aims did not require the research sample to be representative of all Dutch civic education teachers.

In determining my sampling method, I worked from the idea that not every school in Rotterdam and Amsterdam would be equally diverse, as segregation according to migration background persists in Dutch secondary education (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2019). In attempting to identify the mixed secondary schools, my initial approach to determining which secondary schools to contact was grounded in a close examination of the information available on secondary schools' websites. In exploring schools' websites, I looked for clues that a school sufficiently reflected the city's diverse population. In that, I particularly focused on secondary schools' school guides and their statements regarding their identity, mission, and vision. If one or more of these pieces of information suggested that a school was diverse, was welcoming to students of diverse backgrounds, and/or actively cared about issues of diversity, the school was deemed as a suitable school to contact. The secondary schools that made it through this process of selection were then contacted by means of an email in which I briefly introduced myself and the research project and inquired about the possibility of interviewing the schools' civic education teacher(s).

Yet, as this first round of sending out emails to secondary schools did not generate sufficient responses from civic education teachers, I chose to send additional emails to secondary schools in Rotterdam and Amsterdam that did not as explicitly describe themselves as mixed or did not as explicitly list the theme of 'diversity' as a priority. My second sampling strategy, therefore, was less specifically targeted at secondary schools that explicitly positioned themselves as mixed on their website. Still, if a secondary school truly appeared to be highly segregated – based on images of its students, for instance – I decided not to contact the school.

In considering the scope of this thesis, I aimed to interview five to seven civic education teachers who currently teach at a mixed secondary school in either Rotterdam or Amsterdam. Additionally, I pursued a focus on teachers who teach at the *havo*- and/or the *vwo*-level. I selected this focus both because this allowed me to narrow down the sample and because the national civic education exam programs of these two educational tracks are highly similar to each other and rather different from the shared exam program of the *vmbo*-level educational tracks (College voor Toetsen en Examens, n.d.). Ultimately, six civic education teachers who teach at the *havo*- and/or the *vwo*-level at different secondary schools across Rotterdam and Amsterdam were interviewed. Five teachers confirmed their willingness to participate in an interview by responding to my email. One teacher agreed to participate after being invited by an acquaintance of mine who possesses professional ties to a secondary school in Rotterdam. Regarding the six teachers' identities, the teachers differed in terms of their age, gender, and 'race'/ethnicity. Given the interviewees' different ages, their teaching experience also varied. These differences among the interviewees, then, made for a rather diverse research sample, albeit still a small and locally specific one.

In terms of external validity, both the small size and locally specific nature of the sample imply that the results of the present research cannot be generalized to the national level – or even to the level of the two urban contexts. Although I must reflect on this limitation when drawing conclusions from the interview data, my main objective, as a feminist researcher, was not to be able to make generalizations about current teaching about 'race' and racism in civic education but rather to better understand different civic education teachers' experiences with, and approaches to, teaching about 'race' and racism (Hesse-Biber, 2007). Hence, rather than considering the limited representativeness of the sample as a problem, drawing upon a small and locally specific sample was taken as an opportunity to gain in-depth insight into how different civic education teachers navigate teaching about 'race' and racism – insight that could ultimately be used to obtain a better understanding of the challenges and promise tied to existing teaching about 'race' and racism, the central aim of this project.

More specifically, I viewed the six interviewees' statements about their teaching as valuable, in that their statements – when analyzed through the lens of critical approaches to (teaching about) 'race' and racism – would allow me to identify and explore particular elements of critical, anti-racist teaching about 'race' and racism that are already present in current teaching about these issues. Identifying these elements, I believed, would allow me to not only grasp the promise of existing teaching but also establish practice-based, feasible ways for civic education teachers to implement a critical, anti-racist approach to teaching about 'race' and

racism, which could be inspiring for teachers who seek to commit to such an approach to teaching about these topics. Additionally, I believed that the interviewees' statements about their teaching – when viewed through this thesis' theoretical lens – would help me to pinpoint certain additional critical, anti-racist approaches to (teaching about) 'race' and racism that are grounded in theory and may help teachers committed to critical, anti-racist teaching about 'race' and racism to deepen or expand their current teaching. Moreover, gaining insight into different teachers' experiences with teaching about 'race' and racism was taken to allow me to better understand the challenges that teachers may face in teaching about 'race' and racism and in implementing particular facets of critical, anti-racist teaching more specifically. In light of these linkages between the six interviewees' perspectives and this project's aims, studying a research sample representative of all Dutch civic education teachers was not deemed necessary in the context of this thesis.

Conducting the Interviews

One interview was conducted by phone, one interview took place face-to-face at a secondary school, and four interviews were conducted via Teams. The interviewee's preference was guiding in determining whether the conversation took place in person, online, or by phone. Certainly, the corona pandemic also significantly influenced how the interviews were conducted. Under normal circumstances, all interviews would have taken place in person, as face-to-face conversations generally are the most pleasant. An interview by phone, for instance, does not allow one to read the other person's facial expressions and gestures when speaking to one another. Additionally, there is an increased risk that the conversing parties talk over each other, as they cannot tell when the other party wishes to speak, which does not benefit the flow of the conversation. Such challenges, then, simply had to be accepted in considering what worked best for all participants in times of the corona pandemic. Furthermore, the length of the interviews ranged from approximately thirty minutes to an hour, depending on the teachers' availabilities. Overall, then, the interviews were rather brief. Consequently, the topics that came up in the conversations could not all be discussed in great detail, which is a limitation that I will address in the concluding chapter.

Ethics

In considering the ethical concerns tied to interviewing and in pursuing a careful, feminist approach to qualitative research (Hesse-Biber, 2007), I designed a concise informed consent form that I distributed to the interviewees via email a few days before each interview (see

Appendix B). This form offered a brief description of the research project, the procedure of processing and storing the interview data, and the interviewees' voluntary participation in the research project. After providing information about these matters, the form asked the interviewees to confirm that they had read and understood the information on the form and agreed with it. Distributing the informed consent form, then, was intended as a practice of transparency about the research project and served to ascertain that the interviewees were aware of what their participation in the project entailed and were comfortable with participating. If an interviewee confirmed that they had read – and agreed with – the content of the form but had not yet filled it out before the interview, I asked the interviewee to fill out the form as soon as possible and send it to me via email. If an interviewee had neither read nor filled out the informed consent form before the interview, I made sure to inform the interviewee about the content of the form before starting the interview, so that the interviewee was made aware of what their participation entailed and could still withdraw from participation based on this information.

II. Data Analysis

Thematic Analysis

In order to analyze the interview data, I performed a thematic analysis, allowing themes to emerge inductively (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). In performing a thematic analysis, I roughly followed the five steps that Castleberry and Nolen (2018) propose to follow in a thematic analysis. First, as Castleberry and Nolen (2018) suggest, the researcher compiles the data into a form that is convenient to use. In the context of the present research, this step entailed transcribing the interviews. Before each interview, I asked the interviewee for their approval to audio-record the interview, which ultimately allowed for verbatim accounts of the interviews to be constructed. Not only did this process of transcribing the interviews enable me to shape the interview data into a more convenient form, but it also allowed me to grow increasingly familiar with the interview data, corresponding with how Castleberry and Nolen (2018) typify the first step of a thematic analysis.

The second step of a thematic analysis involves separating the data into meaningful clusters by using codes, as Castleberry and Nolen (2018) note. Put concisely, coding is “the process by which raw data are gradually converted into usable data through the identification of themes, concepts, or ideas that have some connection with each other” (Austin & Sutton, as cited in Castleberry & Nolen, 2018, p. 808). I did not employ a pre-existing coding scheme, but

rather developed it while coding. Coding was guided by this thesis' main research question, which implies that I focused on the content that I deemed valuable in helping to answer this question. More specifically, the main topics listed in this thesis' overarching research question – course content, the national curriculum, course materials, teaching methods, the school context, teachers' own identity and beliefs regarding 'race' and racism, and the challenges that teachers face – served as the starting point for the thematic analysis, in that I commenced my analysis by color-coding the interview data according to the former main topics. These topics would eventually also function as the main topics guiding my presentation of the themes (see Appendix C).

Important to note is that I also color-coded content linked to creating a safe space and teachers' key aims or what is most leading for them in teaching about 'race' and racism, as I also asked about these issues in most interviews. Ultimately, however, the former two topics did not evolve into main topics in the thematic analysis, as alternative ways of including them worked better, in my view. As for teachers' ideas linked to creating a safe space, I deemed them to fit best within the topic of 'pedagogy,' which, based on the interview data, was later added as another main topic to guide the thematic analysis and, crucially, also incorporated into this thesis' central research question. Moreover, I decided to address some of the teachers' key aims in teaching about 'race' and racism in discussing the promise of current teaching about 'race' and racism (see *The Promise of Current Teaching*), as I did not deem outlining teachers' overall aims to fit into the broader collection of themes. This is because the collection of themes was specifically intended to offer insight into how teachers navigate particular factors in teaching about 'race' and racism and the challenges that they face, and teachers' overall aims did not fit into this focus. Hence, the topics that I color-coded the interview data for were incorporated into this thesis based on where I deemed the topics to fit best, either as a stand-alone main topic in the thematic analysis, under another main topic, or into a different section of the thesis.

After having color-coded the interview data based on the beforementioned main topics, I assembled all information related to each topic and started coding within the topics by adding comments on the side. I then created an overview of all the codes that I uncovered per main topic to prepare for the next stage of the thematic analysis. The third step of thematic analysis outlined by Castleberry and Nolen (2018) involves putting together the codes and creating themes with them. The resulting themes, then, represent how different codes are related in a broader sense in order to help answer a project's research question(s). Crucially, the process of grouping together codes into themes is neither straightforward, nor done all at once. Instead, themes must be reviewed multiple times in order to ensure that they are robust (Castleberry &

Nolen, 2018). Accordingly, researchers must ask themselves questions such as whether each theme is really a theme rather than a code and whether each theme is sufficiently supported by the interview data.

This description of the third step of thematic analysis, then, summarizes the approach that I took to construct themes in the context of this thesis. In constructing themes, the overview of all codes structured according to the beforementioned main topics functioned as the starting point, in that I created themes by reviewing how the codes listed under a certain main topic could be organized into themes. I went through this process of organization multiple times, reshaping and renaming the themes until I deemed them to be sufficiently solid – that is, sufficiently representative of the codes contained therein and distinct from the other themes. The reshaping also continued into the process of writing out the themes. For instance, when I noticed significant overlap in the ideas conveyed by two themes, I reshaped the themes. I also made more detailed decisions regarding the in- and exclusion of certain content while writing. If, for instance, I had named multiple examples for a certain theme that were not all necessary to convey the main idea or presence of the theme, I chose to leave some examples out.

The fourth step that Castleberry and Nolen (2018) list represents the stage in which the researcher interprets the data. Whilst interpretation also takes place during the first three steps, the fourth step is where the researcher attempts to put into words how the themes that they have constructed interrelate and what the researcher has found in a more global sense. Interpretations, then, take place at an even higher level than the themes constructed in step three and form the basis for the final step of the thematic analysis – concluding (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). In this final step, the researcher explicitly responds to the research questions based on what they have found in the thematic analysis. In the context of this research, I focused on answering the second part of this thesis' main research question: how might critical approaches to (teaching about) 'race' and racism be used to examine the challenges and promise tied to existing teaching about 'race' and racism in civic education? In the interpreting and concluding stage of the thematic analysis, then, I employed this thesis' theoretical framework as a lens to examine the themes. In that, I mainly aimed to better understand the challenges that teachers face, explore the potential of how teachers currently navigate teaching about 'race' and racism, and identify particular topics, angles, and approaches that may be valuable to pursue in the future for those teachers who seek to teach about the topics in a critical, anti-racist manner.

In critically reflecting upon the process of performing a thematic analysis, I feel that it is imperative to address my role as the sole researcher who performed the thematic analysis of the interview data. In the upcoming paragraphs, I will reflect upon the ways in which my

interests, beliefs, commitments, and position as a white, native Dutch scholar may have influenced the thematic analysis, not only in terms of the process leading up to constructing the themes, but also in terms of presenting and interpreting the themes. This commitment to reflexivity and refusal to present my voice as disembodied or objective is grounded in feminist theory (Harding, 1987; Letherby, 2003).

More broadly, in committing to reflexivity, I aim to highlight that my selective representation and interpretation of the interview data makes it impossible for the thematic analysis to be judged as ‘neutral.’ This stems from a wider rejection of the idea that ‘neutral research’ or a ‘neutral researcher’ exists (Vanner, 2015; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002), particularly when dealing with the topics of ‘race’ and racism. Crucially, however, such a move away from neutrality does not necessarily imply a rejection of aiming for any kind of objectivity in research. In fact, in practicing reflexivity, I aimed to pursue a feminist kind of objectivity – more specifically, ‘strong objectivity,’ which Harding (1992) explains “requires that the subject of knowledge be placed on the same critical, causal plane as the objects of knowledge” (p. 458). This way, objectivity is not approached as something that “requires the elimination of *all* social values and interests from the research process and the results of research” (Harding, 1992, p. 460). Rather, reflection upon how one’s interests, *inter alia*, have guided one’s research can be seen as constituting the very basis for ‘strong objectivity.’ This way, not aiming to be neutral as a researcher does not necessarily equal to not striving to be objective. Ultimately, then, whilst I did not strive to be neutral in the context of this thesis, I did pursue the kind of objectivity that Harding (1992) has named ‘strong objectivity,’ by being reflexive.

In order to begin to illuminate how my interests and commitments influenced the thematic analysis, it is key reflect upon the fact that the interview guide – which reflected the main topics part of this thesis’ overarching research question – significantly directed the course of the interviews and, therefore, inevitably also shaped the thematic analysis. Whilst the interviewees could bring up certain topics themselves and the semi-structured approach to interviewing allowed for a sense of spontaneity, the interview guide still played a substantial role in guiding my conversations with civic education teachers. Ultimately, then, the interview guide – to a large extent – determined which topics the interviewees shared their reflections upon, thereby strongly shaping the interview data that I eventually worked with during the thematic analysis. This way, the very basis for the thematic analysis was strongly shaped by my interests as a researcher – that is, by my interest in exploring how teachers navigate the factors part of this thesis’ research question in teaching about ‘race’ and racism and the challenges that teachers face in teaching about these topics.

Furthermore, my position as a white researcher and an outsider to the teaching domain may have shaped the interview data that I worked with in the thematic analysis. Whilst I can only speculate about how my whiteness may have shaped my conversations with the interviewees, in five out of the six interviews, my whiteness was visible and, thus, could have played a role. For instance, my whiteness could have been a factor that stimulated certain teachers to feel more – or less – comfortable with me asking questions related to their ‘race’/ethnicity and its role in their teaching. Accordingly, this may have led teachers to share more – or less – information about this topic. This way, the visibility of my whiteness in the interview setting could have shaped the interview data. Another factor that may have played a role is the fact that I am not part of the educational field and lack professional knowledge about secondary school teaching. Considering this, teachers may have oversimplified certain ideas or omitted certain technical terminology in discussing their teaching. This idea surfaced in one interview, in which a teacher stated that they did not want to get “too technical.” Ultimately, then, my outsider status in relation to the teaching domain may have shaped the conversations and, therefore, also the data that I eventually worked with.

Moreover, although the themes presented in this thesis display the interviewees’ reflections upon the research topic, it is important to acknowledge that I occupied a position of power in being able to guide the way in which these reflections were grouped together, presented, and interpreted. This position of power is crucial to explicitly recognize from a feminist perspective as a means to make visible that “‘elements of inequality, exploitation, and even betrayal are endemic to [research]’” (Stacey, as cited in Letherby, 2003, p. 117). Whilst I could not remove the element of inequality inherent to the relationship between myself and the interviewees in this project, I did actively attempt to minimize the risk of betrayal by handling the interview data in an affirmative manner. This implied, for instance, that I focused on exploring the promise of the interviewees’ approaches to teaching about ‘race’ and racism rather than criticizing their approaches. Accordingly, in the analysis, I actively attempted to identify those facets of current teaching that are in line with critical, anti-racist approaches to (teaching about) ‘race’ and racism and highlight their promise. Additionally, in suggesting ways to further critical, anti-racist teaching about ‘race’ and racism, I intentionally did not present them in a way that positions current teaching practice as lacking. Moreover, in examining the challenges that civic education teachers face in teaching about ‘race’ and racism, I aimed to look for potential explanations as to why these challenges exist in the wider Dutch educational system and society rather than simply attributing the existence of these challenges to a lack of teaching skills on the teachers’ part.

Furthermore, I also actively attempted to minimize the risk of betrayal when translating the interviewees' statements, an issue that I must also address in practicing reflexivity. As the interviews were conducted in Dutch and this thesis is written in English, I needed to translate the interviewees' statements from Dutch to English. In doing so, the meaning of teachers' specific choice of words inevitably got lost to some extent. Another factor that most likely added to this loss of meaning is that I sometimes paraphrased rather than quoted the interviewees' statements to benefit the flow of the text. Additionally, when quoting the interviewees, I omitted certain slips of the tongue, hesitations ('uhm'), and elements of repetition in order to present their ideas in a clear manner. These practices, then, emphasize a significant element of inequality that is inherent to this research project, in that I, as a researcher, fully held the power to put the interviewees' ideas into words. Additionally, these practices brought with them the possibility of betrayal, in that my choices could lead me to misrepresent the interviewees' ideas. This risk arguably was only strengthened when the interviewees' statements were taken out of their original context during the process of coding and grouped together with other interviewees' statements. To attempt to minimize the risk of betrayal in presenting the interviewees' ideas, I always went back to the interview transcriptions to check the context in which a certain statement was made. This way, I attempted to increase the likelihood that how I interpreted the interviewees' statements corresponded with their ideas.

Finally, in acknowledging my whiteness, I worked from the idea that, whilst I am committed to promoting anti-racist futures and have read quite some literature on the topic, I most likely cannot fully understand what it means to teach about 'race' and racism in a meaningful manner. Also, whilst I designed this project in line with the aim of being an anti-racist ally, I was careful about viewing myself as a 'good white,' in acknowledging that my own investments in whiteness may not be visible to me, as for other whites (Thompson, 2003). Moreover, in recognizing that I am not a civic education teacher, I reminded myself to be aware of the reality that I cannot adequately assess the feasibility of introducing particular critical, anti-racist approaches to teaching about 'race' and racism in civic education. Considering these reflections on my own position, in drawing conclusions from the interview data, I actively sought to be careful about making statements that convey the idea that my voice can tell civic education teachers how they should teach about 'race' and racism.

Ethics

As a means to carefully handle the interview data, I chose to anonymize the interview transcriptions. Before archiving the verbatim interview transcriptions, I identified all

information that could potentially reveal the interviewees' identities and replaced it by neutral labels. To illustrate, in a passage in which an interviewee specified their age, I replaced this information by '< age specification >,' and when an interviewee mentioned their school's name, I replaced the school's name by '< school name >.' By making these changes, I attempted to ascertain that the transcripts could not be directly linked to the teachers whom I interviewed or reveal sensitive information about them. The only identity-specific that I intentionally left in the interview transcripts was information that specified the interviewees' 'race'/ethnicity, as examining how teachers navigate their own identity is part of this thesis' key aims. The only change that I made to the transcripts in relation to this factor was that a teacher's non-white 'race'/ethnicity was labeled as '< non-white >' if described as more specific than this, and a teacher's white 'race'/ethnicity was labeled as '< white >' if described otherwise. This way, the only distinction that could be made regarding the interviewees' identities based on the interview transcriptions would be whether they were white or non-white. Ultimately, then, I did not deem this information to compromise the interviewees' anonymity.

Moreover, in presenting and analyzing the themes that emerged from my thematic analysis, I chose to present the interviewees' ideas in an anonymous manner, which was also explained to the interviewees in the informed consent form. This implies that the interviewees' statements are presented in such a way that they cannot reveal teachers' identities to the reader. Rather than using names, then, I chose to refer to the interviewees as *Teacher A, B, C, D, E,* and *F* in the analysis. Additionally, I chose to use 'they/them' pronouns when referring to the interviewees in order to not reveal their gender. The only identity-specific information that I did include was the information that the interviewees shared when asked how they navigate their identity in teaching about 'race' and racism. In handling the interviewees' answers to this question, then, I paid close attention to presenting the interview data in such a way that linking the interviewees' reflections upon this question to them as individuals would be extremely difficult.

III. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have outlined my methodological approach, offering insight into my research sample and sampling method, the interviews I conducted, my thematic analysis of the interview data, and my approaches to dealing with ethics. I also incorporated an element of reflexivity as a means of pursuing 'strong objectivity,' as outlined by Harding (1992). In the following

chapter, I will build upon the themes that emerged from my thematic analysis to examine the challenges and promise tied to current teaching about ‘race’ and racism in civic education.

Exploring The Challenges and Promise Tied to Existing Teaching About ‘Race’ and Racism in Civic Education

I. Analysis: A Brief Introduction

As outlined in the previous chapter, I performed a thematic analysis in order to analyze the interview data. In Appendix C, one can find an overview of the themes that emerged. This overview offers insights connected to the first part of this thesis’ central research question – that is, how do civic education teachers navigate teaching about ‘race’ and racism at Dutch mixed secondary schools? As explained in the methodological chapter, the themes are presented according to the following main topics: course content, the national curriculum, teaching methods, pedagogy, course materials, the school context, teachers’ own identities and beliefs regarding ‘race’ and racism, and the challenges faced in teaching about ‘race’ and racism. Together, then, the themes listed in Appendix C offer a broad, descriptive overview of how the interviewees navigate the beforementioned factors in teaching about ‘race’ and racism and the challenges that they face in teaching about these issues.

Rather than including this overview into the main body of this thesis, I chose to place it in Appendix C, because I did not deem all content included in the themes to be helpful for the purpose of exploring the promise and the challenges tied to existing teaching about ‘race’ and racism, which ultimately is the key focus of my analysis. For instance, in the theme *Own Materials* (see Appendix C), one can find that one of the course materials that Teacher F uses is a document that contains information about politics after the Second World War, of which racism is not a huge part; yet, the topic is always discussed in class, as they explained. Whilst this content does offer insight into how Teacher F navigates the issue of course materials, it does not describe a challenge that they face, nor can the promise of their use of this document about politics adequately be assessed, since the document’s content and its link to racism were not clearly described. Therefore, I decided to exclude this content from the analysis.

In this chapter, then, I will zero in on – and analyze – the content of the themes that did allow me to dive deeper into the promise and challenges tied to current teaching, thereby helping me to explore the second part of this thesis’ main research question: how might critical approaches to (teaching about) ‘race’ and racism be used to examine the challenges and promise tied to existing teaching about ‘race’ and racism in civic education? My engagement with this question will be distributed across two sections – the first concentrates on the challenges that teachers face in teaching about ‘race’ and racism, and the second focuses on the promise tied

to current teaching about ‘race’ and racism. Following these two sections, I will present a final section that reflects on some of my findings in the previous two sections and, based on this thesis’ theoretical framework, illuminates various additional ways in which teachers might further develop their teaching about ‘race’ and racism in a critical, anti-racist manner that did not surface in the themes as being part of teachers’ current approaches to teaching about ‘race’ and racism. Additionally, this section will highlight several ways forward raised by the interviewed teachers themselves.

II. The Challenges Tied to Teaching About ‘Race’ and Racism

In the upcoming section, I will explore the challenges that teachers face in teaching about ‘race’ and racism. A first insight that arose in the themes (see Appendix C) is that some challenges lie within factors that are beyond teachers’ control, such as those tied to the covid restrictions and learning outside of schools. When asked about the teaching methods that they use to teach about ‘race’ and racism, for instance, Teacher E corroborated the idea that certain challenges lie within the covid restrictions, in stating: “When we were still without all kinds of restrictions of corona, that was easier, in my view.” I then took their subsequent naming of ‘going into society’ as an illustration of a teaching method that they used to incorporate into their teaching before the corona pandemic, such as visiting *Humanity House*, a place in which they explained students “could really experience what it is like as a refugee and what are then the extra problems for someone who really is discriminated against based on racist ideas.” This way, the covid restrictions seemed to arise as a challenge or obstacle in terms of allowing students to *experience* ‘race’- and racism-related issues through particular teaching methods that involve ‘going into society.’ Fortunately, the covid restrictions will not form a lasting challenge, and teachers who seek to enable students to learn through experiencing by ‘going into society’ will be able to do so again.

Regarding learning outside of schools, this thesis’ theoretical framework illuminated that students’ families, friends, and the media, *inter alia*, may also guide students’ learning about ‘race’ and racism (Bryan, 2012) and may teach students to think in certain stereotypical ways (Sommier & Roiha, 2018), which could be a challenge for teachers. Yet, different civic education teachers’ statements suggested that a *lack* of learning outside of schools, caused by factors such as parents not taking on an active role in teaching their children about issues such as ‘race’ and racism, may also form a challenge for teachers. Teacher D, for instance, voiced

that “most students, they can learn reasonably well, and they actually do have potential, but they do not at all come from a family where sometimes a newspaper lies on the table or is talked about these kinds of things.” They then seemed to attribute students’ family situations, or their lack of learning at home, as part of the reason why students – or most students – “do not have a clue about what the world looks like,” in their eyes. In reflecting upon this, Teacher D explained that civic education is “a very important course” and later added that “a couple hours more civic education would not hurt.” Their latter statement suggests that, ultimately, they lack the hours needed to change students’ lack of awareness of “what the world looks like.” Hence, when all responsibility is put on teachers to teach students about issues such as ‘race’ and racism – issues part of ‘what the world looks like’ – this may be a burden that is too heavy for teachers to carry, for their time with students is limited. A lack of learning outside of school, then, may be a larger problem that exceeds the topics of ‘race’ and racism and requires wider changes to the course such as an increased number of teaching hours in order to help teachers deal with it.

Crucially, the number of teaching hours surfaced as a wider challenge, particularly when combined with the wide range of topics that teachers voiced to need to address (see Appendix C, *Limited Number of Hours and Wide Range of Topics*). Whilst Teacher B, for instance, stated that they “would absolutely find it very important to be able to give racism a much more prominent place,” they explained that:

Civic education does not have that much time. And they also want us to discuss terrorism, and radicalization, and how do I deal with money, and well, you know, everything that happens, they want us to discuss in civic education, but we do get very few hours. Yes. Give me a solution. It is just impossible.

Evidently, then, the limited number of hours combined with the wide range of topics that ‘they’ – those who structure civic education as a course – want civic education teachers to address is both a challenge and an obstacle to giving racism a more prominent place, in Teacher B’s view. At a later point, then, Teacher B stated: “go and talk with the Ministry of Education, as they have determined exactly how many hours and everything that needs to be in there.” In stating this, they emphasized that this challenge is grounded in decisions that are beyond teachers’ control, a reality that came across as a source of frustration.

Moreover, for Teacher E, the curriculum appeared to play a specific role in creating the challenge connected to the plurality of topics that teachers must address, in that they explained that ‘race’ and racism are “one of the hundred themes” that teachers must cover, not only from their own perspective, but also based on curricular demands. In this regard, navigating both the structure offered by the curriculum and their own views on what topics they should address

appeared to form a challenge. All in all, then, the plurality of topics that teachers must – and/or seek to – address in civic education may limit the space that ‘race’ and racism (can) take up in the course. Unfortunately, the lens of critical approaches to (teaching about) ‘race’ and racism does not offer any solutions to the limited number of hours given to civic education and the wide range of topics that teachers need to address, nor does it help to explain this reality. Yet, such structural challenges must not be overlooked, as they may impact civic education teachers’ teaching in such a way that they diminish the feasibility of discussing ‘race’ and racism in an in-depth manner – and, therefore, also the feasibility of discussing the topics in a thorough, critical, anti-racist manner.

The lens of critical approaches to (teaching about) ‘race’ and racism may, however, offer possible explanations for the wider lack of support and guidance – another theme that surfaced (see Appendix C) – particularly in terms of the lack of explicit reference to ‘race’ and racism in the national curriculum. First, the Dutch’ avoidance of explicit talk about ‘race’ and racism and the use of ‘softer’ terms instead (Hondius, 2014; Wekker, 2016) offers a possible reason why there is no *explicit* reference to ‘race’ and racism in the national civic education curriculum. Second, since the curriculum generally promotes the dominant group’s interests (Weiner, 2018) – the dominant group being white Dutch people (Ghorashi, 2020) – and it is not necessarily in this group’s interest to further students’ knowledge about ‘race’ and racism, let alone to distribute critical knowledge aimed at transforming the racial status quo, these topics’ omission from the Dutch civic education curriculum would not be surprising. Crucially, in looking towards the future, the conceptual lens of ‘interest convergence’ (Bell, as cited in Smith, 2020) helps one grasp that Dutch people of color’s interests are likely to only be included into the curriculum when they align with white Dutch people’s interests. As long as the white Dutch continue to deny the workings of ‘race’ and racism, view racism as an issue that has no relevance in today’s Dutch context, and reject the opportunity to learn more about these issues (Smith, 2014; Goldberg, 2014; Essed & Hoving, 2014; Wekker, 2016), then, ‘race’ and racism most likely will not be included in the curriculum. Hence, transformations within the wider Dutch context – which BLM has promisingly helped to set in motion (Ghorashi, 2020) – may be judged as imperative to help alleviate the lack of guidance and support that teachers face in relation to teaching about ‘race’ and racism.

Moreover, in further considering the Dutch’ avoidance of explicitly discussing ‘race’ and racism (Hondius, 2014), a sense of discomfort may also be tied to explicitly addressing these topics in class. The challenge connected to language when teaching about ‘race’ and racism mentioned by Teacher D, who stated to find it difficult to refer to people of color (see

Appendix C, *Language*), might, then, be explained from the perspective that explicit ‘race talk’ may cause discomfort in the Dutch context. This way, this challenge tied to speaking in ‘racial’ terms might partially stem from wider Dutch societal dynamics of avoidance rather than merely being a personal challenge faced by Teacher D.

The challenge tied to a lack of knowledge regarding ‘race’ and racism, which Teacher E raised in acknowledging that they may have a certain “blind spot” in relation to the definitions of ‘race’ and racism, may also partially be grounded in a wider contextual factor. They hinted at this idea in stating that: “this is not a theme that we experienced like that when we were still at school,” thereby suggesting that their “blind spot” is – at least partially – grounded in their lack of learning about ‘race’ and racism at school. The roots of this challenge may, therefore, partially lie within how ‘race’ and racism have (not) been dealt with in the Dutch educational domain – a wider contextual factor. Of course, however, one cannot simply position omissions in the educational domain as the only factor that shaped someone’s lack of knowledge about ‘race’ and racism. For white Dutch teachers like Teacher E, their possible ‘white innocence’ (Wekker, 2016) may, for instance, also have played a role in shaping their “blind spot” over time, in making them view Dutch society as racism-free and, therefore, perceive learning more about racism as unnecessary. Additionally, the time that Teacher E can invest in learning more about ‘race’ and racism may simply be limited, given the many topics that civic education teachers must address, which they arguably cannot all explore in equal depth. Despite the existence of different possible explanations for the challenge that Teacher E faces, I would argue that this challenge corroborates the value of active engagement with ‘race’ and racism at school – particularly in civic education, a course that all Dutch secondary school students must take – in helping to prevent future generations from also having a ‘blind spot’ regarding these themes.

Another challenge that surfaced is tied to navigating the person behind the teacher, which seemed to particularly affect Teacher C in navigating their position as a non-white teacher, as illuminated in the theme *Objectivity, Neutrality, and Being Bound to One’s Position* (see Appendix C). Teacher C clarified that, in teaching about Black Lives Matter, they attempt to avoid talking solely from their own position, as students may think that it only makes sense that they would support BLM. Accordingly, they stated:

So, it is also sometimes seeking the balance therein, that what you want to convey is a broader theme than just saying yes, but guys, do you understand that I find that awful, because it is so obvious that I can find it awful.

Although it was not completely clear to me what exactly would be obvious for Teacher C to ‘find awful’ – possibly, the death of George Floyd or the issues addressed by BLM – this statement did clarify that, for Teacher C, a challenge lies in finding a ‘balanced way’ to discuss ‘race’- and racism- related issues, in navigating both their own beliefs regarding ‘race’ and racism and how students may read their skin color in the context of discussions surrounding such issues.

Whilst this challenge is clearly grounded in Teacher C’s ‘race’/ethnicity, one could also connect the challenge to the broader impossibility of neutrality when teaching about ‘race’ and racism (Dervin, 2018), in that Teacher C’s quest for ‘balance’ and their seeming efforts to ‘switch off’ their own frame of reference can be read as attempts to be ‘more neutral.’ Indeed, this thesis’ theoretical framework illuminated that, when one is invested in being ‘neutral,’ the impossibility of neutrality can certainly be a challenge in teaching about ‘race’ and racism. Promisingly, though, Teacher C seemed to have found a way to confront the impossibility of neutrality, in finding moments wherein they acknowledge to students that: “guys, also I really do not think that I stand here talking neutrally about a theme, however badly I would want to do so.” This way, they intentionally make students aware of the reality that they are not a “source of truth.”

Although it is important to legitimate the challenge that Teacher C faces, the promise of their approach to navigating the impossibility of neutrality also deserves to be highlighted, as it may be inspirational for other civic education teachers for whom this is a challenge – both white and non-white – and who seek to deal with it in a critical, anti-racist manner. In openly stating that they cannot be neutral and conveying the message that they are not a source of truth, Teacher C can be seen to approach the knowledge that they distribute in a way that involves a critique of neutrality. Not only can this approach to knowledge be seen as a decidedly critical, anti-racist approach (Kishimoto, 2018; Smith-Maddox & Solórzano, 2002), but being open about one’s lack of neutrality as a teacher may also contain great promise in teaching students to critically approach the knowledge that teachers distribute rather than simply taking it in as ‘the truth.’ Teacher C’s approach to dealing with the impossibility of neutrality, then, may serve as a source of inspiration for teachers who seek to navigate their own position and beliefs in a critical, anti-racist manner and foster a critical approach to knowledge.

Particular student responses also appeared to form a challenge (see Appendix C, *Students’ Responses*). When I asked Teacher C to what extent there are things that they find difficult in discussing ‘race’ and racism, they mentioned various responses that could come from students in classes about ‘race’ and racism. One possible response that they named was

the argument that the discussion should be about ‘social class’ rather than ‘race’ and racism, which they explained to find difficult to navigate. Interestingly, when I asked them to what extent such a response also comes up in the classroom, they replied “good question, actually, that response barely comes up in the classroom, but a lot more when I talk to my peers.” This way, Teacher C’s experiences *outside* of the classroom in discussing ‘race’- and racism-related issues appeared to guide their expectations regarding how discussions *inside* of the classroom could go. Hence, I learned that teachers’ worlds outside of school may be taken into the classroom in the form of expectations and create potential challenges in their minds. The fact that this challenging response proved to be more imagined than real in the case of Teacher C, however, does not mean that this response does not surface in other teachers’ classes or might at some point come up in Teacher C’s classes. It may, then, be helpful to imagine ways to deal with this response. Building upon critical race perspectives on ‘race’ and racism (Gillborn, 2015; Yosso, 2002), one way to navigate this response could be to avoid acting on the either/or element of this argument – that is, teaching about *either* class *or* ‘race’ and racism – and rather navigate this argument by incorporating an intersectional perspective on ‘race’ and racism, thereby leaving room to address *both* class and ‘race’ and racism. In dealing with both topics in an intersectional manner, teachers may not only tackle the risk of students remarking that it is class that should be addressed rather than ‘race’ and racism, but also teach about ‘race’ and racism in line with critical race perspectives (Gillborn, 2015; Yosso, 2002).

Another possible student response that Teacher C marked as challenging, yet has found a way to navigate, was students getting into a “defensive mode.” They mentioned this response specifically in relation to discussing the topics of whiteness and white privilege, and they voiced to navigate the risk of getting this response by choosing not to explicitly start the discussion with the terms ‘whiteness’ and ‘white privilege’ but rather work towards them. In light of this thesis’ theoretical framework, Teacher C’s mentioning of this student response in relation to the themes of whiteness and white privilege stood out to me, as getting defensive is a student response that is explicitly marked as a potential challenge in this thesis’ theoretical framework – particularly in relation to white students, through the concept of ‘white fragility.’ In using the term ‘white fragility,’ DiAngelo (as cited in Smith, 2020) points at a state wherein, for white students, “even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves” (p. 61). Combining this term with the reality that, for white students, it may be painful to comprehend the racialized power structure that is in place, in which they are the benefitters, the privileged (Alemanji & Seikkula, 2018), whiteness and white privilege certainly could be topics that, when discussed, could trigger white students’ ‘white fragility.’ This way,

students' 'white fragility' and the defensive moves that may follow therefrom may indeed be a challenge for teachers when discussing whiteness and white privilege.

Whilst Teacher C did not explicitly link the possibility of defensive responses specifically to white students but rather stated that their approach to the topics was intended "to not get *people* [emphasis added] in a sort of defensive mode," the fact that they mentioned this response specifically in relation to the topics of whiteness and white privilege suggests that they are aware that these specific topics could trigger defensive responses within students. Ultimately, then, although Teacher C's approach to navigating the challenge was not explicitly described as targeting white students' possible responses, it can be judged as promising in relation to this group specifically, in that Teacher C's careful approach to discussing whiteness and white privilege may minimize the risk of triggering white students' 'white fragility.' Evidently, Teacher C's awareness of the possibility of students becoming defensive stimulates them to make active teaching choices to navigate this response. This highlights that, although being aware of the challenges that one may face as a teacher when discussing 'race' and racism may not necessarily be pleasant, such an awareness may help one find ways to tackle the expected challenges.

Lastly, concerning students' responses, Teacher D mentioned that the topic of racism "is not always taken seriously." Whilst this response may be grounded in wider Dutch patterns, such as the denial of the workings of 'race' and racism (Essed & Hoving, 2014), to truly understand this response, one would need to ask students directly. Doing so could be particularly helpful for teachers, as knowing what causes this response could help teachers to find more effective ways to spark students' interest in the topic. Moreover, asking different students about their interest in the themes of 'race' and racism could help to establish whether students' identities play a role in shaping this response. This may be relevant to examine, as different teachers expressed that they feel that teaching about 'race' and racism is 'easier' when teaching to groups that are more diverse as compared to less diverse groups (see Appendix C, *The School's Diverse Student Population*).

In relation to the challenges surrounding the risk of hurting students, the lens of critical approaches to teaching about 'race' and racism allows one to understand that teaching about these issues does not necessarily involve comfortable discussions or come without any risk of students potentially facing emotional discomfort (Smith, 2020; Ohito, 2020). This may particularly hold when teaching about these issues is approached in a critical, anti-racist manner and a 'brave space' is created (Smith, 2020). Also, since teachers' learning about 'race' and racism should not be seen as complete (Montgomery, 2013), the risk of hurting a student

because of one's ignorance or lack of sensitivity, which Teacher B mentioned, arguably is always present. Perhaps, then, completely removing this risk is impossible; yet, by investing in learning more about (teaching about) 'race' and racism, teachers may reduce it. Of course, however, such learning requires time, which teachers might not necessarily have, or wish to dedicate thereto, in considering their wider teaching responsibilities.

Finally, in thinking about how teachers might deal with quiet students when discussing sensitive topics like 'race' and racism – which Teacher C brought up as a challenge – this thesis' theoretical framework can only offer making active attempts to create a safe space as a possible approach (Kishimoto, 2018). Not only did Teacher C already prove to do this, but I must also emphasize that they raised this challenge specifically in reflecting upon the possible impact of their non-whiteness in the classroom, which adds another dimension to the challenge of dealing with students' quietness that general strategies to create a safe space may not effectively help them tackle. Perhaps, workshops focused on how to deal with sensitive topics could be helpful, as Teacher C mentioned. Yet, in considering Teacher C's linkage between their non-whiteness and students' possible quietness or inhibition when sensitive topics are discussed, I would argue that such workshops would only help to tackle the 'race'/ethnicity-related component of Teacher C's described challenge if they actively involve teachers' 'race'/ethnicity and offer strategies that may help teachers navigate their physical presence in the classroom when discussing sensitive topics such as 'race' and racism.

All in all, we have seen that civic education teachers face various challenges in teaching about 'race' and racism – challenges that are grounded in different factors, some that exceed teachers' control more than others and some that may be more difficult to overcome or deal with than others. Interestingly, various possible challenges part of this thesis' theoretical framework did not surface in the interview data. In this regard, the interviews did not generate fully expected results regarding the challenges faced by teachers. For instance, various possible emotional responses that could come from students, such as anger (Ohito, 2020), were not described by the interviewees as responses that tend to come from students.

Furthermore, teachers' own emotional discomfort in teaching about 'race' and racism, which was marked as a possible challenge in this thesis' theoretical framework, did not explicitly surface in the interviews. Whilst Teacher E, for instance, did explain that they may lack certain knowledge, they did not explicitly attach any emotion thereto; they conveyed it more so as a given based on their lack of education on the topics. Moreover, Teacher D explained that, for them, teaching about racism as a white person can slightly feel like being a white male teaching about the two waves of emancipation – although they did note “I must not

compare” before stating this. When they made this comparison, then, I potentially would have expected an expression of a sense of emotional discomfort to follow. Yet, instead, they simply noted that it was “far removed” from their personal identity, without explicitly attaching any particular emotion thereto. Therefore, teachers’ statements did not do more than hint at the possibility of emotional discomfort. Of course, this does not discard the possibility that certain emotions come up in practice, as the way in which teachers conveyed their thoughts to me in the interview may differ from the thoughts that they have, or emotions that they feel, when teaching about ‘race’ and racism or when privately reflecting upon their teaching about the topics. Hence, rather than particular emotions truly not being there, I might simply not have gained insight into the emotions that might be attached to their teaching about ‘race’ and racism. Overall, then, teachers’ experiences do not fully correspond with the possible challenges outlined in this thesis’ theoretical framework – both in terms of challenges that were not part thereof, such as the limited number of teaching hours, but *are* encountered in practice as well as challenges that were part thereof but *are not* encountered in practice, such as highly emotional student responses.

III. The Promise of Current Teaching

In beginning to explore the promise of current teaching about ‘race’ and racism in civic education, I will first highlight two promising factors that are not mentioned in the themes presented in Appendix C. First, all teachers expressed an interest in, and seemed to attach importance to, addressing ‘race’ and racism in civic education. In my view, such an interest in and/or commitment to teaching about ‘race’ and racism is not only promising, but also necessary in order for civic education to function as a course that contributes to shaping anti-racist futures. In fact, currently, such an interest and commitment appear to be necessary in order for ‘race’ and racism to be addressed in civic education at all, given that the national exam program does not explicitly stimulate teachers to teach about these issues. Second, the aims that teachers described to have in teaching about ‘race’ and racism came across as promising. More broadly, teachers seemed committed to aims such as bracing students, contributing to tackling societal issues such as racism and inequality, and fostering positive interrelations, mutual understanding, and critical reflection on the self and society. To offer a specific example, when asked how they would describe the goal that they have in discussing ‘race’ and racism, Teacher C stated:

Then I would still want, and I know that it is perhaps idealistic sometimes, that prejudices, stereotypes, wrong assumptions, that those can be there, but that the awareness should be there that you have that sometimes and that you then immediately have to be able to question where does this come from.

Teacher C's wider aim thus appeared to be strongly focused on the individual, in seeking to foster students' awareness of – and critical engagement with – their own thought patterns and ideas. Herein, great promise may lie, in that their broader aim includes an element of self-reflection, which is marked as a valuable facet of anti-racist teaching in this thesis' theoretical framework (Alemanji & Seikkula, 2018; Kishimoto, 2018). Still, as teachers' aims and practice may differ, I will further explore the theme of self-reflection later in this section.

Teacher D's aim proved to involve contributing to tackling the wider existence of racism, as they stated that:

I cannot improve the world with my class, I cannot accomplish that, of course. Yet, that is eventually, so to speak, the higher goal, right, that it is not there anymore or at least that it exists slightly less after a year of classes with me than that it was there before.

This way, they showed a commitment to contributing to working towards a world without racism – or at least one in which there is less racism – a commitment that reflects anti-racist aims. Overall, then, the different intentions that teachers have with their teaching struck me as promising from an anti-racist perspective.

However, when it comes to anti-racist teaching, good intentions may not be sufficient (Mikander & Hummelstedt-Djedou, 2018). In the upcoming section, I will explore the aspects of teachers' current approaches to teaching about 'race' and racism that show promise when viewed through the lens of critical approaches to (teaching about) 'race' and racism. These facets, then, may serve as a practice-based source of inspiration for teachers who seek to approach teaching about these issues in a critical, anti-racist manner. Subsequently, in the section *Possible Ways Forward*, I will draw on this thesis' theoretical framework to identify several additional angles, topics, and approaches that may help teachers who seek to commit to critical, anti-racist teaching about 'race' and racism to further develop their teaching.

Importantly, in both this section and the following section, I will offer possible ways forward with no intention of claiming that all of the presented ways forward *should* be followed, as not only might this be unfeasible given the limited amount of time that teachers have voiced to have in civic education, but I also am not in a position to make such claims, as illuminated in this thesis' methodological chapter. Also, as stated in this thesis' theoretical framework, there

is no anti-racist approach to teaching about ‘race’ and racism that works for all teachers (Alderman et al., 2019). Ultimately, then, civic education teachers seeking to approach these topics in an anti-racist manner must find out what works best for them as a teacher and for the goals that they have in mind, which also holds for the possible ways forward that I will outline.

To commence, great promise lies in various teachers’ inclusion of a historical perspective on ‘race’ and racism (see Appendix C, *(The Lack of) A Historical Perspective on ‘Race’ and Racism*), which has been defined as a valuable approach to the topics based on critical race and postcolonial perspectives (Wekker, 2016; Smith-Maddox & Solórzano, 2010). When asked whether a historical perspective surfaces in their civic education classes, Teacher C, for instance, responded: “Yes, very much so.” They explained that they “sometimes attempt to show that these problems also are not just of this time” or that these issues had an even greater impact on entire generations in the past. They continued by stating:

So, yes, that plays a very big role indeed. And because of that I perhaps then also dive into documentaries and into books in which also a lot more sometimes an analysis is present with the comparison to the past, which continues to haunt us.

In stating this, Teacher C highlighted that they not only are aware that the past and the present are connected when it comes to ‘race’ and racism, but also connect the past and the present through comparison in their teaching and intentionally – although the ‘perhaps’ adds an element of uncertainty – dive into particular materials to include this perspective. Whilst Teacher C’s statements came across as promising in terms of the incorporation of a historical perspective on ‘race’ and racism, I must note that their statements ultimately do not allow me to thoroughly assess how they connect the past and the present in practice, or which exact parts of the past they connect to the present, as the interviews did not leave room for such detailed discussion of teachers’ classes. Therefore, I can only conclude from their statements that incorporating a historical perspective on the topics is a practice that can be implemented in civic education and that materials such as documentaries and books might help teachers who seek to implement this practice to do so.

Teacher A not only corroborated the possibility of incorporating a historical perspective but also highlighted its value, in explicitly confirming that they include such a perspective and stating that: “It appears to me that one cannot address the present without those historical roots.” For Teacher A, then, who is also a history teacher, including a historical perspective on issues such as ‘race’ and racism proved to be vital. Interestingly, I learned that Teacher A and Teacher D, both teachers of civic education *and* history, combine the two courses. This approach can be judged as promising, in that it may offer a stronger guarantee of the inclusion of a historical

approach to ‘race’ and racism. Yet, as not all students take history alongside civic education, teachers who seek to adopt a critical, anti-racist approach to teaching about ‘race’ and racism may consider incorporating an in-depth historical perspective on these issues in civic education specifically. This way, *all* students may thoroughly grasp the historical underpinnings of today’s workings of ‘race’ and racism, rather than just those who take history.

Moreover, when Teacher E mentioned the slavery past, I asked them to what extent these kinds of issues are part of their approach to the themes of ‘race’ and racism in civic education, to which they responded: “Still too little.” Yet, they voiced that they do support students who wish to explore this on their own, by looking for research sources, for instance. From a critical, anti-racist perspective, this approach certainly includes a sense of value, in not offering students ‘the answer’ but rather helping them deepen their own analyses (Kishimoto, 2018). Yet, as civic education has proved to be a course that deals with a wide range of topics, it is likely that many students will choose a different topic for their projects. Therefore, alongside offering students the opportunity to explore a historical or postcolonial perspective on ‘race’ and racism in their individual projects, teachers committed to critical, anti-racist teaching about ‘race’ and racism may consider actively incorporating such a perspective on the topics on the class-level, so that *all* students can learn from this perspective.

Alongside teachers offering a historical perspective, teachers’ exploration of current issues (see Appendix C, *Being Guided by Current Issues*) also contains great promise in helping students to understand the workings of ‘race’ and racism in the world around them. Moreover, teachers’ discussion of *particular* current issues may also contain a further sense of promise. By addressing Black Lives Matter, for instance – which several teachers proved to do – teachers may bring in the element of resistance, which this thesis’ theoretical framework has illuminated as a valuable way to refrain from positioning particular groups of people as fixed victims (Alemanji & Seikkula, 2018) and empower students of color (Kishimoto, 2018). Moreover, in addressing ethnic profiling, teachers clearly involve the macro level, thereby moving beyond a non-racist approach to racism that selectively defines racism as the overt, racist acts that occur between individuals (King & Chandler, 2016). In doing so, they may allow students to grasp that the phenomenon of racism encompasses more than overt, micro-level instances.

More generally, teachers seemed to address both the micro- and the macro level in teaching about ‘race’ and racism – another promising element of existing teaching from an anti-racist perspective (King & Chandler, 2016). Beyond ethnic profiling, the macro level also proved to be addressed through various teachers’ explorations of the place and meaning of ‘race’ in the Dutch constitution, for instance, which may allow students to grasp the presence

of 'race' in Dutch structures. As for the micro level, Teacher E explained to address this level through case studies, for instance. In relation to such case studies, Teacher E clarified that: "so that is very selective, then it is again about one case with one story, and I then connect it to the story of the student." This way, in exploring the micro level, they also leave room for students' experiences to be told.

More broadly, various teachers highlighted that students' experiences are addressed in class. For instance, Teacher B stated: "I sometimes also open a conversation in class like, okay, who has ever dealt with discrimination or racism? Then there are also always children who indicate this, who then have examples thereof." As illuminated in this thesis' theoretical framework, incorporating and legitimating students' experiential knowledge about 'race' and racism – particularly that of students of color – is highly valuable from a critical, anti-racist perspective (Alemanji, 2018; Bergerson, 2003; Smith-Maddox & Solórzano, 2002; Yosso, 2002). More specifically, the promise thereof is multifold, in that experiential knowledge may corroborate the value of theoretical perspectives on 'race' and racism (Dewey, as cited in Miller & Tanner, 2019), give voice to marginalized students (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004), help students see "what life is like for others" (Delgado & Stefancic, as cited in DeCuir & Dixson, 2004, p. 41), and form a basis for bonding for students of color (Bergerson, 2003), *inter alia*.

Whilst incorporating students' experiences into one's classes, thus, certainly is valuable, it is important to emphasize that it also matters how one navigates students' experiential knowledge. For instance, as this thesis' theoretical framework illuminated, tokenizing is a practice that should be avoided from an anti-racist perspective (Kishimoto, 2018). Unfortunately, whilst the interviews did clarify that different teachers appeal to students' experiential knowledge, they did not offer substantial insight into how teachers interact with students when discussing their experiential knowledge. Therefore, I cannot adequately judge the promise of teachers' approaches to navigating students' experiential knowledge. Teacher B's open call for students to share their experiences with racism, for instance, may be judged as promising in its careful initial set-up, in inviting students who wish to share their experiences to do so, without 'forcing' any individual student to share their experiences. Yet, the interview did not offer insight into what happens after this promising start of the conversation. Therefore, I cannot fully explore Teacher B's approach to navigating students' experiential knowledge, nor can their practice of incorporating students' experiential knowledge fully be used as a practice-based source of inspiration by other teachers, as the information about how they navigate students' experiential knowledge is incomplete. I will return to this limitation in the concluding chapter.

Next, various teachers also proved to address issues of language (see Appendix C, *Language*). One example thereof is the distinction between ‘discrimination’ and ‘racism,’ which Teacher B voiced to address. Making this distinction is particularly valuable when viewed through the lens of critical approaches to ‘race’ and racism. Amongst other factors, this is because, when ‘discrimination’ is used to discuss ‘racism,’ the specificity of racism and its roots may be lost (Vasta, 2007). Particularly in the Dutch context, wherein people tend to use ‘discrimination’ to replace the term ‘racism’ (Hondius, 2014), explicitly addressing their distinction may be highly valuable, in order for Dutch students to grasp racism in its specificity. Yet, again, I cannot fully explore the promise of the distinction that Teacher B makes between ‘discrimination’ and ‘racism,’ as they only mentioned *that* they make this distinction, not *how* they make this distinction.

Regarding the Dutch context more broadly, teachers proved to address its particularity in their teaching. I also view this as a promising aspect of current teaching, as certain ‘race’- and racism-related issues are specific to the national context and, when addressed in class, may help students to better comprehend the society that they live in. Additionally, illuminating the Dutch-specificity of certain ‘race’- and racism-related issues may allow students to grasp that the workings of ‘race’ and racism do not just exist beyond Dutch borders but are also very much part of Dutch people’s lived realities. This way, teachers may also contribute to countering dominant patterns of denial in the Netherlands, whereby racism is seen as an issue that has no relevance in today’s Dutch context (Goldberg, 2014; Essed & Hoving, 2014). One topic that allows teachers to illuminate the Dutch-specificity of certain ‘race’- and racism-related issues is the controversial figure of ‘Zwarte Piet,’ which different teachers proved to engage with. In relation to this topic, Teacher C clarified that they address the critiques voiced by a minority that does not feel represented therein and also explore the question of to what extent racist intent is present in the ‘Sinterklaas’ tradition. Regarding their aim in discussing this topic, they added that:

and then my goal is that, by having that conversation, that students at least are aware of, but wait, something can also, for instance, not have the intention like that, but what does it mean if it is experienced like that, and how can we sometimes also constructively work towards something that belongs to all of us?

In considering Teacher C’s quoted aim, a first point that I find valuable to highlight is the fact that their statement demonstrates that a topic such as ‘Zwarte Piet’ can be used as a starting point to discuss the question of intent and interrogate what it means for something to not necessarily be intended as racist but still be experienced as such. For teachers who seek to

incorporate a critical, anti-racist approach to ‘race’ and racism, engaging in such a discussion may be valuable, in offering the opportunity to question the idea that intent is a necessary component of racism, an idea which Dutch critical race theorist Philomena Essed (1991), for instance, disputes. In doing so, teachers may help students grasp alternative ways to unveil the presence of racism, such as looking at the effect of a certain practice. This may be insightful not only in relation to ‘Zwarte Piet,’ as Teacher C’s statement suggests, but also when exploring institutional racism, for instance, since Vasta (2014) highlights that institutional racism is not about intent but rather about the systematic detrimental impact thereof on particular groups.

Another facet that is valuable to highlight in Teacher C’s description of the conversation that they have about ‘Zwarte Piet’ is the question: “how can we sometimes also constructively work towards something that belongs to all of us?”. In this question, I recognize a connection between ‘race’-related Dutch topics such as ‘Zwarte Piet’ and the themes of inclusion and belonging. These themes were also hinted at in Teacher C’s statement that they address the critiques voiced by a minority group that *does not feel represented* in the ‘Sinterklaas’ tradition. By raising the former question and exploring minority critiques regarding the ‘Sinterklaas’ tradition, I take Teacher C to illuminate that this Dutch tradition is not necessarily inclusive of minority groups, particularly because of their experience of this tradition as containing a racist element. They also stimulate students to think about the possibilities of working towards traditions wherein *all* Dutch citizens feel represented, thereby moving beyond traditions that certain minority groups experience as racist, which offers a sense of hope in looking toward the future. This element of hope is very much in line with anti-racism more broadly, in that “the gains of antiracism lie in the knowing and in the hope of a better future,” as Alemanji and Seikkula (2018, p. 190) note. Inspired by Teacher C’s approach to the topic of ‘Zwarte Piet,’ then, teachers who seek to contribute to shaping anti-racist futures may consider finding ways to stimulate students to reflect upon how we can work towards Dutch futures wherein racism does not hold a place and minority groups are actively included.

Another promising point is teachers’ engagement with the question of whether ‘race’ is a biological reality or rather a social construction (see Appendix C, ‘Race:’ *Biology or Social Construction?*). Teacher B explained that they engage with this question specifically when addressing the place of ‘race’ in Article 1 of the Dutch constitution and stated: “I then always tell the students that ‘race’ is a social phenomenon but does not exist in a biological sense, so to speak, there are no different human races.” Such efforts to make visible that ‘race’ is a social construction are in line with critical, anti-racist perspectives on ‘race’ and contain a particular sense of promise, in that they may allow teachers to contribute to denaturalizing ‘race’ (King

& Chandler, 2016). Teachers who seek to approach ‘race’ in a critical, anti-racist manner, then, may find inspiration in Teacher B’s practice of illuminating the socially constructed nature of ‘race.’

Furthermore, social experiments and forms of simulation also struck me as a promising aspect of different teachers’ classes (see Appendix C, *Joint Learning Activities*). One example is the experiment ‘Over de streep,’ which Teacher C described in the following manner:

we have a nice line over here and, if you ask all kinds of questions, you can step forward if you can answer ‘yes’ thereto, and all those questions have more or less to do with social inequality, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, et cetera.

Through this experiment, as Teacher C clarified, students may become more aware of the privileges that they have – or do not have – or the issues that affect them – or do not affect them – and that this may be the result of factors such as their gender, sexuality, or ‘race’/ethnicity. Such a social experiment may be judged as valuable for multiple reasons. First, such an experiment that involves students taking steps – in a physical sense – can be a way for teachers to bring students’ bodies into their teaching, which may be highly valuable, as ‘the body’ can be viewed as a distinct source of meaning and “forms a condition of possibility for relating to the world in a meaningful way” (Vlieghe, 2014, p. 25). Second, given that the experiment may help students grasp that factors such as their gender, sexuality, or ‘race’/ethnicity all have implications for the issues that they may face or the privilege that they have, it shows great promise in offering an intersectional take on students’ positions, which this thesis’ theoretical framework has marked as valuable, in illuminating how ‘race’ intersects with other axes of difference (Gillborn, 2015). Additionally, in offering an intersectional take on students’ positions, the experiment may stimulate students to self-reflect on the meaning of their intersecting identities and the possible implications tied thereto. As illuminated in this thesis’ theoretical framework, promoting such self-reflection within students can be judged as promising from an anti-racist perspective (Alemanji & Seikkula, 2018), particularly in allowing students to better understand their social positions, I would specify. Ultimately, in speaking to various critical, anti-racist approaches to (teaching about) ‘race’ and racism, this social experiment may serve as a practice-based source of inspiration for teachers who seek to approach teaching about the themes in a critical, anti-racist manner – especially for those who seek to allow students to learn through experiencing.

Beyond this experiment, I take the element of self-reflection as a wider promising feature of various teachers’ current approaches to teaching about ‘race’ and racism, in light of anti-racist perspectives on teaching about the topics (Alemanji & Seikkula, 2018; Kishimoto,

2018). Interestingly, in relation to the theme of self-reflection, I felt that the interviews offered more insight into teachers' own self-reflection – both inside and outside of the classroom – than into the self-reflection that I expected some teachers to seek to stimulate within students through their teaching. Regarding teachers' self-reflection outside of the classroom, Teacher C's self-reflection in the interview, for instance, stood out to me, in that they reflected upon how their non-white physical presence might impact students' sense of comfort in speaking their minds. When attempting to make sense of why there have never been conflicts in the classroom when dealing with 'race' and racism, they stated that one possible explanation could be that "it is slightly different" when having a non-white teacher. They explained: "I have also thought sometimes there will also be students who then perhaps might not dare to express themselves in a certain way. That is possible, as your physical presence also creates that." In stating this, they demonstrated an awareness of their own position and how this may impact their teaching, which can be seen as a vital starting point for anti-racist teaching (Kishimoto, 2018). Such self-reflection outside of the classroom, then, may be a helpful starting point for teachers who seek to teach in an anti-racist manner, allowing them to become more aware of the possible implications of their identities in the classroom setting. Building upon this thesis' theoretical framework, I would add that incorporating one's *intersecting* identities into self-reflection (Kishimoto, 2018) could particularly provide teachers – both white and non-white – with in-depth insights into how their identity may shape their teaching, which could thus be a possible approach to explore for teachers who are open to engaging in self-reflection to further their anti-racist teaching.

Regarding teachers' self-reflection inside of the classroom, Teacher E's practices particularly struck me as promising, in being very open and addressing different axes of identity. As highlighted in the theme *Self-reflection Within and Outside of the Classroom* (see Appendix C), Teacher E voiced to discuss pictures of themselves on a holiday to Abu Dhabi to reflect upon how privileged they were treated as a white person there. After this, they also proved to reflect upon the fact that they grew up poor but could still follow the Dutch *vwo* educational track and were hired over others, because of their "background." This way, Teacher E addresses class as a factor alongside their 'race'/ethnicity and shares an understanding of the implications of their intersecting identities while growing up with their students. Such open engagement in self-reflection may contain great promise, in that teachers may set the example for the kind of self-reflection that they might wish students to engage in (Smith et al., 2017). In the case of Teacher E, not only do they model self-reflection in relation to one's 'race'/ethnicity, but they also set the example for involving other factors such as class, which, in my eyes, adds

a valuable level of complexity to an already-promising facet of their teaching, from an anti-racist point of view (Kishimoto, 2018).

Interestingly, however, when I asked Teacher F about the extent to which their identity plays a role in teaching about ‘race’ and racism, they responded that they “attempt to not put it on the foreground,” nor would they use themselves as an example in class. Instead, they stated: “I prefer that it comes from the classroom.” They also explicitly voiced that they are aware of there being “a stream in anti-racism that makes an incredible lot of work thereof and completely dives into it, about one’s own experience” and one’s prejudices. Yet, they expressed to not feel connected to this stream. Ultimately, they stated: “of course, I will have hidden prejudices et cetera, but whether that is truly interesting...”. Their main priority seemed to be how they treat others in practice rather than adhering to “that ‘going deep’ stream,” as they characterized the anti-racist stream that they were discussing. This way, I noticed that there might be some resistance to certain facets of anti-racist teaching on some teachers’ part, such as incorporating their own self-reflection into their teaching. For some teachers, then, particular anti-racist approaches to teaching simply might not work.

In the interview data, some teaching practices that may help foster self-reflection within students surfaced as well. Beyond the social experiment ‘Over de Streep,’ which I have already mentioned may stimulate students to reflect upon their identities, Teacher C mentioned that, in class, they and their students attempt to “sometimes distance themselves and imagine, yes but why do we have these ideas about a certain theme or not?”. This way, Teacher C’s teaching holds the potential to stimulate students to reflect both on their identities as well as on their beliefs or ideas. Not only, then, does Teacher C actively stimulate different kinds of self-reflection within students, but their beforementioned wider aim – which also distinctly includes the element of promoting self-reflection within students – also appears to match their teaching practice, which emphasizes their commitment to reaching their aims. More broadly, this also suggests that promoting self-reflection is an aim that is feasible for civic education teachers to put into practice in teaching about ‘race’ and racism as a means of committing to a critical, anti-racist approach.

In relation to stimulating self-reflection within students, I also wish to discuss some of Teacher A’s statements, which, although not part of the themes presented in Appendix C – as they did not clearly connect to the main topics that structured the thematic analysis – are valuable to mention, in that they may offer further insight into how teachers may stimulate self-reflection within students. Teacher A explained that white students sometimes come to them saying “you have really opened my eyes” or “I really did not know that it was like that.”

Subsequently, I asked them whether this kind of self-reflection is something that they seek to stimulate within students, to which they responded: “Yes, I think every teacher of civic education or history attempts to achieve that.” Although other teachers’ statements did not corroborate this claim, this statement did clarify to me that, for Teacher A, self-reflection is a self-evident part of – and aim tied to – teaching practice in civic education. Yet, how exactly they stimulate such self-reflection remained largely unclear to me. The fact that they mentioned white students’ responses after stating that they have discussed issues such as ‘ethnic profiling’ and ‘white privilege’ for a while now, however, does suggest that information-sharing about such topics forms their main approach to teaching about such topics and stimulating self-reflection. Accordingly, the way in which they stimulate self-reflection is likely to differ from experiential teaching methods such as the social experiments that Teacher C involves in their teaching. Hence, there might be different ways to stimulate students’ self-reflection for teachers interested in doing so, allowing teachers to pursue the manner that best fits them.

Moreover, four teachers explicitly voiced that they address whiteness and/or white privilege in class (see Appendix C, *Addressing Everyone*), which this thesis’ theoretical framework has illuminated as another valuable facet for teachers to incorporate into their teaching. One way in which various teachers proved to address these themes is by showing the Dutch documentary *Wit is ook een kleur* (‘White is also a color’). Promisingly, using this documentary may not only be an effective way to attract students’ attention, as a moving image (Van Kempen, 2018), but it may also contribute to making whiteness – and its specific role in the Dutch context – visible, as the title of the documentary hints at. I take the latter as particularly promising, given that whiteness tends to simply be seen as ‘ordinary’ instead of as ‘also a color’ in the Netherlands, thereby remaining an invisible norm (Wekker, 2016). As Wekker (2016) explains, the reproduction of whiteness as a position of power occurs precisely by whiteness staying invisible, by not being named, for it generally does not need to name – let alone interrogate – itself. The documentary’s explicit naming – and examination – of whiteness as also being ‘a color,’ then, can be judged to help counter the reproduction of whiteness as a position of power, in helping to dismantle its usual invisibility. For this reason, the documentary strikes me as a promising type of course material to include in teaching about ‘race’ and racism.

Additionally, I judge teachers’ incorporation of this documentary as promising, in that the documentary speaks to the positions of the white Dutch students in their classes and may help raise these students’ awareness about what it means for them to be white in Dutch society. Ultimately, as Carr (2016) notes, “for there to be any serious hope of attaining social justice, it is critical for White people to be understood as being fully part of the racial equation” (p. 54).

Addressing white students' positions, rather than just those of minoritized student groups, then, may be a key approach to consider for teachers seeking to work towards social justice, and incorporating course materials such as the documentary *Wit is ook een kleur* may be one way for these teachers to do so.

Next, I also view several of the interviewees' pedagogical approaches that have not yet been named as valuable to highlight. First, fostering a safe space proved to be a priority for various teachers (see Appendix C, *Creating a Safe Space*), which arguably is key when having difficult conversations (Kishimoto, 2018). Teachers also described various strategies that they implement in attempting to foster a safe space, such as intervening when students cross a certain boundary by making statements that go against human rights, as Teacher A does. Interestingly, different teachers also stated to consciously confront controversial or sensitive topics and perspectives to create a safe space. Teacher A, for instance, offered an example thereof in stating: "I take a point from the party program of the PVV or whatever, and then I say, like, can you say that? So, it is more that I raise certain extreme stances and have a discussion based on that." They added that: "In principle, you try to create a safe climate in such a manner, precisely by saying things that are sensitive and to then talk about that." In such a strategy to create a safe space, safety does not necessarily seem to equal to comfort, in that a teacher may also push students out of their comfort zones in fostering a safe space. This way, they might in fact also be fostering a 'brave space' (Smith, 2020) in the process of working towards a safe space. This approach appears to be a promising road to follow when teaching about 'race' and racism, in taking valuable elements of both kinds of spaces. For teachers attempting to navigate the question of what kind of space they should aim to create when teaching about 'race' and racism, such a combined approach may thus be a source of inspiration. I would add, however, that raising certain controversial or extreme topics does not come without risks, such as the risk of conflict, which implies that such topics should always be handled with care, even when introduced with the intention of creating a safe space.

Moreover, from an anti-racist perspective (Kishimoto, 2018), great promise lies in various teachers' inclusion of mutual learning, fostering of a sense of community, and their decentering of authority in teaching about 'race' and racism (see Appendix C, *Decentering Authority and Creating a Sense of 'we'*). In terms of mutual learning, Teacher E, for instance, explained that they marvel at how certain structures are organized in the Dutch context *together* with students, thereby clearly positioning themselves as a learner alongside their students. Teacher E also clarified that they "take a step back as a teacher" when teaching about 'race' and racism and believe that they should not act as the "authoritarian, all-knowing" teacher when

it comes to these topics. When I asked them why they feel this way in relation to the themes of ‘race’ and racism specifically, they answered: “then I should have been more diverse.” I took this to mean that they feel that their whiteness – which they characterized as a lack of ‘diversity’ – is the main reason why they must ‘take a step back.’ Another factor that proved to play a role herein is their view that students are “specialists” themselves in relation to the topics. They explained: “if you have been discriminated against or at least have felt that you have been discriminated against, who am I to take on a leading role therein, that just is not possible.” This way, motivated by a consideration of their own position and experiences and those of their students, Teacher E decenters authority in the classroom by taking ‘a step back.’ In reflecting upon Teacher E’s decentering of authority, I would argue that this practice contains promise not only for being in line with anti-racist approaches to teaching (Kishimoto, 2018), but also for conveying to other teachers that it is acceptable for them to take ‘a step back’ when dealing with ‘race’ and racism, even if the role of teacher can be perceived as one that requires a strong sense of authority, in being a ‘distributor of knowledge.’

Still, I would argue that taking ‘a step back’ should not be interpreted as fully removing oneself from the conversation, as this would be a missed opportunity for teachers to take on an active role in shaping students’ knowledge about ‘race’ and racism. Additionally, for white teachers specifically, taking such a ‘step back’ can be read as a pitfall when it entails a white teacher’s ‘disappearance’ (Kishimoto, 2018). As highlighted in this thesis’ theoretical framework, whilst such a move of disappearance may be well-intended, this is a move of power and privilege and should, thus, be avoided (Kishimoto, 2018). Fortunately, in the case of Teacher E, they proved to not disappear as a white teacher when teaching about ‘race’ and racism, in openly discussing their own experiences as a white person in class, as illuminated when discussing their self-reflection inside of the classroom. Crucially, then, for teachers – particularly *white* teachers – seeking to commit to critical, anti-racist teaching about ‘race’ and racism, paying attention to not ‘disappear’ when decentering authority or focusing on students’ experiences may be vital. Teacher E’s approach to teaching, wherein they decenter authority, whilst also incorporating self-reflection, then, may serve as a source of inspiration for white teachers seeking to decenter their authority in a careful manner.

Moreover, for Teacher C, decentering their authority and creating a sense of ‘we’ appeared to be a deliberate pedagogical approach. They mentioned that they feel that: “the awareness should be there that I am also part of the people who just have prejudices and stereotypes.” This way, they actively aim to share with students that, although they are their teacher, they are not faultless. Additionally, Teacher C explained that they add a “personal

note” and share their own experiences to remove the distance between themselves and their students. They also express to students that: “we are all trying to understand this together and I am not here to lecture you.” Clearly, then, both building a sense of community and emphasizing mutual learning lie at the heart of their teaching. All in all, teachers’ incorporation of mutual learning, building a sense of community, and decentering authority demonstrates that different teachers’ pedagogical approaches include anti-racist elements (Kishimoto, 2018). This final promising facet of current teaching, then, may help teachers who seek to approach pedagogy in an anti-racist manner to find a way to do so.

IV. Possible Ways Forward

In this final section of the analysis, I will offer some reflections upon my findings in the previous sections and outline several additional ways in which civic education teachers who seek to teach in a critical, anti-racist manner may move forward based on this thesis’ theoretical framework. To commence, the former section has illuminated various facets of current teaching that are in line with critical, anti-racist approaches to (teaching about) ‘race’ and racism. In terms of content, these facets include the inclusion of a historical perspective on ‘race’ and racism, addressing both the micro- and the macro level, illuminating the specificity of the Dutch context, and making visible that ‘race’ is socially constructed, *inter alia*. Other elements of current teaching that correspond with critical, anti-racist approaches to teaching about ‘race’ and racism include teachers engaging in – and promoting – self-reflection, creating a safe space, and decentering authority. By identifying these facets of current teaching about ‘race’ and racism in civic education and highlighting their promise, I have aimed to illuminate a set of ways in which critical race, anti-racist, and postcolonial theoretical perspectives can be translated into teaching practice. Civic education teachers committed to a critical, anti-racist approach to teaching about ‘race’ and racism, then, may find inspiration in the former section – or confirmation, if the presented practices are already part of their teaching.

Ultimately, however, as mentioned before, teachers must find out which practices fit their teaching. Even if they are committed to an anti-racist approach to teaching, there is no universal approach that works for all teachers (Alderman et al., 2019). In my interview with Teacher F, for instance, they explicitly clarified to not seek to dive into their own position. For such a teacher, then, self-reflection – one anti-racist approach to teaching (Kishimoto, 2018) – simply does not work. Therefore, both the possible ways forward highlighted so far as well as

the ones that I will outline in the upcoming paragraphs should merely be taken as approaches that may be helpful for teachers moving forward, depending on their views on teaching about ‘race’ and racism.

To commence, I got the impression that some topics that teachers discuss in class may not be explored to their full potential, in that they could be tied to ‘race’ and racism more explicitly than they appeared to be tied thereto and, if linked thereto more explicitly, could serve as valuable starting points to illuminate particular critical, anti-racist perspectives on ‘race’ and racism. One topic to which I feel that this applies is Dutch politicians and their messages. Whilst two teachers brought up Dutch politician Geert Wilders (see Appendix C, *The Dutch Context and Beyond*), they did not offer substantial insight into why or how they discuss Wilders or his statements in the context of teaching about ‘race’ and racism. Teacher F, for instance, stated: “the PVV and Wilders are certainly addressed.” Yet, they then moved on to talk about another political party, the SGP, without expanding on how or why they address the PVV and Wilders – let alone how they link this topic to ‘race’ and racism. This way, the link between this topic and ‘race’ and racism remained unclear to me, which raised doubts as to whether this link is made explicit in class.

If the link between the topic of Geert Wilders and ‘race’ and racism would indeed not be made explicit, this thesis’ theoretical framework offers a lens that can help one imagine potentially valuable ways to link the topic to ‘race’ and racism. Based on this lens, I would argue that Wilders’ statements can be used as a valuable starting point for discussions around ‘entitlement racism’ (Essed & Hoving, 2014) and culture-based forms of racism that prevail in the Dutch context (Vasta, 2007; Weiner, 2018), for teachers interested in exploring these angles on Dutch racism. For instance, Wilders’ ‘more or less Moroccans’ statement, which Teacher E mentioned, can be read as a case of highly explicit racism voiced without an excuse.² In that, it matches the definition of Dutch ‘entitlement racism’ (Essed & Hoving, 2014), thereby being a possible illustration thereof – if linked explicitly to the concept. Additionally, this statement can be seen to express a culture-based form of racism, in that the statement targets Moroccan-Dutch citizens and unmistakably constructs them as a problem, reflecting the wider Dutch pattern of racism targeted at this migrant group (Weiner, 2018). By connecting Wilders’ statement explicitly to culture-based racism, then, teachers may illuminate that skin color is not the sole basis upon which people might face racism in the Dutch context and thereby acknowledge and legitimate the experiences of students who face culture-based racism.

² Wilders’ ‘more or less Moroccans’ statement involved Wilders asking supporters of his political party whether they wanted ‘more or less Moroccans’ in Dutch society (NOS, 2020).

Building upon the point that skin color is not the only possible ground for racism in the Netherlands, teachers may deepen their teaching by reflecting upon the relationship between ‘race,’ ethnicity, and culture/religion – a relationship that the interviewees did not explicitly clarify to explore yet. In doing so, teachers may help students grasp that, when ‘race’ is replaced by ‘ethnicity’ or ‘culture,’ the workings of ‘race’ may persist (Wekker, 2016), concealed behind the alternative terms, and racist expressions can continue to be made (Goldberg, 2008). This way, students may comprehend that discussions surrounding ‘culture’ and ‘ethnicity’ may not be innocent or neutral in today’s Dutch context.

Moreover, to further explore what ‘race’ does in the Dutch context, teachers may consider illuminating the connection between ‘race’ and belonging to the nation. Whilst Teacher C did appear to hint at the theme of belonging in relation to the Dutch ‘Sinterklaas’ tradition, none of the teachers explicitly clarified to make a broader connection between ‘race’ and belonging to the Dutch nation. Establishing this connection may be valuable to highlight another facet of the impact of ‘race’ and acknowledge the realities of students who may be, or feel, excluded from the Dutch nation based on their ‘race’/ethnicity – or, perhaps, based on their culture or religion. Wekker’s (2016) work may help teachers to connect ‘race’ to the theme of belonging, in illuminating that ‘race,’ as part of the cultural archive, shapes perceptions and constructions of those inside and outside of the Dutch nation – ‘us’ and ‘them’ – and that the Dutch self is racialized as white, excluding those who do not fit into this picture. These Others, then, are not only constructed as uncivilized and barbaric, but they also do not properly belong, as Wekker’s (2016) work suggests. To make the connection between ‘race’ and belonging more tangible, teachers may reflect upon the terms ‘autochtonen’ and ‘allochtonen,’ used to distinguish the white, native Dutch from particular migrant citizens (Wekker, 2016).

In further considering Wekker’s (2016) work, teachers may also consider exploring the Dutch self-perception of ‘white innocence,’ the belief that the Dutch are “a small, but just, ethical nation; color-blind, thus free of racism” (Wekker, 2016, p. 2), particularly focusing on the element of color-blindness. As highlighted in this thesis’ theoretical framework, color-blindness may have detrimental effects, including its potential to serve to deny racism or pretend that it no longer exists (Rodriguez, 2009; Montgomery, 2013), thereby making racism invisible (Kishimoto, 2018). Exploring the Dutch’ ‘white innocence,’ then, could be valuable to help students understand how ‘race’ and racism are generally dealt with in today’s Dutch context and what the implications of adhering to color-blind ideology may be.

Finally, the work of Wekker (2016) may be of great help in strengthening teachers’ postcolonial perspective on the workings of ‘race’ and racism – or adding this perspective for

teachers who do not yet explore this in civic education, such as Teacher F – and keeping the discussion focused on the lasting impact of the *Dutch* colonial past specifically. Wekker’s (2016) insights into the Dutch ‘cultural archive’ may particularly help to illuminate the colonial underpinnings of the present workings of ‘race’ and racism in the Dutch context. Ultimately, by building upon such Dutch postcolonial work, teachers may illuminate the “presence of the past in the present” (Bourdieu, as cited in Wekker, 2016, p. 20). Possibly, then, introducing postcolonial writings such as Wekker’s (2016) into civic education classes could be a valuable way forward to incorporate a Dutch-specific postcolonial perspective on ‘race’ and racism. Doing so would also correspond with a possible way forward imagined by one of the interviewees, Teacher E.

Teacher E also expressed that they would be grateful if this thesis would bring “a sort of mini literature list,” that is, some reading suggestions for teachers and/or students. In imagining the construction of such a list, alongside Wekker’s (2016) work, Essed’s (1991) writings on Dutch ‘everyday racism’ came to mind as a possible addition, which could allow teachers and/or students to gain insight into how racism is part of the routine, everyday elements of Dutch people’s lives. Ultimately, however, I decided not to formally include such a literature list in this thesis, as I felt that constructing such a list should be a collaborative project. More specifically, I felt that a white scholar such as myself should not be the sole judge of which literature to include in such a list, and the input of people of color should not only be included but also be the most leading voice in the selection of literature. Yet, I do believe that this thesis’ bibliography – particularly the academic literature used to construct this thesis’ theoretical framework – may function as a valuable starting point for teachers seeking to build upon critical, anti-racist theoretical perspectives on ‘race’ and racism to further develop their teaching.

Particular perspectives presented in this thesis’ theoretical framework may, for instance, help teachers to deepen their discussion of the idea that ‘race’ is a social construct, an idea that Teacher B proved to engage with. Based on this thesis’ theoretical framework, one way to deepen students’ insight into what it means for ‘race’ to be a social construct could be to illuminate that ‘race’ and racial categories are time- and context-bound (King & Chandler, 2016; Wekker, 2016). Additionally, making visible that ‘race’ functions as an organizing grammar (Wekker, 2016) that hierarchically organizes the population (Mbembe, 2017), which has consequences for people’s access to resources and opportunities (Weiner, 2015), may be valuable in order to convey what ‘race’ *does*. This way, teachers may also acknowledge the lived realities of students who face the detrimental impact of the workings of ‘race’ – such as a

lack of access to resources and opportunities – based on their positioning in the Dutch racial hierarchy that Weiner (2015) has described.

Moreover, based on this thesis' theoretical framework, intentionally incorporating an intersectional perspective on 'race' and racism could be a possible way forward for teachers seeking to approach teaching about 'race' and racism in a critical, anti-racist manner (Dixon & Anderson, 2018; Yosso, 2002; Gillborn, 2015). Whilst various teachers did seem to address other vectors of identity, such as gender and religion, alongside 'race' (see Appendix C, *Other Axes of Identity*), only the social experiment 'Over de streep' raised by Teacher C and Teacher E's open self-reflection on the implications of their intersecting identities while growing up showed significant potential in terms of illuminating an intersectional perspective on 'race,' in my view. Moreover, the fact that none of the teachers explicitly mentioned the term 'intersectionality' suggests that incorporating an intersectional perspective generally is not a practice that the teachers intentionally seek to implement. Attempting to incorporate such a perspective on both 'race' and racism, then, could be a valuable future approach for civic education teachers to take, allowing students to better understand how 'race' and racism intertwine with other axes of identity and forms of subordination (Gillborn, 2015; Yosso, 2002).

Some existing discussions that proved to take place in civic education may lend themselves particularly well thereto, such as Teacher D conveying the idea that the 'nest' one is from "largely determines who one will be in life" and that people's luck differs in this regard (see Appendix C, *Addressing Everyone*). If approached in a deliberate manner, discussing people's 'nests' – that is, their family backgrounds – may allow teachers to offer an intersectional perspective on people's social positions, since people's family backgrounds may be linked to more vectors of identity than 'race,' such as their class. These vectors can then be interrelated to help students understand people's different social positions through an intersectional lens. Perhaps, then, introducing an intersectional perspective on 'race' and racism may not necessarily require the introduction of novel discussion topics; instead, teachers may be able to find ways to fit this perspective into their existing teaching.

When further reflecting upon how civic education teachers may move forward in their teaching about 'race' and racism, the question of aims also arose as relevant to consider based on the interviews. During the interviews, I obtained quite a lot of insight into *what* teachers do in teaching about 'race' and racism; yet, overall, I did not obtain substantial insight into *why* teachers do what they do in teaching about these issues beyond their wider aims and broader teaching choices. In other words, I often did not get a proper sense of what their aims were in introducing particular topics, teaching methods, and pedagogical approaches, *inter alia*, in

teaching about 'race' and racism specifically. I must acknowledge that there were some exceptions to this, such as Teacher C explaining that they use social experiments, so that students "slightly experience what it is like." In other cases, I did gain an understanding of why a certain teacher chooses to do something in terms of their wider teaching choices but not in terms of aims that are specific to the topics of 'race' and racism. Teacher D, for instance, explained why they involve current issues that are not part of the textbook that they use, in stating that: "The book, I do not always find equally interesting and, otherwise, I am just explaining what they can already read themselves." This way, I did gain insight into why they involve certain current issues alongside the textbook as a wider teaching choice; yet, their statements did not allow me to grasp why current issues are helpful to address in relation to 'race' and racism, in their eyes, or which specific aim is tied to involving current issues when dealing with 'race' and racism.

Whilst I cannot make any definite statements about why teachers often did not explicitly attach any specific aim to particular elements of their teaching about 'race' and racism, the absence thereof could suggest that particular facets of the interviewees' teaching might not be grounded in aims that are both clear and specific to the topics of 'race' and racism. Moving forward, then, civic education teachers may consider asking themselves self-reflexive questions, such as: What do I seek to achieve in teaching about 'race' and racism? To what extent does my teaching involve deliberate approaches to the topics of 'race' and racism that help me work towards reaching specific aims? How might I imagine my teaching 'otherwise' to intentionally work towards clear aims that are specific to the themes of 'race' and racism? To me, such questions are not just relevant for teachers who seek to work towards teaching about 'race' and racism in critical, anti-racist manner. Rather, I take them to be more fundamental questions that all teachers who teach about these topics would benefit from asking themselves, notwithstanding their preferred approach to teaching about the topics. This is because establishing clear aims arguably is imperative in order for teachers to consciously work towards shaping students' learning about 'race' and racism in a particular way, thereby allowing them to intentionally navigate their position as a powerful actors in schools (Sincer et al., 2019).

Moreover, the challenges section raised some further points to consider in thinking about possible ways forward, such as particular factors that are beyond civic education teachers' control and may stand in the way of them furthering their teaching about 'race' and racism. For instance, the wide range of topics that different teachers voiced to have to address in a limited number of hours may be an obstacle to giving 'race' and racism a stronger and more continuous presence in civic education. Such a continuous presence would be desirable from a critical, anti-

racist perspective (Kishimoto, 2018), yet may thus not be feasible for all teachers. Ultimately, then, giving the course more hours appears to form a valuable way forward. However, this would require substantial top-down changes to the course that teachers have no control over.

The same holds for the national curriculum, which, as we have seen, currently does not offer explicit guidance in terms of addressing ‘race’ and racism, thereby placing the responsibility to find ways to address the topics on teachers’ shoulders, as Teacher C illuminated. Another issue that arguably adds to the burden put on teachers to have to find ways to address ‘race’ and racism is that textbooks contain barely to no reference to ‘race’ and racism, as different teachers suggested. Promisingly, despite the (near) absence of ‘race’ and racism in textbooks and the national curriculum, teachers proved to find ways to address the topics, which highlights their commitment to addressing ‘race’ and racism. Still, the burden of having to find ways to address the topics arguably would be helpful to alleviate.

Those who hold the power to shape the civic education curriculum and textbooks, then, could play a vital role in helping teachers navigate the topics of ‘race’ and racism by making active efforts to explicitly incorporate the topics. Yet, such active efforts cannot easily be expected, since, as Gillborn (2015) explains, “any attempt to place race and racism on the agenda, let alone at the *center* of debate, is deeply unpopular” (p. 277). Additionally, as discussed in the challenges section, in the Dutch context, there is a denial of the workings of ‘race’ and racism and an active refusal to learn more (Essed & Hoving, 2014; Smith, 2014; Goldberg, 2014). These tendencies may have unfavorable implications for the chances of critical engagement with ‘race’ and racism in the national civic education curriculum and in Dutch textbooks. Hence, whilst explicit, critical engagement with ‘race’ and racism in the national curriculum and textbooks would be a valuable way forward that could help further develop the promise of current teaching about ‘race’ and racism, obstacles that teachers have no control over may stand in the way of this becoming a reality.

To close this section, I wish to highlight some of the ways forward that the interviewed teachers mentioned could potentially benefit their teaching about ‘race’ and racism (see Appendix C, *Possible Ways Forward*). First, as discussed before, Teacher C mentioned having the opportunity to follow workshops or courses focused on how to deal with particular sensitive topics as a valuable way forward. Second, Teacher E explained that the government’s support of “less formative testing” and increased testing through practical assignments could be helpful to expand their teaching about ‘race’ and racism. In relation to this point, I wish to add that obtaining the space to introduce alternative assessments may be of vital help for teachers seeking to approach testing in a critical, anti-racist manner, as contemporary assessments tend

to focus on ‘end results’ rather than the process of learning (Kishimoto, 2018). Moreover, Teacher E raised increased opportunities to invite guests into the classroom as a helpful addition to current teaching about ‘race’ and racism. Indeed, increasing such opportunities could allow more teachers to introduce much-needed critical, anti-racist Dutch black voices into the classroom, such as Jerry Afriyie, whom Teacher C voiced to have invited before. Still, such guests cannot be seen as *the* solution, as anti-racist visits may simply serve as “exotic excursions” that only disrupt everyday school routines very briefly (Armila, Rannikko, & Sotkasiira, 2018, p. 139). Ultimately, for teachers who truly seek to commit to critical, anti-racist teaching about ‘race’ and racism, incorporating those critical, anti-racist approaches that speak to them into their teaching may be a valuable wider way forward. Of course, however, feasibility also plays a role and may limit teachers’ anti-racist efforts in the classroom, notwithstanding their intentions.

Conclusion

In this thesis, the central question that I have aimed to examine is: how do civic education teachers navigate teaching about ‘race’ and racism at Dutch mixed secondary schools, and how might critical approaches to (teaching about) ‘race’ and racism be used as a lens to examine the challenges and promise tied to existing teaching about ‘race’ and racism in civic education? I opened this thesis by offering a sense of context, outlining how the Dutch population’s diversity has evolved and been dealt with over time, addressing the workings of ‘race’ and racism in today’s Dutch context and the dominant ways of dealing therewith, unveiling particular dominant patterns in the Dutch educational domain, and sketching a background of civic education as a course. Next, I outlined my theoretical framework, which joins together postcolonial, critical race, and anti-racist contributions on (teaching about) ‘race’ and racism. Subsequently, I offered insight into my methodological approach for this thesis, focusing on my interviews with civic education teachers and my thematic analysis of the interview data. Lastly, I presented my analysis of the themes that emerged from my thematic analysis, in which I specifically aimed to examine the challenges and promise tied to current teaching about ‘race’ and racism in civic education, employing this thesis’ theoretical framework as an analytical lens. In the upcoming paragraphs, I will reflect upon some of my key findings and connect them to this thesis’ main contributions.

Overall, in terms of the challenges that civic education teachers face in teaching about ‘race’ and racism, I found that these challenges are connected to a variety of factors, including students’ possible responses, the national curriculum, and language. Crucially, in relation to some challenges, I found that the lens of critical approaches to (teaching about) ‘race’ and racism does not offer any substantial explanatory value and/or help in terms of imagining ways to deal with them. One of these challenges is the wide range of topics that civic education teachers must address in a limited number of teaching hours. This is a finding that helped me to grasp that the existing critical, anti-racist literature that I built upon to construct this thesis’ theoretical framework, whilst offering vital theoretical perspectives on (teaching about) ‘race’ and racism, may lack active engagement with a key practical question – the question of feasibility. In producing knowledge that is grounded in teaching practice, then, this thesis has illuminated the need for future theorizing about critical, anti-racist education to work from an active engagement with practical concerns in order to increase the connection between theory and praxis, thereby possibly being of greater help to educators. Herein, then, lies one of this thesis’ main contributions to the field.

Another key finding of this thesis in relation to the challenges faced in teaching about ‘race’ and racism is that some possible challenges outlined in the existing literature are not encountered in practice, such as students’ highly emotional responses in the context of discussions about ‘race’ and racism, like anger (Ohito, 2020). This finding demonstrates that such challenges part of the existing literature do not hold for all teachers – a rather hopeful finding and contribution to the research community. However, this thesis has also revealed the existence of some challenges that were not part of the literature that this thesis drew upon. One of these challenges is the beforementioned challenge tied to addressing a plurality of topics in a limited number of teaching hours, which is grounded specifically in how civic education is structured in the Dutch educational domain. In unveiling such challenges, then, this thesis has contributed novel insights regarding the challenges that teachers may face in teaching about ‘race’ and racism. Additionally, it has shed light on the complexities of teaching about ‘race’ and racism specifically as a civic education teacher in the Dutch educational context, an issue that had not been explored academically before.

A final key finding connected to the challenges that civic education teachers face in teaching about ‘race’ and racism involves the promising ways in which certain challenges are currently navigated. Teacher C, for instance, proved to navigate the impossibility of neutrality in a decidedly critical, anti-racist manner, by illuminating to students that the knowledge that they distribute in class is not neutral. Such practice-based, anti-racist ways of dealing with challenges that this thesis has identified then, may be both helpful and inspiring for teachers who struggle with similar challenges and seek to deal with them in a critical, anti-racist manner. Herein lies another key contribution of this thesis.

As for the promise of existing teaching about ‘race’ and racism in civic education, this thesis has found that particular critical, anti-racist approaches to (teaching about) ‘race’ and racism are already part of current teaching practice. These include teachers’ incorporation of a historical perspective on ‘race’ and racism, their self-reflection within and outside of the classroom, their decentering of authority, and their emphasis on mutual learning. In identifying these aspects of current teaching, then, this thesis has offered ways to match critical, anti-racist theoretical perspectives on ‘race’ and racism with teaching practice, thereby bridging a gap that can be incredibly difficult to bridge. Additionally, by drawing upon this thesis’ theoretical framework, I have proposed some additional ways to further teaching about ‘race’ and racism. Whilst the fact that these approaches did not arise in the interview data implies that they lack the practice-based grounding of the approaches that did surface therein, these approaches might offer new perspectives to teachers that could help them imagine their teaching ‘otherwise.’

Overall, then, this thesis may offer meaningful help to teachers who seek to teach in line with critical, anti-racist approaches to (teaching about) ‘race’ and racism, thereby contributing to dismantling the workings of ‘race’ and racism.

Finally, in terms of theory, I would argue that this thesis’ main contribution lies within the theoretical framework that integrates postcolonial, critical race, and anti-racist perspectives on (teaching about) ‘race’ and racism. Whilst this theoretical framework certainly cannot be positioned as an all-encompassing critical, anti-racist framework about (teaching about) ‘race’ and racism, the theoretical perspectives that are joined together in the framework may collectively form a highly productive starting point for researchers aiming to explore what it means to teach about ‘race’ and racism in a critical, anti-racist manner. Beyond the research community, this thesis’ theoretical framework may be particularly helpful for teachers who do not have a solid academic background in critical race, postcolonial, and anti-racist perspectives on ‘race’ and racism. To these teachers, this thesis’ theoretical framework may offer valuable conceptual guidance that can help them to lay a solid theoretical foundation for some of their discussions about ‘race’ and racism.

Having outlined some of this thesis’ main findings and contributions, I must also address several of its limitations. In doing so, I will also offer some potentially valuable directions for future research. To commence, one limitation that I must address is the limited depth in which I could explore certain facets of the interviewees’ teaching. As this project is an exploratory study of how teachers navigate teaching about ‘race’ and racism, my main goal was to get as much information about teachers’ approaches to, and experiences with, teaching about ‘race’ and racism as I could in the limited time that I could speak to teachers. This implied that I prioritized getting a broad sense of how teachers navigate different factors in teaching about ‘race’ and racism and the challenges that they face therein over exploring certain facets of teachers’ teaching in great detail. Accordingly, when analyzing the interview data, I found that I sometimes lacked the depth necessary in order to thoroughly explore particular facets of the interviewees’ teaching and be able to present the interviewees’ approaches in a detailed enough manner for them to serve as an in-depth, practice-based source of inspiration for other teachers. Building upon this thesis, then, future studies could dive deeper into particular facets of civic education teachers’ approaches to teaching about ‘race’ and racism, so that these approaches may form a more in-depth, practice-based source of inspiration for other teachers. Additionally, such future studies that explore particular facets of teachers’ teaching about ‘race’ and racism in greater detail may hold increased potential to make an active theoretical contribution to the

field of anti-racist education, in illuminating in a more detailed way how theory and praxis may be bridged or how teaching practice may inform theorizing.

Furthermore, as highlighted in this thesis' methodology, another limitation of the present thesis is the fact that its research focus did not include students' perspectives on current teaching about 'race' and racism. In considering directions for future research, interviewing students would be valuable, in that their experiences form key pieces of puzzle that are necessary to sketch a more complete picture of current teaching about 'race' and racism. Additionally, their experiences with, and views on, current teaching about these issues would be a valuable source to build upon from a critical race and feminist point of view (Hesse-Biber, 2007; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002), in that they could help one reimagine current teaching in a bottom-up manner, for instance.

Additionally, whilst this thesis' small and locally specific sample was not a limitation given this thesis' aims, interviewing larger and more diverse groups of civic education teachers about their teaching would be a valuable direction for future research. Interviewing teachers who teach in different local teaching contexts across the country, across schools that have different student populations, and across the different Dutch educational tracks could, for instance, offer new perspectives on the topic. Not only could such future research foci allow one to approach current teaching practice from a more comparative angle, but they could also allow one to make stronger generalizations, when working with a sample representative of all Dutch teachers.

Finally, it would be valuable for future studies to move beyond interviewing as a method and explore current teaching through classroom observation, as this could offer a deeper understanding of teachers' actual approaches to teaching about 'race' and racism. Classroom observation would also offer more insight into classroom dynamics in the context of discussions around 'race'- and racism-related issues and in the context of the use of particular teaching methods, such as social experiments or conversations about students' experiences. This way, through classroom observation, one may also gain more insight into whether certain pitfalls are present in current teaching, such as 'tokenizing' when asking about students' experiences (Kishimoto, 2018).

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Appendix A
Interview Guide

Onderwerp	Vragen
<i>Openingsvraag rondom petitie racisme en discriminatie als verplichte onderwerpen op school + eigen visie op lesgeven over ‘ras’ en racisme – het belang ervan en de inhoud</i>	<p>Hoe kijkt u naar deze petitie vanuit uw vak?</p> <p>In hoeverre vindt u het belangrijk om les te geven over ‘ras’ en racisme in het vak maatschappijleer? Waarom?</p> <p>Wat vindt u inhoudelijk belangrijk om te bespreken over ‘ras’ en racisme in de lessen maatschappijleer? Waarom vindt u deze inhoud belangrijk? (In hoeverre bespreekt u deze inhoud in uw lessen?)</p>
<i>Het Nationale Curriculum</i>	<p>Hoe ziet u de plek van ‘ras’ en racisme in het huidige nationale maatschappijleer curriculum (havo/vwo)? (Hoe beschouwt u het havo/vwo examenonderdeel ‘de pluriforme samenleving’ en in hoeverre maken ‘ras’ en racisme daar deel van uit in uw ogen?)</p> <p>In hoeverre is het nationale maatschappijleer curriculum behulpzaam en/of leidend voor u in het lesgeven over ‘ras’ en racisme? (Indien de plek van ‘ras’ en racisme in het nationale curriculum niet heel sterk of duidelijk voor de docent is: hoe zou het curriculum ingericht kunnen worden om de onderwerpen ‘ras’ en racisme een duidelijkere plek te geven?)</p>
<i>Lesmaterialen</i>	<p>Welke lesmethode gebruikt uw school (tekstboeken)? Hoe vindt u dat de onderwerpen ‘ras’ en racisme worden besproken in deze lesmethode? (Hoe vindt u dat deze onderwerpen zich tot de andere onderwerpen in de lesmethode verhouden?)</p> <p>Hoe ervaart u het werken met de lesmethode in het lesgeven over ‘ras’ en racisme? In hoeverre is de lesmethode leidend in het bespreken van ‘ras’ en racisme in de les?</p> <p>Gebruikt u naast de lesmethode ook andere materialen in het lesgeven over ‘ras’ en racisme?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Zo ja, waarom gebruikt u deze materialen? (Wat voegen deze materialen toe aan de les?) - Zo nee, waarom gebruikt u geen andere materialen? <p>In hoeverre liggen er op het gebied van lesmaterialen nog mogelijkheden om het lesgeven over ‘ras’ en racisme te verbeteren/veranderen/verbreden/verdiepen?</p>
<i>Werkvormen en interacties met en tussen leerlingen</i>	<p>Welke werkvorm(en) gebruikt u om ‘ras’ en racisme te bespreken in de les en hoe zien daarin de interacties tussen u en de leerlingen en tussen de leerlingen onderling eruit? Hoe vindt u dat deze werkvorm(en) en de interacties verlopen?</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (Indien de evaluatie goed is: Waarom werken deze werkvorm(en) en deze interacties denkt u in het lesgeven over 'ras' en racisme? - Indien de evaluatie niet zo goed is: Wat zou voor u helpend kunnen zijn in het navigeren van mogelijke werkvormen en de interacties tussen u en de leerlingen en tussen de leerlingen onderling tijdens het lesgeven over 'ras' en racisme?)
<i>De school context</i>	<p>Hoe gaat uw school in bredere zin om met de thema's 'ras' en racisme? In hoeverre heeft de school context invloed op de manier waarop u lesgeeft over 'ras' en racisme?</p> <p>In hoeverre is de diversiteit van de leerlingen op uw school een factor waar u rekening mee houdt of moet houden in het lesgeven over 'ras' en racisme? (+ de stad context)</p>
<i>Eigen identiteit en overtuigingen</i>	<p>In hoeverre speelt uw eigen identiteit een rol in het lesgeven over 'ras' en racisme? In hoeverre spelen uw eigen overtuigingen over de thema's 'ras' en racisme een rol in het lesgeven over 'ras' en racisme?</p> <p>Heeft u zich wel eens verdiept in kritische academische literatuur over 'ras' en racisme?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Zo ja, welke literatuur? Wat motiveerde u om zich hierin te verdiepen? In hoeverre verwerkt u deze literatuur in uw lessen over 'ras' en racisme? - Zo nee, waarom niet? In hoeverre zou dit iets zijn waar u interesse in zou hebben of wat u zou zien als waardevol?
<i>Veilig klasklimaat</i>	<p>In hoeverre maakt het creëren van een veilig klasklimaat deel uit van het lesgeven over 'ras' en racisme? Hoe creëert u een veilig klasklimaat in het lesgeven over 'ras' en racisme?</p>
<i>Concluderende vragen</i>	<p>Wat, voor u, is uiteindelijk het meest leidend in het vormen van uw aanpak van de thema's 'ras' en racisme in de lessen maatschappijleer?</p> <p>Is er een bepaalde factor die meespeelt in het vormen van uw aanpak van de thema's 'ras' en racisme in de lessen maatschappijleer die nog niet besproken is?</p> <p>In hoeverre zijn er dingen die u lastig vindt in het lesgeven over 'ras' en racisme? Wat zou u kunnen helpen om met deze lastige aspecten om te gaan of om deze lastige aspecten te verhelpen?</p>

Additional topics:

Black Lives Matter protests

The presence of a historical perspective on 'race' and racism

Whiteness and white privilege

Teachers' goals in teaching about 'race' and racism

The presence of conflicts in the classroom when discussing 'race' and racism

Appendix B
Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Formulier

Korte beschrijving van het onderzoek

Voor de masterscriptie die ik schrijf ter afronding van de onderzoeksmaster Gender Studies aan de Universiteit van Utrecht doe ik onderzoek naar het lesgeven over ‘ras’ en racisme in het vak maatschappijleer. Hiervoor interview ik docenten maatschappijleer die lesgeven op diverse middelbare scholen in Nederland om inzicht te krijgen in hoe docenten maatschappijleer omgaan met de thema’s ‘ras’ en racisme in de les.

Het verwerken en bewaren van de interview gegevens

Ten behoeve van de analyse van de interview gegevens is het gewenst om deze letterlijk vast te leggen. Om die reden zal ik voor het interview begint toestemming vragen voor het opnemen van het interview (audio). Na afloop van het gesprek zal ik het interview transcriberen en de transcriptie van het interview anonimiseren. De audio-opname van het interview zal na het afronden van mijn masterscriptie zo spoedig mogelijk worden vernietigd. De geanonimiseerde transcriptie van het interview moet 10 jaar bewaard blijven. De audio-opname en de transcriptie van het interview zullen niet gedeeld worden met anderen en zullen alleen gebruikt worden in de context van mijn masterscriptie. In mijn masterscriptie zal ik uw uitspraken anoniem verwerken om te waarborgen dat deze niet aan u als persoon verbonden kunnen worden.

Vrijwillige deelname

Deelname aan dit onderzoek is vrijwillig. Op elk moment tijdens het interview kunt u uw deelname stoppen, zonder opgave van redenen. Mocht u aangeven om uw deelname aan het onderzoek te willen stoppen na het interview, worden de interview gegevens verwijderd. Het verwijderen van de interview gegevens is echter niet meer mogelijk als de interview gegevens al zijn geanalyseerd en zijn verwerkt in mijn masterscriptie.

Informed consent

Ik bevestig dat ik de beschrijving van het onderzoek heb gelezen en begrepen. Ik weet dat ik de mogelijkheid heb om de onderzoeker te contacteren bij vragen of onduidelijkheden over het onderzoek.

ja nee

Ik bevestig dat ik de informatie over het verwerken en bewaren van de interview gegevens heb gelezen en begrepen en ik stem hiermee in.

ja nee

Ik bevestig dat ik de informatie over mijn vrijwillige deelname aan het onderzoek heb gelezen en begrepen en ik stem hiermee in.

ja nee

Naam

Handtekening

Datum

Appendix C

Thematic Analysis: An Overview of the Themes

Course Content: Addressing 'Race' and Racism

(The Lack of) A Historical Perspective on 'Race' and Racism

Whilst some teachers explicitly voiced that they incorporate a historical perspective on 'race' and racism, others either did not mention it or stated to not necessarily incorporate a historical perspective on the class-level. For Teacher A, including a historical perspective on issues such as 'race' and racism proved to be imperative. They noted that one "needs to go back to the past" in order to understand and analyze certain structures that exist in today's society. Their inclusion of a historical perspective on 'race' and racism was also reflected in the topics that they clarified to address in relation to these themes, including the 'Golden Age,' the fate of the North American indigenous population, apartheid in Africa, and the Holocaust, *inter alia*. Teacher C also voiced that they find including a historical perspective important and mentioned that they attempt to convey that 'race'- and racism-related issues are "not just of this time" or that these issues had an even greater impact on entire generations in the past. Teacher F explained that, whilst they generally do not address issues before the Second World War, they do address more recent history such as decolonization as well as migration and the political responses thereto.

In Teacher E's classes, a historical perspective on 'race' and racism seemed to largely be absent. They expressed that a historical perspective on 'race' and racism is not very prominent in their classes in terms of addressing issues such as the slavery past. Whilst they indicated that students can explore this themselves and, in stating that a historical perspective is "still too little" part of their approach to the themes, seemed to judge the absence of a historical perspective as a 'lack,' they voiced that this is not part of class-level content in their case. Finally, Teacher D explained that, whilst they take current issues such as ethnic profiling to originate from slavery, they have noticed that "people do not agree about that," both within their own section as well as within circles of historians more broadly. This way, Teacher D illuminated that not all teachers stand behind such a historical perspective on 'race' and racism, which arguably may lead to the absence of a historical perspective on these issues in some teachers' classes. Ultimately, despite Teacher D's acknowledgement of the connection between slavery and contemporary issues such as ethnic profiling, the extent to which Teacher D incorporates a historical perspective on 'race' and racism into their civic education classes remained slightly unclear.

Being Guided by Current Issues

For various interviewees, teaching about ‘race’ and racism seemed to be guided by current issues. Several teachers, for instance, discuss the issue of ethnic profiling, which has repeatedly been in the news lately. Moreover, Teacher A brought up the recent discussion surrounding whether or not a white woman could translate a black woman’s poetry, which arose in connection to Amanda Gorman’s performance at the American presidential inauguration. In discussing this matter, Teacher A indicated that they raise questions such as: “Do you then really have to be black to translate a poem or to understand ..., to have empathy?”. Moreover, the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests arose as a contemporary issue that different teachers discuss. Teacher C, for instance, explained that they explore the slogan ‘Black Lives Matter’ in relation to the slogan ‘All Lives Matter,’ examining why some people have issues with the former slogan and a part of the population advocates the latter slogan. By exploring such issues, then, students are stimulated to engage with current ‘race’- and racism-related topics.

‘Race:’ Biology or Social Construction?

Various teachers proved to tackle the question of whether ‘race’ is a social construction or a biological reality. Teacher B, for instance, voiced that they convey the message that ‘race’ “is a social phenomenon but does not exist in a biological sense.” They added that, when addressing ‘race’ in the context of the Dutch constitution, they specifically mention that ‘race’ “actually is cultus.” Yet, they also explain that, if ‘race’ “is real in people’s heads, then it also becomes real in society.” This way, Teacher B makes visible to students that, whilst ‘race’ is not a biological reality, it is part of our social realities. Moreover, Teacher E explained that they explore multiple perspectives on ‘race,’ including biological perspectives, which involve “theories surrounding different human races.”

The Dutch Context and Beyond

In discussing the topics that they address when teaching about ‘race’ and racism, teachers proved to explore both topics that are bound to the Dutch context specifically as well as topics that transcend the Dutch borders. In discussing the Dutch context, one topic that proved to surface in several teachers’ classes is ‘Zwarte Piet,’ a highly contested figure part of the Dutch ‘Sinterklaas’ tradition. In relation to this topic, Teacher C, for instance, stimulates students to explore how they perceive the tradition and the critiques voiced by a minority group that does not feel represented therein as well as the question of to what extent racist intent is present in the tradition. Another issue that different teachers discuss in relation to the Dutch context is

Dutch politics. In exploring Dutch politics, Dutch political parties and political figures such as Pim Fortuyn and Geert Wilders and their statements are discussed. One example thereof is Wilders' 'more or less' statement, which Teacher E mentioned.

Moreover, teachers' discussion of 'race'-related issues also proved to include topics beyond the Dutch context. Teacher C explicitly expressed the need to move beyond Dutch borders, in stating that they feel that "if one only knows the Dutch society, then one really does not know any societies." Accordingly, they explained that they frequently include comparisons with other countries. One context that various teachers examine beyond Dutch borders is the American context, which Teacher C, for instance, proved to explore in terms of the elections and the death of George Floyd, *inter alia*. Furthermore, as mentioned before, the Black Lives Matter protests have also surfaced in various teachers' classes, a topic that truly transgresses borders. Evidently, then, teachers address both content that is specific to the Dutch context as well as issues that exceed its borders.

The Micro- and the Macro Level

Various teachers' statements offered insight into how teachers address the micro level when exploring issues of 'race' and racism. One way in which teachers proved to do so is by zeroing in on individual stories and experiences, whether those come from students, themselves, or people beyond the classroom. For instance, Teacher E leaves room for students' own stories to be told, such as whether anyone has ever considered changing their last name because they feel treated unequally based thereon. Another way in which Teacher E zeroes in on the micro level is by using case studies, thereby exploring one specific story, which they explained they also connect to students' stories. Other issues that teachers mentioned allow for a macro-level exploration of 'race' and racism, examining how 'race' and racism are present in particular structures or institutions. One example thereof is the presence and meaning of 'race' in legal structures such as the Dutch constitution, zeroing in on Article 1, which details different grounds for discrimination that are prohibited in the Netherlands, including 'race.' Another macro-level example is ethnic profiling, which proved to be addressed by different teachers, as illuminated in the theme *Being Guided by Current Issues*.

Addressing Everyone

More generally, it appeared as though civic education teachers' classes shed light on how different groups of people may relate to issues of 'race' and racism, including white people. Teacher A, C, D, and E explicitly confirmed that issues such as whiteness and white privilege

are addressed in their classes, either brought up by themselves or by students. Teacher E, for instance, explained that they feel that one needs to convey the advantages that come with white privilege and uses their own experiences to illustrate this, as a white teacher. Moreover, in addressing racism, Teacher A mentioned that, alongside discussing ‘white racism,’ they also discuss ‘non-white racism.’ This approach to racism appeared to be grounded in their belief that “it is not that white people have a monopoly on racist thinking,” as they stated. This way, Teacher A seemed to aim to address racism in a way that speaks to different groups and does not position white people as the only group with racist thought patterns. Finally, Teacher D’s teaching proved to hold the potential to speak to different people’s realities, in that they seek to convey that the ‘nest’ one is from plays a significant role in determining “who one will be in life” and that people’s luck differs in this regard. This perspective leaves room to address the different positions that students find themselves in, both white and non-white.

Other Axes of Identity

Beyond ‘race,’ civic education teachers also appeared to address other vectors of identity. In relation to the different grounds based upon which people may face discrimination outlined in Article 1 of the Dutch constitution, Teacher F, for instance, clarified that “being a woman, homosexuality, and Islam” are issues that they also commonly address. Hence, they also discuss gender, sexuality, and religion. The issue of religion also surfaced when Teacher F detailed the kind of recent history that they address in civic education, which proved to include the anti-Islam sentiments that arose around 9/11 and, in the Dutch context specifically, around politician Pim Fortuyn’s time. Moreover, in defining ‘racism,’ Teacher F also proved to involve religion, in defining the concept as: “the discrimination based on descent, skin color, religion, as a group, for one’s group descent, so to speak, when one is treated differently.” Evidently, then, Teacher F moves beyond ‘race’ in defining ‘racism.’ Moreover, Teacher E raised class justice as a topic, putting forward class as another axis of identity that teachers may address. Hence, different axes of identity may surface in teachers’ civic education classes. Yet, it is important to note that one cannot be sure as to how or whether teachers relate different vectors of identity to one another – or specifically to ‘race.’

Language

Although not mentioned very elaborately, issues of language also proved to be part of several teachers’ approaches to teaching about ‘race’ and racism. For instance, Teacher A explained that they discuss the sensitivity tied to terms such as ‘slaves,’ ‘enslaved,’ and ‘Indians’ as well

as the difference between the two Dutch terms for ‘white:’ ‘wit’ and ‘blank.’ Moreover, Teacher B mentioned that they discuss the difference between ‘racism’ and ‘discrimination,’ an issue which Teacher E also explained students ask about in their classes. Furthermore, in Teacher E’s classes, students appeared to be stimulated to reflect upon the term ‘race’ and question whether they really understand it. Evidently, then, different teachers stimulate students to engage with issues of language in relation to ‘race’ and racism.

Defining ‘Race’ and Racism: Raising Questions and Expressing One’s Unease

Instead of straightforwardly answering the question as to what they discuss in relation to ‘race’ and racism, Teacher B responded with questions, including: “what does one discuss exactly when one discusses racism?” “What is racism then to you ... what should be discussed?”. For Teacher B, then, it seemed as though the complexity of the issues of ‘race’ and racism raises questions regarding what content they should address in relation to these topics. Teacher E seemed to voice a sense of unease grounded in what they perceive as a sense of ambiguity surrounding the definitions of ‘race’ and ‘racism’ that makes them prefer to not give concrete definitions thereto. In not wanting to commit to one definition of – or approach to – the concepts of ‘race’ and ‘racism,’ then, Teacher E always emphasizes that any definition discussed in class is just one possible way of approaching the concepts. To Teacher D, the term ‘racism’ proved to be odd in general, given the fact that, in their eyes, there are no different races. For some teachers, then, a sense of unease seemed to be tied to discussing and defining ‘race’ and racism.

The National Curriculum

The Core Domains

The national curriculum’s core domains proved to be more leading and/or helpful in teaching about ‘race’ and racism for some teachers than for others. For Teacher F, the national curriculum proved to not be an important factor in shaping their teaching more generally – therefore, nor are its domains. Teacher C indicated that, whilst ‘race’ and racism do surface in the domain *pluriform society* in some way, the national curriculum is merely a ‘capstone’ to them. Hence, the national curriculum did not appear to be a framework that strongly guides their teaching about ‘race’ and racism. For several other teachers, the domains *pluriform society* and *constitutional state* seemed to offer the clearest incentive to address ‘race’ and racism. Teacher A, for instance, explained that, to them, it is evident that one would discuss racism in the context of *pluriform society*. Teacher B explained that ‘race’ and racism come up in the

context of *constitutional state* based on the explicit presence of ‘race’ in Article 1 of the Dutch constitution, a topic that has been mentioned before. In relation to *constitutional state*, Teacher D contributed that they discuss ethnic profiling therein. Yet, more generally, they voiced that racism barely comes up in the core domains. Finally, Teacher E illuminated that their approach to teaching, which includes creating space to discuss current issues, allows them to address issues such as ‘race’ and racism in connection to all domains. To offer one example, in relation to *constitutional state*, they explained that one can discuss how much more often people with a certain skin color are stopped by the police in comparison to people with another skin color.

‘Race’ and Racism: Lacking an Explicit Presence in the National Curriculum

In relation to ‘race’ and racism, various teachers judged the framework offered by the national curriculum as problematic or lacking in certain ways. For Teacher C, one key issue proved to be that ‘race’ and racism are solely implicit components of the curriculum. As they clarified, there is not a single curricular ‘end term’ in which the term ‘race’ or ‘racism’ explicitly surfaces. They understand this absence as being caused by the reality that incorporating these terms into formal decisions “remains a sensitive point.” Ultimately, for them, the problem proved to not necessarily be the lack of explicit presence of ‘race’ and racism in itself but rather what they view as the consequence thereof, which is that the responsibility to address these issues is placed on teachers. Teachers, then, are left without a framework to fall back on, as Teacher C explained. To them, this is a problematic reality also because addressing ‘race’ and racism in class should not depend on how important a teacher finds addressing these issues – rather, it should be positioned as being “important for all of us.” Teacher D also voiced that racism currently is not really covered in the national curriculum’s framework. Moreover, in response to the question of how ‘race’ and racism could potentially be fit into the existing framework, they stated to find this question difficult to answer, despite their perception that these topics should certainly hold a place therein.

Teachers’ (Lack of) Flexibility in Navigating the Curriculum

The interviewees highlighted both a sense of flexibility and a lack thereof in terms of navigating the curriculum and its demands. Teacher C explained that they attempt to avoid dealing with the curriculum’s ‘end terms’ in a very rigid manner, which would, for instance, lead them to discuss one domain in one specific period of the school year. For them, a sense of flexibility seemed to be imperative in order to be able to involve current events without having to wait until they reach the domain in which a certain event would fit. Teacher C’s teaching thus proved

to be guided by current events, no matter the domain of the national curriculum they are working on, showing their flexibility in navigating the curriculum. Teacher E also emphasized a sense of flexibility in handling the curriculum, which they linked to teaching experience, in explaining that, when one has been a civic education teacher for quite a while, one is less dependent on the curriculum. Yet, in other ways, the curriculum proved to be somewhat restrictive. Teacher E, for instance, explained that ‘race’ and racism form “one of the hundred themes” that teachers must cover, not only from their own perspective, but also based on curricular demands. This way, curricular demands seemed to make it more difficult for them to meet everyone’s needs.

Course Materials

Textbooks

Not all teachers proved to use textbooks, among whom Teacher A and C. Teacher B, however, explained that they do use a textbook and clarified that the textbook that they use significantly guides their teaching, as they find this convenient and believe that “it also gives the kids a lot of clarity.” Still, they voiced certain critiques of the textbook that they use, *Thema’s*. For instance, they mentioned that the slavery past is not addressed therein, nor does the term ‘racism’ surface in the section ‘Pluriformiteit in Nederland’ (‘Pluriformity in the Netherlands’), which they stated to find rather odd. Teacher D, who uses the textbook *Dilemma*, explained that, whilst issues of ‘race’ and racism do come up, they do not take center stage. In terms of navigating the textbook, they explained that they believe that current events – events that took place so recently that they are not part of the textbook, such as Black Lives Matter – should be addressed alongside the textbook. Moreover, for Teacher D, the textbook mainly serves as a ‘backup’ to check whether they have addressed nearly everything that is part thereof.

Teacher E shared that, at a certain point in the school year, they close the textbook and focus on current events and extra programs. Hence, the textbook does not guide their teaching throughout the entire year. Moreover, when asked about the presence of ‘race’ and racism in the textbook that they use, Teacher E explained that the themes mainly surface in the chapter ‘pluriforme samenleving’ (‘pluriform society’); yet, they surface in a rather limited manner. Ultimately, Teacher E clarified that they believe that learning from textbooks should be reduced to explore current themes. Finally, Teacher F explained that they pick and choose parts of the textbook that they use, *Thema’s*, and do not tend to use the section ‘pluriforme samenleving’ a lot. For them, then, the textbook did not appear to be very leading. Moreover, when browsing

through the textbook during the interview, they observed that ‘racism’ is not part of the textbook’s index, which they voiced to find quite odd – mirroring Teacher B’s view on the absence of the term ‘racism’ in the textbook *Thema*’s. The only explicit reference to racism that they found was in a picture that contained a protest sign stating ‘racisme is geen mening’ (‘racism is not an opinion’), pointing out that the textbook barely refers to racism. Evidently, then, not all teachers use textbooks, nor are textbooks navigated and perceived in the same manner by the teachers who do use them. Additionally, textbooks appear to leave room for improvement in terms of (explicitly) addressing ‘race’ and racism.

Academic Literature

For Teacher C, academic literature plays a significant role in their classes. They explained that the books and articles that they read in their own time can stimulate them to want to share something with students and “build a class around it,” such as the writings of Frantz Fanon. In fact, they also see themselves as part of the educational domain to share such writings with students – it is something that drives them. Teacher F mentioned that there is one academic theory that they build upon in class, Frank Bovenkerk’s vicious circle, which they explained helps to explain why youths with a migrant background may become involved in criminality more so than others. By using this theory, Teacher F aims to convey the idea that one’s starting position is an important factor in determining the opportunities that one gets in society. More broadly, Teacher F also mentioned that they view psychological theories translated to secondary school level as highly useful. Other teachers do not use academic literature in their classes, which may be caused by different factors. Teacher D, for instance, explained that reading is “a disaster today” in terms of grabbing students’ attention.

Material Tied to Current Events

As the theme *Being Guided by Current Issues* has illuminated, various teachers address current events in their classes. In order to address these events, they incorporate materials tied thereto into their teaching. Among the materials that teachers use are newspaper articles and clips from the television show *Nieuwsuur*, which can then be discussed or analyzed. In terms of selecting newspaper articles, Teacher C explained that selection can be based on which newspaper they judge as good, practical considerations such as whether they have a newspaper subscription, which sources are generally used in exams, and the teaching method that they wish to use. Regarding the latter point, they offered the example that, if they want students to work in groups, including a variety of newspaper articles is useful.

Moving Images

Beyond clips from *Nieuwsuur*, various teachers explained that moving images are part of their classes, also those on ‘race’ and racism specifically. Teacher D explained that teachers need such materials in order to make their classes a bit more exciting and make the course content more tangible. Documentaries and films are two types of moving images that various teachers confirmed to use. One example thereof is Dutch filmmaker Sunny Bergman’s *Wit is ook een kleur* (‘White is also a color’), after which Teacher A explained they tend to have a debate in class. A non-Dutch example offered by Teacher D is the documentary *Thirteenth* about the American Thirteenth Amendment, which they view as clearly linked to ‘race’ and racism.

Own Materials

Various types of own materials proved to be part of several teachers’ classes. In the case of Teacher A, their overall approach to civic education classes is grounded in them composing their own course materials, in line with their school’s prioritization of teachers’ autonomy. They see this approach as a way to prevent teachers from being limited by a certain textbook. For Teacher F, their own materials proved to be complementary to the textbook that they use. One example thereof is a document that contains information about politics after the Second World War, of which racism is not a huge part, yet is always discussed in class, as they explained. Moreover, the own materials that Teacher E incorporates into their classes proved to contain a rather personal element, in that they explained that they use personal photographs to illustrate that they were treated as royalty as a white person on a holiday to Abu Dhabi ten years ago.

Teaching Methods

Before presenting the themes for this topic, it is important to note that several teachers explained that the teaching circumstances during the corona pandemic have limited the teaching methods that they can use. Teacher E, for instance, suggested that the question of teaching methods was “easier” before the covid restrictions were introduced, and Teacher F mentioned that discussing freely with one another has happened considerably less over the past year. Therefore, not all teaching methods presented below are representative of how teachers have structured their classes over the past year but rather represent how they would do so in ‘normal’ teaching circumstances.

Conversation, Discussion, and Debate

For all teachers, some form of conversation, discussion, or debate seemed to be part of their classes. Discussions and debates proved to revolve around some of the course materials mentioned before, such as documentaries, as illuminated by Teacher A. Discussions about current events also surfaced as a commonly used option. Other triggers for discussion and debate include specific questions or positions brought up by teachers. Teacher E, for instance, explained that they create debate settings in which students are placed against one another and must defend both positions in a certain debate. One example of the topics addressed in such debates that they offered was quotas to help increase the representation of people with a non-western background in top positions. Furthermore, students also get to raise issues that they wish to discuss, as Teacher D illuminated. Ultimately, then, it seemed as though teachers generally perceive civic education as a true “discussion course,” as Teacher D stated.

Moreover, one type of conversational format that stood out in the interviews was the sharing of experiences and stories, both by students and teachers. Teacher B, for instance, explained that they sometimes ask students: “who has ever dealt with discrimination or racism?”, thereby allowing students to share their experiences. For Teacher C, taking a personal approach to teaching that involves sharing their own experiences proved to be a key approach to teaching about issues such as ‘race’ and racism, which they seemed to feel can stimulate students to talk about their experiences as well. Additionally, they explained that they, for instance, play a clip from the documentary *Wit is ook een kleur* that shows how three people attempt to steal a bike and “the Dutch man” gets away with it, whilst the others are stopped, after which they first discuss what happens in the clip together with their students and then ask their students whether they have ever experienced this or relate to it in some way. This way, Teacher C actively invites students to share their experiences. Teacher E also proved to leave room for students to share their own experiences, stories, and anecdotes.

Inviting Guests

Although inviting guest teachers did not prove to be an approach that is shared by all teachers, different teachers acknowledged the value thereof. Teacher C was the sole teacher who mentioned that they sometimes invite guest teachers. One reason why they invite guest teachers is to allow students to listen to a certain story being told by someone who is part of ‘the field.’ One previously invited guest that they named in relation to the themes of ‘race’ and racism was Jerry Afriyie from Dutch action group *Kick Out Zwarte Piet*. With the help of such voices from

the outside, then, Teacher C highlighted that students can be stimulated to look at a certain issue from a side that they have not seen before.

Explanation and Advice

Throughout the interviews, it also became apparent that teachers use methods such as explanation and advice to teach students about ‘race’ and racism, wherein their own voice is central. Teacher D, for instance, mentioned that they explain to students “what happens” in response to their questions about certain things that they have seen. In doing so, they illuminated, they can spark responses of amazement and even slightly shock students. Moreover, Teacher E stated that students sometimes ask them for advice, in asking whether something should be understood as discrimination or rather as racism, for instance.

Independent Learning

Different forms of independent learning activities also surfaced in the interview data. Teacher C, for instance, explained that they sometimes stimulate students to first read something for themselves and write a number of things down in order to then discuss this. Teacher E mentioned that they let students work on their own projects, such as making a documentary, writing a report, or creating any other end product that speaks to them. In that, Teacher E confirmed that some students choose to explore topics related to the themes of ‘race’ and racism. Teacher E also mentioned an independent learning activity that takes place outside of the classroom, namely interviewing others. In their eyes, this allows students to move outside their own ‘bubbles’ and learn what it would be like to stand in someone else’s shoes.

Joint Learning Activities

Joint learning activities surfaced as another teaching method that several teachers use, such as social experiments. Teacher C, for instance, mentioned the experiment ‘Over de streep’ (‘Across the line’) that involves students stepping forward if they can answer ‘yes’ to certain questions that are related to factors such as ‘race’/ethnicity, religion, and sexuality. Through this experiment, students can become aware of the reality that they have – or do not have – certain privileges or are – or are not – affected by certain things and that this may be attributed to different vectors of their identity, as Teacher C illuminated. Another experiment that they mentioned, in which a group of students is ignored by the other students until they guess their means of communication, appeared to be aimed more specifically at understanding issues of in- and exclusion. After this social experiment, Teacher C’s statements suggested that a

conversation is held in class in which students reflect on their experiences. Through this teaching method, then, Teacher C clarified that students become more aware of their own prejudices and stereotypes, *inter alia*.

Teacher E mentioned a teaching method specifically aimed at students who generally do not face racism themselves, in which students obtain a type of ‘character card’ that stimulates them to imagine that they do face racism. In such a joint activity, then, students go through a kind of ‘simulation’ experience. Additionally, Teacher E raised ‘going into society’ as a joint learning activity. This mainly seemed to be part of their teaching before the corona restrictions were introduced, considering the statement that preceded their mentioning of this activity, in which they suggested that the question of teaching methods was “easier” before the corona restrictions were introduced. For instance, they explained that they went to a place called *Humanity House*, which allowed students to experience “what it is like as a refugee” and what kind of additional problems a refugee may face when being discriminated against on the basis of racist beliefs. Overall, Teacher E clarified that, rather than tackling ‘race’ and racism in a purely theoretical sense, they seek to approach these issues in practical ways. The joint activities that they mentioned arguably lend themselves well to such a practical approach.

Case Studies

In the interviews, teachers also raised different types of analysis focusing on specific cases as a teaching method. Teacher C, for instance, mentioned that they have examined the case of Black Lives Matter through the lens of “framing” specifically, thereby exploring how Black Lives Matter has appeared in the news. Furthermore, Teacher E mentioned that they addressed the developments surrounding Dutch comics such as *Kuifje* and *Suske en Wiske* last year, in relation to which they proved to examine questions such as why certain older comics would no longer be acceptable when placed in today’s context, thereby comparing historical contexts. They added that one could do the same for British films and documentaries, in which black males always had to play “a sort of comical role” in the past.

Pedagogy

Decentering Authority and Creating a Sense of ‘we’

Two teachers made it rather explicit that, in teaching about ‘race’ and racism, they do not position themselves as an all-knowing, faultless, or authoritarian teacher. Teacher C, for instance, mentioned that they wish that students take away from their classes “the awareness of

that we have prejudices and stereotypes, all of us,” which implies that it is important to Teacher C that students are aware that they – as their teacher – also have certain prejudices and stereotypes. This way, Teacher C actively shares that they are not faultless and creates a sense of ‘we’ amongst themselves and their students. Additionally, Teacher C illuminated that they add a “personal note” to their teaching and share their own experiences in order to make students aware that there is no distance between themselves and the teacher. This way, decentering one’s authority and creating a sense of ‘we’ appeared to be a deliberate pedagogical approach that Teacher C takes. Teacher E explained that they ‘take a step back’ when teaching about ‘race’ and racism and believe that they should not act as the “authoritarian, all-knowing” teacher when it comes to these topics. They feel that, since certain students have experienced discrimination themselves, they should not take a leading role as a teacher in class – particularly as a white teacher, a point to which I will return. They also highlighted that, as they do not understand everything properly themselves, they stated that they can “marvel at that it sometimes also just is wrongly organized in terms of system and structure” in the Dutch context *together* with students. Additionally, they raise questions such as: “what really is the word ‘race,’ do *we* [emphasis added] understand this?”. These practices emphasize the decentering of authority and mutual learning that occurs in Teacher E’s classroom.

Incorporating Students’ Input

For different teachers, students’ input seemed to be rather leading in their classes. In fact, Teacher D clarified that students’ input forms one reason why they barely have to prepare their classes. Teacher B also hinted at the fact that students’ input guides their classes, in explaining that their prioritization of certain themes is guided – at least in part – by what they feel that students wish to discuss. Moreover, Teacher E mentioned that, in the third period of the year, when the textbooks close, they discuss issues that students bring up. They also confirmed that, on the topic of ‘race’ and racism specifically, their students are leading. Finally, Teacher F stated that, if a number of students is interested in something, they feel that one has to engage therewith as a teacher. Evidently, then, for several teachers, students’ input plays quite a leading role.

Creating a Safe Space

Various teachers clarified that creating a safe space is a priority to them, if not a precondition for any class that they teach. Creating a safe discussion space, then, is part of various teachers’ approaches to teaching. One way in which Teacher A appeared to foster such a space is by

stimulating students to speak freely, yet intervening when a student's comment goes against human rights and pointing this out. One example of such a comment they gave was: "all Muslims need to leave the Netherlands." Fortunately, they explained that they have never needed to intervene like this before. Ultimately, they emphasized that there is a certain boundary that students cannot cross. Whilst they believe that students must be able to express their opinions and engage in debates about particular opinions, Teacher A thus clarifies what is acceptable based on the law and starts a critical conversation when a student says something that is not acceptable. Teacher F illuminated that the wider norm at their school – that is, "everyone must be able to feel safe in class" – reflects a similar point of view, in explaining that this norm entails that one has to be able to engage in honest discussions, yet everyone must feel safe.

Moreover, some teachers explained that they deliberately confront certain extreme or contested topics in order to create a safe space. Teacher A, for instance, mentioned that they may take a point from the political program of the Dutch right-wing political party PVV and discuss this with students, thereby creating a safe space by ensuring that sensitive topics are spoken about. Teacher C mentioned using a similar approach, in that they explained that they may play a controversial video and together discuss what happens therein as a means of fostering a safe space. Another way to create a safe space that Teacher C mentioned is letting students engage in an independent activity before, or instead of, having to openly share their ideas in class. For instance, following the death of French teacher Samuel Paty, Teacher C let students write an anonymous letter, which allowed them to discuss students' ideas anonymously in the following class. Finally, Teacher D mentioned that one needs to respect students as a teacher and emphasized the importance of fostering good bonds with students in order to create a safe space.

Teachers' own Identity and Beliefs Regarding 'Race' and Racism

Objectivity, Neutrality, and Being Bound to One's Position

Various teachers appeared to seek to pursue a neutral or objective approach to teaching. Teacher A, for instance, voiced that they believe that one can expect that a graduated historian like them attempts to pursue objectivity. At the same time, however, they acknowledged that "we are all location-bound" and stated to adopt a critical attitude to all issues that they discuss. Accordingly, they illuminated that they are not necessarily 'neutral' about issues such as historical violence. Therefore, they would typify themselves as someone who seeks to work as

objectively as possible, whilst always adopting a critical approach. Teacher C, a non-white teacher, appeared to actively attempt to ‘switch off’ their own frame of reference and explained that they try to avoid talking solely from their own position when it comes to Black Lives Matter, for instance, as they believe that students may think that it only makes sense that they would support BLM. In this regard, they clarified that they seek for a sense of balance rather than approaching teaching as a kind of ‘mission’ to discuss issues in a specific manner. They also explicitly acknowledge to students that, however badly they may want to discuss a theme neutrally, they do not believe that this is the case. Accordingly, they also attempt to make students aware of the fact that they, as a teacher, are not a “source of truth.” Teacher F explained that they used to think that, as a teacher, one has to be objective. Today, they still attempt to address all issues in an “honest, egalitarian manner,” as they stated, yet they do feel that students have the right to know – if students wish to – what arguments underlie their choices. Finally, Teacher D explicitly related their political commitments to the issue of neutrality, in stating that they cannot mention their political commitments “too often in a class,” as they have to be “neutral.” This way, being ‘neutral’ appeared to be something that Teacher D somehow strives for in class.

Self-reflection Within and Outside of the Classroom

In class, Teacher C proved to engage in self-reflection and also stimulate this within students. For instance, they mentioned that, in class, they and their students together reflect upon the question: “why do we have these ideas about a certain theme or not?”. More broadly, Teacher C also deliberately takes a personal approach to teaching and incorporates their experiences as a non-white person. They also proved to engage in self-reflection outside of class, in reflecting upon the possible impact of their physical presence as a non-white teacher, *inter alia*. During the interview, they reflected upon how their non-whiteness may cause certain students to not feel comfortable to express themselves in certain ways, which they do not necessarily know how to deal with. They also appeared to consider students’ possible responses to their skin color in selecting their teaching strategies. For instance, their statements suggested that inviting guest teachers or discussing current events can be deliberate choices that they make in order to prevent students from judging their repeated discussion of ‘race’- and racism-related issues as coming just from their own position or investment in these issues.

When asked about the extent to which their own identity plays a role in discussing ‘race’ and racism in class, Teacher B, a white teacher, voiced that they understand that, as they have never faced racism, it can be quite easy to forget about this issue. Accordingly, they explained,

they have to actively realize that their own reality differs from other people's realities, showing a sense of self-reflection beyond the classroom. Moreover, when asked about the extent to which their own position also surfaces explicitly in class, Teacher B stated that they believe that they sometimes mention their own position, which suggests that they engage in a sense of self-reflection inside of the classroom as well.

Like some of the other teachers, Teacher E also showed a clear sense of self-reflection in the interview, in explaining that, although they cannot compare the two, teaching about racism as a white person can slightly feel like being a white male teaching about the two waves of emancipation. Subsequently, they clarified that racism is a theme that, in terms of their own identity, is far removed from them. Given their white identity, Teacher E also explained that they feel as though they cannot act as the "authoritarian, all-knowing" teacher and generally take 'a step back' when dealing with this topic, allowing students to take on more of a leading role. In the classroom, they also proved to openly reflect on their own identity, in using photographs, as mentioned before, to reflect upon how privileged they were treated in Abu Dhabi ten years ago, as a white person. After this story, they explained, they also address the fact that they were raised in poverty, but could still go to the Dutch VWO level and were hired over others, given their "background."

Teacher F, however, clarified that they would never use themselves as an illustration of anything and attempt to not bring their personal life to the foreground. They expressed that they prefer to focus on students' experiences, societal events, and the teaching material. They also illuminated that they are aware that there is an anti-racist stream in which people dive into their own experiences and their prejudices, *inter alia*. Yet, they explained to not really identify with such anti-racism and appeared to attach most importance to how people, including themselves, deal with others in practice.

The School Context

The School's Identity and Teachers' Freedom

Various teachers clarified that the school's broader identity, vision, and/or mission includes facets such as being welcoming to everyone, prioritizing 'tolerance,' guaranteeing students' safety, and allowing students to be "who they are." This way, issues of 'race' and racism appear to be dealt with in some way by most schools – at least implicitly. Teacher D, however, mentioned that, given their school's highly diverse student population, discrimination does not occur at their school, and racism is not an issue that their school tends to actively engage with.

Across schools, however, it appeared as though the wider school context did not significantly impact teachers' teaching about 'race' and racism. Teacher A, for instance, emphasized that teachers are not told to 'do something' with the themes. At their school, they explained, this simply happens "automatically." Teacher E made a similar point in stating that teachers are given quite some freedom at their school. Both teachers' statements, then, suggested that the school simply trusts that themes such as 'race' and racism are addressed and are "taken good care of," as Teacher A described, and does not offer any specific instructions to teachers regarding how they should approach such themes. Teachers thus appeared to possess significant freedom regarding how they address 'race' and racism.

The School's Diverse Student Population

The schools that the interviewees teach at are all typified by a mixed student population, which Teacher B, for instance, explicitly expressed to find a pleasant teaching context. Different teachers contrasted the context that they teach in with less diverse school contexts and other local Dutch contexts, suggesting that they believe that it would be different for them to teach in another context, also specifically in relation to teaching about the topics of 'race' and racism. Teacher D, for instance, built on their teaching experience to illuminate that, at a 'white' school or in a 'white' local context, topics like racism generally are not part of people's realities and, consequently, are 'harder' to teach in comparison to teaching about these topics at a mixed school like the one that they currently teach at, where they explained students immediately connect thereto. Despite the difference in students' responses to the topic of racism across contexts, however, they explained that the student population's diversity does not impact the content that they address in class.

Similarly, for Teacher F, the student population's diversity proved to not shape the content that they teach. Yet, they did raise the point that, in a mixed group of students, certain students may engage with others in stereotypical ways – expecting, for instance, Turkish students to view Erdogan in a certain way – which Teacher F explained they actively attempt to work against. Teacher C mirrored Teacher D's views on the school level, in clarifying that they notice that, at their school, teaching about 'race' and racism could require greater effort in certain class compositions, which they explained expresses itself in the difference that, in classes that are more diverse, students generally "recognize themselves more quickly in a certain story." Moreover, Teacher E stated that, in a diverse group of students, the themes of 'race' and racism feel safe. Additionally, they appeared to view such a group composition as valuable, in explaining that such a group composition allows students to learn more from one

another, when buddied together, for instance. They also clarified that they feel that one must consider students' diversity in selecting teaching methods, which shows that this is a factor that somehow shapes their teaching. For Teacher A, however, the student population's diversity proved to not be a factor that they consider when teaching, no matter the topic. Clearly, then, teachers do not navigate the student population's diversity in the same manner.

Civic Education and Other Courses

Also part of the wider school context are the other courses offered therein, which proved to be relevant to address, as various interviewees discussed the course that they teach alongside civic education. In the interviews, it became apparent that teaching about 'race' and racism may be handled through a cross-course approach. This became particularly clear in the case of two teachers who also teach history, Teacher A and D, who both illuminated that they interconnect history and civic education and use a cross-course approach for themes such as 'race' and racism. Teacher A, for instance, mentioned that, in the third period of the year, they combine civic education and history in dealing with issues such as racism, immigration, stereotyping, and ethnocentrism.

Challenges

Some challenges that teachers face have already surfaced in the previous themes, such as those tied to the national curriculum, the student population's diversity, and covid restrictions. Next, I will present some additional challenges that surfaced in the interviews. Teacher A's statements will not be part thereof, as they indicated that they do not really face any challenges.

Limited Number of Hours and Wide Range of Topics

Based on the interviews, a key challenge for teachers seems to lie in the lack of prioritization of civic education as a course, which most clearly expresses itself through the limited number of hours that the course gets in comparison to other secondary school courses. Teacher D explained that civic education is a minor that most students simply pass and is of the courses that they believe to be "underappreciated." They added that there is quite a lot of material that students must learn, which teachers have very little time to address – an issue that Teacher B also raised in problematizing the reality that civic education teachers are expected to address a wide range of topics, yet they "do get very few hours." Hence, teachers having a limited number of hours to address a wide range of topics appeared to be a key challenge. This challenge also

arose specifically in relation to textbook content, in that Teacher F explained that they do not have enough time to cover all textbook content. Unfortunately, this is a challenge that is grounded in government decisions rather than choices made by teachers themselves, making it a broader issue that cannot easily be solved, as Teacher D highlighted. Teacher B appeared to express a sense of frustration with this reality, in stating: “go and talk with the Ministry of Education, as they have determined exactly how many hours and everything that needs to be in there.”

Lack of Guidance and Support

Teacher B’s statements in the interview suggested that it is unclear to them what addressing the theme of racism in civic education truly means. They expressed that, if one wishes that racism is explicitly addressed in civic education, then one has to be clear about what one means by this. They then raised the following questions: “Is it about racism in the Dutch society? Are we then all going to watch the documentary by Sunny Bergman?”. These questions and statements suggested that, in their eyes, it is unclear how racism should be addressed in civic education. They also seemed to disagree with teachers having to determine this. To me, then, my conversation with Teacher B suggested that there might be a lack of guidance regarding what it means to address racism in civic education. Teacher C’s beforementioned critique of the implications of the lack of explicit reference to ‘race’ and racism in the curriculum – including the responsibility that is placed on teachers to find a way to address these themes and the fact that teachers are left without a framework to fall back on – raises the idea that a challenge may lie in the lack of guidance specifically from those who structure civic education as a course. Moreover, Teacher E’s statements hinted at a current lack of government support in terms of allowing teachers to test students in less formative manners and more through practical assignments. For them, gaining the government’s support to move away from “the old-fashioned manner of testing” seemed to be key in order for them to be able to devote more time to issues such as ‘race’ and racism. In sum, a lack of support or guidance from those who design the overall course appeared to be a challenge for civic education teachers when teaching about ‘race’ and racism.

Risk of Hurting Students

For different teachers, the risk of hurting students appeared to be something that makes them slightly uneasy when teaching. Teacher B, for instance, explained that they are nervous about saying something that would hurt a student, based on their own ignorance or lack of sensitivity

regarding what something can be like for certain students. They clarified that they would find it awful if someone would feel unsafe as a result of something they said. Yet, despite the fact that they experience this risk as a difficulty, they explained that they would not avoid any topic in their class to navigate this risk. Teacher C also explained that they are afraid of “damaging a student,” specifically in reflecting on the potential impact of singling out a student whom they mistakenly suspect is quiet due to their presence as a non-white teacher when dealing with sensitive topics. They stated that they perhaps should follow a course about how to deal with the quiet students in class when sensitive topics are discussed.

Language

Teacher B’s statement that they are afraid of hurting someone with their statements has already hinted at the idea that language can be a challenge for teachers when teaching about ‘race’ and racism. Teacher D, however, explicitly mentioned that they experience language as a challenge in teaching about these issues. Among other things, they stated to find referring to people of color difficult. Moreover, as stated before, the very term ‘racism’ is odd to them because they believe that there is only one human race, and so, for them, a challenge also seemed to lie in putting the theme of ‘racism’ into words more generally. They added that they believe that many teachers find such issues of language difficult – or, in fact, many people in general.

Teachers’ Lack of Knowledge

One teacher, Teacher E, openly acknowledged that they might have a certain “blind spot” concerning the definitions of ‘race’ and racism or a lack of knowledge, because this topic was not part of their own education. They suggested that this is a wider issue that may hold even more for older teachers. Accordingly, they stated that such teachers need to question whether how they teach is right or whether it is just well-intended. Hence, teachers’ lack of knowledge can also form a challenge when teaching about ‘race’ and racism. Teacher E illuminated that one way in which they keep their knowledge about the themes up to date is by requesting to supervise an intern who knows more about certain topics than they do themselves, thereby being able to learn from them.

Students’ Responses

Teacher C mentioned various responses that could come from students that they view as a potential challenge, including their discussion of ‘race’ and racism being interpreted as “a sort of victim role for the minority,” thereby getting into the discussion around the question of how

relevant slavery still is today. Additionally, they mentioned the argument that the discussion should be about “social class” rather than ‘race’ and racism. Yet, these ideas about students’ possible responses proved to not necessarily reflect what students have actually said in class. Rather, they explained, the argument that the discussion should be about class, for instance, barely surfaces in class but is something that their peers have said. Hence, in some way, this challenge may be more imagined than real. Yet, the challenge posed by students’ possible responses did appear to guide Teacher C’s teaching in some way, in that they seemed to adjust their teaching to not get students into a “defensive mode,” by choosing not to open their discussion of whiteness and white privilege with these specific terms but rather work towards the terms. Teacher D also identified students’ responses as a challenge, in stating that the topic is not always taken seriously.

Learning and Taking Responsibility Outside of Schools

In discussing one of civic education’s curricular ‘end terms,’ teaching students a positive attitude towards the Dutch democratic values, Teacher C stated that this is not possible in half a year or a year – the duration of civic education as a course. Instead, they believe that one also requires parents’ contributions in order to teach students this, in addition to students taking the responsibility to orient themselves. Learning outside of schools, then, seemed to be vital in their eyes to achieve the course goals more broadly. Teacher F also made a broader point regarding learning outside of schools in critiquing the idea that the educational domain should just solve everything. Like Teacher C, they highlighted the importance of parents’ roles and also emphasized the need for people to think for themselves about what they can do. Teacher E made a similar point regarding ‘race’ and racism specifically, in stating that they are unsure as to whether these issues should only be addressed at school and suggesting that perhaps they should also be addressed at home or at sports associations. Teacher D also addressed students’ home situations, which they seemed to view as playing a role in shaping the reality that students generally “do not have a clue about what the world looks like.” In the interview, they thus highlighted the possible detrimental implications of students’ lack of learning at home and, in reflecting upon this issue, explained that civic education is “a very important course.” They also added that “a couple hours more civic education would not hurt.” Overall, then, a lack of learning and taking responsibility outside of schools may be seen as a challenge for teachers.

Possible Ways Forward

In the interviews, teachers mentioned various ways to further improve their teaching and help them to deal with the challenges that they face. Whilst I cannot elaborate upon all of them, I will present a few. Teacher C mentioned courses and workshops to help teachers to better deal with sensitive topics. Teacher E brought up the possibility to invite certain guests, such as Black Lives Matter activists, people who are against Black Lives Matter, and people with more moderate views on the topic to create a dialogue. They also mentioned the need to develop new course materials and emphasized the value of incorporating academic writings into civic education classes. They expressed that they would be very grateful if they would obtain some suggestions for literature related to ‘race’ and racism. Additionally, they stated that the government’s support of “less formative testing and more practical assignments, reports, documentaries” would allow one to dedicate more time to the topics. A final, more general, helpful way forward seemed to be for teachers to have more time to address issues such as ‘race’ and racism, which can only be achieved with the government’s support.