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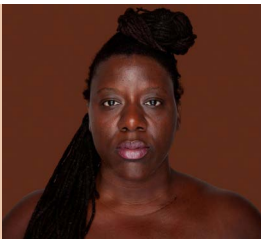


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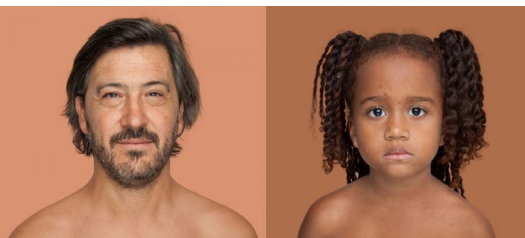
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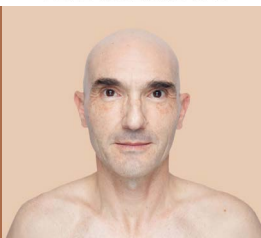


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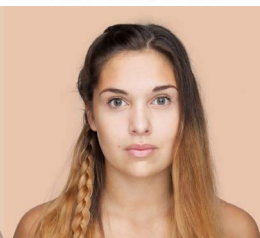


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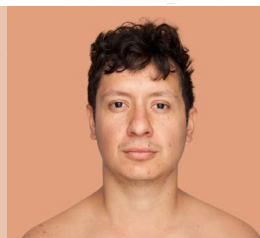
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PANTONE. 71-7 C



PANTONE. 70-5 C

# RECOLOR THE DOMINANT TRUTH :

Work oriented interventions  
to uncover manifestations of  
racism.

Master thesis  
Tirza Izelaar

# ABOUT THE COVER

The collection of photographs on the cover and on the chapter introductions of this thesis are from project Humanæ. In which the artist Angélica Dass is documenting humanity's true colors, instead of the labels people attribute to skin colors as 'white', 'red', 'black' and 'yellow'. The background for each picture is identical to a sample taken from the nose. That sample is linked to the neutral Pantone® pallet. The project has no date set for completion, but is rather a collection of 4000+ pictures already, taken in 36 different countries. Representing various beliefs, gender identities, physical abilities, ages or health, all build Humanæ (Dass, 2021). All without labels.

Find more about the project on:

<https://angelicadass.com/photography/humanae/>

**RECOLOR THE DOMINANT TRUTH:**

Work oriented interventions to uncover manifestations of racism.

**MASTER THESIS**

Design for Interaction

**TIRZA IZELAAR**

July 2021

**DELFT UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY**

Faculty of Industrial Design Engineering

**GRADUATION COMMITTEE:**

*Chair*

Prof. dr. Eekelen, B.F. van  
Professor of Design, Culture and Society.

*Mentor*

Prof. dr. Hekkert, P.P.M.  
Professor of Form Theory.

*Company mentor*

K. de Randamie  
Founder at Cre8tiveRevolution Group.

# GLOSSARY

This graduation project has been written with terminology associated with the topic of racism at the moment. Therefore, it could happen that over time other terms are used in relation to this topic. For now, people are described as white people, people of color and black people. Other terminology has been taken from literature. Below is also a translation list from English to Dutch, in order for a Dutch reader to translate the used term appropriately. It should be noted that Dutch language is not as evolved in this topic as English, therefore some terms are applicable in a broader manner compared to their English translation.

White people - witte mensen, de term blank is hier specifiek niet gebruikt als de vertaling vanwege de connotatie die daarbij gepaard gaat.

Black people - zwarte mensen

People of color - mensen van kleur

Systemic racism - institutioneel racisme

Institutional racism - institutioneel racisme

Everyday racism - alledaags racisme



# PREFACE

For this self initiated project I focused on the topic of systemic racism. Therefore, a trigger warning should be in place regarding the content as it also describes examples of racially unjust situations.

Hereby, I present my graduation project 'Recolor the dominant truth: Work oriented interventions to uncover manifestations of racism.' This project marks the end of my master Design for Interaction at the University of Technology Delft and the era of being a student. I worked on this project from November 2020 till July 2021.

It would be wrong to say that these accomplishments are only thanks to my efforts so I would also like to use this section to express my acknowledgements.

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisory team. Thank you Bregje for still being part of my team even though you did not judge yourself as most appropriate. I would like to kindly disagree as I was stimulated by your expertise and sensitivity of the context throughout every contact. I would like to thank Paul for allowing the ViP process to flow right out of the project and for always safeguarding the alignment of the project by handing me methods and questions to clarify. Last, I would like to say a special thanks to Kevin for being patient with me, allowing me to go through my own journey. All our 30 minute zoom calls brought a smile and inspiration.

I would like to express my gratitude to my parents for supporting me no matter the size of my chosen adventure, for creating a space where I can always come at ease, for always showing interest even though not really understanding what I do about 80% of the time.

Thank you to all my friends for those who matched their schedules so we could go through this graduation process together and others for all your support, opportunities to be miserable, celebrating highlights, food and distractions. I hope to return the favor.

The recipient of the biggest shout out and thanks is reserved for Jurre. Thank you for being an invisible project member by always listening, proofreading all my dense text, for letting me be whatever I needed to be and snapping me out of it.

Finally, a thanks to all participants who invested their time to help me out and be confronted with this topic. Your participation, feedback and thoughts guided me and brought meaning to this project.

To anyone who continues reading this thesis, you might be confronted with your apparent norm, so stay open and calm. You are not alone. So feel free to reach out for any questions or interest. Enjoy the read.

*Tirza Izelaar*

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the summer of 2020 thousands of people in the Netherlands took a stand against racism during BlackLivesMatter demonstrations. A large group gathering for their first time, being young and old, black and white, creating a voice within Dutch society screaming racism is unacceptable. But what exactly is regarded as unacceptable?

In collaboration with RAEN Industries Holding BV.'s activities to give the BlackLivesMatter movement (BLM) an impact beyond media items and demonstrations. This graduation project will specifically look into the relation of white people to systemic racism in the Netherlands.

This graduation project explores how white people can break their reproduction cycle of systemic racism. As a result this thesis proposes the final design REcolor, a consecutive three step process that visualizes employees' apparent normal within work related situations. It appeals to the Dutch belief that manifestations of racism are wrong in order to adjust their behavior regarding reproduction of racism.

Within the first phase of this project the context exploration has been examined through an exploration of the systemic level of racism revealing how it touches upon individuals, organizations and institutions. In which manifestations are embedded within cultural and institutional processes. The exploration continued with a focus on the reproduction of the individual within the context of Dutch society. While white Dutch citizens have no intention of executing manifestations of racism, they unconsciously continue to be reinforced and reproduce the cycle of racial injustice. In which white people behave according to the norm that is reinforced through social structures of the dominant culture. Allowing white Dutch people to remain ignorant towards their own manifestations of racism during social interactions.

Continuous context exploration of institutional racism placed these individuals in the social structures of organizations and institutions. As such, decisions and products individuals make at work are influenced by their reinforced social structures. Via the distribution of these products like a meeting agenda or a policy within the social network



of an organization they gain a power of influence. In other words, organizations hold power to influence the reproduction of during their social interactions via their created in/visible elements. Based on these insights a focus has been put on the individual with unintended racially unjust decisions during work situations. Combined with both the insights of white Dutch people that are unaware of racial reproductions and the acceptance of these as the norm, the design statement became:

'In order to reduce systemic racism, I want white people to break with work oriented reproduction of racially unjust choices by broaching their apparent normal for review so they can adjust their actions towards their beliefs.'

The final design of this thesis exploration is REcolor, intersecting at individual and organizational levels of systemic racism by visualizing shared individual actions, allowing people to be critical towards the current organizational culture. Reveal is the first step, and visualizes the social relations of an organization to allow participants to be critical upon the societal contribution of the organization. Reflect is the second step in which participants are confronted with the effects of unintended behaviors during social interactions through dilemmas about institutionalized situations at work. Redirect is the third and final step in which a new shared social structure is documented on a visible element allowing participants to monitor undesired behaviors despite the intentions of the actor. Crossing of these manifestations from the visible elements confronted participants with their self perception of an equal society and involvement with racially unjust decisions. The three distinct steps of REcolor facilitate employees to broach manifestations of racism in social interactions in order to adjust their behavior regarding reproduction of racism.

A preliminary prototype was used by participants to evaluate the design. The concept was evaluated as promising, creating awareness about manifestations of racism and reflection about effects embedded into common actions. Group discussions after execution of a step of the process received richness thanks to visualizations giving them something to be critical about and share individual perspectives. However, the content needs further alignment to practical experiences of users. A disconnection to the content created a decrease in motivation. But when participants could relate to the content they indicated new insights regarding their own behaviour and the wish to adjust. As such, the interventions facilitate its users to break with their reproduction of manifestations of racism by broaching their apparent norms.

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# PART 1

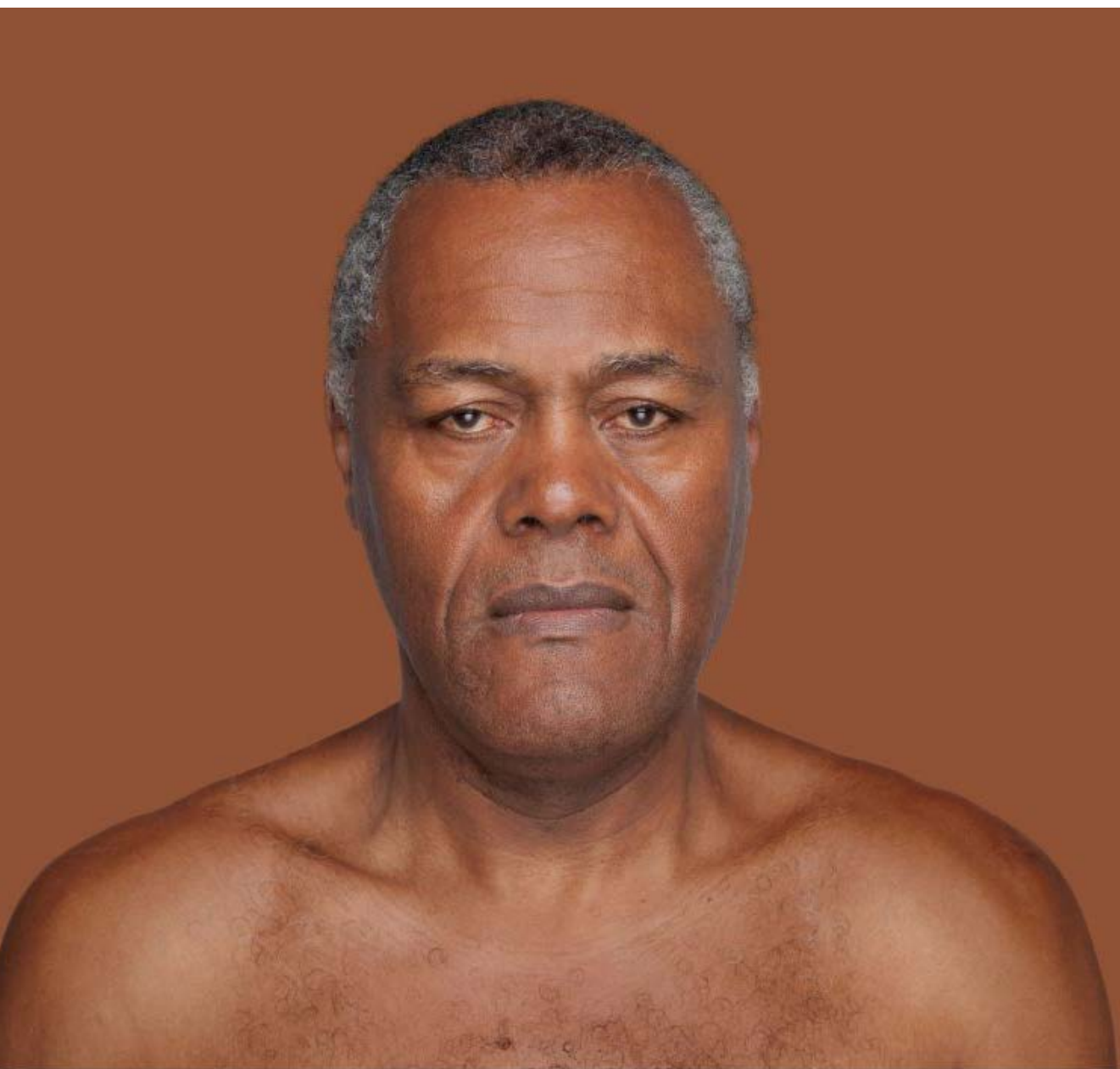
figure 1.  
BlackLiveMatter  
demonstration  
at the Dam in  
Amsterdam





# PROJECT SETUP





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# 1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, a general overview of this project will be given. This includes the significance of the topic and its context. Which together with an introduction of the external party leads to the project aim. Furthermore, a reading guide will provide an overview of this report's structure.

- 1.1. Significance and motivation of this project
- 1.2. Context of systemic racism
- 1.3. Collaboration with RAEN Industries Holding BV.
- 1.4. Project aim
- 1.5. Reading guide

## 1.1. SIGNIFICANCE AND MOTIVATION OF THIS PROJECT

When I revisit the Dutch summer of 2020 two matters come to mind. On the one hand, the Covid-19 pandemic that disrupted the normal way of living by keeping us inside. While on the other hand, see figure 21, thousands of people showed up at BlackLivedMatter demonstrations all over the Netherlands to take a stand against systemic racism in the United States and in Dutch society. People showed up, some for their first time, young and old, black and white; all adding to a bigger public voice saying, “We are no longer okay with this.” (Elibil &Tielbeke, 2020).

The increase of attention on racism within the Netherlands has put it on the political agenda. For the first time ever, on the second of June 2020, the Dutch prime minister, Mark Rutte, admitted the existence of systemic racism in the Netherlands. This forms a significant shift in attitude compared to his beliefs in 2007, when he saw no harm in treating certain ethnic groups differently (Elibil &Tielbeke, 2020). Systemic racism is embedded into Dutch societal structures making dominant white culture the norm.

An example illustrating its effect can be seen on the instagram account Directiekamers van Nederlands from Madeleijn van den Nieuwenhuizen. Within this account she showcases people at the top positions within big Dutch organizations. While going through the page it is noticeable that the majority of showcased people are white. They have powerful positions that are accountable for dividing money, supervising and influencing Dutch society (Van den Nieuwenhuizen, 2021). Some of these are displayed in figures 2 and 3. Another example is the collapse of the Dutch government in January 2021 which was a result of manifestations of systemic racism in the tax authority. This display of systemic racism has caused 20.000 working families, most with an immigration background, to be falsely accused of fraud (Henly, 2021). Both examples show the relevance of systemic racism in Dutch society. Showing how a system has been created with preference and trust in white Dutch citizens while non-white citizens got the short end of the straw.



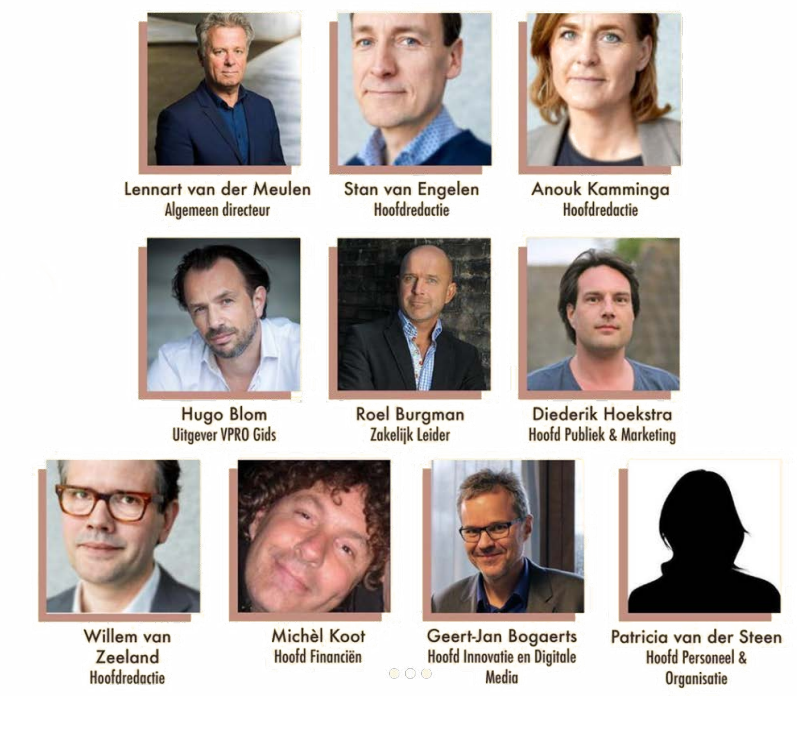


figure 2.  
Editors in  
chief from  
the national  
broadcasting  
company  
VPRO.

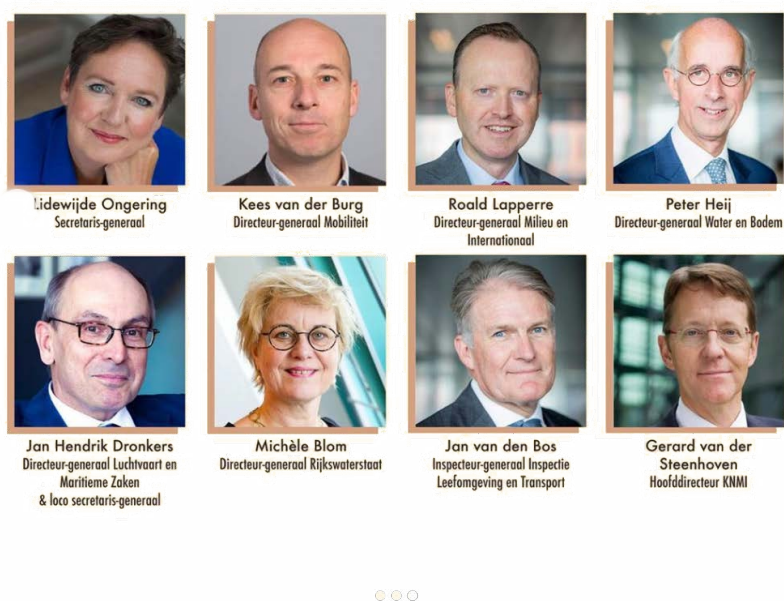


figure 3.  
Organization  
of Ministry of  
Infrastructure  
and Water  
Management

## 1.2. CONTEXT OF SYSTEMIC RACISM

The concept of systemic racism for which Dutch people took a stand can be clarified by explaining its two words. First, racism is a product of power and prejudice. Power is the relationship between social groups that places groups lower in the social hierarchy based on categorizing them as being different (Essed & Hoving, 2014). This categorization is based on skin color, origin, nationality, ethnicity (Rijksoverheid, 2020). Throughout history prejudices connected to these characteristics have become fixed in society and are embedded within culture and traditions. These prejudices influence how people perceive and respond to others. Manifestations of racism are the combination of these two concepts leading to negative effects for groups regarded as different from the dominant culture (Essed & Hoving, 2014).

Second, the systemic component refers to reproduction of racism via cultural and institutional processes that are present in society (Essed & Hoving, 2014; Griffith, et al, 2007; Nzume, A.,2017). This reproduction in social structures are institutionalized as accepted, repetitive social behaviours that are passed on from generation to generation (Greenwood et al., 2008; Scott, 2013). Brand identified its embedment into three levels in society as can be seen in figure 4. The acceptance of the manifestations of racism within individuals, organizations and institutions allow for its reinforcement and reproduction to exist. This leads to the unintentional exclusion of people of color in Dutch society (Essed & Hoving, 2014).

figure 4.  
Systemic  
racism



### 1.3. COLLABORATION WITH RAEN INDUSTRIES HOLDING BV.

RAEN Industries Holding BV. is the external party for this graduation. The founder, Kevin de Randamie and his team aim to foster impact from creativity by protecting ideas, their owners and its scalability. This graduation connects with one of their activities in particular which is the pursuit of impact of BlackLivesMatter beyond media items and demonstrations. As such, they are creating a national council consisting of black professionals named BEE as an acronym for Black Economic Empowerment. Kevin de Randamie has taken on the task of to formalise this council. As such, he makes connections between black communities and the governmental innovation platform, which is known as Top teams. With his knowledge of both BlackLivesMatter and governmental innovation he is the external supervisor and client within this graduation. The collaboration preferred this research to be independent from the activities of BEE. While at the same time de Randamie's insights and feedback guides this project to match RAEN Industries Holding BV.'s goal of creating impact for BlackLivesMatter. This thesis will investigate the role of white people and how they could have a suitable impact on systemic racism.

To match the focus of BEE and to provide a narrower scope to this thesis, a focus has been put on fighting anti-black racism within the Netherlands. As such, the people of color interviewed are part of BEE and have specific expertise of anti-black racism. Moreover, much of the literature referred to in the text and examples refer to anti-black racism.

## 1.4. PROJECT AIM

The wide public and political interest show a society in which systemic racism can be addressed. In which opportunities are opening for individuals, organizations and institutions to create impact within their old reproduction cycles. However, the question remains how manifestations are labelled as normal within the white dominant culture. As indicated in the design brief, see appendix A, this graduation will explore this question by a deep dive into:

**THE CONTEXT OF SYSTEMIC RACISM WITHIN THE  
NETHERLANDS IN ORDER TO FACILITATE A POSSIBILITY FOR  
WHITE PEOPLE TO BREAK WITH THEIR REPRODUCTION OF  
SYSTEMIC RACISM.**

## 1.5. READING GUIDE

This report will show the results of research into the context described above. figure 5, pictures a visual representation of this exploration. As such, the following chapter will indicate the approach used to structure and guide the graduation process. The approach shows the phases of this project describing the methods used to come to the results presented in this report. In which chapters 3, 4 and 5 show the results of the context exploration by providing an explanation of the systemic layer of racism and a representation of reproduction mechanisms through the societal levels. Based on these insights chapter 6 will state the design statement. The statement adds a mechanism and individual motivation to the intended goal of facilitating white people to break with reproduction of systemic racism. Chapter 7 will present an answer to the design statement via the showcase of the final design and its evaluation. Last, chapter 8 will finalize this project by concluding upon the total project with its results, limitations and recommendations.

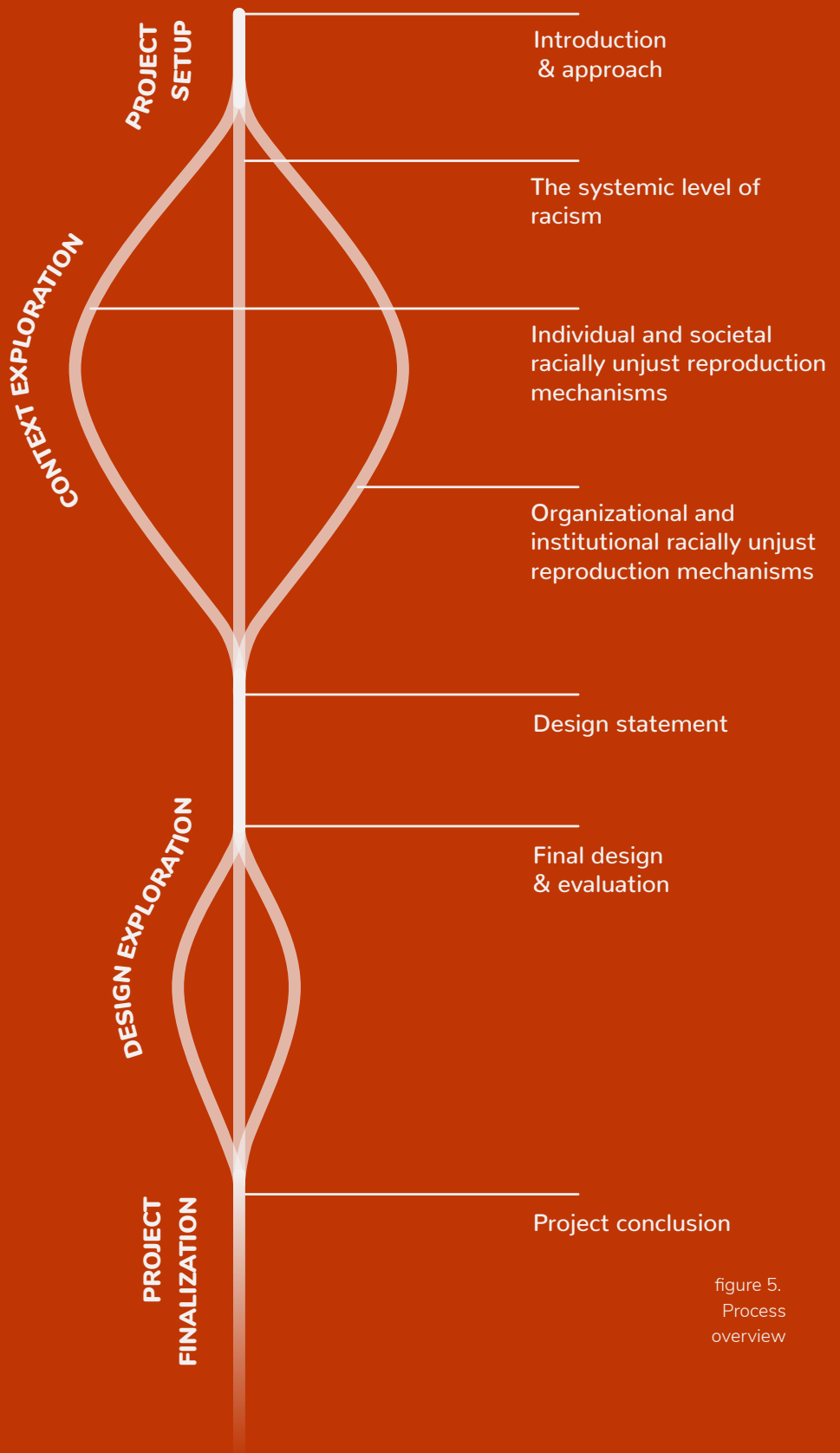
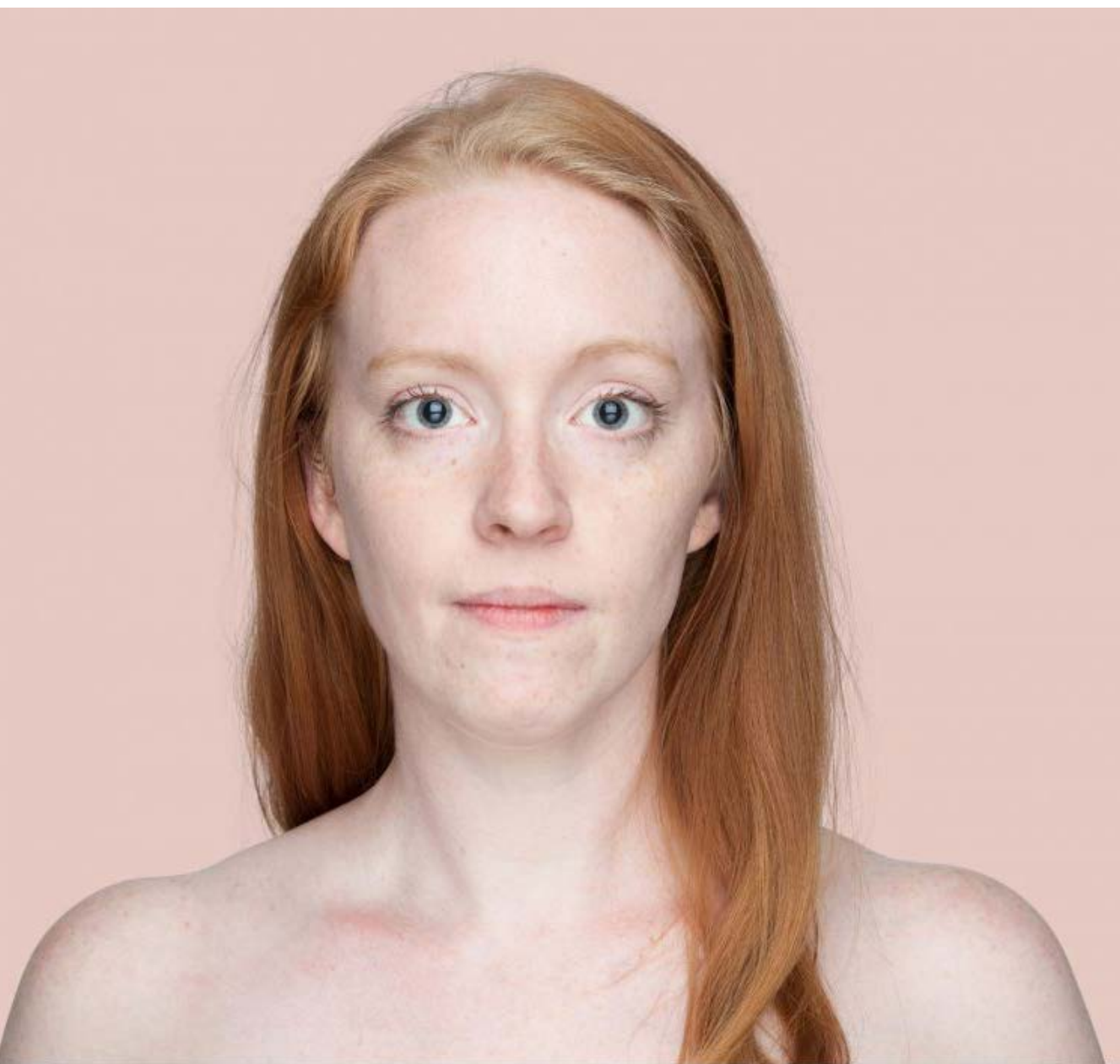


figure 5.  
Process  
overview



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# 2. APPROACH

This chapter will present the approach used in order to answer the project aim. First, it will illustrate the overall approach. Followed by an elaboration of its phases by describing its used methods. The results of the approach can be found throughout future chapters as was mentioned in the reading guide.

2.1. Overall approach

2.2. Approach per phase

## 2.1. OVERALL APPROACH

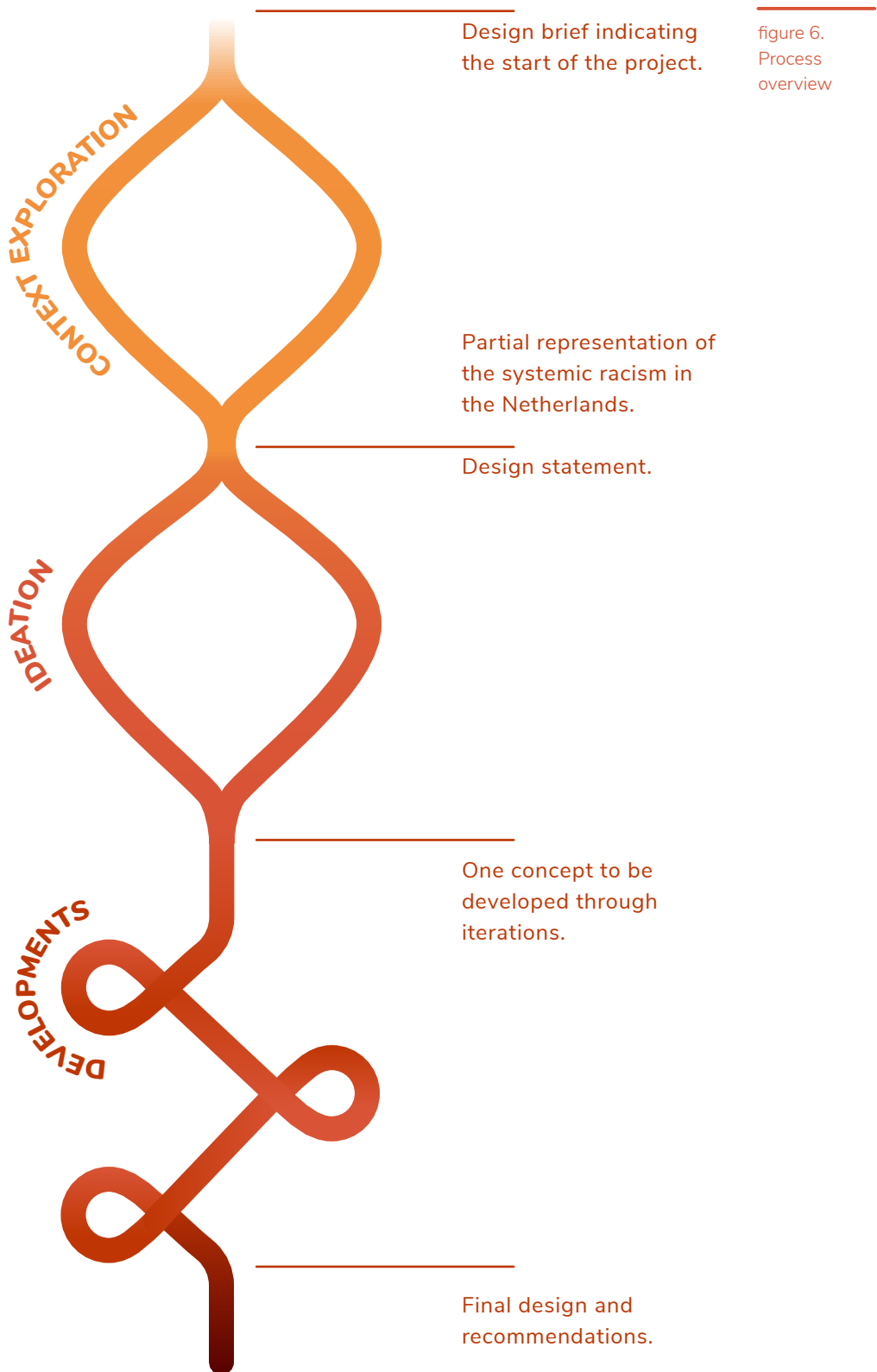
The project aim as stated in the introduction being:

The context of systemic racism within the Netherlands in order to facilitate a possibility for white people to break with their reproduction of systemic racism.

An iterative process was used based on the double diamond design method. As such, multiple phases of divergence and convergence have led to a final design. As can be seen in figure 6, it started by a context exploration. This diamond consisted of discovering the context in order to translate the insights into a partial representation of systemic racism in the Netherlands. To conclude, this phase a design statement is stated based on the described issues within the context.

The design statement describes the societal goal, desired individual behavior, individual motivation and a mechanism which should be implemented into the design. These components functioned as a goal throughout the ideation phase. Throughout this phase the interchanging activities of diverging and converging created many ideas and selection processes. Variety within the ideas was obtained by the execution of multiple design activities both individually and with peers. Followed by selecting the most promising ideas in regards to the design statement. To finalize the ideation phase one concept was created.

This concept was developed and detailed throughout the final phase. In which the concept experienced iterations based on interviews and user evaluations. Resulting in the final design presented in chapter 7. To conclude, this phase an user evaluation creates insights for the recommendations of the proposed design and the process in total.



## 2.2. APPROACH PER PHASE

### *Context exploration*

Especially in the United States, the topic of racism is studied widely. Dutch racism specifically, has gotten less attention from Dutch scholars. Few scientists have investigated the topic and compared racism between the United States and The Netherlands. Multiple differences appeared, for example the difference of identifying as black or white in the US, while in the Netherlands white is not seen as an identity. The focus of this graduation project is on changing the reproduction cycles of specifically white Dutch citizens. As such, the status of systemic racism within the US will not be discussed and literature used to explore the context is based on Dutch racism.

Steps of the Vision in Product Design method, created by Paul Hekkert and Matthijs van Dijk, inspired the process of context exploration. In order to get to the design statement that describes a future vision, the current context was explored via context factors (Hekkert & van Dijk, 2011). The context factors were gathered via literature resources and desk research of news articles, antiracism websites and books. Due to the great number of generated factors, they were first clustered to create an overview (Hekkert & van Dijk, 2011). Next, the clusters were used to form a narrative describing a representation of systemic racism in the Netherlands.

### *Creation of the design Statement*

The Social implication Design (SiD) method provided guidelines to create the design statement. Its guidelines are deemed suitable to this project, since the SiD method is meant supporting designers in coming to a desired social impact. In doing so the method wants the designer to benefit from the implicit influence the eventual product has on peoples' behavior in order to reach that desired social impact (Tromp & Hekkert, 2016). This point of view matches the goal of creating a design that supports individuals to break their reproduction cycle.

SiD stretches the importance of three elements to be included within a design statement. First, being the goal for the intervention on a society level. Second, being the desired individual behavior leading toward social change. Lastly, the third element should mention the individual motivation why people would want to change their behavior (Tromp & Hekkert, 2018). A fourth element

will be added from guidelines of the Vision in Product Design method. This element describes the mechanism of how the design intervention should lead to the desired behavior (Hekkert & van Dijk, 2009). The determination of the content for all the elements is shown in appendix B, showing combining research from the previous chapters, the research question and the search for the right words.

### *Ideation phase*

This final concept was not created out of thin air. It was an iterative process of falling and getting back up, while making decisions based on earlier research and the design statement. To stimulate the creative vibe needed for ideation two creative sessions were done with fellow design students, see figure 7. One group of students that have no particular affiliation to the subject and one with interest and knowledge about the topic. Both groups were invited to join a digital session during which partial solutions were generated. Their ideas have been clustered, see appendix C, providing a kickstart for individual brainstorming being inspired by their efforts.

With a bedroom wall covered in post-its, see figure 8, a C-box method was used to select promising ideas, based on elements of the design statement. Ideas within the promising area were judged with gut feeling, resulting in some ideas being further developed. The elaborated ideas were presented to de Randamie and judged based on relevance to BEE and design statement, see appendix D for the results. This selection resulted in two ideas being combined into a concept.

### *Development of the concept*

This preliminary concept was iterated upon based on interviews with another BEE member and de Randamie. After which feedback was asked from possible end users to finalize the concept. As such, seven users used a prototype of phase 1 for 3 days, followed by a conversation about their experiences of the first phase and thoughts on the variations of the second phase, see appendix E for the results. All of their experiences resulted in the final design.

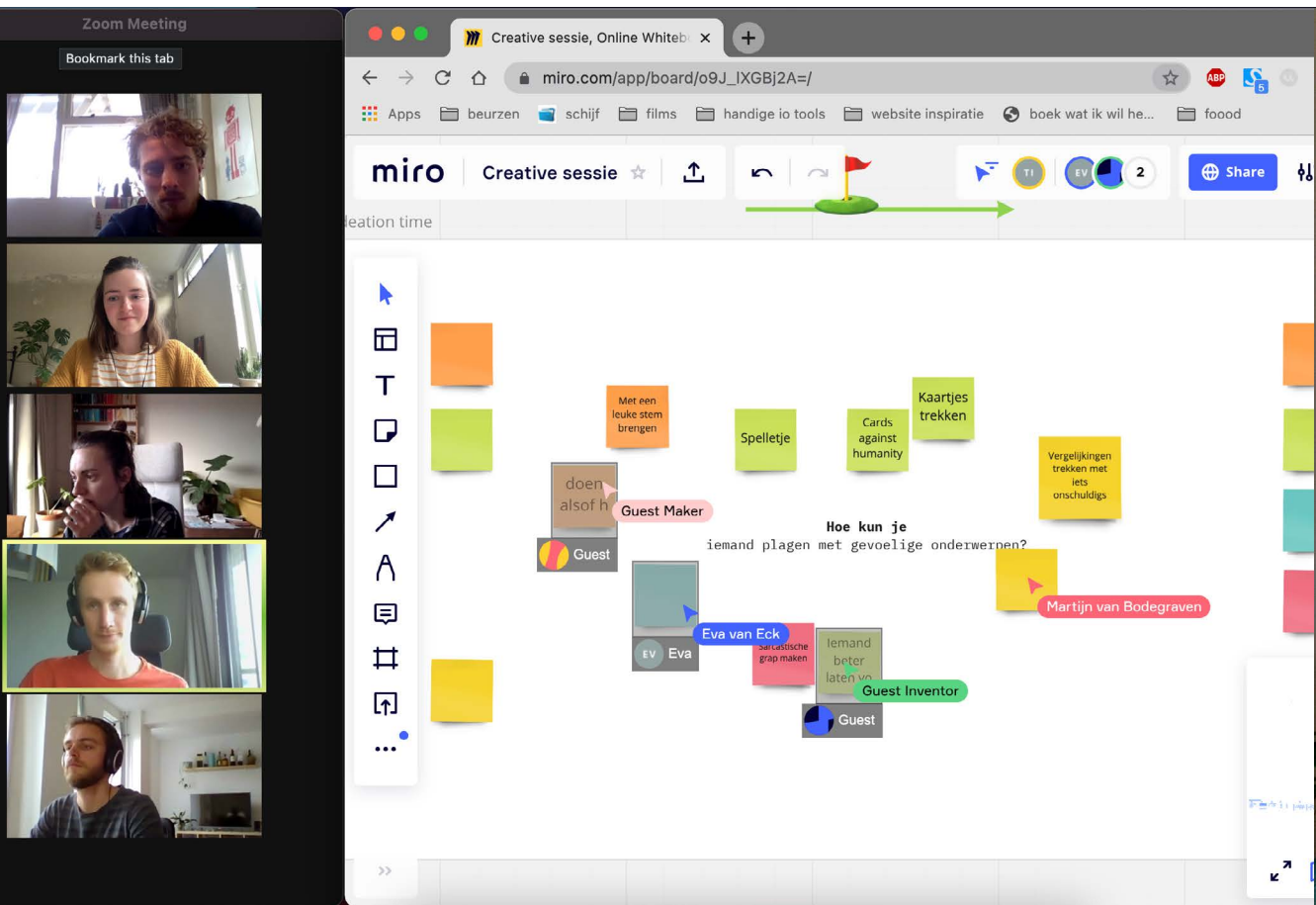


figure 7.  
Impression of  
one creative  
session.



figure 8.  
C-box at  
home.

# PART 2

# CON

watch her  
performance





# TEXT EXPLORATION

Nederland, Ik wil van je houden.  
Ik wil je land loven en je bressen bouwen.  
Na pandemie, schandalen en complottheorieën schijnt  
Dat de touwen die onze leving samen houden eigenlijk van zijde zijn.

10 jaar kies je hetzelfde  
Oude wijn in nieuwe zakken  
Oude mannen in nieuwe pakken  
Als duizenden slachtoffers op straat staan, zijn we pas om  
We herkennen racisme niet  
Al hangt het om onze nek en doet het ons de das om

We zetten de  
arme tegen de wand  
en dan de arme tegen de migrant  
En om BV Nederland te laten lopen  
Moet al het dorre hout verbrand

Nederland, Ik wil van je houden, maar ik ken nu alle hoeken van je leed  
Dus geloof me niet op m'n blauwe ogen, geloof mij op mijn boxbraids

Je activisme is zo leeg als je straten,  
we doen movements uit en aan als in pashokjes  
Ik scroll instagram en net als de gedupeerden van de toeslagenaffaire;  
Zie ik enkel zwartgelakte blokjes

Ik wil een poëtische brug zijn maar ik ga praten als brugman,  
Als er in het parlement nog steeds geen gezicht is waar ik me aan spiegelen kan  
Ik wil als Amanda Gorman verenigen in alliteratie, tricolon en synoniem  
Maar waarom moet ik constant een oceaan verder kijken om mezelf te kunnen  
zien.

Nederland, ik wil van je houden, dus laat me alsjeblieft op 17 maart zien  
dat je dat verdient.

Nederland ik wil van je houden  
door Zaire Krieger

(Dipsaus, 2021)



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# 3. THE SYSTEMIC LEVEL OF RACISM

As was indicated during the introduction, this project focuses on systemic racism. This chapter will look deeper into what this exactly entails. First, it will give a detailed description of what racism is. This is followed by a description of different levels of racism within multiple levels of society, which altogether indicates a social system. As such, this system is expressed through characteristics that influence societies behavior and its reproduction of racism.

- 3.1. Definition of Racism
- 3.2. Layers of racism
- 3.3. Systemic social structures
- 3.4. Conclusion

### 3.1. DEFINITION OF RACISM

The question of what racism is can be broadly described in two ways. Both entail manifestations with negative effects for groups in society, specifically within this scope against people of color (Essed & Hoving, 2014). However, both differ in the way they are constructed. One can be linked to the first official use of the term racism in 1930. Although before that time the term was already being used, it was unclear what behavior it accounted for. In 1930 it was used to refer to the theories on which Nazis based their prosecution of Jewish people. In 1937 a book called 'Race: A study in Modern Superstition' by Jacques Barzun widened the scope of racism beyond the attitude of Nazis towards Jewish people and included the assumption of white people being superior to people of color (Fredrickson, 2015). So one construct for racism is an ideology in which one group believes to be superior to another (van Dijk, 1993).

While within the other, racism is a product of power and prejudice (Essed & Hoving, 2014). In which power is the imbalanced relationship between groups within society (Garner, 2017). One group is placed below another within the social hierarchy based on categorization (Essed & Hoving, 2014). Categorization itself happens automatically during social interactions and is a way of making distinctions between one group and another (Garner, 2017). Within racism these distinctions are based on skin color, origin, nationality or ethnicity (Rijksoverheid, 2020). In addition to categorization, prejudices are linked to these same distinctive characteristics but attach, in the case of people of color, negative characteristics to them. These prejudices influence somebody's social interaction with other people. What is attached to a property has developed throughout time and is based on history, traditions and culture (Essed & Hoving, 2014). Both power relations and prejudices are expressed during social interactions resulting in a treatment that is not only different, but unjustified.

Expressions that come to mind might be explicit manifestations of racism like verbal abuse, deliberate segregation or violence (Garner, 2017). This can be observed at an individual level with for example a white patient refusing care from a black nurse. People can admit to incidents of racism that have happened. However, history seems to repeat itself when putting all incidents together. As such, racism can be seen as a system and racially unjust manifestations are linked to a system of power and prejudice (van Dijk, 1993).

## 3.2. LAYERS OF RACISM

This subsection will build upon the explanation of racism as a product from systemic power and prejudice. There are different levels in society where various forms of racism are expressed. In this subsection systemic racism, institutional racism and everyday racism will be elaborated upon.

### *Systemic racism*

The systemic part refers to the reproduction of racism via both dominant group structures together with cultural and institutional processes that are present in society (Essed & Hoving, 2014; Griffith., et al, 2007; Nzume, 2017). In other words, systemic racism is about: norms, values, rules, attitudes and behavior that results in negative effects for groups regarded as different (Van Dijk, 1993). These social structures are institutionalized as accepted and repetitive social behaviors that are passed on from generation to generation (Greenwood et al. , 2008; Scott, 2013). This results in people from the dominant culture often not recognizing racist manifestations. Their behavior is seen as normal within these dominant group structures and processes that exclude groups in society (Essed & Hoving, 2014).

Brandt identified these structures and processes being embedded in individuals, organizations and institutions. For which he specified racial behaviors within organizations and institutions as institutional racism (Brandt, 1989). While Essed has specified manifestations of racism by individuals during their routine as everyday racism (Schaap & Essed, 2017).

### *Institutional racism*

As was mentioned above Brandt investigated manifestations of racism within organizations and institutions (Brandt, 1989). Within his framework an organization is physical like a school, while an institution has a societal purpose, like education. Both are closely related because an institution can have physical elements, for example the law has courts to rule the law (Nzume , 2017). Within organizations and institutions manifestations of racism are embedded into their rules, customs, regulations, processes and products which are expressed on three levels within their systems and social structures. One is the extraorganizational level in which the relationship organizations and institutions have to the rest of society. This includes the relation to other organizations and

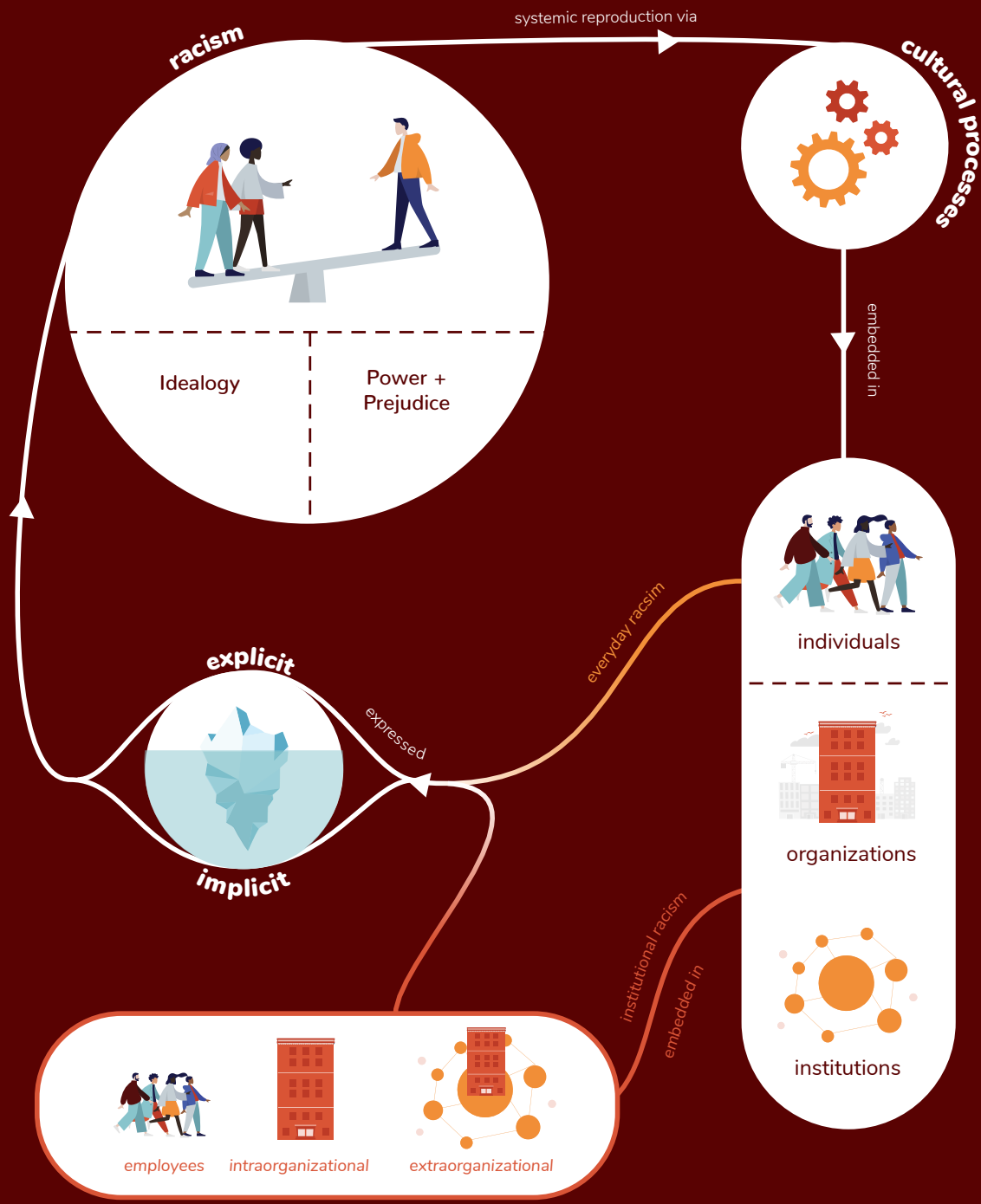
institutions. The second is the intraorganizational level within an organizations' culture. This includes policies, procedures, relations between employees and power relations (Brandt, 1989; Griffith et al. , 2007). The third one is about individuals and their daily interactions within the organizations' culture (Essed, 1991).

### *Everyday racism*

This form of racism has been identified by Essed and observes the individual expressions of racism in a wider context than the organizations' culture. This is about manifestations within the routines people enact during social interactions. Systemic manifestations of cultural and institutional processes have been translated into individual norms and values (Schaap & Essed, 2017). People both unconsciously and consciously decide how to interact with one another. The expressions during those interactions are called microaggressions (Schaap & Essed, 2017).

This subsection clarifies that manifestations of racism are expressed and embedded in multiple levels of society, see figure 9. The manifestations are accepted and institutionalized as normal within the dominant group. Their behavior is influenced by the social system and reproduced during social interactions. As a result, the processes in which power relations and prejudices are embedded continue to exist which results in manifestations of racism that remain to be reproduced.

figure 9.  
Layers of racism.



### 3.3. SYSTEMIC SOCIAL STRUCTURES

This reproduction of the norm is not only applicable for systemic racism. Josina Vink describes a reproduction loop of social structures via the repeated processes of reinforcement and reproduction. Reinforcement describes the effect of continuous influence of peoples' actions and thoughts within the system. This is followed by the reproduction of aforementioned structures by enactment without people's awareness (Vink, 2019). As such, a loop is formed that maintains a norm of what is considered appropriate behavior within society (Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

Within this reproduction loop five tensions are characterized as: dis/abling, in/forming, un/shared, un/inhabited, in/visible. The /slash indicates that both the elements can be active at the same time (Vink, 2019). In short, these tensions allow the people that are part of social structure the following:

- dis/abling: By providing structure and guidance of what is the norm, while at the same time it allows for categorizing people as abnormal.
- in/forming: Social structures inform people on how to behave but people can also form social structures themselves.
- un/shared: People can share the same system but still have different views of appropriate behavior due to balancing multiple structures at the same time
- un/inhabited: Social structures are objective truths that are untouchable, nevertheless people bring the structure to life by executing them.
- in/visible: Influential elements are on the one hand invisible and being perceived as normal, while on the other hand they are expressed into physical visible elements which also influences people to behave accordingly (Vink, 2019).

The reproduction loop and its characteristics, as visualized in figure 10 describe a basic understanding of the systemic social structure. This understanding can be projected onto the topic of systemic racism. This system disables people of color by categorizing them as abnormal while enabling a structure describing the norm of the white dominant culture. By informing them on how to behave during everyday social interactions (van Dijk, 1993). White people inhabit the social structures by living by this information without consciousness. The processes, routines and practices they enact are invisible and make it difficult for people of the dominant structures to realize they are reproducing manifestation of racism.



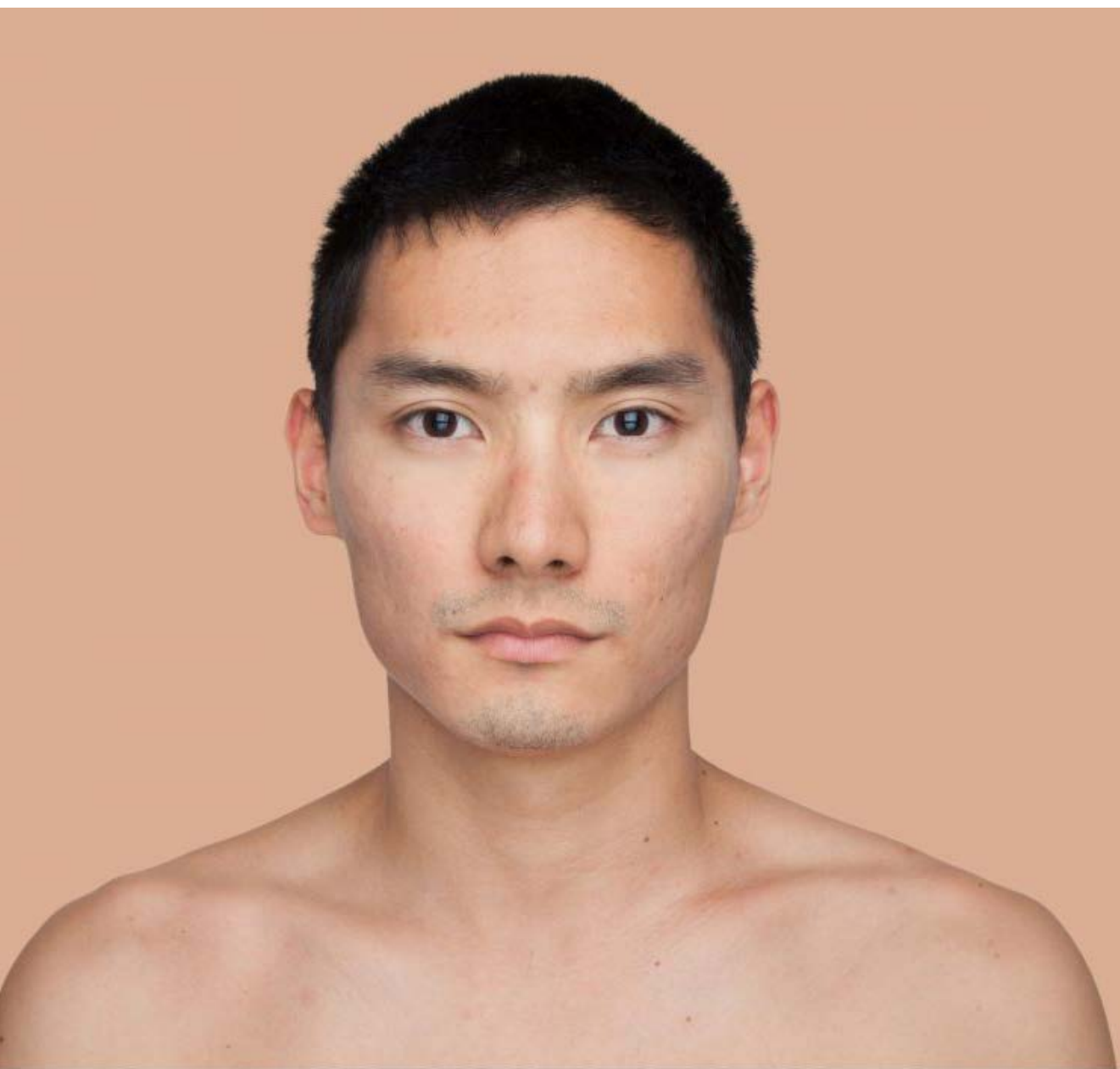
figure 10.  
Reproduction  
cycle with its  
tensions.



### 3.4. CONCLUSION

As has become clear during this chapter manifestations of racism are expressed on the multiple levels of individuals, organizations and institutions. People are influenced by the social system on how to behave, while reproducing the manifestations of racism during social interactions. As such, a general reproduction loop has been indicated within systemic racism and overlaps multiple levels of racism. Different tensions within this loop make it difficult for people from the dominant structure to get a grasp on their own reproduction cycle. Looking at the project brief this project focuses on the reproduction of systemic racism by white Dutch citizens. As an exploration within this scope, the next chapter will look into the individual mechanisms of reinforcement and reproduction.





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# 4. INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETAL RACIALLY UNJUST REPRODUCTION MECHANISMS

Chapter 3 illustrated systemic racism happening on individual, organizational and institutional levels within society. Within this chapter the individual level is explored via the approach mentioned in chapter two. Describing exploration via clustering factors retrieved from literature review and desk research. This chapter will discuss the reinforcement of reproduction by Dutch white citizens and its mechanism for maintaining this social structure. For which the results have been divided into three main categories; self perception, defense mechanisms and implicit judgement. A visual representation being a summary of the clusters will describe how Dutch white citizens continue to reproduce manifestations of racism.

- 4.1. Self perception
- 4.2. Defense Mechanisms
- 4.3. Implicit judgement
- 4.4. Conclusions

## 4.1. SELF PERCEPTION

As a first category this subsection will dive into what it means for people to be a Dutch citizen with two clusters, see figure 11. Looking back at the tensions within a social structure described by Vink, this relates to the dis/abling, in/forming and un/shared tensions. Within the reinforcement process the first cluster will illustrate what white Dutch people share as the perceived behavioral norm as a Dutch citizen. Showing how this perception is informed by the perception of the role of the Netherlands within the world. While the second cluster will shed a light on the reproduction cycle by illustrating white people's belief that they are enacting acceptable behavior.

### *Old habits die hard*

The dominant group in Dutch society sees themselves as tolerant, being another way of saying open and caring (Ghorashi, 2014). Many Dutch people are proud of being part of a society from a small country that has a big contribution to the world (Kaaaitheater, 2018). Like, the Netherlands being a frontrunner on fighting freedom of women, LHBTQ marriage and abortion policies. People believe the country's economy is healthy enough to support people in distress. People see the Netherlands as a country that welcomes people in need. This existing self image of being openminded and progressive is not a match with the concept of racism (Ghorashi, 2014; Kleczewski, 2020).

Racism became a taboo in the Netherlands after World War II (Wekker, 2014). Consequently, race was no longer part of Dutch education or science while at the same time language barely developed words connected to racism (Jouwe, 2015). The ban of the concept of race was assumed to stop racism from appearing within Dutch society. As such, influencing the behavior of citizens by not talking about racism anymore based on a popular belief was that when people talk about racism, it would lead to racism (Essed, 1984). In other words, it became an unspoken rule not to talk about racism or skin color in order to prevent racism in the Netherlands (Hondius, 2014).

### *I am what I think and know*

75% of the Dutch population indicates not to have a problem with colleagues with another ethnicity (Van den Broek, 2014). This is an enactment of the earlier described self perception of a Dutch

citizen which is to be tolerant, because racism is morally wrong. It shows how people believe that their actions, thoughts and opinions reflect their moral beliefs. This results in Dutch people believing that they are doing good (Essed, 1984). Which can be seen as an indication of them being unaware of their reproduction of racist manifestations. They believe they are not executing manifestations of racism on the basis of them consciously thinking of racism as unacceptable.



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figure 11.  
Self  
perception.

## 4.2. DEFENSE MECHANISMS

The ignorance of white people about their own racially unjust manifestations is protected by defense mechanisms as described within this category consisting of two clusters. See figure 12 for the main insights. The first cluster highlights the un/informing and dis/abling character of the reinforcement process. In which, white people can stay uninformed and ignorant about the manifestations of racism. In addition, the second cluster highlights the dis/abling factor during reproduction. In which the higher threshold and belief in good intention of white people contributes to stay blindsided towards other perspectives of racially unjust manifestations. Both clusters contribute to the perception of white people of their behavior being without manifestations of racism.

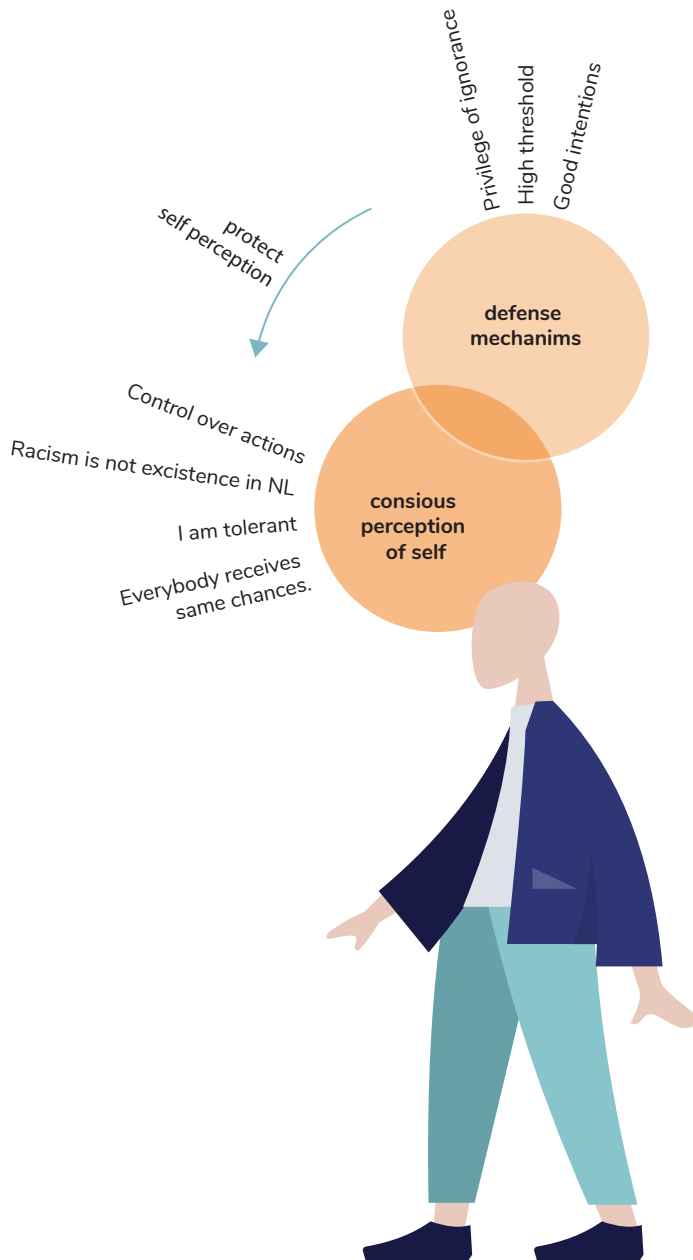
### *Ignorance is bliss*

As was mentioned before, it became an unspoken rule in the Netherlands not to talk about racism or skin color as a method to prevent racism (Hondius, 2014). This resulted in a generation with little awareness of the topic (Essed, 1984). In addition, white people also lack the need to broaden their knowledge, since they are never the victim of racism. As a consequence, it becomes unnecessary to protect themselves by recognizing manifestations of racism and understanding how it works and feels (Kleczewski, 2020). If not, the opposite, because expanding their understanding of racist manifestations would harm their own perception of not being a racist.

In addition, people unconsciously select what they do and do not want to see (Van den Broek, 2014). In a similar manner people interpret perspectives to match their own point of view. In the case of Dutch citizens their point of view being their behavior without racially unjust manifestations. In order to protect this view they give meaning to a situation based on what they want to see, instead of taking the whole context into consideration (Van den Broek, 2014; Staats, et al. 2015). For example, successful black people, like Obama becoming president of the United States, becomes a reason to think the suffering of black people can not be that bad. Moreover, Dutch people refer to people of color, as people with a little bit of color (*mensen met een kleurtje*) making the differences smaller and making racial problems smaller. As a result, white people develop a higher threshold for racist incidents (Carter & Murphy, 2015). A report published by The Netherlands Institute



figure 12.  
Defense  
mechanisms.



for Social Research on perceived discrimination in the Netherlands, mentioned that 75 percent of the public believed that victims label a situation as being racist too quickly (Andriessen, et al. , 2020). This shows that white people have a higher threshold for calling out racism, which also protects them against being called a racist themselves (Carter & Murphy, 2015). Both ignorance and their higher threshold contribute to white people perceiving an equal world because they are white (Kleczewski, 2020).

### *The road to hell is paved with good intentions*

During enactment of these higher thresholds and ignorance a situation within the Netherlands is only called out as racist, when it involves explicit intent to hurt somebody based on ideological beliefs (Essed & Hoving, 2014). Whenever a manifestation is subtle, it does not receive the same repercussion. Accusations of such implicit racism are often neutralized. Denial is the standard Dutch response when a remark is called out as racist. Meaning it might come across as such but it was not meant like that (Kaaitheter, 2018). Instead, it was meant rather jokingly (Hondius, 2014). For example, when a Dutch talk show sidekick, Johan Derksen, said that “Simons (a black female politician) would run through the country as proud as a monkey” in a response about a decision made about Black Pete. For which he later explained that it was not his intention to hurt her, but he was not speaking with his mind (Van den Blanken, 2016). Denying the impact of a remark while putting focus on the intent creates distance between the violence of the remark and the speaker. Which is another defense mechanism of the speaker to avoid confrontation about the disparity between their actions and their tolerant self identity.

## 4.3. IMPLICIT JUDGEMENT

This last category of individual reproduction mechanisms investigates implicit judgements as part of the reinforcement and reproduction process. See figure 13 for the main takeaways of the following two clusters. In which the first cluster will set out how over time the power element of racism has developed over time in the Netherlands. Resulting in a social hierarchy within Dutch society with white citizens at the top. While this hierarchy is protected by the reinforcement and reproduction of prejudices through implicit judgements. In which people of color are labeled as the out-group attributing negative characteristics. Whilst white Dutch citizens are the in-group as the norm and accompanied by positive characteristics. Which are unconsciously enacted and reproduced by white people during social interactions.

### *Birds of a feather flock together*

The population in the Netherlands was predominantly white until 1940. Some people from Suriname had migrated to the Netherlands in the 1920s but those were mostly elite or students (Essed, 1991). They migrated into a white population, which still had a mindset and a system dating from colonial times. Dutch culture was considered higher on the ladder of social hierarchy (Essed, 1984). A belief which during the 19th century was as common as believing in the existence of gravity (Jouwe, 2015).

Due to experienced demographic shifts, white Dutch citizens were afraid to lose their privileges, safety, cultural identity and way of living (Andriessen et al., 2020). This fear was fed by the perception that Dutch culture belonged to the original, white, Dutch citizens. Making the dominant Dutch citizens feel uneasy with possible dangers of other cultures and changes 'others' would bring (Ghorashi, 2014). Moreover, the white Dutch citizens were feeling as if they were losing authority in their own society (Jennissen et al, 2018). Resulting into a fear and disapproval of immigration and multiculturalism (Essed & Hoving, 2014).

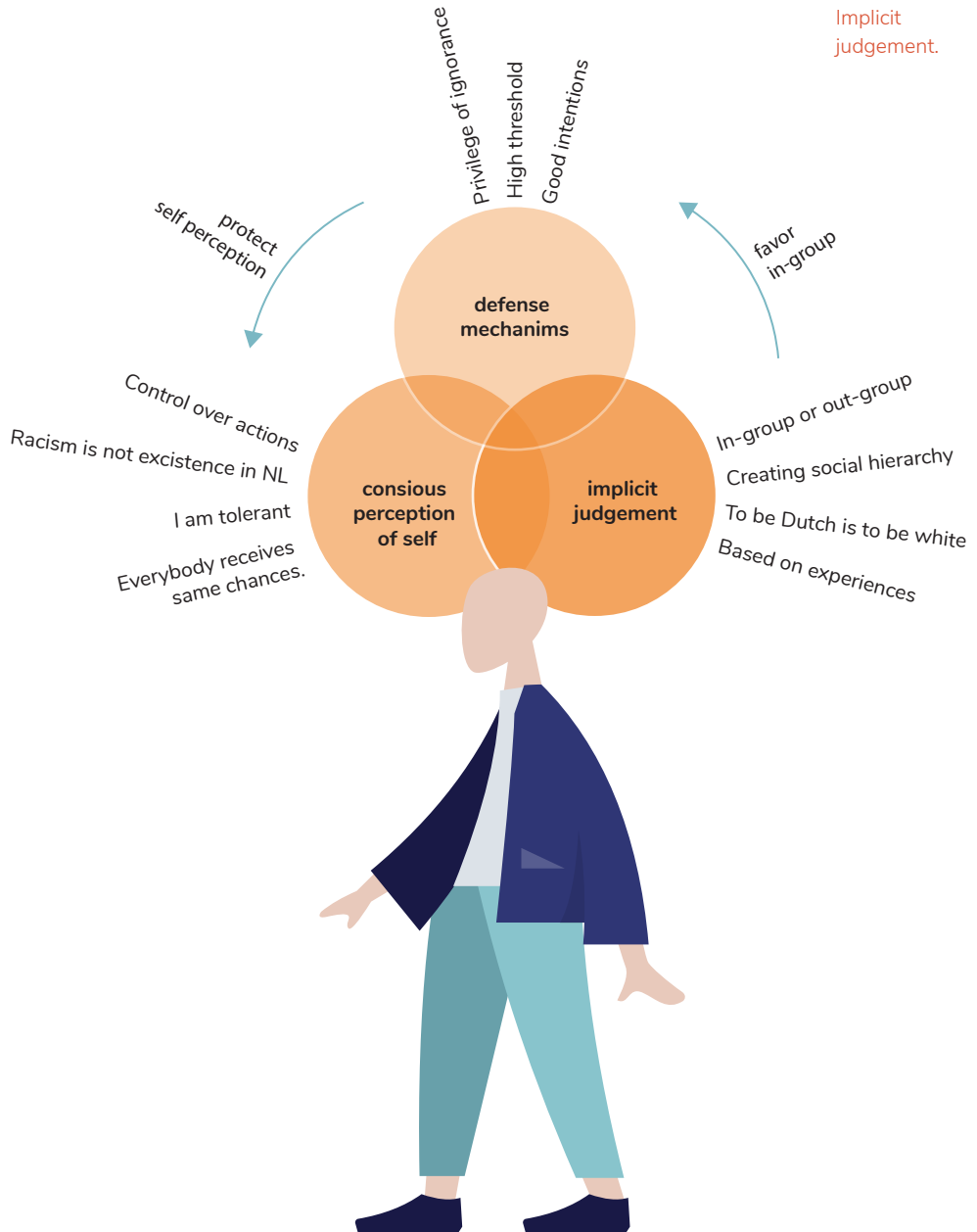
When a group is lower on this social hierarchy, they are perceived further from the Dutch norm and are more often stereotyped (Andriessen et al., 2020). As one example, before 9/11 in 2001 Surinam Dutch were at the bottom of Dutch social hierarchy and were seen as troubling within society (Jones, 2012). After 9/11 the focus shifted to people who were categorized as Islamic,

resulting in Turkish and Moroccan Dutch becoming the focal point of negative attention at the bottom of the hierarchy (Jones, 2012, Weiner, 2014). Surinam Dutch were still not seen as part of Dutch culture but were mentioned as an integrated group (Jones, 2012). This example illustrates how social hierarchy can change over time. But it also shows how the weight attributed to an aspect, in this case wearing a hijab, is influenced by context. However, both can change, the people staying at the top determining the weight attributed to an aspect, as of now remain Dutch white citizens.

To maintain this power relation, people have different prejudices towards people of color or similar white people. Therefore, people from colonies were labeled as 'others', based on appearance, ethnicity and culture (Essed, 1984). Even though some post colonial citizens became official Dutch citizens, this labeling of 'others' did not change for white Dutch citizens. Most white Dutch citizens still assign Dutch nationality to most white people they encounter in the Netherlands (Weiner, 2014). For example, a white cashier would speak Dutch to a white Canadian exchange student, assuming they will be Dutch. In contrast to a Dutch citizen of color, who is not categorized as such (Jones, 2012, 22). Over time a connection has been made that to be European or Dutch, you have to be white (Essed & Trienekens, 2008). To belong to the norm, you have to be white.

In contrast to the assigned negative characteristics towards people of color, once you belong to the norm you will be protected. From the age of four children start to assign positive characteristics to their own group, as being funnier and smarter, but they are also more willing to help their own group (HUMAN, 2020). Likewise, people first defend members within their own group, before defending others (Carter & Murphy, 2015). As such, white people will first defend their own group, by explaining to the victim that a white person did not mean it that way. Which protects their perception of Dutch people not enacting racist manifestation and the Netherlands staying a tolerant country.

figure 13.  
Implicit  
judgement.



### *Judging a book on its cover.*

The reinforcement and reproduction of is maintained by the creation of implicit judgements, guiding people to assign positive or negative characteristics to what they perceive. People determine whether they like or dislike something via two cognitive systems. System one is often unconscious, rapid and intuitive but sensitive to mistakes. System two is slower and reflective, less sensitive for mistakes. The formation of implicit biases happens through system one (Jolls & Sunstein, 2006). In which we tend to label people based on first impressions. Assigning qualities to someone based on their perceived value (Essed & Trienekens, 2008).

Starting at a young age we learn about the world by looking around us. For example, seeing who in society holds power and who is less valued as a reinforcement of the social hierarchy. During education they see examples of intelligence being white, heros being white (Bergman, 2016). Besides processing what we see around us, we also assign qualities to that information (Essed & Trienekens, 2008). When over a period of time similar connections are made between aspects, perceived values and qualities, patterns will emerge between them (Staats et al., 2015). As can be seen in the documentary *Wit is ook een kleur* (White is also a color) from Sunny Bergman. In which she interviewed 30 children between four and seven years old. She asked them to point out who is most smart, who is the boss and who is bad. The children had to choose from a range of children with different skin colors or between a white and colored doll, see figures 14, 15 and 16. 75% of all the children pointed to the white doll as smartest and expected the black doll to be most bad and receive most punishment (Bergman, 2016).

These patterns create expectations to which we respond and take action (Staats et al., 2015). When there is a general assumption that black people are bad, white people perceive a higher level of unsafety within more diverse neighborhoods (Jennissen, et al. 2018). In response, they check their belongings, when black people are near. Or take the example of employees pursuing black people in shops to prevent them from stealing (Hondius, 2014). The formation and activation happens automatically and without our conscious beliefs. The effects it has on personal behavior and thoughts is something no one can escape. Showing a relation between the information received within the reinforcement process and the actions causing a reproduction.



figure 14.  
Child gets asked, 'Who is the boss?' Response is, 'Because he is smartest.' From documentary, Wit is ook een kleur.



figure 15.  
Child gets asked, 'Which doll is smartest?' Response is, 'the white'. From documentary, Wit is ook een kleur.



figure 16.  
Child gets asked, 'Which skin color do people find more beautiful?' Response is, 'This, that is real skin color.' From documentary, Wit is ook een kleur.

## 4.4. CONCLUSIONS

Three categories have been identified describing the result of exploring individual reproduction mechanisms of racism within white Dutch citizens. As such, the first category influences people's behavior during the reinforcement process via the shared perception of acceptable behavior as a Dutch citizen. Which has reproduced within the individual perception of racism being morally wrong and a taboo to be discussed. This has created a generation amongst the dominant culture with little awareness about racist manifestations within their society and their own actions and fears of being called a racist. White people endorse this by believing to control their actions. Whilst the contrary can be true they defend their perception of an equal society and personal treatment.

The second category describes unconscious defense mechanisms to protect the individual perception. As such, the dis/abling character supports white people to only see their norm. They interpret situations and experiences from their own norm allowing them to remain ignorant to knowledge about racism or other perspectives towards racially unjust mechanisms. Whenever another perspective tries bursting the bubble and marks a situation as racist. A higher threshold of manifestations of racism and a good intention make all accusations go away. Thanks to these defense mechanisms the reproduction of manifestations of racism of white people remains invisible to them.

The third category illustrates how people are influenced during the reinforcement process. Through experiences and by simply looking around their prejudice align to the norm within their social group. Based on this information people categorize others assigning positive or negative characteristics based on interpreting skin color, cultural expression and origin. Within Dutch society the impression is created that white people are both the norm and the top of the social hierarchy. Whomever matches the prescriptions of this Dutch norm, will belong to the in-group, which will receive positive attributes and will be defended. Whomever is labeled as the 'other' will be the out-group and placed lower on the social hierarchy by assigned negative attributions. As such, white people maintain at the top of the hierarchy which allows them to stay ignorant of their racially unjust manifestations and determine the norm.



As a consequence of these three categories and their clusters, white people remain to reproduce manifestations of racism. They do not intend to execute manifestations of racism but it is being reinforced by a social structure that labels their manifestations as normal. Without their knowledge they reproduce the same social structures during social interactions. As was discussed in chapter 3, reinforcement and reproduction is happening at different levels in society. Therefore, the following chapter will look into the level of organizations and institutions.



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# 5. ORGANIZATIONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL RACIALLY UNJUST REPRODUCTION MECHANISMS

Chapter 3 illustrated systemic racism happening on different levels within society. Within chapter 4, the individual level was explored and this chapter will explore the organizational and institutional levels via the approach mentioned in chapter two. As such, this context has been explored via clustering factors retrieved from literature review and desk research. This chapter will discuss the reinforcement of reproduction within organizations and the effects within society. Therefore, three categories will be discussed; influence is power, creating information is power and exclusion as input. Together they will interconnect the three levels of institutional racism by showing multiple reinforcement and reproduction loops.

- 5.1. Influence is power
- 5.2. Creating information is power
- 5.3. Exclusion as input
- 5.4. Conclusions

## 5.1. INFLUENCE IS POWER

This category returns to the earlier mentioned levels of institutional racism by placing individual mechanisms within the social structure of an organization or institute. See figure 17 for a visualization of these levels. Therefore, it will demonstrate how the in/formative tension is embedded within the culture of an organization or institute. And how organizations have the ability to influence the reinforcement process via in/visible elements, which individuals enact during their professional social interaction. While the last level will illustrate how the influence of an organization reaches beyond internal communications when their external relations are taken into account.

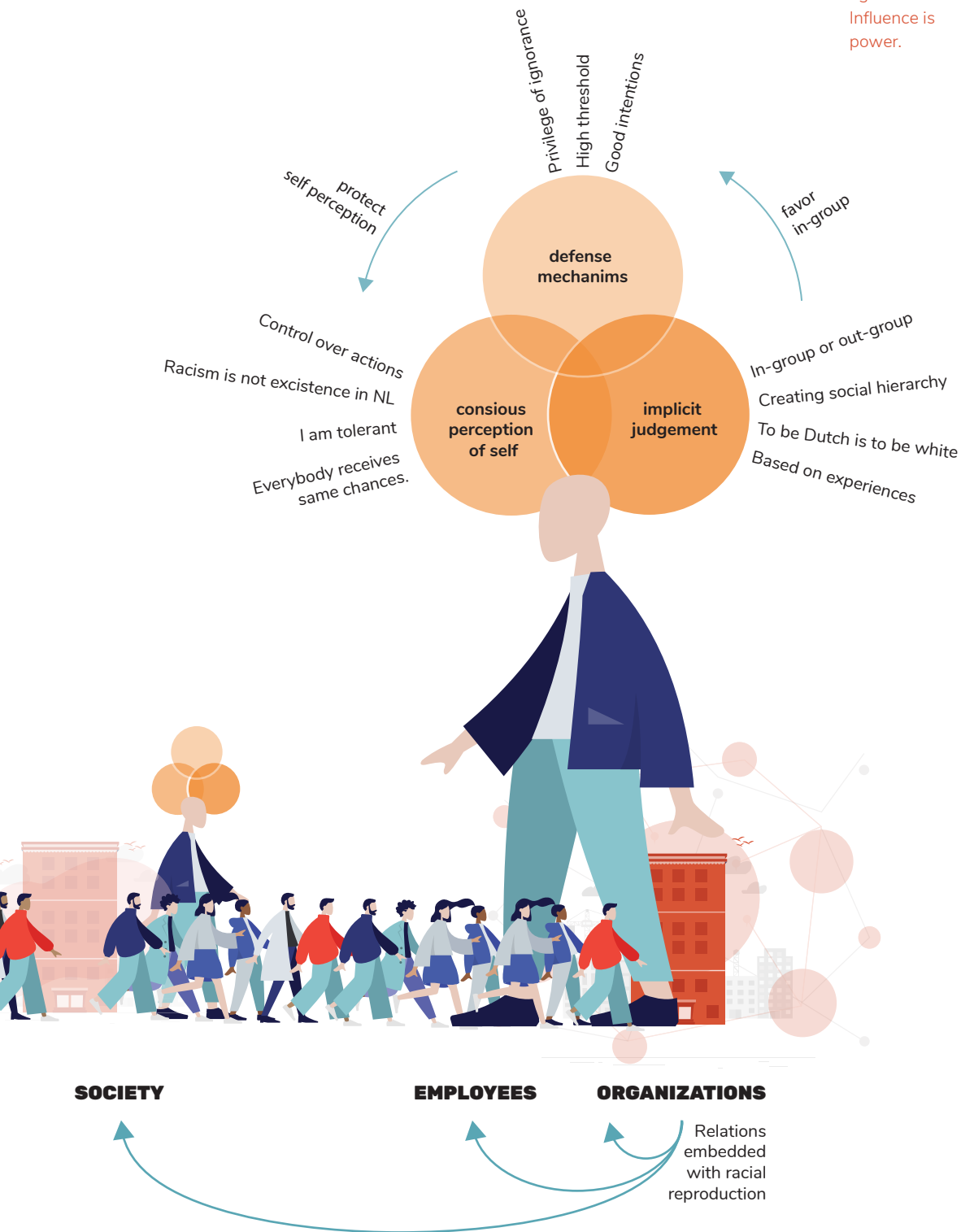
### *No person is an island*

As was mentioned in chapter 3, racism is embedded in individuals, organizations and institutions. Brandt had identified three levels on which racism is ingrained within these organizations and institutions. First, being at the individual level, how racism operates through beliefs and behaviors of employees. These individual reproduction mechanisms are already explored in chapter 4 but emphasis is put on their enactment during professional social interactions (Brandt, 1989; Griffith et al., 2007). The other two levels of institutional racism from Griffith place these individual mechanisms within the organizational or institutional social structure.

The second level is intraorganizational, meaning that it focuses on racism within an organization's culture. This includes policies, procedures, relations between employees and power relations (Brandt, 1989; Griffith et al., 2007). A power relation can be expressed by numbers. Both majority and minority employees have racioethnic markers. Similar to what was described in, birds of the same flock flock together, majority employees determine what the norm is. As such, minority employees' markers stand out, because they seem to deviate from what is considered to be the norm within the organization. For example, talking with a Surinam accent and people start to reply by imitating a Surinam accent, thinking it is funny. When minority employees get categorized upon these differences at work, they most likely swallow it. Due to their lower position in the social hierarchy of society caused by their skin color they have less ground to stand on (Siebers, 2009).



figure 17.  
Influence is  
power.



In addition, power is present when a person can shape or influence somebody else's behavior and thoughts (Came & Griffith, 2018). On a more visible level this is expressed when deciding what appears on the agenda, what is seen as a priority and how situations are framed. For example, when inclusivity is not seen as a priority, organizations can hide behind a diversity quota. By having few employees of color they appear to be taking responsibility, while the relationship between coworkers can still be hostile to people of color. Combined with the information from chapter 3, this power is expressed via in/visible elements which are able to influence the reinforcement of social structures.

Lastly, the third level is extraorganizational, being the relation of the organization to society or another organization and vice versa (Brandt, 1989; Griffith et al., 2007). For example, research showed that employment agencies have accepted multiple requests from partners as: don't send us Turkish or Surinamese workers (Hondius, 2020). It shows how external organizations can also play a role within the reinforcement and reproduction of a social structure (Came & Griffith, 2018).

## 5.2. CREATING INFORMATION IS POWER

Within this category the relation between the in/formative and in/visible tensions are discussed between organizations and society. As such, the cluster will describe how visible elements have been created by organizations, which influence the perception upon black people within society. However, the creation of such elements are the organizations reproducing their own norm. See figure 19 for a visualization of the main takeaways.

### *Beauty in the eye of the white beholder*

During colonial time, knowledge about the 'other' was transferred to citizens in the metropole via stories of colonizers. In those stories the 'others' were depicted as highly sexual barbarians. This perspective was translated into pictures and illustrations on colonial products, like soap and coffee (Wekker, 2016). In addition, also art, music and literature ascribed unsuited characteristics to African people. Black people were portrayed as servants within family portraits, for example see figure 18 (Weiner, 2014). All of



figure 18.  
Painting from  
Jan Mijtens  
in 1668 of  
Margaretha  
van  
Raephorst,  
wife of  
Cornelis  
Tromp

the above examples are visible elements of how people would be informed about the perception about black people during reinforcement.

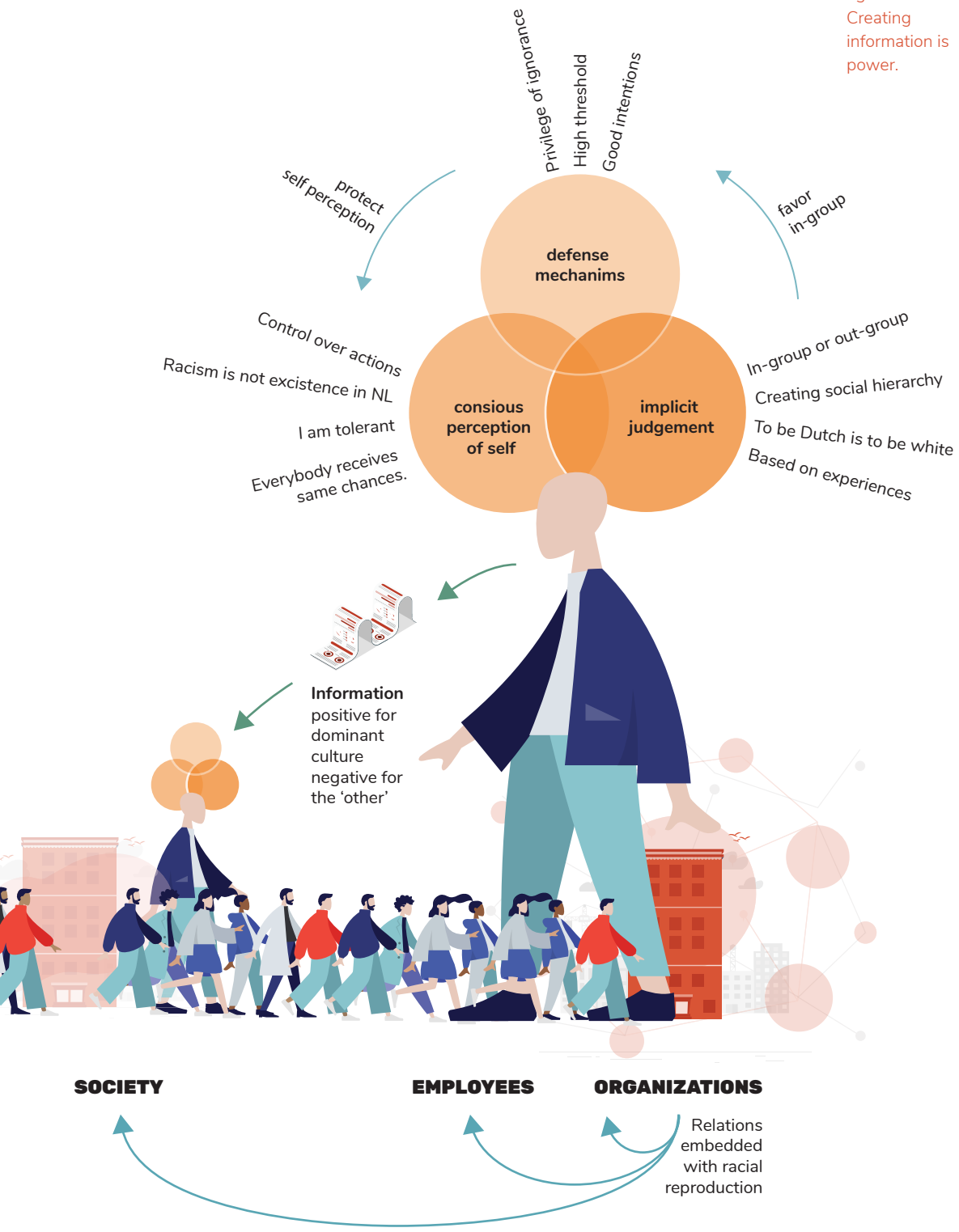
This perception did not change after trading enslaved people was made illegal in the Netherlands, in 1814 (Jouwe, 2015). For example, during the transition to mass education in the 19th century, many dictionaries and children's books made connections between blackness and evil. They were full of stereotypes depicting black people as unhygienic, superstitious and cannibalistic (Weiner, 2014). After the second world war, when racism became a taboo, it did not change either. If any change it is that racist manifestations have gotten more implicit and as such less visible. Any racist dimension within media reports of violent incidents between people of color and white people was utterly denied (Essed & Hoving, 2014). This denial of manifestations of racism was discussed before, in 4.2 defense mechanism. But apparently the same mechanism is applicable to organizations.

Currently, Dutch citizens are mainly informed in their perception of Africa via NGO's campaigns of NGO. In which white people are supposed to save Africa (Meelker & Soudagar, 2021). These associations are being confirmed on a daily basis by information created by the media (Van den Broek, 2014). So on one hand white people are portrayed to be heroes. On the other hand, Antillean, Surinam and African Dutch are often presented as criminal, lazy, uncivilized, unhygienic and emphasis is put on their body and origin (Weiner, 2014). Citizens are unconsciously interacting with and processing these images, while living their lives. In other words, the input citizens receive as information during reinforcement is actually a reproduction by organizations, which can because of their content be reproduction of racism.





figure 19.  
Creating  
information is  
power.



### 5.3. EXCLUSION AS INPUT

Within this category a link is created between the effects of reproduction as the information perceived during reinforcement. As such, white people higher in the social hierarchy perceive the lower position of people of color and assume they deserved to be there. An assumption made from their perception of an equal world. In which the assumption also confirms the perception of people of color creating a basis again for their behavior towards people of color. See figure 20 for the addition of this loop to the rest of the information. Creating a reproduction system with white people at the top of the social hierarchy.

Every person is the architect of their destiny.

Within Dutch society, it is perceived that every person will get what they deserve based on their actions and achievements. This train of thought creates a perception of an equal path and similar chances for everyone including (Van den Broek, 2014). Nevertheless, people of color are excluded by people higher in society, who unconsciously fear losing authority within their own society, as was discussed in cluster Birds of a feather flock together. As a consequence of being discriminated against, people drop out of education, quit looking for a job, withdraw from society and have less trust in the system of justice as the government and the police. Resulting in lower incomes, smaller social circles and fluctuating routines (Andriessen et al. 2020). On the next page a list is shown to illustrate the multiple systems in which people of color experience exclusion.

In the eye of the beholder, this is the information about people of color they receive. Putting this information in addition to their perspective of an equal society leads to the conclusion that the actions of people of color must have led them to this position in society. Making it look like people of color did not try their best (Ghorashi, 2014). That deserved, lower position in society is again what society will perceive as information. Therefore, systemic racism is a closed system, keeping white people at the top of the social hierarchy. As the dominant group, who perceive that as the norm. (Essed & Hoving, 2014).

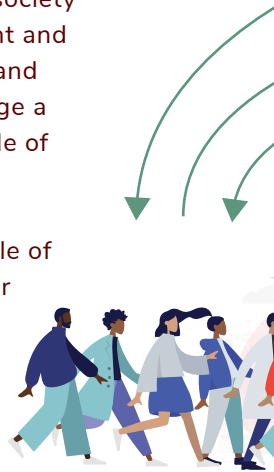
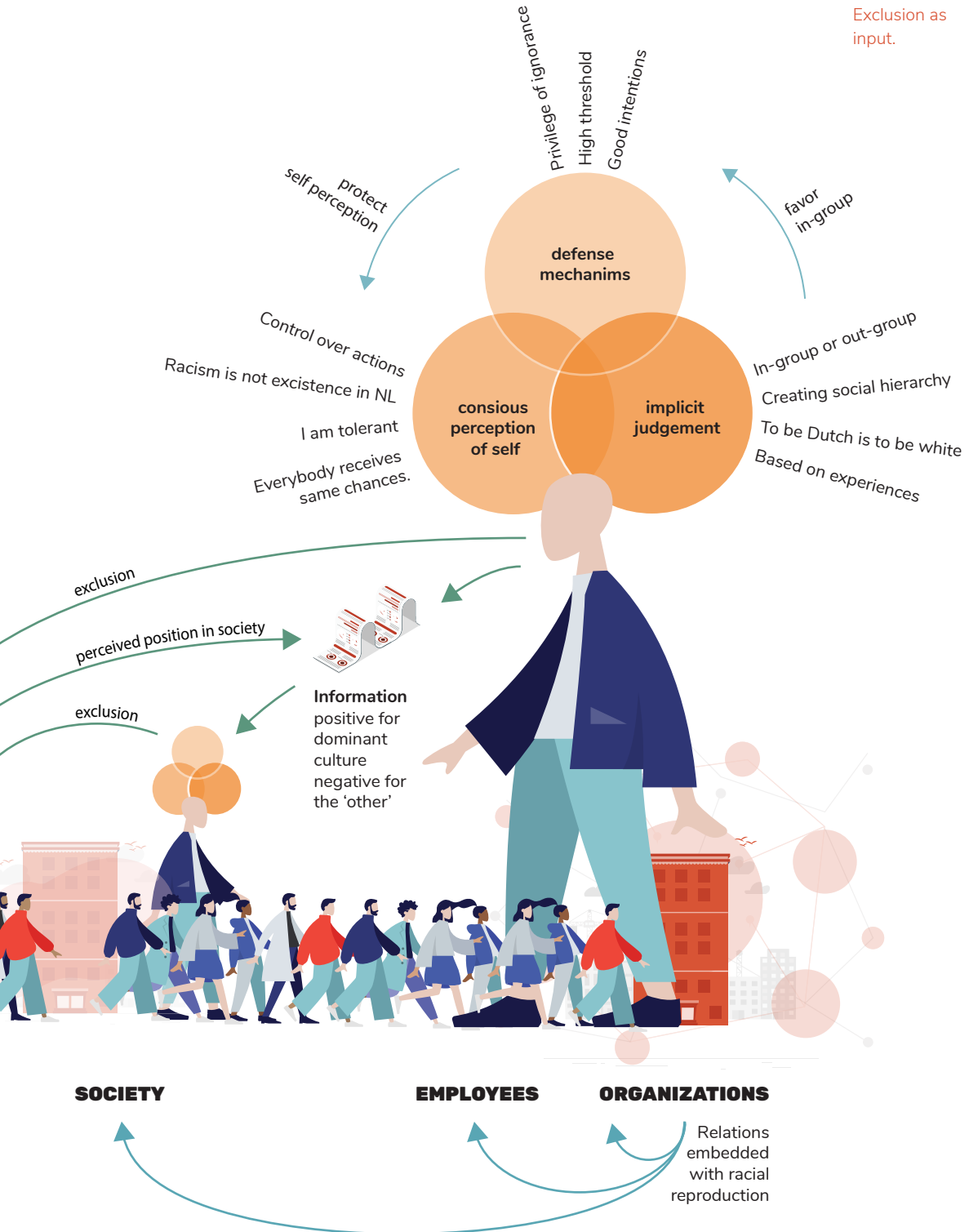


figure 20.  
Exclusion as  
input.



**PEOPLE WITH A NON-WESTERN  
BACKGROUND ARE SEEN AS  
ARREARS, SINCE THEY ARE LESS  
INTEGRATED INTO A MODERN  
SOCIETY (ESSED & TRIENEKENS,  
2008).**

**PEOPLE OF COLOR ARE EXCLUDED  
FROM NIGHTCLUBS EVEN AFTER  
SHOWING ID (HONDIUS, 2014).**

**PEOPLE OF COLOR ARE BEING  
EXCLUDED FROM THE LABOR  
MARKET (ESSED, 1991).**

**PEOPLE OF COLOR ARE BEING  
EXCLUDED FROM THE HOUSING  
MARKET (ESSED, 1991).**

**PEOPLE OF COLOR ARE RECEIVING  
EDUCATION ADVICE BELOW THEIR  
SKILLS (WEINER, 2014).**

**PEOPLE OF COLOR ARE BEING EXCLUDED FROM SPECIFIC TASKS WITHIN THEIR JOB (HONDIUS, 2014).**

**IMMIGRANTS WITH A NON-WESTERN BACKGROUND, COMPARED TO IMMIGRANTS WITH A WESTERN BACKGROUND, ARE OFTEN UNEMPLOYED, REPRESENTED IN PRACTICAL JOBS IN BIGGER NUMBERS, OFTER HAVE TEMPORARY CONTRACTS, RECEIVE LOWER WAGES AND ARE BEING EXCLUDED MORE OFTEN (VAN DEN BROEK, 2014).**

**AND SO MUCH MORE.**

**IN OTHER WORDS, PEOPLE OF COLOR RECEIVE DIFFERENT CHANCES.**

## 5.4. CONCLUSIONS

This chapter described the reproduction of institutional racism. Therefore, three categories have been defined describing this exploration. First, the individual's reinforcement and reproduction as described in chapter 4 were placed within the social structure within organizations. As such, within this social context individuals are basing decisions upon their own beliefs and values, including the organizational context to their reproduction. In addition to the individual beliefs the organization's culture also reinforces their perspectives onto its employees and society.

As such, the beliefs of an organization are translated during reproduction into visible elements of their structure as priorities, company vision and their products. These elements are distributed upon employees, other organizations and society. Which creates the possibility for organizations to influence the reinforcement of its employees, contacts and customers. In other words, organizations hold power to influence the reinforcement within their social relations. In addition, those visible elements who influence somebody's reinforcement are based upon the beliefs and values of their creators. Taken together, these findings describe that the influence on reinforcement of social structures are based upon the reproduction within the organization.

The third category builds upon this by describing the reproduction within an organization is based upon earlier effects of reproduction. Being that people of color have a lower position within the social hierarchy as a consequence of exclusion. However, experiencing this as a white person in a higher position, combined with the mindset of an equal world, a conclusion can be drawn that they have deserved that position. This position in society of people of color is used as information to reinforce the perception of and behavior towards people of color. Indicating a loop consisting of the effects of reproduction being used as reinforcement. Which reaches further than the everyday interactions with people of color in people's personal lives. Moreover, it serves as a foundation during professional context upon which they unconsciously base their decisions.





# PART 3

# DE

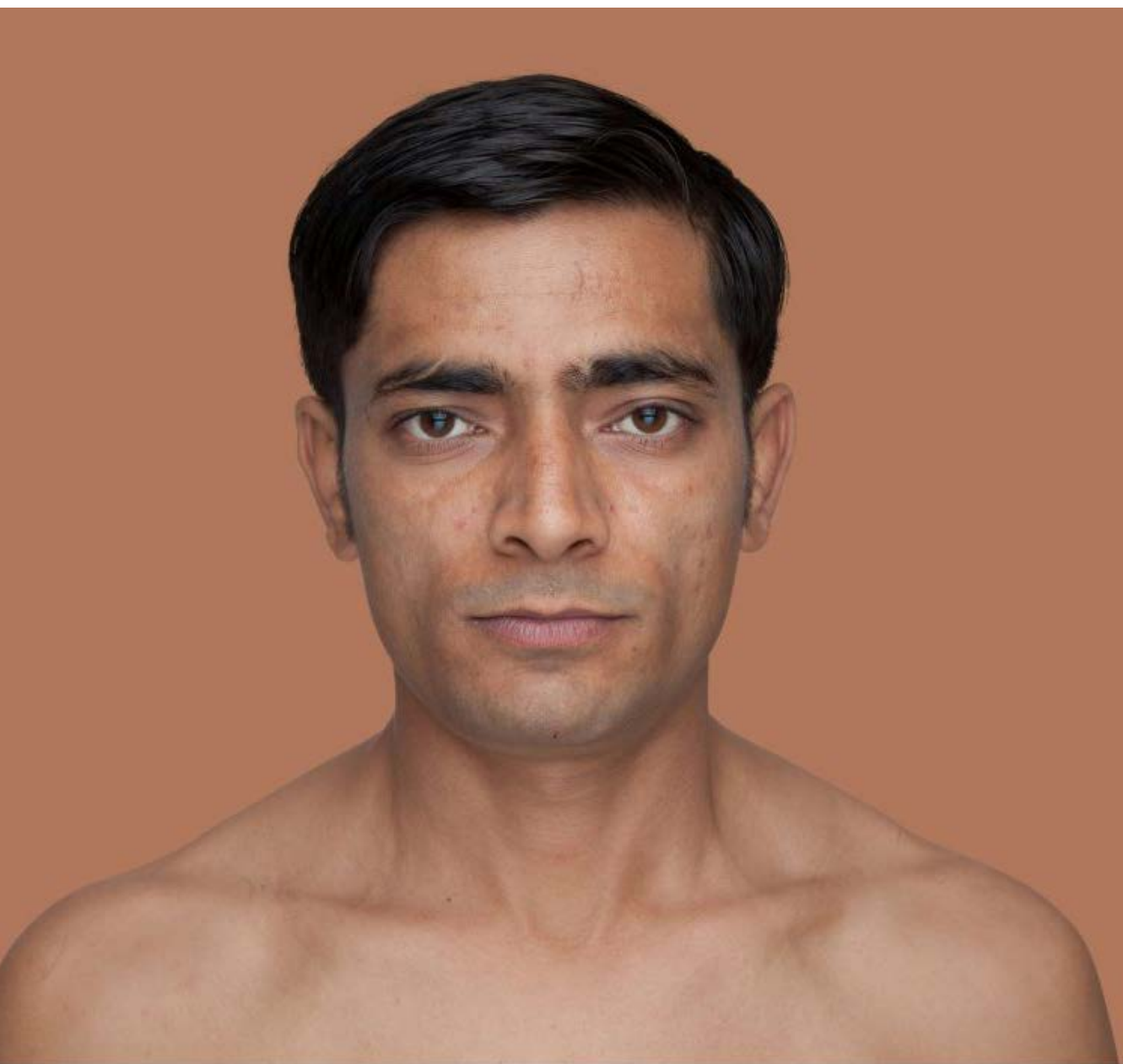
figure 21.  
Impression  
of user  
evaluation of  
Redirect





# DESIGN EXPLORATION





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# 6. DESIGN STATEMENT

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 dove into the context of systemic racism within the Netherlands. Based on these insights a solution scope will be determined in this chapter. Within this scope a design statement will be formulated describing the goal of the intervention and the mechanism to achieve this. Together with an interaction vision they describe when the intervention will be considered successful.

- 6.1. Research basis
- 6.2. Design Statement
- 6.3. Interaction Vision

## 6.1. RESEARCH BASIS

Recalling the question stated in the introduction being:

How can white people work against reproduction of systemic racism, instead of contributing to the existence of the reproduction cycle?

Chapter 3, indicated that the reproduction of systemic racism is a system of embedded manifestations into individuals, organizations and institutions. On the one hand, these embedded manifestations influence the people within the social structure during the reinforcement process. On the other hand, people reproduce these social structures during social interactions.

Which is in close relation to the possibility of white people being unaware about their manifestations of racism. They have no intention to execute racially unjust manifestations and they believe to act upon this belief. Behavioral mechanisms are in place to protect this perception of an equal society and treatment. As such, their possibilities to stay ignorant towards manifestations of racism. White people have created a higher threshold regarding racially unjust manifestations and deny any racist intentions, disregarding the impact of an action. Therefore, any or their own manifestations of racism remain invisible to them.

In addition, are at the top of the social hierarchy placing them in an imbalanced power relation. Their culture is considered as the dominant culture regarding their behavior as normal. Since this has been the case for an extensive period of time, the manifestations of racism within this dominant culture are also labeled as normal. As such, white people unconsciously continue to reproduce these behaviors, because they are accepted and institutionalized as normal within the dominant culture.

These individual reinforcements and reproductions are placed within the social structure of organizations. In which they base their decisions on their personal beliefs balanced within the organizational culture. As such, their beliefs are translated into elements within the organization. Which in other words is the reproduction of their social structure. By distributing these elements they are reinforcing their social structure within their social relations. This describes the position of power of organizations and their employees. As the reproduction of employees is based upon their personal reinforcement also becomes the reinforcement of people within the professional social relations.

## 6.2. DESIGN STATEMENT

Based on prior information, various design statements were created before finding a fit. As such it kept evolving throughout the project based upon new insights. See appendix B for this journey, but see the final result below.

**IN ORDER TO REDUCE SYSTEMIC RACISM, I WANT WHITE PEOPLE TO BREAK WITH WORK ORIENTED REPRODUCTION OF RACIALLY UNJUST ACTIONS BY BROACHING THEIR APPARENT NORM FOR REVIEW SO THEY CAN ADJUST THEIR ACTIONS TOWARDS THEIR BELIEFS.**

Deconstructing this sentence into the elements mentioned in the SiD method as described in chapter 2, gives the following overview:

- social change: reduce systemic racism
- desired individual behaviour: white people would make racially just decisions during organisational processes
- individual motivation: enabling adjustment of their actions towards their beliefs
- mechanism: broach their apparent norm for review



---

figure 22.  
Girl fetching a  
waterballon



## 6.3. INTERACTION VISION

To accompany the design statement's mechanism a metaphor is describing how interaction with the intervention should feel like for the user.

Interacting with my design should be like catching a water balloon.

Meaning characteristics of the interaction should be inviting, confronting, together, playful, active and reactive.

These characteristics have been determined based on the needs of white people. As such, a questionnaire was filled in by 19 people identifying as white and compared to what I envisioned with the statement. Appendix F shows both the complete questionnaire and its results. Main difference was their need for confrontation for which I envisioned the interaction as too gentle at first.

Both the design statement and the interaction vision will serve as guidance for choices to come during design exploration.



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# 7. FINAL DESIGN

After many (online) post-it's a final design has emerged from an iterative process based upon the insights from research and the design statement. This chapter will showcase REcolor as a proposal for white people to break with their work related racially unjust manifestations. First, an overview of the concept will be presented by showing its three phases. Second, every phase will be elaborated upon in more detail. Third, an evaluation of the concept will be described regarding the design statement, this will be followed by recommendations for the design.

- 7.1. The concept
- 7.2. Reveal
- 7.3. Reflect
- 7.4. Redirect
- 7.5. Evaluation
- 7.6. Insights and  
recommendations for  
the design

## 7.1. THE CONCEPT

The final design of this graduation project is REcolor, a process consisting of three consecutive steps as can be seen in figure 24. It is intended for organizations with mainly white employees within the Netherlands who want to do something about systemic racism. As such, every phase consists of interventions to broach a different aspect of the apparent ordinary as perceived by the employees. Creating visible elements, as shown in figure 23, to enable a critical reflection about the invisible accepted norm. The visualization should offer the opportunity to revise upon invisible actions. Therefore, each intervention is a combination of individual actions and it's effects that can be compared to the organization's intentions during group reflections. Moreover, also tapping into the un/shared tension within the social fabric by creating a new desired social structure together. A focus during the research went towards the development of the individual interventions instead of group reflections. This is due to the limited timeframe and the design statement's focus on individuals breaking with their representation. The three distinct steps of REcolor appeal to the Dutch belief that manifestations of racism are wrong and therefore people can adjust their behavior regarding the reproduction of racism.

figure 23.  
Interventions  
of REcolor



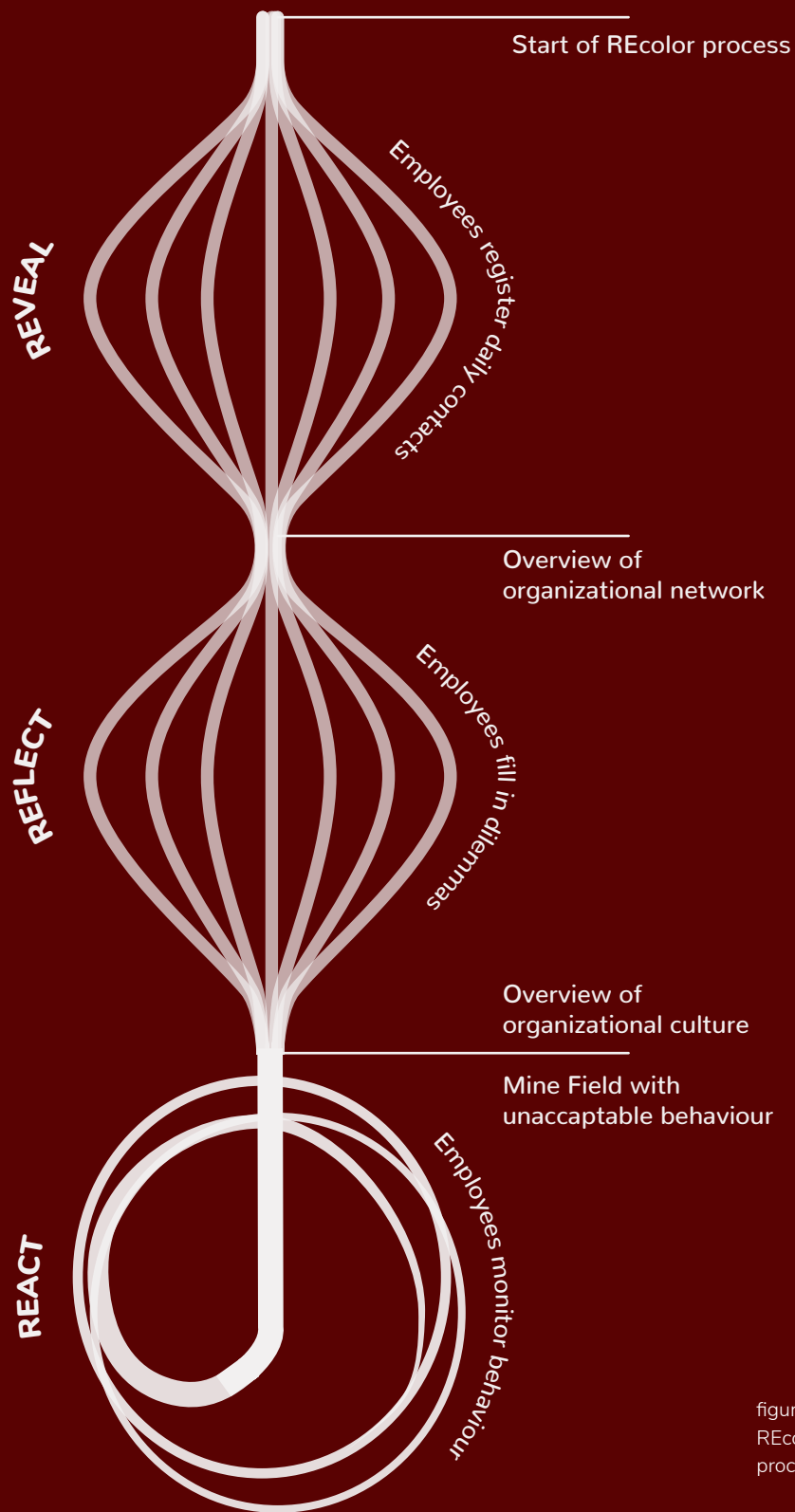


figure 24.  
REcolor  
process

## 7.2. REVEAL

During phase one the focus within the apparent normal is on the daily contacts of the employees. An overview is created of the diversity regarding skin color of the organization's network, see figure 25. The visualization displays the network divided into the social relation categories of colleagues, customers, partners and others. These categories were inspired from the Code of Diversity as categories to take into account regarding diversity and inclusion (Code Diversiteit & Inclusie, 2021). They allow the organization to revise and compare both internal and external contacts during a group discussion.

The result is obtained via employees receiving daily notifications for at least a week to register their contacts. For a more accurate representation of customers, partners and others, it is advised to answer the notifications throughout multiple weeks. This links to the un/inhabited tension in a way that it visualizes actions people are not actively thinking about, yet social interaction creates this result. By answering two short questions the intervention can be done in between tasks. One question regarding the category of the contact, followed by a question regarding their skin color from a range of options. The range of color is displayed horizontally to avoid any hierarchy and is intended to make users aware of the variety of skin colors within the in-group and out-group. The flow of the intervention has been iterated through user evaluations. To see the insights from these evaluation, see appendix E.

Answers of the employees are visualized within both the personal and common network. Both representations have been chosen to opt for (1) the illustration of an individual's contribution to a bigger picture, and (2) self reflection when comparing individual answers to the whole. In addition the individual answers are represented by the squares putting emphasis on the obviously countable number of people of color. Which is based on the assumption that organizations who are the intended users of these tools mainly have white employees. The squares affiliated with white employees also stand by the use of a colored background.

The added value of revealing the apparent normal regarding contacts:

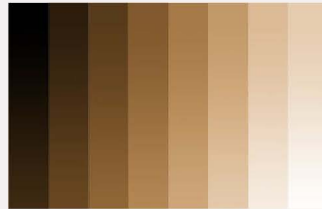
- Warm up to the topic of systemic racism by seeing the visual impact of something seemingly small as contacting and meeting with the social network.
- Notice how people are likely to contact similar people.
- Compare results of social relation categories to check if the external contacts are represented internally.

In welke groep valt de persoon met wie je het laatst  
werkgerelateerd contact heb gehad?

collega's   klanten   partners   overige

figure 25.  
Reveal

Wat was de huidskleur van deze persoon?  
Klik op die kleur in de afbeelding hieronder.



Ik heb deze persoon nog nooit gezien.

1. Collect individual  
actions

2. Update shared network.



## 7.3. REFLECT

During Reflect the focus within the apparent ordinary is about choices and actions during possible situations at work. Within nine dilemmas situations are presented to the employee in which they have to choose between two given actions or responses. The form of dilemmas has been chosen to prepare the participant for a choice between two imperfect options, see figure 26. This approach is intended to make the participant feel less defensive about their choice.

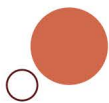
The answers are equal in a way to avoid people choosing what they think is the preferred answer. This approach originated from an earlier evaluation of this concept, from which insights can be found in appendix E. After choosing, the employee can read information about invisible elements of the structure which informs them of their behavior regarding the situation. This also entails questions and tips to help them form the social interaction within this situation. The extra information describes assumptions applicable to a wider range of situations in case the employee could not relate to one of the answers. In this manner, they can still use the information to reflect upon their actions and intentions.

The topics from the situations and answers are derived from the research described in chapters 4 and 5. Appendices G (NL) and H (EN) show an overview of the dilemmas and their origin in the research. A gathered overview of combined individual answers grants the organization the opportunity to reflect upon the represented answers as being an undesired or desired work ethos.

The added value of visualizing a reflection of an apparent normal during work related decisions:

- Confronts employees with assumptions and the effects of them.
- Kick starts a conversation about the desired actions within a work related situation.
- Creates a moment to consciously look at actions and thoughts during work related situations.

de  
telefoon was



Het persoonlijke netwerk van mensen bestaat vaak uit mensen die op henzelf lijken. Wanneer het bedrijf voornamelijk uit witte mensen bestaat, zal dat desbetreffende netwerk ook voornamelijk wit van kleur zijn. Wanneer je via via mensen aanneemt, krijgen mensen die daarbuiten vallen niet de kans om te solliciteren. Om die kans wel te bieden kan je gebruik maken van externe kanalen zoals een recruitment bureau, waarbij je als netwerk. Maar bijvoorbeeld ook via social media, waarbij je als bedrijf in de gaten houdt dat de vacature verschillende kringen bereikt.

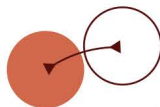
volgende →

... schakel een extern recruitment bureau in.

## Je moet kiezen.

Je hebt lunch met je nieuwe collega van kleur en vraagt waar die vandaan komt. Je vraagt dit want het toch een normale vraag ...

... als iemand er anders uitziet.



OF

figure 26  
... en iemand te leren kennen reflect



## Je moet kiezen.

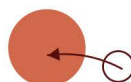
Binnen ons bedrijf komt een positie vrij. Ik ...

... vraag of collega's nog een goede kandidaat kennen.



OF

... schakel een extern recruitment bureau in.



## Jouw keuze

Je hebt lunch met je nieuwe collega van kleur en vraagt waar die vandaan komt. Je vraagt dit want het toch een normale vraag ...

... als iemand er anders uitziet.

ns aan het diversiteit  
otum laat voldoen.



## Je moet kiezen.

Ik heb het met mijn collega's nooit over diversiteit, inclusie of racisme, want dat ...

... voelt als een mijnenveld.



OF

... heeft niks met werk te maken.



## Jouw keuze:

Ik heb het met mijn collega's nooit over diversiteit, inclusie of racisme, want dat ...

... voelt als een mijnenveld.



Wit wordt lang niet altijd g  
een andere huidskleur had  
geweest. Hetzelfde geldt  
verschil dat het er bij hu  
gemaakt dat zij kleur he  
Dit gebeurd hele dag d  
is daardoor niet zo ge  
over racisme gaat tu  
dat botsen. Dit zou  
mag of moet gaan  
verschillen tussen

## Jouw keuze:

Mensen hebben de neiging om vrienden te hebben die op ze lijken. Dit geldt hetzelfde als er mensen worden aangenomen voor een bepaalde functie. Je hebt daar gevoelsmatig een betere klik mee waardoor zij een betere indruk achterlaten. Echter is dat een gevaar. Tevens moet men zich dan afvragen of men opgenomen binnen het team? Of wordt men opgenomen op diens kleur in plaats van op diens kwaliteiten? Men willen blijven werken?

## 7.4. REDIRECT

Within the Redirect phase a visible element is created to visualize unintended and undesired behaviors. As such, the first step is to determine what the new shared understanding is of what is undesired within the intended organization's culture. Onwards from the group discussion that is part of the Reflect phase, Redirect continues the conversations to determine undesired behaviors. 15 actions are pre-selected to indicate them as being undesired behaviors. Its content is based on the dilemmas, see appendices G (NL) & H (EN) for the underlying relation. In addition, there is the possibility of adding own statements to increase the alignment between the intervention and the organization. With the help of this selection the team gets a tool to form their own social structure.

The selected undesired behaviors are added to the Minefield, see figure 27. The minefield is an online monitoring tool to be received by every employee within the team. The name, Minefield, indicates that the situations on the field are undesired. To enhance the individual commitment to this phase it is important that all employees receiving the Minefield can participate during its assembly. The Minefield itself consists of the selected undesired behaviors on both an "I have" and a "Someone has" side. Whenever the owner of the Minefield notices an undesired behavior that is done by either themselves or a professional contact, they hit the mine and thus tick off the situation. The combination of both the personal and colleague side should create a representative visualization of executed unintended undesired behaviors. It is assumed that somebody who has been defending and explaining own manifestations of racism will not change this routine overnight. In this case another colleague can tick off the situation from the Minefield. In line with this assumption the choice has been made to tick off undesired behaviors, since it is expected that people will unintentionally stick to their old behavior. By ticking off situations in which they unintentionally execute undesired behavior people are confronted with their self perception of not being in full control of their actions.

After two weeks of daily reminders and continuous use of the Minefield a representation appears on which behaviors are still executed within the company. This visualization shows the un/inhabited tension of the employees on how they unintentionally enact the social structure. During a group discussion the status of its redirected actions regarding the desired work ethos can result in a recreation of the Minefield.

Added value of the Minefield:

- Together thrive towards the new common goal.
- See executed behavior within the team despite the intentions.
- Sparks conversation about implementation of desired organizational culture.



figure 27.  
Redirect



## 7.5. EVALUATION

A final user test was conducted to evaluate the direction of this concept. It should indicate whether or not this concept fulfils the design statement being: In order to reduce systemic racism, I want white people to break with work oriented reproduction of racially unjust choices by broaching their apparent ordinary for review so they can adjust their actions towards their beliefs.

To check the compliance of the design to the concept, the following effects were analysed during evaluation:

Effect 1: This concept has visualized normal behaviours of which they were unaware.

Effect 2: This concept motivates them to adapt their actions to their intention.

Effect 3: This concept encourages them to break with their reproduction of racially unjust choices at work.

In addition to the user tests the relevance of the final design was discussed with two members linked to BEE.

### *Procedure*

This final evaluation was conducted within circumstances that most resembled the intended user and usage. As such, the phases Reveal and Reflect were tested within a group of five colleagues. Throughout five workdays they created an overview of their professional network with a prototype. In addition, they received and executed the dilemmas after which results and their thoughts were validated during online interviews. One bigger session consisted of an evaluation with three colleagues at once, this was done to also experience group discussions.

The Redirect phase was evaluated with a group of four colleagues. Who during a first session created their Minefield and used it throughout four business days. Interaction with the concept was done through the creation of paper prototypes, see figure 28. After the four days the results on the Minefields were discussed during a group interview. In order to keep track of their usage of the Minefield, daily reminders were sent to fill out the accompanied booklet. Within this booklet the participants had to describe their interaction with the Minefield and the situations in which they could tick off a box. See appendices I and J for a more detailed description of the evaluation procedures.

figure 28.  
Paper  
prototypes



### *Limitations of evaluation*

One limitation was the influence of time during evaluation of the concept. As such, the evaluation of phases one and two were done within one organization and phase three within another organization. Breaking the concept's consecutive intention created a different informed state when using the interventions with possible different evaluation results. Especially for the Redirect phase, the intervention was used for a shorter amount of time leaving little social interactions for self reflection. Therefore, conclusions of the measured effects are from the expected potential mentioned by the participants during longer use.

Second, a limitation of the evaluation was the composition of the group participants evaluating the concept. They were asked to join on a voluntary basis which had multiple consequences. One being that most joined because of curiosity or affiliation with the topic. This has influenced the results by the level of awareness participants had compared to employees who would use this concept as one of the first introductions to the topic. Moreover, participation in a user test also affected their usage and reflection about the concept as participants mentioned they continued to answer the dilemmas even though some made them uncomfortable. Pushing through and reflecting upon their content since they were told to use it. Also, during the Redirect phase, the voluntary basis had the effect of testing the intervention with colleagues who were part of a bigger team. Creating situations in which they were less motivated to start the conversation as other colleagues did not share the similar need for prioritizing this topic.



## 7.6. INSIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE DESIGN

During the evaluation insights were gathered about the design in relation to the design statement and the details of the concept. The information received during evaluations were translated to insights. Which formed the basis for the insights and recommendations about the final design as a whole and per phase.

### *Whole concept*

Insights about the whole process of REcolor were gained from the evaluation with two people linked to BEE, of which one was de Randamie.

Based on personal experience this interviewee replied that these visualizations would intersect at the problem they run into. In which organizations do not see their own contribution to systemic racism. Moreover, management and employees look at the problem from different angles. Collecting and visualizing individual actions represents an overview of the intended and unintended status quo of the organization to overcome these differences and see their contributions. This is valuable to start a group conversation about the shared social structures and the goals to adjust them.

The information used within the content is up to date to their own experiences as a person of color and to their knowledge its actors are unaware of their impact. However, to increase awareness of the situation's impact this interviewee stretched the importance of involving an external person of color during group discussions. Who in this case could be linked to BEE.

***'This methodology would be an eye opener.'***

***'When you want to create change within an organization everybody needs to be involved. Which is about the direct environment but also about the indirect surroundings.'***

***'Beautiful how it directly generates data, not only intended data but also unintended data.'***

***'It consists of many blind spots of which people are unaware.'***

Its success depends on the starting point of the organization to which the entry point and implementation could be agreed during an intake. This step has not been taken into account at the moment but its development would be recommended in order to optimize the effect of the consecutive interventions.

The two interviewees evaluated the entire concept as a promising direction with a logical three step plan. However, it is recommended evaluating it within its intended context. The following subsections will discuss the user evaluation results.

***'As I mentioned in the answers, a lot of white.' - participant A2***

***'Not new, we are with a small team. So it is not that there might be a colleague of color that I do not know about.' - participant A1***

***'An awareness step is that we are very Dutch a very white team but actually the people for whom we work are not like us.' - participant A4***

### ***Reveal***

Within one day awareness was achieved about their emphasis on white professional relations. Within the category colleagues the visualization was confirmative instead of insightful. This was caused by being a part of a small company with virtually no new employees coming in.

Visualization of the other categories created more insights and reflection. As such, it allowed for the opportunity to reflect upon internal representation of their target group. This led to insights about the societal contribution

of the organization. However, to obtain a richer discussion regarding the non colleague categories the intervention is recommended to be used over a longer period of time. This would grant the opportunity to register a more representable overview of customers, partners and other contacts.

The visualization itself did not stimulate a reflection on individual actions in relation to an impact on the common network. Only after posing a question during the evaluation, the participants reflected upon their position within the company and its related impact. For this it would be recommended to add reflective questions about the individual action after registering a contact. In addition, the participants had little to say about their personal network but rather reflected upon the collective network. They mentioned due to already answering of the questions no surprises arose within their personal network. However, the ability to compare personal

networks of colleagues would have a possibility of stimulating revising personal actions. This should be evaluated during another round of iterating.

Other insights regarding this concept were that representation was limited in relation to diversity. At the moment it highlights an absence of people of color by actively showing the lack of variation in skin colors. This approach disregards groups within society that share similar skin color to white people but are also treated racially unjust. In relation to the topic of systemic racism the design could explore additional possibilities of visualizing other minority groups within society.

### **Reflect**

With regard to the desired effects the form of reflection shows potential, however the content needs to be iterated upon since it made participants say:

As of now, a lack of connection with the majority of the dilemmas created resistance towards the presented information. Both answers were equally bad but for five dilemmas also equally unrelatable from their experiences. It caused discomfort while using the intervention. However, the participants continued as part of the evaluation and mentioned the information afterwards was still valuable. Allowing them to bring the situation closer to their own experiences to hypothetically reflect upon their actions. This describes how it is of value to be confronted with the effects of their unconscious action. Nonetheless, at the moment this was too much compared to the intended use. Therefore the content need iterations to create a balance within comfortable confrontation. The dilemmas one, two and six significant adjustments are needed to make them recognizable for participants. Dilemmas four and seven need smaller adjustments, by reframing one of the options.

***'For women with a Turkish or Moroccan cultural background I was looking for the right shade and at the end it was not very different from my skin color. As such, the colors felt flat, like it did not represent the diversity.'* - participant A3**

***'My feeling was that the question was a nicer way of saying I am a racist because A or B.'* - participant A3**

***'Dilemma three was confrontational, because secretly I do this and we do this.'* - participant A4'**

A difference was noticed between dilemmas focusing on actions rather than personal thoughts or beliefs. The dilemmas about actions like dilemmas three, five, eight and nine were relatable to the participants because they saw themselves executing both options. As a consequence, they started to think about the effect of the options, which created the biggest moment of self reflection and new insights into unaware unintended behaviors. This was shared during the evaluation of situations linked to the dilemmas in which they want to change their behavior.

### *Redirect*

It became clear Redirect shows potential to achieve the desired effects, yet it still requires further iterations regarding the statements and further detailing of the phase.

In addition to selecting and discussing the statements, a interesting discussion arose touching upon different levels of the organization.

***‘I think we will pick them all, we have put one thing aside and then replaced it with something else.’***

***‘The balance was nice within this concept that you are not directly labeled as racist for something you did not intend it like that.’***

On one level the employees shared personal experiences and perspectives on the probability of situations. On the second level they reflected on themselves within projects. By sharing how customers had referred to them in the past or how they let opportunities slide to prioritize inclusivity. On the third level they reflected on the projects themselves and the policies in place to work within them. The statements were recognizable to every participant, which created a shared feeling within the group and a

mindset in which it is okay to later tick off these behaviors on the Minefield. Whenever a situation seemed plausible and undesired it was selected for the Minefield. It is advised to not preselect all the statements beforehand. The freedom to move and adjust the statements in the paper prototype allowed for an overview within a natural flowing discussion.

Besides the little social interactions within these four days all participants ticked off between one and four situations. However, to optimize self reflection based upon the visualized actions, iterations need be done regarding the statements.



The users have assembled the Minefield making them very aware of the chosen undesired behaviors. The participants indicated to be aware of a situation and did consciously avoid the specific undesired behaviors. However, when the statements are generalized upon situations, such as judging somebody, including these examples it allows participants to become more aware of their actions within this situation being either good or bad. In addition, the Minefield should have the opportunity to note down a description of the situation.

This can then be shared during the group discussion and is indicated to be of significant value to also reflect upon individual behavior. As such, a participant who ticked the least situations drew a personal conclusion that they were not actively thinking about the topic enough during work. For this they opted to embed the topic within more activities, so they would be confronted with the topic more.

Other insights were about the people involved within this evaluation. Doing this intervention with only a part of the colleagues, employees created extra situations in which the topic was not discussed due to power relations or the lack of commitment by non-participating colleagues. Therefore, it is emphasized to participate in this intervention as a complete team.

In addition, the attendance of a colleague of color gave a deeper level to the discussions, since they were able to share personal experiences regarding situations. This made the other participants more aware of the impact of their actions. Moreover, my own attendance had a positive effect by being able to share the reasoning behind some statements. My own attendance as an external party to report to provided the participants an extra layer of commitment. As such, it would be recommended taking group composition and involvement of an external expert into account during further steps.

***'I also think that because we do not have a lot of colleagues of color, situations occur less.'***

***'When you do this for a week with 10 people in the office it would also work, but now not there are already days in which there is no opportunity to discuss this due to lack of social interactions with COVID.'***

***'Because we had discussed in depth and physically moved the pieces. I was primed.'***

***'A problem I faced was that I did not know what to say exactly so that others would also think it was important.'***

# PART 4

# PRO

figure 29.  
Location  
of the final  
hours of this  
graduation.

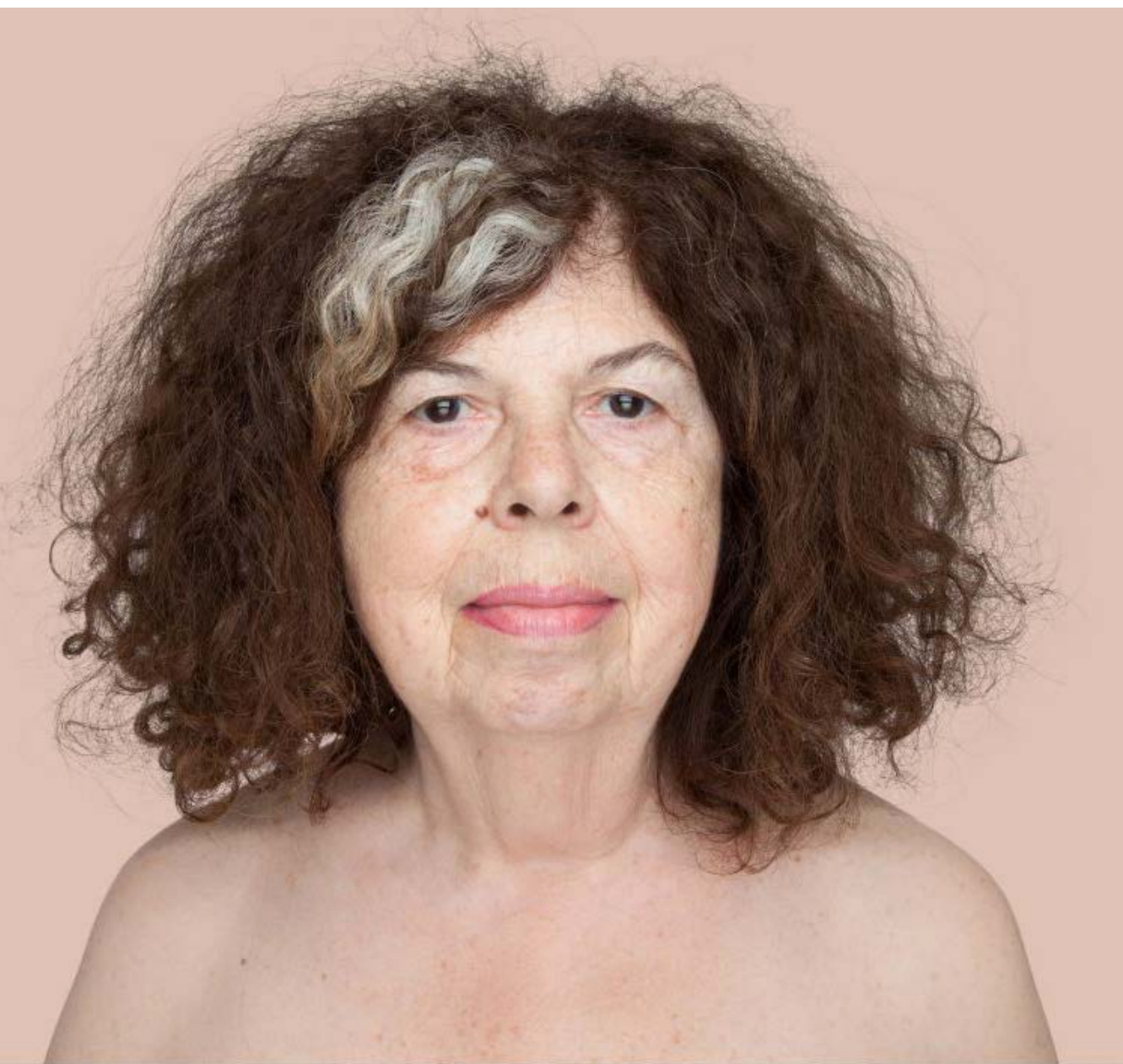




# PROJECT FINALIZATON







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# 8. PROJECT CONCLUSION

Previous chapter presented and discussed the final design REcolor. Throughout this chapter the design will be placed within the entirety of the project by describing the initial goal and obtained results. These will be critically reflected upon through listing the shortcomings of this project, which are translated into recommendations for future work. Finally, a personal reflection will conclude this chapter and thus this graduation report.

- 8.1. Goal & Results
- 8.2. Contribution to the knowledge
- 8.3. Limitations
- 8.4. Future steps
- 8.5. Personal Reflections

## 8.1. GOAL & RESULTS

The goal of this project has been to explore how white people can break their reproduction cycle of systemic racism. First, this has been examined through an exploration of the systemic level of racism revealing how it touches upon individuals, organizations and institutions. Manifestations of racism are embedded in their cultural and institutional processes and reinforced and reproduced within social interactions. Second, the exploration continued with a focus on the reproduction of the individual within the context of Dutch racism. While white Dutch citizens have no intention of executing manifestations of racism, they continue to contribute, maintain and protect the reproduction cycle of racial injustice. This behavior is identified through three mechanisms: self perception, defense mechanisms and implicit biases. These mechanisms allow white Dutch people to remain unaware of their own manifestations of racism which allows them to protect their societal and self perception. As such, the mechanisms describe how white people behave according to the norm that is reinforced through social structures of the dominant culture.

In a similar manner, the research explored the context of institutional racism with placing individual mechanisms in the social structures of organizations and institutions. Individuals continue to reproduce their reinforced social structures during work related situations. As such, the decisions and products they make at work are embedded with their social structures. Via the distribution of these products like a meeting agenda or a policy within the social network of an organization they gain a power of influence. In other words, organizations hold power to influence the reproduction of during their social interactions via their created in/visible elements. Based on these insights a focus has been put on the individual with unintended racially unjust decisions during work situations. Combined with both the insights of white Dutch people that are unaware of racial reproductions and the acceptance of these as the norm, the design statement became:

‘In order to reduce systemic racism, I want white people to break with work oriented reproduction of racially unjust choices by broaching their apparent normal for review so they can adjust their actions towards their beliefs.’

The final design of this thesis exploration is REcolor, a consecutive three step process that visualizes employees' apparent normal within work related situations. It intersects individual and organizational levels of systemic racism by visualizing shared individual actions, allowing people to be critical towards the current organizational culture. Reveal is the first step, and visualizes the social relations of an organization to allow participants to be critical upon the societal contribution of the organization. Reflect is the second step in which participants are confronted with the effects of social interactions through dilemmas about institutionalized situations at work. In this step the concepts of both self reflection and awareness of unintended behaviors are obtained by making participants wage its effects between dilemmas. Redirect is the third and final step in which a new shared social structure is documented on a visible element that informs participants of undesired behaviors. Within Redirect racially unjust manifestations are monitored despite the intentions of the actor. Crossing of these manifestations from the visible elements confronted participants with their self perception of an equal society and involvement with racially unjust decisions. The three distinct steps of REcolor appeal to the Dutch belief that manifestations of racism are wrong in order to adjust their behavior regarding reproduction of racism.

## 8.2. CONTRIBUTION TO THE KNOWLEDGE

Within the field of behavior change design, the conducted research has been based on the hypothesis that people are supported in adapting their behavior via the visual representations of their actions and choices. It is assumed that a clash between intentions and the visual representation will activate people to change behavior. This contributes to the insights given by Josina Vink, who within her doctoral thesis writes about Conceptualizing Service Ecosystem Design. Within her work she emphasizes on the importance of surfacing structures that are normally invisible. Surfacing formerly unseen structures grants individuals within the social structure the opportunity to reflect, criticize and intentionally change behavior (Vink, 2020).

However, it should be noted that decisions regarding the design were not based upon the available knowledge of the design fields of behavior change, social design or systemic design. Instead, decisions were derived from theories of systemic racism, which are implemented during a design approach as described in chapter 2.

Within the academic field of systemic racism it is believed that no new knowledge has been contributed by this conducted research. Nonetheless, the implications of the gathered knowledge during the design process has created an unique outcome to confront white individuals with their own relations with various manifestations of racism.



### 8.3. LIMITATIONS

The topic of this project is systemic racism and one of the limitations was executing this project from a white privileged perspective. This starting point has guided the context exploration towards understanding the individual reproduction cycle. As a consequence, the weight of the context exploration was on individual mechanisms instead of mechanisms within institutional racism. This has influenced the theories used within the design.

Moreover, the content of the interventions is mainly based on the gained knowledge from literature and interviews. In combination with the privileged position it lacks a possible deeper understanding and nuances of experienced racials injustice from a person of color's point of view. This has not had the possibility to be translated into the content of the interventions influencing the visualized manifestations of racism and user experience.

A third limitation was the social bubble in which this project has been executed. During ideation and evaluation of the design mainly similar people were involved. All subjects had similar cultural background, education, political interest and an open attitude towards the topic. Development of the design based on this feedback caused a disconnection with more diverse perspectives and needs of people outside this bubble.

Finally, the scope at the start of this thesis on anti-black racism created a final design which does not include other groups experiencing manifestations of racism. Which has translated into the content of the design not being a representation of their experiences. As such, users are not stimulated to reflect upon those manifestations. Creating the risk of white people staying unaware and ignorant regarding their manifestations of racism beyond those against black people.

## 8.4. FUTURE STEPS

This project began with the aim to have white people break with the reproduction of systemic racism. The proposed design is one of many possible forms that facilitates this. As could be read in 8.3 this design was the outcome of a project with limitations regarding the execution within the scope of a graduation thesis. Nonetheless, the following user evaluation quotes from the evaluation described in chapter 7 indicate potential in the proposed design, but needs further iterations.

***A real racist would feel at home, what a shame we need to choose. Both options are so good. - participant A5 about some dilemmas***

***It is good to realize that every social interaction you have can have so much influence. - participant A3***

As such, further research could focus on the implementations of the expertise of people of color. First, by taking into account the effects the content could have when people of color use this final design. Second, when including the expertise of a diverse group of people that are of color allows for the opportunity to extend the content beyond anti-black racism. As of now the design mainly focuses on generalized racially unjust manifestations towards black people. However, iterating the content of the

intervention should be done with continued evaluations by white employees. As a balance needs to be found for a comfortable level of confrontation. In order to decrease frustrations and increase recognition, the possibility could be explored to specify the statements of the dilemmas and the Mindfield regarding work related situations per sector or department.

In addition to the development of the final design further research should also include facilitation of group discussions. As of now the focus of development went towards the individual interventions. Moreover, as became clear during the evaluation of REcolor the presence of an external party was seen as an added value. For this purpose, it is recommended to look into the role of BEE as this external party when continuing this project.

Finally, in order to evaluate the practical success of REcolor an evaluation is recommended after concluding the iterations and the detailing of the design. As such, it is advised to evaluate with multiple departments from various organizations who have different starting points in relation to institutional racism. This allows for insights into the effects of the both successive use and social interactions when teams are participating with different knowledge starting points.

## 8.5. PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

To conclude this report I would like to reflect upon my personal experiences and ambitions.

I can still remember the start of this project. For which I contacted supervisors expressing I wanted to do something with systemic racism, since I had recently learned about my own ignorance and thought others might still be. Never could I have imagined the shift my societal and personal perception experienced through learning more about systemic racism.

This shift had a bigger impact than I expected. Not only was I seeing manifestations of racism on many unexpected moments, but also because racism never takes a break. Especially throughout the first months racism started to creep in all aspects of my life, I woke up to news articles and went to bed with Instagram filling my mind with more examples. In the meantime, my bubble showed interest towards my graduation and so the topic arose again. Taking all this together while also just doing the graduation is what I would call a deep dive into the topic.

I felt the need to use my privilege and not talk, read or hear about racism all the time, yet I had a difficult time to stop discovering information. The effects of racism added a weight to do justice to the topic and the people involved. Time was needed to come to terms again that this graduation project was only going to highlight a small part of the big beast. Until the day of writing this, I still feel that this is not enough to comfortably maneuver in the topic. However, I do believe it is enough for a graduation project.

Stating that here is already achieving a personal ambition, since I struggle with confidence towards my own work. Even though there are still many things I would like to add and adjust, I feel at peace looking back at all the progress I made. Not only in regards to the topic of racism, but in my skills within this project.

As that I have lowered my threshold to ask people to invest their time. If it was merely a conversation, a week long user test, a creative session, people were eager to help me or admit they simply did not have the time at that moment. A balance was always achieved by reaching out to more people. During those sessions I got less nervous and went with the flow during those sessions thanks to a plan ahead.

The weight of me being the only one in charge and responsible had ups and downs. Within a project group I like to know the bigger picture, knowing how things align. However, during this project being the only one executing it all I got so deep into details I needed reminders to take a pause at the alignment. During those moments I rediscovered the value of inviting people into the project. Who does not need all my gained knowledge to listen. Knowing somebody else understands the decisions was all the assurance I needed during those times. Communicating them is still something I thrive to improve.

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