Making Sense of Belonging:

An Exploration of Everyday Racism in the Lives of Dutch Citizens with an Asian Background

Master Thesis
Cultural Anthropology: Sustainable Citizenship

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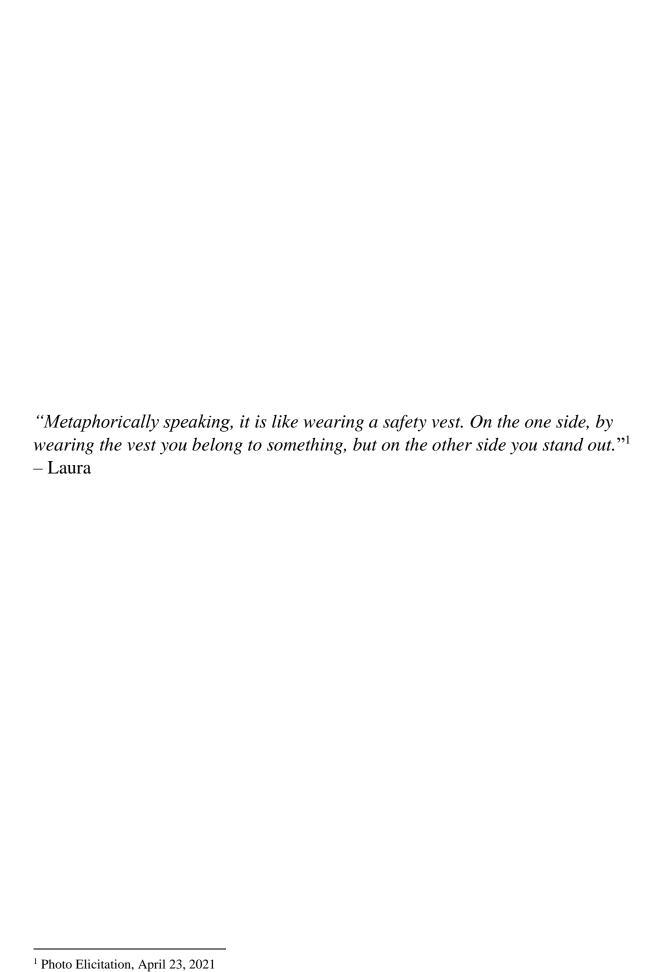Date: 15 August 2021

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"Metaphorically speaking, it is like wearing a safety vest. On the one side, by wearing the vest you belong to something, but on the other side you stand out."[1]
– Laura

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[1] Photo Elicitation, April 23, 2021

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Acknowledgments

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Introduction

"What a day! What a day! What an honor that I can stand here, be here, give a speech here. I came to the Netherlands ten years ago, a village boy from Urumqi, a proud Uyghur boy, who wanted a better life and a better future in the Netherlands. So yes, I am a fortune seeker [audience laughs]. I never thought beforehand that a fellow student would ask me, 'Hey Warren, what is in your bread tray? Is that cat or dog meat?'. I never thought that in my favorite city Eindhoven, '*Eindhoven de gekste*!', a group of youngsters would shout Chinese virus at me, and not just once until I did not dare to go out anymore. I also could not have imagined being pushed 100 meters outside my door by peers because I am a *kankerchinees*. This did happen, in 2017, on the *Nieuwstraat*, in the center of Eindhoven. Am I really inferior to fellow Dutch people? Am I really a *poepchinees*?[2] Am I really someone who will only work hard and never complain about injustice in this society? I wonder, am I really a second-class citizen?"[3] – Warren, an activist speaking at the demonstration 'Stop Asian Hate' in Amsterdam

Warren's speech shows that discrimination and racism have been part of his everyday life since he moved to the Netherlands many years ago. It started with fortune seeker and *poepchinees* but has evolved to "Chinese virus" since the emergence of the Coronavirus in 2019. This example shows one of the many forms and how discrimination and racism affect the everyday life of the Dutch-Asian community.[4] Anti-Asian racism has come more to the fore in the last few years (NOS 2020). It comes in explicit forms such as jokes, stereotypes, caricatures, no media representation, name-calling, and implicit (subtle) forms. Examples of implicit forms are gaslighting ("what is wrong with making slit eyes"), micro-aggressions ("your Dutch is so well"), and the downplaying of jokes ("you are overreacting"). These expressions of racism are accompanied by denial. Wekker (2016) describes this as 'white innocence': the Dutch self-image of being a tolerant, small, ethical nation, free of racism, presenting itself as a victim instead of the perpetrator of national violence. Discrimination and racism are a significant part of the lives of the Dutch-Asian community. Therefore, I decided to look at how everyday racism affects the feelings of belonging within Dutch society.

This research contributes to the academic debate of belonging by exploring the role of everyday racism in constructing a sense of belonging. According to Kwansah-Aidoo and

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[2] *Kankerchinees* and *poepchinees* are Dutch swear words to indicate people of Asian descent.
[3] Fieldnotes, video, April 10, 2021
[4] Dutch-Asian community in this thesis means Dutch citizens with an Southeast – and East Asian background. This will be explained more elaborately later on in the section research population and location.

Mapedzahama (2018), the part that experiences of racism play have not been centered or fully explored yet in studies that focus on how minorities in Western, white-dominated contexts construct a sense of belonging. Kwansah-Aidoo and Mapedzahama (2018, 96) argue that it is critical to look into "the implications of racialized existence of shaping constructing, experiences and anxieties of belonging" because it is still not clear what "shapes" belonging for racialized or othered groups. Therefore, this thesis aims to address this gap by showing Dutch-Asian perspectives and experiences on their sense of belonging. By using the concept of everyday racism of Philomena Essed, I will contribute to the studies that focus on everyday forms of racism which, according to Combs (2018), remain untheorized since research has focused more on overt forms of racism. As Essed (2001, 214) explains: "it is important to see when, where, and how racism operates through everyday life, and how ordinary situations become racist situations. [..] There is no structural racism without everyday racism." Thus, this research will contribute to both the discussions concerning belonging as well as everyday racism.

By looking at the different perspectives and experiences of the Dutch-Asian community towards belonging and everyday racism, I aim to construct an image of the emerging processes of everyday racism and how this constitutes a particular agency in constructing one's belonging. This goal will add to existing theories of belonging, which argue belonging as the interplay between politics of belonging and the feeling of home (Antonsich 2010; Yuval-Davis 2006). Additionally, I will also look at how some people do not, or to a lesser extent, experience the structural expressions of racism. I will look at some possible causes for these differences and their view on belonging to the Netherlands. Overall, everyday racism and belonging are terms that consist of many different meanings. Not only in terms of academic differences but also within communities. In summation, I narrowed my research question down to the following: *''How do experiences of everyday racism in the Netherlands affect the feeling of belonging of second-generation Dutch adults with a Southeast – and East Asian background?''*

Theoretical Framework

As mentioned, this research is embedded in the debates on belonging and everyday racism. I will outline the debates and developments within these debates in this theoretical framework. In the following chapters of this thesis, I will analyze and define the concepts in relation to my collected data.

Belonging

People can belong in many different ways and to many different objects of attachment: "[It] can vary from a particular person to the whole of humanity, in a concrete or abstract way, by self or other identification, in a stable, contested or transient way" (Yuval-Davis 2006, 7). Belonging is multi-layered, multi-scaled, and multi-territorial, making it a dynamic process and not a reified fixity (Yuval-Davis 2011), which is also visible in the many discussions about the term in various disciplines (Youkhana 2015).

Geographer Floya Anthias (2013) argues that belonging relates to a place or location in the geographical sense and symbolic figurations. In contrast to geographer Marco Antonsich (2010), who argues that belonging is the interplay between two dimensions: the personal one, meaning "belonging as a personal, intimate, feeling of being 'at home' in a place (place-belongingness)" and a structural dimension of discourse and power relations, meaning "belonging as a discursive resource which constructs, claims, justifies, or resists forms of socio-spatial inclusion/exclusion (politics of belonging)" (Antonsich 2010, 645). Compared to Anthias (2013), Antonsich (2010) tends to focus on how emotional attachments and identifications construct belonging, similar to sociologist Yuval-Davis (2006). She also argues how belonging is about an emotional attachment, feeling "at home," and feeling "safe" (Yuval-Davis 2006). According to Yuval-Davis (2006), belonging constructs itself on three analytical levels: (1) social locations that emerge along different power axes and social categorizations, (2) identifications and emotional attachments to various groupings, and (3) ethical and political value systems in which the former two levels are valued and judged (politics of belonging). Yuval-Davis (2006) argues that belonging tends to be naturalized, but it becomes articulated and politicized only when it is threatened in some way. Therefore, she makes this distinction between belonging and the politics of belonging. This transition from a sense of belonging towards the politics of belonging can also become what Pfaff-Czarnecka calls "regimes of belonging" (Youkhana 2015). In this case, institutionalized patterns of belonging are created, which can be bounded and exclusive, which insist on time and resources, loyalty, and

commitments (Pfaff-Czarnecka 2020). "To enter a national space and durably remain, migrants need to present themselves as particularly deserving" and perform civic duties (Pfaff-Czarnecka 2020, 119). Not "paying the prices" (time, resources, loyalty) can result in exclusion and ostracism (Pfaff-Czarnecka 2020, 119).

Belonging in itself is still a relatively new theoretical term (Youkhana 2015), which remains vaguely defined and under-theorized (Antonsich (2010). Maybe this is why I have not been able to find any contestations about the term belonging in itself. Many anthropological researchers, such as Ana Dragojlovic, Nadia Lovell, or Renato Rosaldo, discussed belonging, but often connected to or used as a synonym for citizenship, ethnicity, and identity (Antonsich 2010; Youkhana 2015). Therefore, I chose two scholars who take belonging as a term in itself. I want to construct belonging in line with the definitions of Yuval-Davis (2006) and Antonsich (2010), who argue that belonging is the interplay of the "feeling at home" (an emotional attachment) and the "politics of belonging." In addition, this research will show the ability of people to create their way of belonging or freedom in a country where many of the Dutch-Asian community feel like they do not belong. I will connect some parts to identity and citizenship, considering these are essential parts in constructing belonging within the Dutch-Asian community. However, I will try to construct belonging as a term within itself, besides these connections to identity and citizenship. Lastly, I will distinguish between belonging and the politics of belonging. According to Yuval-Davis (2006), this differentiation is crucial for any political discourse on nationalism, racism, or other contemporary politics of belonging.

Everyday Racism

Everyday racism is a concept raised by Dutch sociologist Philomena Essed, which expresses the regular, recurrent, systematic, and familiar practices (hence "everyday") within society which act to the disadvantage of ethnic minorities (Heery and Noon 2017). These practices become seen as normal by organizational members since they infiltrate organizational life. Overall, everyday racism plays out on all levels of society, within and outside institutions (Essed 2001).

Essed (2001, 204) argues that the concept of everyday racism has two constituent parts: one part says that it is about racism, and the other is about the everyday. Within the debates of everyday racism, it is still hard to define what "the everyday" entails (Bourabain and Verhaeghe 2021). Many other theories define the everyday through the component of "space," such as schools, streets, or public transportation (Bourabain and Verhaeghe 2021). In

Essed's (2001) theory, the everyday consists of repetitiveness and familiarity. Also, according to Bourabain and Verhaeghe (2021), the part of racism is not adequately discussed in many papers or refers to a general definition of racism where they divide racism into different micro -and macro-levels (individual, institutional, or structural). Bourabain and Verhaeghe (2021, 13) notice how, in much qualitative-method driven research, "the insights from experiences or micro-interactions are not combined and explained through influences of the macro-level." This distinction is exactly what Essed (2001) herself tries to contradict by emphasizing the interconnection between the micro – and macro-level. Therefore, when using the term everyday racism in this research, it includes many aspects of the lives of the respondents: no presence of Asian representation in the media, stereotypes (such as the model minority), the subtle expressions of discrimination (micro-aggressions, gaslighting, jokes), not being recognized and seen as a Dutch citizen, in the workplace or at parties (being seen as the one who knows everything about China), the internalization of Western values, and within education (such as the song Hanky Panky Shanghai).

Methodology and Position of Researcher

This research took place from 8 February 2021 to 9 May 2021. I conducted a hybrid ethnography in which I combined online and offline research methods (Przybylski 2020). Ethnography usually means that the researcher is participating, overtly and covertly, in people's everyday life for an extended period of time; "watching what happens, listening to what is said, and/or asking questions through informal and formal interviews" (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007, 3). Therefore, I obtained most information through online interviews, focus groups, and photo-elicitation, except when I physically attended a demonstration (participant observation).

Semi-structured online interviews

For this research, I conducted 23 semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews contain the elements of both structured as unstructured interviews (O'Reilly 2012). I chose semi-structured interviews because they helped me explore the respondents' ideas and opinions and get fixed responses for some criteria (O'Reilly 2012), which I wrote down on a topic list. These topics were the politics of belonging, discrimination, belonging, citizenship, and the improvement of an inclusive society. Most interviews lasted one to two hours and were recorded with permission from the respondents. I did the online interviews live through video-calling using a laptop audio-visual interface called Zoom. Just as with (regular) interviews, these live interviews let me check that the respondents understood what I said and vice versa

(Maddox 2020). However, I noticed some challenges while conducting the interviews concerning the internet connection, the lack of non-verbal cues, not having the ability to sense the ambiance, and more difficulty building rapport. Despite these challenges, this method enabled me to understand what they think an inclusive society should look like, how they experience having a Dutch and Asian background, and experience discrimination in their everyday lives.

Online focus groups

To examine the meaning of belonging in Dutch society, I wanted to see how they create this meaning in groups. Usually, an anthropologist will conduct participant observation *within* a particular community to achieve this goal. However, since I could not participate in the respondents' lives (due to COVID-19 restrictions), I chose this method as an addition to and as an alternative for participant observation. Focus groups make a great tool to "explore perceptions, feelings, and thinking about issues, ideas, products, services, or opportunities" (Krueger and Casey 2015, 37). I conducted three focus groups through Skype where the moderator (me) and the respondents contributed to the group simultaneously (also called synchronous focus groups) (Abrams and Gaiser 2017). Each focus group lasted around two hours, and in this time, they allowed me to understand their views towards Dutch talk shows, nationality, politics of belonging, belonging, and inclusivity. I kept the groups small, between three to six persons, to make it more manageable (in case of technical issues) and encourage the respondents to talk. The groups consisted of a mix of people who knew each other and people who did not. When sampling the focus groups, I tried to adhere to the principle of homogeneity (Morling et al. 2018). I did not put people of very different social statuses or backgrounds together to make sure those with (perhaps) less power would be less likely to speak their minds (Morling et al. 2018). I got to know each respondent during individual interviews first before doing the focus groups, so I got an idea of who the respondents were who joined the focus groups. During the focus groups, I noticed some challenges concerning my position as a moderator and white researcher, the spontaneity of the conversation, and distractions during the focus group. Despite these possible disadvantages, this option did help me in the ability to do focus groups in times of the corona-pandemic, in which meeting up with a larger group was not advised. It enabled me to see how the respondents interact and express their experiences, views, or responses in groups (O'Reilly 2012).

Online photo-elicitation

I used the method of (online) photo-elicitation, which entails using photographs to invoke comments, memory, and discussion in the form of a semi-structured interview (Banks 2007). It entails asking them to talk and think about what the picture (or video) means and how it was made (O'Reilly 2012). I chose this method to look more into how people construct their meaning of home and describe being a Dutch citizen with an Asian background. I asked some respondents to look for or take a photo that represents this best and asked them questions through Zoom in an online interview. My questions were about the choice and meaning of the photo, the place and time, what they did at that particular moment, and the feelings the photo evokes. These questions resulted in a deeper understanding of how some respondents perceived themselves in relation to other (Dutch) citizens and how they give meaning to the notion of feeling at home.

Participant observation

As a participant-observer, you observe and take part in the field (O'Reilly 2012). Considering my health and safety, I decided not to make this my primary method, despite anthropology being known for using this method. However, one time I decided to participate in a demonstration of anti-Asian racism in the Netherlands. It allowed me to gain valuable information about how the Dutch-Asian community constructs their way of belonging through activism. I also joined a Facebook group to observe the experiences and struggles of the Dutch-Asian community about constructing their identity and discrimination. This participation gave me a good sense of important topics within this community, such as identity, nationality, and discrimination towards the Asian community (both the successes of speaking up about it and the downsides) and noteworthy happenings within the media. Additionally, I spoke to some respondents by private messaging through Facebook and email (framed as personal communication in the footnotes).

Position researcher and ethical issues

Before starting my research, I knew that my position as a white researcher might affect the research process. Both cultural differences (white and Asian) as not being personally affected by structural expressions of racism embody a significant contrast in the lifeworld of my respondents and me. During this research, one of the respondents within one of the focus groups told me my white position could affect the group because they might not feel the

freedom to express themselves.[5] As Smithson (2000) argues: "for the groups most different to the researcher, there is a risk of constructing some in the group as Other." Contrarily, during the focus group discussion, it came also to the fore that an Asian researcher can understand the Asian culture better but might relate to their *own* experiences more and jump to conclusions related to their own experiences.[6] Also, my position as a researcher, as in not being in the everyday lives of my respondents, made the process of building rapport or trust more difficult than expected. Ethnography is often based on the everyday knowledge of face-to-face human interaction (O'Reilly 2012). When doing internet or virtual ethnography, the "direct and sustained contact with human beings in the context of their daily lives" becomes more problematic (O'Reilly 2012, 176). At first, I was unsure about doing research online since I did not participate in people's everyday lives. However, I noticed that social media such as Facebook are helpful for a community to support each other where needed and keep each other informed about things happening in the world. Facebook is also a part of their world, and it shows how the daily lives of people are no longer single-sited (O'Reilly 2012). It supports what Ulf Hannerz (2003, 213) argues: "But then ethnography is an art of the possible, and it may be better to have some of it than none at all." They allowed me to join the Facebook group, which can also be seen as trust because they want to share a part of their world.

Whereas some activists are publicly active on social media concerning anti-Asian racism, all names in the thesis are pseudonyms. According to the ethics statement of the American Anthropological Association (2012), the researcher must give priority to the protection of research respondents and the research records ("do no harm"). Therefore, I anonymized all the names of the respondents to ensure confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity. The pseudonyms I used in this thesis are randomly selected. By choosing American or English names, I do not intend to nullify any meanings of their real names. It was only a way to be consistent in this thesis. In line with this, I decided not to include the name of the foundation, also to protect their privacy. I ensured that all respondents were fully informed about the study by obtaining informed consent orally and through a digital information letter. Lastly, the data gathered for this thesis was thoroughly analyzed, coded, and stored in a password-protected environment.

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[5] Focus group, May 1, 2021
[6] Focus group, May 1, 2021

Research Population and Location

As mentioned, the research mainly took place online by focusing on the Dutch-Asian community. I got in touch with them by joining the Facebook page of an activist community. Before I explain why I chose this community, I want to emphasize that in this thesis, when I talk about the Dutch-Asian community, I refer to the Dutch citizens with a Southeast – and East Asian community. Often when one speaks about "Dutch-Asians," people refer to everyone whom they perceive as Chinese. However, one often forgets that Asia is a whole continent and excludes India, Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran.[7] My intention is not to exclude other Asian communities or nullify their experiences, but only to make sure I do not speak for the whole Dutch-Asian community. I am also aware that my research does not represent the whole Southeast – and East Asian community. In some of the interviews, it came to the fore that the first generation is often quieter about discrimination and racism. The second generation is often referred to as the one who speaks up more towards racism and discrimination.[8] Since my research question focuses on experiences of everyday racism, I chose to focus on the second generation because they seem to be more involved in and aware of their (frequent) experiences with discrimination and racism. I decided to focus on the activist community, particularly an anti-racism organization that makes people aware of anti-Asian discrimination and racism through campaigns, articles, and demonstrations. By focusing on this community, I was able to see how they create a sense of agency and belonging for themselves in a country where belonging is not self-evident.

When mentioning the second generation, I mean the people born and raised in the Netherlands but whose parents are from abroad. However, slight differences within this generation occurred during the research. Some respondents were born in Asia and came to the Netherlands when they were young, and others were born in the Netherlands. Also, some respondents have two Dutch parents (adopted), have parents who are both Asian, or from which one is of Dutch descent. Despite these differences, all respondents were (at the time this research was conducted) living in the Netherlands.

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[7] Sioejeng Tsao, "Mijn ervaring met het opgroeien in Nederland als Chinese vrouw," (webinar from Bureau Discriminatiezaken Kennemerland, Haarlem, March 15, 2021).
[8] Interview, Warren, March 4, 2021

Structure

To argue how belonging can be about the ability to create your own agency and sense of belonging or freedom, next to being the interplay between the politics of belonging and the "feeling at home" (Antonsich 2010; Yuval-Davis 2006), I will start by constructing an image of how everyday racism affects the lives of the Dutch-Asian community in the first two chapters. First, I elaborate on everyday racism and how it constitutes itself in a politics of belonging, coined by Yuval-Davis (2006). I argue that gaslighting and no representation in the Dutch media constitutes a politics of belonging by strengthening processes of "Otherness," thereby constructing a boundary of "white citizens" versus "others." After that, I will outline how this politics of belonging operates in their everyday life. Secondly, I will argue how the interplay of the politics of belonging and the feeling of home is significant for developing a sense of agency to construct one's belonging. I will illustrate how everyday racism contests people's sense of belonging in multiple ways in their everyday lives, varying from not experiencing everyday racism, experiencing friction between their multiple identities, to affecting their sense of feeling "at home." Lastly, I will add to this definition of belonging as the interplay between the politics of belonging and "feeling at home" (Antonsich 2010) by arguing that belonging can also be about the ability to create your own way of belonging or freedom. In line with Isin (2009) and Ortner (2005), people are "activist citizens" and "knowing subjects" who can create their own terms on what it means to be a Dutch citizen. Eventually, all these aspects show how different experiences of everyday racism affect feelings of belonging.

Note before reading:

Unless stated otherwise, I translated all the quotes of the respondents myself.

Chapter 1: The Politics of Not Belonging

Living with an Asian background in the Netherlands is often accompanied by experiences of othering. Their appearance differs from most Dutch citizens, which the Dutch media also reinforces when defining them as different. This idea strengthens feelings of who belongs to the Dutch society and simultaneously who does not. This form of everyday racism constitutes a politics of (not) belonging (Yuval-Davis 2006) – creating boundaries between 'Dutch citizens' versus 'others' – which affects the sense of belonging in the long run. In this chapter, I will show how everyday racism constitutes a politics of belonging to argue that everyday racism strengthens processes of "Otherness," thereby constructing a boundary of "us" versus "them" (meaning white citizens versus others). I will do so by looking at the terms of everyday racism and institutional racism, how they relate to each other and how they are visible in Dutch society, specifically what the Dutch way of coping with racism entails. Then, I will apply this to how everyday racism constitutes a politics of belonging through Dutch media and how it constitutes in the respondents' everyday lives. Altogether, this has resulted in the conclusion that everyday racism develops an exclusionary sense of belonging.

1.1 (Dutch) Everyday and Institutional Racism

This paragraph introduces the terms of institutional and everyday racism and the distinction between the two. I will show how "belonging is unavoidably conditioned by the working of power relations (politics of belonging)" (Antonsich 2010, 652) by illustrating how the "Dutch way" of denying (institutional) racism already shows ways of excluding others.

Institutionalized racism is a system of inequality based on race (Jouwe 2015, 11). The deep roots of racial thinking and the associated danger of racism are firmly rooted in our social structure, but even more in our collective unconsciousness (Jouwe 2015). Racialized (and gendered) images and ideas, developed in colonial times, remain 'informing' our current society and institutions, also known as our cultural archive (Jouwe 2015; Wekker 2016). Institutionalized racism is based on both written as unwritten rules, traditions, behavior, and manners (Mulder and Bol 2020). It can present itself in the housing market, the media, job market, medical world, language, or traditions (Mulder and Bol 2020) – in short, in many parts of people's lives. A term similar and related to institutional racism is everyday racism. Philomena Essed introduced this term to expresses recurrent, systematic, and familiar practices within society that act to the disadvantage of ethnic minorities (Heery and Noon 2017). Everyday racism thus encapsulates the 'everyday' or regular practices; it shows how these

practices become seen as normalized by organizational members (Heery and Noon 2017). Essed (2001, 208) describes everyday racism as a process in which:

> "(a) socialized racist notions are integrated into meanings that make practices immediately definable and manageable, (b) practices with racist implications become in themselves familiar and repetitive, and (c) underlying racial and ethnic relations are actualized and reinforced through these route or familiar practices in everyday situations."

The terms institutional as everyday racism are similar to each other. However, Essed's term of everyday racism combines both individual actions as institutional structures in how discrimination perpetuates through the whole of society (Heery and Noon 2017). As Essed (2001, 206) argues, "racism is not confined to institutional settings, because our everyday lives are not confined to institutional settings either." It plays out on all levels of society, both within and outside of institutions, and adapts to society's culture, norms, and values as it operates through the prevalent structures of power in society (Essed 2001, 206-9). She claims: "there is no structural racism without everyday racism" (Essed 2001, 209).

Looking more specifically at how these terms constitute themselves in The Netherlands, it is visible how institutional racism is often denied. A recent example of this, in June 2020, is Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte "acknowledging" the existence of institutional racism in the Netherlands. At first, he called it a term for sociologists but admitted that in the Netherlands, the problem of "systematic racism" does exist. He wants to avoid using the term institutional racism because he is afraid to alienate a part of the Dutch citizens in the discussion about racism (den Boon 2020). Not using the term "institutional racism" shows that racism is still not recognized as an existing phenomenon in the Netherlands and how many minorities living in the Netherlands are still alienated from participating in Dutch society. Gloria Wekker (2016) describes this denial as 'white innocence': the Dutch self-image of being a tolerant, small, ethical nation, free of racism, presenting itself as a victim instead of the perpetrator of national violence. This self-image is also visible within the Dutch colonial past.

Bijl (2012) mentions how the violence of the Dutch colonial past is often framed as hidden, "either veiled in silence or stored in some collective Dutch' unconscious, where it lies unmourned" (Bijl 2012, 442). It partly refers to what Anderson (2016) explains as that parts of history that are selectively remembered. Anderson (2016) explains how history is an important part of a nation's imagination and how this is written down. Often the conqueror writes it down

as a legitimization of the nation, and in this way, you have a shared story about the beginning and the ending of a war. Through this selection in telling the story, there is a reassurance to imagine the nation and strengthen the feeling of pride towards the nation you belong to (Anderson 2016). Thus, through history and politics, a "politics of belonging" is framed by picturing who belongs within Dutch society. It shows how history and politics can be "specific political projects aimed at constructing belonging in particular ways to particular collectivities" (Yuval-Davis 2011, 197). By denying institutional racism and picturing a shared story, a particular pride for the nation you belong to is strengthened. However, it also excludes many others who do not get recognized as being part of Dutch society. Neil, one of my respondents, mentions how others get excluded by not fitting into this story because people see them as outsiders. However, there are significant parts of history in the Netherlands that should also fit in this story. For example, the moment when the first Chinese people came to the Netherlands around 100 years ago, or a larger group of labor migrants came to the Netherlands after the war.[9] Not including others in the Dutch history, already shows a way of excluding people who do not fit into the "Dutch image." To an extent, it perhaps became normal to tell the story this way, thereby imprinting this story in the minds of Dutch citizens.

In summary, through a small impression, it is visible how politics and history can create an image about who belongs to Dutch society and who does not by excluding people from the narrative of the Dutch society. This research also showed how the Dutch media plays a significant part in othering and racializing (Asian) communities or areas and can play a complex and central role in the politics of belonging (Dreher 2018). In the (Dutch-) Asian community, it is visible how Dutch media and culture talk about people of Asian descent. The ways the Dutch media talk are inextricably linked to anti-Asian racism, whether through a carnival song of Lex Gaarthuis about the Coronavirus called "Prevention is Better than Chinese" or through teaching materials in schools that still stigmatize people of Chinese descent (Kartosen-Wong 2021). Therefore, in the following paragraph of this chapter, I will describe in greater detail the construction of a politics of belonging through the Dutch media.

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[9] Interview, Neil, March 17, 2021

1.2 Everyday Racism in Dutch Media

In this paragraph, I turn to how othering constitutes itself in the Dutch media, specifically television programs. The politics of belonging also involves the inclusion or exclusion of particular people, social categories, and groupings within the boundaries set by those who have the power to do this (Yuval-Davis 2011). By outlining two fragments of how white Dutch celebrities discuss discrimination and racism, I will show how television shows can create categorical boundaries and reinforce racial and ethnic relations by devaluing experiences with discrimination and not including people in the conversation.

Fragment 1: Goed Fout

The television show *Goed Fout* is a panel show where five people (in this episode, four white celebrities, and one colored celebrity) discuss what is and is not possible in a time where people seem to be offended more easily. In the episode of April 4th, one of the discussion points entails whether a person can draw slit eyes to portray an Asian person. Presenter Katja Schuurman introduces the question: "In these insensitive times, it seems as if everyone has a hyper-focus on what the other is saying and doing. A short time ago, there was a rural riot about a happy portray game in *Wie is de Mol.*" They show a fragment where some candidates of the television show *Wie is de Mol* portray the song Gangnam Style of Psy (a South-Korean rapper and songwriter). They portrayed it by dancing on the song Gangnam Style and by making slit-eyes. The panel continues the discussion of whether this is racist or not. Remarks and questions like: "how else can you portray it?", "the girl with the red hair, that is the one who gets bullied," "what is so bad about portraying a physical characteristic of someone?", and "how would they portray you (pointing to one of the white panel members)?" come to fore during this discussion. The fragment ends with 81 percent of the "representative 1000" agreeing that making slit eyes is still okay.[10]

This fragment shows how the panel makes the expression of slit eyes a struggle of their own, while it is not their struggle. For example, the question of "how would they portray you?" It is a prominent part of discrimination, which is known as downplaying and gaslighting. Davis and Ernst (2019, 761) define (racial) gaslighting as "the political, social, economic and cultural process that perpetuates and normalizes a white supremacist reality through pathologizing those who resist." In the fragment of *Goed Fout*, you can notice this by making others (in this case,

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[10] *Goed Fout*, season 1 episode 1, "Goed Fout", directed by Jos Budie, aired April 4, 2021, on NPO3, https://www.npo3.nl/goed-fout/04-04-2021/POW_04999422, 00:11:34.

the Asian community) feel like they are making it a problem, by saying "what is wrong with that [making slit eyes]?" When discussing the fragment in the focus group, Shane mentioned how this fragment of *Goed Fout* shows the denying of power structures. He explains it as a conditioned and subtle way of denying, such as "I have been through it too, or this is bad too." Shane argues that these comments imply that people should not overreact because *they* [white citizens] experience the same thing. He explains this as a way of downplaying racism, thereby never getting the recognition that racism exists.[11] Similar to the construction of Dutch history, the Dutch media constructs a belonging in a particular way by excluding the stories of the people who have experienced everyday racism and including the stories that matter according to them: those of white citizens. It shows what Francio Guadeloupe (2008, 160) phrases as: "under the guise of neutrality or respect for difference (multiculturalism), elites among the dominant ethno-racial group still decide what constitutes difference and how this should be classified, accepted, and judged." In this case, under the guise of broadcasting a television program that talks about racism, elites still decide how the stories of the Asian community should be valued. According to Kyla and Shane, white people are also often unaware of discrimination against the Asian community, and of how much privilege they have themselves since discrimination is not part of their lives.[12] Activists, like Sabrina, spoke up about the fragment of *Wie is de Mol* (showed in *Goed Fout*), but according to her, the damage had already been done. The fragment was already seen by three million people, and the only thing the activists got back was an apology and the removal of the fragment (*after* the show aired).[13] They are non – or misrecognized as part of Dutch society, and therefore can suffer real damage: "if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves" (Taylor 1994, 25).

In summary, this fragment shows how a television show that discusses racism constitutes an image of othering by diminishing the value of people who could experience racial expressions on a structural basis. It illustrates how gaslighting comes to the fore by constructing an image that the Other is making a problem, and they have that problem as well.

Fragment 2: OP1

Another part of the Dutch media that constitutes politics of belonging is the (non-) representation of the Asian community in the media. As Pete Wu (2021), journalist and

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[11] Focus group, May 8, 2021
[12] Interview, Kyla, March 2, 2021; Interview, Shane, March 1, 2021
[13] Interview, Sabrina, March 8, 2021

writer, argues: "How the media talks (or does not talk) about the people who look like me have, of course, an influence on how others (and myself!) look at me." According to Wu (2021), racism is also about what people do not see and say. As visible in the Dutch talk show *Goed Fout* and *OP1*, [14] discrimination is discussed without anyone with an Asian background present. When discussing a fragment of *OP1* in the focus group, Grace mentions how conscious choices are made not to involve anyone who has structural experiences with discrimination or racism.[15] In addition, Barbara mentions how it is mostly about their (white citizens) discomfort and making it a joke by laughing with each other about it. There has been no attention to the other side (people who experience discrimination) at all.[16] Having no representations or reflections of other East – or Southeast Asians and only being pictured with caricatures and stereotypes strengthens a specific image about the Asian community. Eventually, as Sabrina explains, people will think they are the same as those stereotypes and caricatures.[17] These stereotypes and caricatures can vary from kung fu ninja warriors, tourists, tiger moms to bananas (Kuramitsu and King Choi 2017). Women are often sexualized, and men are portrayed as nerdy, quiet, or feminine (Wu 2020). Dutch media contribute to these confirmations of racist and oriental ideas: people of Asian descent are morally and culturally inferior and form a "Yellow Danger for the West" (Kartosen-Wong 2021). This fragment and these stereotypes precisely show the main problem of the notion of belonging: it is filled in with the rhetoric of sameness by any dominant ethnic group (Antonsich 2010). By creating ideas in which only white people are speaking up about racism (thereby consciously deciding not to include others), or other (racist) ideas of people of Asian descent, national belonging can become "even more exclusionary" (Slootman and Duyvendak 2016, 61). Overall, it shows how everyday racism in the Dutch media actualizes and reinforces underlying racial and ethnic relations.

In conclusion, the media creates an image of who gets included and excluded in daily conversations. In the process, they reinforce racial and ethnic relations and construct a politics of belonging by not inviting people with an Asian background to join the conversation or diminishing the value of their experiences with discrimination or racism by gaslighting. In short, they exclude the Dutch-Asian community from participating in Dutch society. In the next paragraph, I want to look more specifically at the construction of a politics of belonging within

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[14] *OP1*, season 2 episode 64, "Aflevering 64", directed by Herman Meijer, aired April 1, 2021, on NPO1, https://www.npostart.nl/op1/01-04-2021/POW_04917719, 00:40:40.
[15] Focus group, May 11, 2021
[16] Focus group, May 11, 2021
[17] Interview, Sabrina, March 8, 2021

the daily life of the respondents by showing how these stereotypical images formed by the media operate within the everyday life of the respondents.

1.3 An Everyday Politics of Belonging

"I always have some kind of feeling of having to prove myself that I may live in this country."

This quote from Noelle refers to an encounter with an employee during her visit to the notary. The employee addresses her in English instead of Dutch. Noelle asked the employee why she addressed her in English, but she did not get a straight answer. Noelle thinks the employee "listened with her eyes instead of her ears" and thinks it is because of her brown skin color.[18] The bottom line of these subtle, everyday encounters with discrimination and racism is that they constantly construct a(n) (everyday) politics of belonging by not being included as a Dutch citizen in everyday practices. Constantly being told you are not part of the Dutch community affects people in the long term, such as feeling you have to prove you are Dutch or even to the point that you are thinking about emigrating to another country.[19] Therefore, in this paragraph, I will turn to how this politics of belonging constituted by the media operates through their daily lives by outlining explicit and implicit experiences with stereotypes, micro-aggressions, and jokes.

The categorization and stereotyping of (other) groups can have unwanted effects, such as discrimination, identity conflicts, and a lower sense of belonging (Boog 2019). According to Boog (2019, 2002), the connection between the issues of belonging and social equality is clear: "discrimination of citizens on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender or other citizenship irrelevant group characteristics implies that these individuals are not being accepted as full citizens or equal members of the national group." As Warren describes, comments like "Chinese virus" raise feelings of being different from any other Dutch citizen and being a second-class citizen, as he also mentioned in his speech in the introduction. He mentions: "I began to understand what every other minority means when they say they are always being put away or looked after."[20] Kyla even mentions how being called *kut Chinees* [21] has become customary to her. It has become a fact of her life, and she does not know it any differently. It makes her wonder what a Dutch citizen is: "Why is it not Dutch that people of other beliefs and other cultures are

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[18] Interview, Noelle, March 18, 2021
[19] Interview, Shane, March 1, 2021; Interview, Noelle, March 18, 2021
[20] Interview, Warren, March 4, 2021
[21] *Kut Chinees* is a Dutch swear word to indicate people from Asian descent.

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living in the Netherlands?" She believes that by even feeling Dutch, a person is a full-fledged Dutch citizen.[22]

Next to name-calling, the stereotypical images are also maintained by jokes, humor, or satire, according to Sabrina. Sabrina argues how the image represented in the media results in others calling negative comments, micro-aggressions, and racial, xenophobic things towards unknown people.[23] For example, shouting *ni hao*, asking: "do you have a *bamischijf*?"[24] or "ordering white lice [rice]" (referring to mixing up the R with an L). These comments are often accompanied with remarks such as "it is just a joke, do not take it so seriously" or "what are you worrying about?"[25], also referred to as microaggressions (subtle forms of racism). Other examples are being spoken to in English, asked where they come from, or remarks saying that their "Dutch is so well." Furthermore, besides the jokes and microaggressions, they also hear people shout: "go back to your own country."[26] While this is only a grasp of the forms of anti-Asian racism, all these forms have in common that they constitute this feeling of not being a "full-fledged Dutch citizen."[27] It becomes normal or a part of your everyday life to be mocked and ridiculed. As Essed (2001, 202) argues: "Everyday racism is racism, but not all racism is everyday racism. From everyday racism there is no relief." This quote is visible in the explanation of Sabrina: "Sometimes I think if I am just going to be busy with sometime else, for example watching a movie. But also, then I see this whole representation... You are scanning everything." So far, both name-calling, microaggressions, and jokes affect the respondents in all kinds of ways. Whether it is raising the feeling of being a second-class citizen, noticing the normality of being racialized and discriminated against, or thinking about it when watching a movie.

Whereas the above-mentioned racist utterances are explicit, it also affects people more implicitly. Having no representation in the media, for example, may form insecurities about the way you look. As Kyla tells me:

"Hardly anyone has black hair like me or eyes like me. What you actually see on TV or at school with the teachers is all white and blond hair. Then you

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[22] Interview, Kyla, March 2, 2021
[23] Interview, Sabrina, March 8, 2021
[24] *Bamischijf* is a Dutch snack to fry consisting of *bami*. *Bami* is often served in (Chinese) snack bars or restaurants in the Netherlands. Phrasing it in a question: "do you have bamischijf?", is a way to mock people from Asian descent.
[25] Interview, Sabrina, March 8, 2021; Interview, Neil, March 17, 2021
[26] Interview, Warren, March 4, 2021; Interview Sabrina, March 8, 2021
[27] Interview, Kyla, March 2, 2021

want that too because that is just your standard. So, I just wished for a very long time, even in my teens, that I had blond hair and different eyes, bigger eyes, a different nose. Only for a few years maybe I can say that I do not want to look different."[28]

In her teens, Kyla high likely imprinted the image of the Western beauty standard as the one she should pursue. She has not been able to identify with any Asian presenters or main characters, causing her to have internalized a Western view until the point where she believed she should look like other white citizens. Similarly, Shane experiences how he looks towards others with Asian looks from a "Dutch point of view." According to Shane, this entails thinking things such as "what are you quite" or "go make some contact with others." He explains how he internalized Dutch values and norms about Chinese people, such as not being fun or good enough to hang out with and being less attractive. All this causes an inner conflict because he is Chinese himself.[29] Internalized racism is a common and simultaneously the least studied feature of racism (Hall 2021). Stuart Hall (2021, 327) defines it as "the 'subjection' of the victims of racism to the mystifications of the very racist ideology which imprison and define them." The myth of the model minority works in a similar matter. According to Pyke and Dang (2003), this myth is used to denigrate blacks further and obscures that Asian Americans are free from racial oppression and are not honorary whites. In this sense, "they are both praised and resented, complimented and derided" (Pyke and Dang 2003, 150). Neil describes how this myth is used to be an example and thereby distinguish between other minorities.[30] All taken together, it shows how continuously being seen as the Other can cause insecurities about the way you look and how "normal" ideas about others become contested because you become aware of your own position in society (as in Shane's case).

Overall, everyday racism (within the politics of belonging) affects the respondents' daily lives in various ways. It affects them by strengthening the feeling of being a second-class citizen, thinking about it during everyday practices such as watching television, causing insecurities about yourself and your looks, and questioning your own ways of thinking. In short, it shows what Slootman and Duyvendak (2016, 61) argue as to how national belonging can become "even more exclusionary."

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[28] Interview, Kyla, March 2, 2021
[29] Interview, Shane, March 1, 2021
[30] Interview, Neil, March 17, 2021

1.4 In Conclusion

Thus far, I argued that gaslighting in the Dutch media constitutes a politics of belonging. A politics of belonging operates on many levels, such as television shows and within everyday lives. By not recognizing institutional racism and not including others in the stories of Dutch history or shows, a particular Dutch imagined community (Anderson 2016) is created, which makes "national belonging even more exclusionary" (Slootman and Duyvendak 2016, 61). It manifests itself in never being able to belong since they are continuously presented as the Other. Continuous experiences with everyday racism, such as being called "Chinese virus," being spoken to in English, or having no media representation, affects their sense of self-worth and contests their (internalized) way of thinking. Eventually, as Antonsich (2010) argues, not feeling welcome or rejected will affect one's sense of belonging negatively. As I will illustrate in the next chapter, this negative effect may present when constructing their identity and feeling of home. However, not everyone seems to experience everyday racism. I will first contrast these different experiences with racism and discrimination by showing how being seen as Dutch makes you more accepted. After that, I will take these different experiences and show how they might affect the feeling of home and the process of constructing their identity.

Chapter 2: Questioning Your Sense of Belonging

The previous chapter illustrated how belonging is about a structural dimension of discourse and power relations, the politics of belonging, the first analytical dimension of Antonsich's (2010) definition of belonging. This chapter will continue analyzing the second analytical dimension, which is "belonging as a personal, intimate, feeling of being 'at home' in a place (place-belongingness)" (Antonsich 2010, 645). In this chapter, I will show how everyday racism contests people's sense of belonging in multiple ways in their everyday lives, in order to argue that the interplay of the politics of belonging and the feeling of home is significant for developing a sense of agency to construct one's own belonging. I will do so by specifically looking at the experiences of living with and without everyday racism, the frictions of living with multiple identities, and how this might affect the sense of feeling at home. Altogether, this has resulted in the conclusion that although everyday racism contests one's sense of belonging, by excluding and othering, it also creates opportunities to develop a sense of belonging of one's own.

2.1 Dutch or the Other?

During this research, I came across two different experiences regarding discrimination. I came across people who experience discrimination on a structural basis and some people who do not experience discrimination. In this paragraph, I will contrast these two experiences by how being seen as Dutch might be a factor in not experiencing discrimination.

As pictured in chapter one, within the lives of most respondents, subtle and more explicit expressions of discrimination and racism come to the fore on a structural basis and constitute a feeling of being the Other and not being recognized as a Dutch citizen. Most of these utterances relate to their appearances, such as shouting *ni hao* or asking if they like cat or dog food. Their appearance does not seem to fit into the image of the Dutch citizen. Brooke explains how they always perceive her as Asian and assume she knows a lot about China.[31] Megan has similar experiences. She does not like going to birthday parties because she always has to talk about her culture.[32] Not being ascribed to the Dutch society or nationality reinforces struggles of belonging. As Tamara describes: "I do feel very Dutch, but when it comes to the treatment of people or strangers, I do not feel as Dutch as I do myself."[33] It creates a contrast in the way that

[31] Interview, Brooke, February 19, 2021
[32] Interview, Megan, April 14, 2021
[33] Interview, Tamara, March 2, 2021

you feel and the way people observe you. Eriksen (2010) describes that there always exists a certain duality within ethnic identities. They are neither achieved nor ascribed, but they are both (Eriksen 2010). As individuals, people can ascribe themselves to a certain identity based on shared cultural norms, traditions or characteristics, in relation to others, thereby organizing and formulating diversity. However, this is based not only on your own perception but also on a certain ascription from the outside. This ascription is visible in the previous example. You can ascribe yourself to the Dutch or Asian identity, but the ascription from the outside also determines whether you ascribe yourself truly to that specific identity.

The ascription of the outside as non-Dutch or an Other seems to contribute to the feeling of not belonging significantly. In order to belong, it seems as if people should show and *earn* being called Dutch or what van Houdt, Suvarierol, and Schinkel (2011) call "earned citizenship." Dutch citizenship has become increasingly something to be earned, and how hard one needs to work to earn Dutch citizenship depends on where one stands on the citizenship ladder (van Houdt, Suvarierol, and Schinkel 2011). Also, within the case of a politics of belonging, the different levels of belonging described by Yuval-Davis (2006, 209) – social locations, identities, and ethical and political values – become requisites. This means that for a person to belong, one should assimilate to the dominant group's language, culture, and religion (Yuval-Davis 2006). However, the question arises how do you earn Dutch citizenship when you already have it from your own perspective? Or how can you earn Dutch citizenship when you are not representing the Dutch nationality (in the eyes of many) because of your looks? Barbara mentions how "it is kind of an unreachable goal, the Dutch citizen." [34] However, some respondents I met seem to have reached this goal and feel they are Dutch citizens. They experienced no to fewer encounters with discrimination or racism.

Five of my respondents mentioned how they do not experience the same level of discrimination and racism as my other 18 respondents. One of them is Olivia. She mentioned how she is surprised when people say they are discriminated against in certain places because she does not experience anything like that or how people treat her differently.[35] Also, Mandy mentions she has not experienced "hard racism," like being rejected because of her background.[36] How come these respondents do not experience it as "bad" as others? One significant factor in earning this citizenship is that you have to be seen as Dutch, whether by

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[34] Focus group, May 11, 2021
[35] Interview, Olivia, March 3, 2021
[36] Interview, Mandy, April 23, 2021

your name, how you speak, dress or look. A person must go along with the Dutch way to a certain extent. Kelsey mentions how they say to her when they talk about foreigners, "but not Chinese people." Following with "no, not you, you are different." She thinks people would like to experience you are not that different from them because being different is perceived as threatening. The more similarities you have, the less threatening you are, the less reason they have to be racist.[37] Perhaps this is the answer to Mandy's question: "How do they [white Dutch citizens] choose people? How do they choose people who cannot belong or who are not allowed to belong?" Mandy also answers it herself by saying how it seems there are requirements you have to meet to be seen as Dutch, such as speaking with no foreign accent or not looking too different (too tanned or having black hair). Mandy explains how she experiences that she meets (some of) those requirements and is an accepted version of someone with an Asian background or a foreigner in the eyes of people who have less "hardcore" racist tendencies.[38] She perceives her Dutch name as a privilege, considering that people do not get a job right away because of their first name.[39] This example implies that the Western (or Dutch) way is the norm and how cultural and moral criteria that are related to Dutch citizenship need to be fulfilled, also called the "sacralization of citizenship" (van Houdt, Suvarierol, and Schinkel 2011, 416). Also, Kelsey illustrates how she "meets the requirements" of speaking, behaving, and dressing in a Dutch way:

> "I think because I am Dutch in so many things, in how I think, what I do, in my behavior, maybe even in how I dress. In what I like, what I find important. That is all very Dutch or Western, at least the values and standards I have. So, I think that is because of that, and what I think makes much difference is that I speak Dutch very well. When people have me on the phone, they do not expect to have a Chinese person on the phone. So, I also sometimes get to hear afterward from o, when I first talked to them on the phone and then when they see me, 'Oh you are Chinese,' 'Oh, you are not Dutch,' so I think that also helps or works."[40]

Thus, being seen as Dutch shows similarities to earned citizenship, the sacralization of citizenship, and 'regimes of belonging' (van Houdt, Suvarierol, and Schinkel 2011; Pfaff-Czarnecka 2020). All three concepts show similarities in demonstrating that you are investing

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[37] Interview, Kelsey, March 13, 2021
[38] Focus group, May 1, 2021
[39] Interview, Mandy, April 23, 2021
[40] Interview, Kelsey, March 13, 2021

your time and loyalty into fulfilling the goal of "becoming Dutch," adapting to the Western norms (or Dutch characteristics) and showing your willingness to integrate. It makes you 'one of them.' As Wekker (2016, 7) argues:

> "Belonging to the Dutch nation demands that those features that the collective imaginary considers non-Dutch—such as language, an exotic appearance, *een kleurtje hebben*, "having a tinge of color" (the diminutive way in which being of color is popularly indicated), outlandish dress and convictions, non-Christian religions, the memory of oppression—are shed as fast as possible and that one tries to assimilate."

A similar experience mentions Nina: "the people that think differently, they would like to see that you are, well, basically a fully Dutch person but just with another skin color. [..] Many people are definitely thinking… they prefer that you have nothing with your own culture anymore."[41] Skin color also seems a convenient factor to decide whether you belong. According to Neil, the moment they know you speak Dutch, the language is no longer a decisive factor for being Dutch. Then, they will point out another reason why you do not belong.[42] It shows a slight contrast to Yuval-Davis (2006, 209), who argues that one should assimilate to the dominant group's language within a politics of belonging. They perhaps should, but when someone already speaks it, the dominant group moves on to the following requisite. This process might be a never-ending circle of trying to assimilate but never fully belong even if you "possess" all the requisites.

All taken together, having to meet specific requirements, such as speaking the language or behaving in a certain way, shows how the Dutch nationality has become something to be "earned." It shows a nativist side of Dutch citizenship, where one should assimilate to the dominant group. It is visible that people who do not experience racism or are not aware of it are more an "accepted version of a Dutch person" (as Mandy states) in the eyes of the people around them. Thus, being seen as Dutch possibly creates a greater *sense* of belonging. However, *not* being seen as Dutch does not mean they assimilate more to the Dutch nationality (how much more Dutch can they be when they are born and raised here?). They do question the Dutch nationality by showing how it consists of more ethnicities than only white. This finding is what I will discuss in the next paragraph.

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[41] Focus group, May 1, 2021
[42] Focus group, May 8, 2021

2.2 In Search For Your Identity

In the former paragraph, I mainly focused on the differences between respondents who experience discrimination and racism and respondents who did not. In this paragraph, I want to outline the possible frictions everyday racism can cause within the identity of the Dutch-Asian community.

"Why can't my Dutch identity be a melting pot of it all?"[43]. As this question of Noelle implies, the Dutch identity does not include being any different than white. Noelle feels that the Dutch identity does not include other ethnicities or nationalities. Nina also mentioned how people often mistake ethnicity for nationality and how Dutch people think you can only be truly Dutch when you have a white skin color.[44] In a certain way, someone's identity is ascribed to them by others – you are not Dutch because you are not white – similar to the duality of ethnicity Eriksen (2010) coined up. However, a person can have an Asian ethnicity, but this does not mean that (s)he has an Asian nationality. A person can identify with their Asian identity, but this does not mean they feel connected to a Chinese, Indonesian, or other Asian nation. Indeed, national identification, or nation-ness, is something else than ethnic identification, and as Nina mentioned, sometimes these things are intermingling. However, national identification (feeling of being part of a nation) is just as ethnic identification (feeling of being part of an ethnic group) constructed in relation to others (Barth 1969). As Fredrik Barth (1969, 15) argues, "[It is] the ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses," which means that the "only guide to delimit a group is identification of the members themselves and their identification by others" (Eriksen and Jakoubek 2019, 3). In summary, it is not about what we possess as an individual or group, but our ability to distinguish ourselves.

This ability to distinguish ourselves is continuously visible in the respondents' experiences where they are seen as different through jokes or asked about their Asian ethnicity. Eventually, it strengthens the feeling like you have to choose between multiple parts of yourself. As Grace told me:

> "I have a bit of a pity about it myself that they see it that way and that I have to make a choice about how I want to profile myself and that those choices are still very limited at the moment or very black and white if you look at it that way. Like, last week when I got asked again in a jolly way for the umpteenth time, but what

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[43] Interview, Noelle, March 18, 2021
[44] Focus group, May 1, 2021

do you feel then? More Javanese, Dutch or Surinamese? You have to choose. Then I think just stop it. I do not have to choose anything."[45]

Noelle has similar experiences. She explains how both her Indonesian, Chinese and Dutch identity is one of 100%, and how language is problematic in that sense by saying, "I am half Chinese, quarter Indonesian and quarter Dutch."[46] It shows how nationality (and identity) becomes something you have to choose, and you cannot have it both ways. Similar to Slootman and Duyvendak's (2016) findings, there is no room for double identification in the Netherlands. It is viewed as a fixed thing, while actually "you are all multiple things at once, you cannot just be one thing."[47] This quote shows how identity can consist of multiple identities and is flexible and changeable (van Meijl 2008). Stuart Hall (1996) describes it similarly by arguing that it is always "in process" and perceives it as a construction. Identity is a kind of nexus at which different constructions of the Self coincide and sometimes also collide (van Meijl 2008). An example of where this fluidity shows itself is when I discuss a photo with Warren, which shows him at a demonstration: "I have to say that this photo is actually a subtitle of Warren as Dutch-Asian." He elaborates that if he picked another photo, it would show another side of him. If you took all of these photos together, you would construct him as "100% Warren," but this is just a "part of Warren."[48] Having multiple identities can also develop in feeling proud: "I am sort of very happy to be born in the Netherlands with a Chinese background. I can learn both languages and can eat from both cuisines. There are just traditions to both cultures that I can experience."[49] The same goes for Olivia: "I am Dutch with an Asian descent, but I am just proud that I was raised in two cultures and someone recently said to me, you speak three languages well - English, Vietnamese and Dutch - you know, so that is pretty good. You should be proud of that, right?"[50]

However, not everyone feels the same way. Maisie experiences never feeling 100% Chinese and 100% Dutch. She mentions how it does not matter to her that much and that it is more about happiness, but also that it is sometimes hard to find a balance because of how these two cultures collide with each other.[51] Megan disagrees that someone adds more value to or belongs more to a group just because he or she has a particular appearance or comes from

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[45] Interview, Grace, March 15, 2021
[46] Personal communication, April 11, 2021
[47] Interview, Sabrina, March 8, 2021
[48] Photo Elicitation, April 22, 2021
[49] Interview, Tamara, March 10, 2021
[50] Interview Olivia, March 3, 2021
[51] Interview, Maisie, February 16, 2021

certain families. Therefore, she opposes being a Dutch citizen and experiences trouble calling herself a Dutch citizen rather than Chinese.[52] However, she does believe that when you are born in the Netherlands, you *earn* it to be and live in this country.[53] Other experiences relate to feeling less affinity with their parents' culture or feeling ashamed of their Asian identities, causing them to isolate from other Asians.[54] For example, Neil is searching for the role of shame and pride relating to his Asian background and identity. He experiences difficulties placing this pride about himself and found it challenging to put his Chinese identity on culture, meaning he does not know much about the Chinese culture because he is adopted. It also connects to the stuff Neil reads about the Chinese culture and what the state does to its citizens. He does not connect this to his feeling of pride. He elaborates: "It is more about you as a person or the people like you than it is about the country or culture where you come from, at least for me. Pride also has a lot to do with the fact that what I am looking for is that you do not have to be ashamed of your background or who you are, or whom you want to be."[55] In summary, a country or culture is not decisive in how you identify yourself.

All taken together, being Dutch with an Asian background can be a continuous battle between your nationality, ethnicity, identity, and your feeling of belonging. It is a battle between "actually not feeling different, but everyone seeing you as different."[56] It raises questions about and the feeling of having to choose your identity, whether it is through language or through questions of others "what you feel like most." Some have come to the point where they can feel pride in both their Asian and Dutch culture. Others are still searching for how to relate to both their backgrounds. All these experiences show how everyday racism affects the development of someone's identity differently, mainly depending on if someone fits in the projection of a Dutch person. In order to belong, people should feel that they can express their own identity (Antonsich 2010), and that is not always the case. However, as I will show in the next paragraph, it does not have to affect your feeling of the Netherlands being your home.

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[52] Focus group, May 11, 2021
[53] Interview, Megan, April 13, 2021
[54] Interview, Nina, March 22, 2021; Interview, Shane, March 1, 2021
[55] Focus group, May 8, 2021
[56] Interview, Nicole, March 20, 2021

2.3 Feeling at Home Where You Do Not Belong

"It is my home, but it is also that I am not welcome here. I do not belong here, but at the same time, I do."[57]

This quote of Sabrina illustrates the complexity of feeling at home in a country where the majority does not consider you as a part of them. You know it is your home because you grew up here, but the majority keeps seeing you as the Other. Therefore, I want to focus on how everyday racism and the politics of belonging affects feelings of belonging as a feeling of "being at home." In line with Slootman and Duyvendak's (2016, 69) argument, the national politics of belonging influences personal experiences of belonging and the extent to which citizens feel at home. I will look at the meaning of home, how the national politics of belonging, and the extent to which you feel racialized affects the feeling of home.

The concept of home has different meanings in various researches. Jackson (1995, 110-11) argues that "to be at home in the world" is a relationship where there seems to be no resistance between oneself and the world. It little matters whether the other is a landscape, a loved one, a house, or an action. However, Antonsich (2010) argues that home represents a symbolic space of familiarity, comfort, security, and emotional attachment. Also, between the respondents, there exist different views on home. Nicole defines home as:

> "I think a place where you kind of feel safe on the street, so you can just walk around without fear—a place where you can easily navigate. You know where everything is. You feel comfortable, and that is it in really simple words. Also, a place where your people are close by, so to speak, which are my parents. Yes, I think a place that makes you feel good."

She considers The Netherlands as her home because her friends and family live here. However, she does not feel at home when she walks down the street here in the Netherlands. She thinks that if there will be fewer discriminative and racial expressions, it will significantly affect her, and she would be less afraid to go home.[58] Similar experiences relate to Maisie, who mentions how the reason for feeling more at home also has something to do with that she studied, lived, and has friends here who made her who she is today. She says: "I think it is very strange for me to suddenly live in China because that world is actually not completely unknown

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[57] Interview, Sabrina, March 8, 2021
[58] Interview, Nicole, March 20, 2021

to me, but it is still unknown."[59] On the contrary, Shane does not feel like the Netherlands is his home. He tells me that he went to Asia for about six to twelve months, where he felt more at home. In an example, Shane shows how being seen as the Other affects his feeling of belonging:

> "You are always being judged, even by people whom you do or whom you do not know, for example, colleagues. It is almost all the time about being Chinese. I feel I have to justify myself all the time about that, but you notice a certain layer in it, like, what do you think of the politics there or that kind of stuff, while I think, I am born here, why do I have to justify myself all the time? So, I got really tired of that. And on the street, I notice the way they are looking at you. It is different."[60]

The experiences of both Shane and Nicole show how the national politics of belonging affect the feeling of home (Slootman and Duyvendak 2016). The effects of othering and racial expressions on Shane and Nicole influence their feeling of home. On the contrary, Rebecca explains how she does not feel less Dutch because of the Chinese culture she inherited from her parents. Although she experienced some forms of discrimination, the Netherlands is (still) her home because she is born here. Dutch is her first language, her friends and family live here, she has a job here: "It is just my home."[61] Thus, experiencing everyday racism does not have to mean you feel lesser at home. It shows how home is also a symbolic space of familiarity (Antonsich 2010): "Maybe it is because I do not really have a home elsewhere, and this is where I grew up. This is what I know." Neil mentions how despite he resists the dominant values in the Netherlands concerning race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual diversity, the Netherlands is still his homeland.[62] It shows how a person does not have to agree with everything that happens within their home. However, because it is a familiar place (whether it is because of your friends, family, or if the Netherlands is your country of birth), you still might consider it as your home. It shows what anthropologist Michael Jackson (1995) describes in his book, *At Home in the World,* that home is lived as a relationship, a tension, and how it may evoke security in one context and seem to confine in another. The feeling of home is similar to belonging in that not every belonging (or feeling of home) is essential to people in the same way and to the same

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[59] Interview Maisie, February 16, 2021
[60] Interview, Shane, March 1, 2021
[61] Interview, Rebecca, April 5, 2021
[62] Interview, Neil, March 17, 2021

extent (Yuval-Davis 2011), as visible in the examples of Shane, Neil, Rebecca, Maisie, and Nicole.

Also, Barbara describes how expressions of racism and discrimination do not predominate every minute of her life but are structural. Therefore, I believe that the *extent* to which you feel racialized affects the feeling of belonging, which depends on your surroundings, upbringing, and character. [63] Neil describes the time he was in China, and he felt the same as everyone else. People did not notice him as different *at first* (appearance). Therefore, at that moment, it felt like "a sort of coming home."[64] However, some respondents told me Chinese citizens might see you are not a Chinese citizen but a foreigner. Sometimes this also can be confrontational: "Then I realize I am also not 100% Chinese because I do not belong there either."[65] Thus, within these experiences, the extent to which you feel racial expressions dominate your life and the extent to which you feel the same at first affects your sense of feeling at home.

Additionally, surrounding and upbringing can play an important part in the awareness of racial expressions. Most respondents grew up in a white village in the Netherlands. Some respondents were more aware of being the only citizens with an Asian background, whether some perhaps adapted more to the Dutch way of doing things. Some parents let them grow up (more) with Dutch (or Western) values, meaning that they grew up with what is standard in the Netherlands. In that sense, two respondents called their upbringing more freely. They were allowed to do many things that others within the Dutch-Asian community could not or were not allowed to do. As Kelsey mentioned, "I just lived in an autochthone world."[66] On the contrary, as Maisie explains: ".. even if you feel very Dutch, it is tough to live in a Dutch way because of the imposed standards and values from the other culture."[67] Thus, adapting to these Dutch or Western values may not be self-evident because of your other culture or upbringing.

Thirdly, someone's character can also play a part in the extent of experiencing discrimination and racism. Most respondents have many racial expressions to endure. While some speak up about it, some cope with these expressions differently: they mention they do not take it personally, are letting it go, or not feeling addressed when people say *ni hao* because they are not Chinese, knowing the difference between racial and mocking remarks. For

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[63] Focus group, May 11, 2021
[64] Interview, Neil, March 17, 2021
[65] Interview Maisie, February 16, 2021
[66] Interview, Kelsey, April 23, 2021
[67] Interview Maisie, February 16, 2021

example, Maisie tells me she has a sense of self-mockery and can distinguish well between what is meant to be racist or what is just mocking and not meant to be racist. She experiences other Chinese people calling slit eyes racist and starting a discussion straight away. Maisie thinks that by discussing it this way, the gap between white people and Chinese people becomes even larger instead of smaller. You can also take it lightly. Her Dutch friends have made her stronger in that sense: "I am not going to feel hurt over such a swear word or anything. I am just going to let it go."[68] Thus, how you experience your sense of belonging might also depend on how you are as a person and how you deal with racist utterances.

Overall, upbringing, character, and surroundings affect everyone differently. Whereas one experiences it more freely than the other or feels more at home in China for a moment, they all can be considered "in-between" spaces (Bhabha 2004). Bhabha (2004, 2) describes them as "the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood – singular or communal – that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself." Within these areas, they contest their sense of self by finding out what they consider a place where they can belong. They figure out what is needed to create a feeling of home. Perhaps one needs to feel the same, feel the ability to adapt to both the Western and Asian culture, or feel they can deal with certain racist utterances.

In summary, the extent to which they see you as an Other can affect the feeling of being at home, as visible in the case of Shane. However, some respondents still consider it their home, despite all the forms of everyday racism. Familiarity, living with your family and friends, feeling the "same," and having your whole life here are important factors for others to consider the Netherlands as a home. It illustrates how there exists a contrast between belonging and the feeling of home. You might not feel like you belong, but it is still your home. The question remains if this feeling of the Netherlands being your home might be the reason for constructing a sense of belonging of your own. Do people create a sense of belonging because the Netherlands is their home, and going to another country might not guarantee they will belong there? The Netherlands is still your home, and is home not the place to construct your sense of belonging towards the world?

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[68] Interview Maisie, February 16, 2021

2.4 In Conclusion

In this chapter, I argued how everyday racism contests people's sense of belonging in multiple ways in their everyday lives; it creates a struggle of living with multiple identities, and it also affects your sense of feeling at home. The ability to distinguish ourselves from other people strengthens feelings of having to choose between multiple identifications. Identities are flexible and changeable over time (van Meijl 2008), which is visible in the explanation of Warren that his identity consists of multiple parts. The statement that identity is a kind of nexus at which different construction of self coincide and sometimes collide (van Meijl 2008) is also visible in these cases where people feel they have to choose between the Dutch and Asian identities. These two identities collide, considering the many different values and norms that shape these cultures and that you do not feel different from any other Dutch citizen. Besides this collision, it is also possible for the Dutch and Asian identities to meet, considering some respondents say they can be proud of being part of two cultures. It shows how identity, similar to belonging, is not a reified fixity (Yuval-Davis 2011). It may be depending on someone's character, surroundings, and upbringing how one experiences expressing their identity and sense of belonging. Whether they do or do not call you "the Other," or if you can live in a Dutch way or not because of imposed standards and values. Here is where the feeling of home comes in.

The feeling of home is also a continuous process, a relationship that depends on many factors, such as friends, family, and everyday racism. However, the extent to which you experience everyday racism does not affect your feeling of home per se. Being born here, having friends and family here – in other words, being familiar with the place, or being emotionally attached – creates a sense of belonging in itself. It also shows how people can construct their sense of belonging by creating their own belonging with multiple factors surrounding them. In short, I argue that this feeling of home functions as the base to create a new place where you can create your own identity and belonging, in a country where you feel like you do not belong and cannot express your own identity. In the next chapter, I will look at how activism helps to create one's sense of belonging.

Chapter 3: Contesting and Reframing Belonging

Thus far, I showed how a politics of belonging and the feeling of being at home is affected and constructed by everyday racism. Although I support both notions of belonging, considering I showed how everyday racism is encapsulated within power structures that determine who belongs and who does not (chapter one) and that despite these power structures and utterances of everyday racism, most respondents still feel like the Netherlands is their home (chapter two), I also want to add to these notions by arguing how belonging can be about the ability to create your own agency and sense of belonging or freedom despite these power structures and structural utterances of everyday racism. You might not feel Dutch because of others, or you might not feel like you belong, but you still can redefine your position in society on your own terms by speaking up towards your friends or family or setting up a foundation. Therefore, I argue how the respondents redefine citizenship on their own terms by practicing "activist citizenship" (Isin 2009), showing a contrast with the term "earned citizenship," which refers to how citizens should prove they are Dutch (chapter two). I will illustrate this by focusing on how the respondents reframe and contest their sense of belonging in their daily lives and activism.

3.1 *"No to White Hegemony, Yes to Diversity"*

Warren explains how he aims for diversity instead of a white hegemony: "a democracy often means that a minority should accept the opinion of the majority. However, this does not mean that the minority should accept *all* opinions of the majority. The majority should also accept the minority because they exist and have their own values and practices. That refers to diversity."[69] In other words, people should be valued for who they are. In this paragraph, I will not provide a solution to constructing a diverse or inclusive society but show how respondents contest this white hegemony by reframing their sense of belonging in their personal lives through activism, family, and friends.

Firstly, I want to come back to the fragment of *Goed Fout* about *Wie is de Mol,* discussed in chapter one. I mentioned shortly how Sabrina spoke up about this fragment but that the only thing the activists got back was an apology and the removal of the fragment (*after* the show aired).[70] Here, I want to outline *how* they contested their sense of belonging and white

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[69] Photo Elicitation, April 22, 2021
[70] Interview, Sabrina, March 8, 2021

hegemony in this case. After the episode aired, many people spoke up through social media about how the fragment was racist by addressing (tagging) the broadcasting channels and explaining how creating and broadcasting this fragment is dehumanizing and normalizes the insulting of and joking about black, indigenous, and other people of color.[71] They criticized how the apology of *Wie is de Mol* does not even mention that the fragment is racist, thereby not taking full responsibility for their actions.[72] Also, the activists shared many screenshots of other people who wrote comments like "I had not even noticed that," or "unfortunately we live in a world where we have nothing better to do than putting a magnifying glass on everything and where we have to watch out what we say."[73] Challenging these normalized practices of the Dutch media shows how possibilities can emerge to "defer/differ from the dominant hierarchical categorizations of self and other" (Ghorashi 2017, 2428). This "strong reflexivity" resulting from contrasting these positionalities enables a particular form of agency (Ghorashi 2017). As Ortner (2005, 34) argues, people are always partially "knowing subjects" who have some degree of reflexivity about themselves and their desires, and "some 'penetration' into the ways in which they are formed by their circumstance." Similar to Giddens (1984, 14), who argues about people having the ability to "act otherwise." Thus, the activists can put themselves in another position than those ascribed from the outside, such as the model *minority*, or as morally and culturally inferior (Kartosen-Wong 2021).

Furthermore, friends are also important actors in the respondents' daily lives, and even in their inner circle, they show their ability to reposition themselves from the dominant hierarchy. This repositioning can be confrontational, especially when some close friends cannot understand what they are going through. In chapter one, you already met Noelle, who experienced being spoken to in English when going to the notary. After this experience, she discussed it with friends from Amsterdam and family, who did not seem to understand the problem, and said how Noelle should not make a big deal out of it: "It is not racism. It is just a wrong assumption." Noelle finds it painful to see how these subtle things happen to people who love her, and she finds it difficult to speak up about it within that group.[74] Also, Barbara experienced difficulty within her friend group, which she discussed in the focus group. Barbara tells us how her friend remarks about slit eyes being ugly. She described it as follows:

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[71] (Digital) Field notes, February 14, 2021
[72] Wie is de Mol? (@wieisdemol.avrotros). 2021. "Naar aanleiding van aflevering 7 van Wie is de Mol?" Instagram, February 14, 2021. https://www.instagram.com/p/CLRhy0WJLXM/.
[73] (Digital) Field notes, February 14, 2021
[74] Interview, Noelle, March 18, 2021

"I am here with two friends, and one friend said that she had her eyes like half-closed. Then she said like two times, 'no, that is a really ugly picture. I have slit eyes here.' The first time I was very shocked to say something about it because I thought... I am very triggered by this word, but is it what she says… Do I find it not chill that she says this? The second time I said, 'there is nothing wrong with that,' and she realized it to some extent, [..], but what would you guys do?"

Zach responded to Barbara's story with how she maybe could respond with the question of why her friend used the word slit eyes, and Barbara herself mentioned that maybe she could have asked why her friend thinks slit eyes are ugly. At the same time, Barbara also mentions that she worries how speaking up so directly might be too confrontational. Grace responds that there is also much emotion involved when it affects you personally.[75] Discussing Barbara's question and speaking up to her friends shows how she creates belonging on her terms. Barbara discusses how to cope with this matter with fellow peers, and speaking up to her friends makes her construct her sense of belonging by saying it affects her personally. She tries to create an image where the Western norm is not the only norm by saying there is nothing wrong with slit eyes. This image that Barbara creates does not mean that she devalues the Western norm, but that there are also equally important norms besides the Western one. Barbara's story shows how she redefines her position according to her needs and emotions and can construct her own sense of belonging. As Bauman (2011, 432) argues: "it is the 'Self' that recasts the rest of the world as its own periphery, while assigning, defining and attributing differentiated relevance to its parts according to its own needs, desires, ambitions, and apprehensions." As such, it shows how simultaneously people can contest the Western norm and construct their sense of belonging at the same time. Looking back at Neil's statement in chapter two, you perhaps do not have to agree with *all* dominant values in the Netherlands to construct a sense of belonging and home of your own.

Next to their friends, their family is also a big part of their lives. Ballard (1979) illustrated this in her research about major and increasingly irresolvable conflicts between second-generation South Asians in Britain and their parents. Most conflicts concern the discontinuities and contradictions in the behavior and aspirations of the two generations and the incompatibility of the Asian and Western cultures (Ballard 1979). Differences in these aspirations can be found in the example of Maisie. She notices how both her Asian and Dutch

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[75] Focus group, May 11, 2021

cultures collide. For example, her parents would like to marry her off, but she does not want that. As she argues: "I did not choose that they are interfering in my life." Maisie understands where it comes from, but experiences that her Dutch friends do not understand this when they say, "just go for your own luck."[76] Maisie's example shows how the Asian and Western cultures are incompatible in some cases, but it is not easy to choose between or contest one of them. They are both parts of you. Additionally, the conflicts might also relate to activism and the white privilege of not experiencing discrimination. For example, Sabrina mentions how her mother can be worried about her being an activist because she cannot know when people might have bad intentions and recognize her. Nina mentions that her father often relates her problems with bullying to himself, which she finds annoying.[77] It shows that they have to find and construct their position in relation to the Western norm and their Asian one even within their families.

To conclude, I showed how the respondents contest the "white hegemony" in their everyday life by activism through calling out television programs and within their friend group and family by speaking up when they make racist remarks or asking what they think of specific happenings. Simultaneously, it is not only contesting your Western norms and values but also your Asian ones. Your friends and family might not always understand your choices regarding not wanting to marry off or being an activist. However, being able to reposition yourself in all kinds of ways, and knowing how your circumstances form you, constitutes ways to create your way of belonging. Therefore, in the next paragraph, I will show how they can create their sense of belonging through activism.

3.2 Activism: A Way to Construct Belonging

"*Being an activist means constantly opening up old wounds and traumas. [..] Fortunately, I now know that I have an army of empathetic, understanding, lovely people around me who would never blame me if I choose for self-care*."[78]

Kyla illustrates with this quote how activism has both its upsides as downsides. Whereas you are continuously opening up old wounds and traumas on the one side, you create a community on the other side. It contests and constructs belonging simultaneously: you are contesting belonging by speaking up continuously and constructing belonging by joining a

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[76] Interview, Maisie, February 16, 2021
[77] Interview, Sabrina, March 8, 2021; Interview, Nina, March 22, 2021
[78] Personal communication, May 4, 2021

foundation in which you can share your personal story with others who can relate to your stories. In this paragraph, I will show how activism is a way to construct a sense of belonging, in order to argue that belonging can also be about the ability to create your own agency and sense of belonging (or freedom), in addition to the analytical framework of Antonsich (2010) and Yuval-Davis (2006).

According to some respondents, the Dutch-Asian community has not spoken out against racism and discrimination for a very long time. Noelle explains how this "is part of their culture and DNA" because, for centuries, it was normal (in China) that if an individual made an error or violation, your whole clan was punished (massacred).[79] Tamara explains that it was about "saying nothing and keeping your mouth shut" in the previous generation because you live in Dutch society and are trying to survive and become financially stable.[80] However, for a couple of years, the younger generation is making themselves more known about discrimination and racism (Wu 2020). They speak (better) Dutch, making them also more capable of speaking up about these topics concerning the Asian culture (Wu 2020). This transition shows how the question of who is "a stranger" and who "does not belong" is continuously modified and contested (Yuval-Davis 2011). It comes with a great responsibility to speak up, not only because it is a great burden to carry but also because older generations mention how activists should not cross the line too much. According to Warren, they are worried about becoming the annoying Chinese in the eyes of the white Dutch citizens, just as the "annoying Turkish or Moroccan people."[81]

The way activists in the Dutch-Asian community are now speaking up more about anti-Asian-racism shows how the politics of belonging also involves the contestation and challenge by other political agents (Yuval-Davis 2006). These political agents "struggle both for the promotion of their specific projects in the construction of their collectivity and its boundaries and, at the same time, use these ideologies and projects in order to promote their own power positions within and outside the collectivity" (Yuval-Davis 2006, 205). By starting a foundation that connects most of the Dutch-Asian community in battling racism and discrimination, it constructs belonging by meeting people who are experiencing the same struggles. They created a safe space where people could share their experiences with discrimination, racism, and activism. They set up a Facebook-community where people of the Dutch-Asian community

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[79] Interview, Noelle, March 18, 2021
[80] Interview, Tamara, March 10, 2021
[81] Interview, Warren, March 4, 2021

could share their stories. Whether it is to promote Asian representation in movies or TV-shows, sharing articles about understanding their (Asian) history, or sharing a story about an encounter with someone who was racist, all is about creating more awareness about their own community on diverse topics and understanding more about yourself. They can meet new people who they can also see outside of the Facebook community, whether it is through WhatsApp or face-to-face. As in the case of Neil and Nina, who have many experiences with discrimination, their feeling of shame for their Asian identity, making them having less affinity with the culture of their parents, thereby isolating themselves from other Asians, have now found a community in which they do not feel they are the only one.[82]

They try to claim their right to be included in Dutch society and promote and express their power position through this foundation. It shows what Isin (2009) calls "activist citizenship," which includes the people who write their own scripts by making claims to rights that are not granted to them and thus creating a rupture, "creating a scene" (Isin 2009, 381). He argues the emergence of new sites, scales, and acts, through which 'actors' claim to transform and constitute themselves from subjects into citizens as claimants of rights (Isin 2009, 379). As some of the foundation's core values reflect, like diversity and inclusivity, their strive is to be included in society (not only the Dutch one). Everyone should be able to live beside each other where they are recognized as a *person* and not a certain kind of group. They choose not to adapt to the current picture of what a Dutch citizen should be but contribute to expanding the meaning of being a Dutch citizen. They *earn* to be seen as a Dutch citizen simply because they are one. Instead of looking for confirmation that they earn being (seen as) a Dutch citizen (referring to the concept of earned citizenship), they rephrase the definition of being a Dutch citizen. Similar to what Tariq Modood (2019, 233) argues, "multiculturalism is a mode of integration that does not just emphasize the centrality of minority group identities but rather proves incomplete without the re-making of national identity so that all citizens have a sense of belonging." In line with this, I argue how the activists are reframing and claiming their right to the Dutch identity to show that they already fit in that identity as well.

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[82] Personal communication, April 29, 2021 and May 7, 2021

Another way they claim their rights and create a sense of community is during the demonstrations against anti-Asian racism. Despite the rain, wind, and cold, many gathered on the *Museumplein* to demonstrate and create awareness for anti-Asian racism, as shown in figure 1. Quietly shouting "I am proud to be Asian" while raising their fist, or a little boy who held up a sign saying "Proud to be Dutch and Proud to be Asian."[83] It can give people the courage to continue, as in the case of Noelle, who mentions how she gets more courageous going to these demonstrations.[84]

Figure 1. Impression of demonstration Stop Asian Hate in Amsterdam. Source: Author

Contrarily, speaking up against racism can also come with feelings of powerlessness, as Kyla tells me there was a time when she felt powerless because of her limited number of followers. Neil also felt lonely at times when speaking up on his own.[85] It continues to be a fight. As Warren mentions, he must keep on fighting for his personal existence. He has to mention when he does not like certain things, share things all the time (also about his feelings), organize events, where white Dutch citizens might not have to do these things. In short, he has

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[83] Fieldnotes, April 10, 2021
[84] Personal communication, April 10, 2021
[85] Personal communication, May 4, 2021, and May 7, 2021

to fight for his right to exist here in the Netherlands.[86] The majority of the respondents mention that it takes much energy to deal with racism on a daily basis. It is both physically and mentally exhausting because you are constantly investing your time in the matter. It illustrates Essed's (2001) statement how there is no relief from everyday racism (and thereby activism):

> "Because activism is about yourself and your identity, it is difficult to turn it off. I am still constantly confronted with it, even though I try to rest and avoid the news, for example. When I look in the mirror or see news about anti-Asian hate crimes or someone yells *ni hao* at me on the street, I am reminded of it again. It is also very frustrating to get responses from people who invalidate your experience and existence and call you a 'poser.' I can shake it off pretty well now, especially when it is online, but it still touches me somehow. It reminds me of all the times I was and am discriminated against, verbally abused, etcetera."[87]

Also, because of these utterances of racism, some of the activists, from which Kyla is one, feel like speaking up towards anti-Asian racism feels like something she "HAS to do."[88] Also, Neil feels like it is a necessity to speak up with everything that happens.[89] It shows how they are affected by the structures of everyday racism. Through all the jokes, no media representation, micro-aggressions, they feel shame, not feeling welcome in their home country, not feeling safe – thereby feeling necessary to speak up against it, despite being mentally and physically exhausted. Feeling this necessity to speak up resonates with the idea of cultural citizenship of Aihwa Ong (1996), who explains citizenship as a dual process of self-making and being-made. Ong (1996) acknowledges people's agency ("self-making"), but also that we are defined by the structures around us ("being-made"). Ong's (1996) definition shows how citizenship is in a continuous "flux," similar to the activist citizen of Isin (2009). The necessity to speak up shows how the structures of institutional or everyday racism define them. They *have* to speak up because nothing will change if they do not. Overall, it shows their ability to create agency (for themselves) in constructing an inclusive society and thereby cope with the structures of both everyday as institutional racism. In this way, they create a belonging through activist foundations in a country that continuously questions their belonging.

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[86] Photo Elicitation, April 22, 2021
[87] Personal communication, May 4, 2021
[88] Personal communication, May 4, 2021
[89] Personal communication, May 7, 2021

3.3 In Conclusion

This chapter has shown that people can reposition themselves by contesting the 'white hegemony' through activism and personal surroundings. I argued how the respondents could redefine Dutch citizenship by practicing "activist citizenship" (Isin 2009), besides "being-made" through the structures of everyday racism (Ong 1996). They do not conform to the notion of Dutch citizenship by assimilating themselves to what other Dutch citizens would like to see (earning citizenship). However, they reposition themselves as people worthy of being valued as a person or group with their own values and practices. Through larger causes – demonstrating or setting up a foundation – and smaller causes – speaking up towards your friends and family – they create their way of belonging. Noticing who supports you and that you are not alone creates a feeling of not being alone in this fight "for your personal existence," as Warren mentioned. It shows the ability of people to create agency and a sense of belonging or freedom despite these power structures and structural utterances of everyday racism. They can construct belonging in a place where they simultaneously belong and do not belong.

Conclusion

This research contributed to the analytical framework of Antonsich (2010), who argued that belonging is about the interplay between the politics of belonging and the "feeling at home." In addition, I argued how belonging is also about the ability to create your own agency and sense of belonging or freedom, besides the politics of belonging and the feeling of home. By focusing on the concept of everyday racism, I was able to construct this image. I showed how everyday racism has its downsides, such as creating a sense of not belonging and being the Other, as its upsides, constructing ways in which people contest this sense of not-belonging by building their sense of belonging through activism. The objective was to answer the following question: *"How do (different) experiences of everyday racism in the Netherlands affect the feeling of belonging of (second generation) Dutch adults with a Southeast – and East Asian background?"*

This research showed how everyday racism manifests itself in many aspects of the lives of the respondents: no presence of Asian representation in the media, stereotypes, the subtle expressions of discrimination (micro-aggressions, jokes), and in the workplace or friend groups (being seen as the one who knows everything about China). Also, adapting the Dutch way of thinking about themselves and others within the Asian community (internalized racism) and behaving according to a Dutch citizen are aspects of everyday racism, considering these are recurrent and familiar practices in the eyes of the respondents.

I started with the argument that the politics of belonging, related to the Dutch media, create processes of Otherness. This chapter showed how everyday racism plays out on all levels of society (Essed 2001) and how belonging is also about the politics of belonging (Antonsich 2010). Through gaslighting in Dutch media – devaluing others' experiences with racism – and no representation, the Dutch-Asian community is not included in everyday practices of Dutch society. It shows how in the guise of "talking about subjects that matter," the elites still decide which difference should be valued and how this should be judged (Guadeloupe 2008). The media also shapes certain stereotypes about the Dutch-Asian community, which affects them in their everyday life. These stereotypes manifest in explicit and implicit forms of everyday racism, such as name-calling or internalizing Western ideas about the Asian community, which constitute feelings of insecurity about your looks, thoughts and not being recognized as a full-fledged Dutch but as a second-class citizen. Eventually, this politics of belonging also affects

personal experiences of belonging and the feeling of home (Slootman and Duyvendak 2016), which I outlined in chapter two.

In chapter two, I argued how the interplay of the politics of belonging and the feeling of home is significant for developing a sense of agency to construct one's belonging. I showed how the construction of a national politics of belonging in the Netherlands increases questions about the respondents' sense of belonging and identity. Although some respondents are perceived as Dutch and did not experience forms of everyday racism, many did experience everyday racism and are perceived as Others which raises struggles on how to position themselves within their Dutch and Asian nationality and identity. Experiences varied from feeling that you have to choose between multiple identities, feeling Dutch and Asian, to the experience of pride that you have multiple identities. It seems there is no room for double identification (Slootman and Duyvendak 2016), at least not in the conception of being Dutch. Dutch citizenship is the only one you should choose. The importance of Dutch citizenship is also visible in their daily lives when other white citizens, for example, tell them "you speak Dutch very well" or "no, but *you* are different." Processes of othering also affect their sense of belonging in whether they consider the Netherlands as their home. Where Shane feels more at home in Asia, others consider the Netherlands as their home because they are born and raised here. In line with this, I argued that you can feel at home but still experience structural forms of everyday racism. It shows a contrast within belonging being the interplay of the "politics of belonging" and the "feeling of being at home" (Antonsich 2010): the interplay of processes of othering creating a sense of not belonging, but the Netherlands still being their home. Furthermore, I argued that the extent to which you feel racialized might affect your feeling of belonging. Significant reasons that came to the fore in this research were upbringing, surroundings, character, and the feeling one is perceived as Dutch. These factors show how the adaptation to the Dutch (or Western) norm seems important to construct any sense of belonging to the Dutch community but is perhaps not necessary since people can construct their own sense of belonging. This insight brought me to chapter three.

Lastly, I argued how the respondents redefine belonging and citizenship on their terms. Creating and building up a community to speak up about struggles relating to identity, ethnicity, belonging, or everyday racism forms a new kind of belonging, where people find shared interests and new friends. Speaking up about discrimination and racism shows how political agents contest and challenge their sense of belonging within the politics of belonging (Yuval-Davis 2006). In this research, the activists construct activist citizenship (Isin 2009). They claim

their right to be treated equally and to be treated just like any other, thereby refusing to adapt to "being Dutch." Besides claiming their right within demonstrations, they also claim this right within their everyday life, such as friends and family. Overall, it shows they are "knowing subjects" (Ortner 2005) able to position themselves within the structures of everyday racism and the white hegemony. All these chapters show that everyday racism negatively affects belonging when looking at developing your identity and how it manifests itself within every aspect of your everyday life. However, it may also positively affect belonging by opening the ability and space to create your own sense of belonging.

Although many ideas, processes, and practices are yet to be explored, this thesis contributes to the anthropological debates of belonging and everyday racism, especially how it constructs itself in a Western, white-dominated context. The findings can be of practical societal relevance since they contribute to understanding the emerging processes of everyday racism in daily life and emphasize that what people perceive as "normal" and familiar should perhaps not be seen as such, for example, the jokes about Asians. It is what anthropologists can do best: making the familiar strange and the strange familiar. This research might be a good setup for future research regarding generational differences within the Southeast – and East Asian communities. I noticed people mentioning how many different views and generational differences exist in speaking up against racism and discrimination. As mentioned briefly (in chapter three), the first generation is quieter and worries about the second generation speaking up too much. They worry white Dutch citizens might see them differently than before (being the model minority). These generational differences may be of interest to better understand the processes everyday racism produces between white citizens and the Dutch-Asian community *and* within the Dutch-Asian community itself. Method-wise, as Nina recommended, I would conduct this research with two researchers (Dutch and Asian) since you would have more views looking towards the same matter.[90] If possible, I would recommend doing as much face-to-face research as possible. I noticed that during the interviews and focus groups, it was more challenging to contextualize through the lack of non-verbal cues, less spontaneity, some bad internet connections, and sensing the ambiance. Although my respondents were all very open in telling their stories, these challenges should be considered in future (online) research since they could have affected the data gathered.

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[90] Focus group, May 1, 2021

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