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The Personal as the Political: The Everyday Resistance of LGBTQ+ WOC in the Netherlands

Sofia Del Valle
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The Personal as the Political:

The Everyday Resistance of LGBTQ+ WOC in the Netherlands

Del Valle, Sofia

Academic Director: Sterk, Garjan

Advisor: Frank, Chandra

Mount Holyoke College

Gender Studies

Latinx Studies

Europe, Netherlands, Amsterdam

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Working Definitions and Acronyms

LGBTQ+: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Plus. Such is the acronym that is used to indicate the various sexual orientations that exist outside of heterosexuality. The plus component of the acronym is important in that it indicated the infinite possibilities and labels that people may find the most accurate for them. I chose to use this term because I was not comfortable using a word like queer without having a full understanding of its implications within the Dutch context. Queer has many different connotations and legacies for different individuals and communities that range from derogatory to political affiliations. Such is not to say that LGBTQ+ is apolitical and is universally accepted but given my research limitations due to my positionality, it seemed like the most viable option for this project.

POC: People/person of color. I use this term to describe any individual who is not white and/or the larger nonwhite community because it is the most widely used and commonly understood phrase regarding minorities. Not everyone who may be labeled as a person of color feels comfortable with this word and offer alternatives such as People of the Global Majority. Some critiques of the phrase POC is that it does not accurately convey the ways in which colorism and anti-blackness particularly impact darker skinned people of color. I fully recognize and understand such critiques (and hope to address some of these claims within my positionality component), however due to the limitations of this study, I will be using POC.

WOC: Woman/women of color. I use this term to describe any self-identifying female who also identifies as a person of color. I was very intentional about making sure that my participants self-identified as women of color and that this was not something I was imposing upon them. I understand that the use of a colonial critique framework and the use of gender

categories carved out of colonial legacies may seem slightly contradictory but given the various limitations of this study, I will be using WOC.

Queer: In this piece, queer is being used as an umbrella term for sexualities and gender identities beyond heterosexuality and/or in reference to radical political formations in relation to such identities. I am using queer as I so understand it within the content of largely US centric Queer WOC feminist frameworks. Though I use queer to describe myself, I recognize that the word comes with a violent and painful history that for some still carries those same connotations. See definition for LGBTQ+ for more.

Stories: In this paper, I use stories very loosely to indicate ways of communicating one's voice. Stories can take many forms such poems, narratives, art, songs, visuals, etc.. I am recognizing that stories can be found both within my interviews and the explicit "stories" that my participants gave to me.

Citizenship: Throughout this paper, I will be referencing the idea of citizenship. I will be using the framework set by Alondra Nelson in her text *Body and Soul* (2013) which uses the idea of social citizenship which helps to differentiate between citizenship as simply having certain civil rights versus complete social integration and belonging. Such a reexamination of citizenship allows us to see it as an entirely social construction used to further subjugate minority groups.

Chapter I: Introductory Content

1.1 Introduction

The Netherlands is often a country characterized by tolerance and inclusion, especially in regards to sexual diversity. Having legalized same sex marriage in 2001, one of the first in the world to do so, the Netherlands has secured its spot on the map as one of the top “gay friendly” countries. However, upon further examination, we find that tolerance within the Netherlands is not all that it seems. Many scholars and activists argue that Dutch tolerance, rather than a strive for LGBTQ+ equality, is a guise to perpetuate racism and xenophobic political agendas. Such a debate necessitates an understanding of the ways in which the semantical power of “progressive values” in seeming support of the gay community serves to consolidate ‘the Dutch citizen’ and exclude all those who fall outside the bounds of such citizenship standards. As both a social exclusionary tool and legal apparatus, citizenship exists as a way to reify the citizen subject, and all its subsequent values, as white and male. The consequences of such rhetoric is that many members of LGBTQ+ community who fail to gain access into the sphere of Dutch citizenship face mounting discrimination that is too often disregarded. One such group is LGBTQ+ women of color, a demographic that is contending with, at minimum, the amalgamation of racism, sexism, and homophobia. This paper seeks to explore the experiences of LGBTQ WOC in the ‘tolerant’ Netherlands and more specifically, the resistance methods they employ within this space. Utilizing the analytical frameworks of resistance theory, I am relying on data collected from my participant interviews with LGBTQ+ WOC in the Netherlands and the stories that they gave to me outside of the formal interview. As a means of contextualizing the forces my participants experience, the first portion of my literature review will explore the topics of homonationalism, Dutch tolerance, and racism in the Netherlands. Following such background, I

will then examine scholarship surrounding resistance to help frame my participant's narratives. Lastly, as a lens for my research methodology, I will delve into women of color feminist theories surrounding the role of women of color in knowledge production.

1.2 Aims and Motivations of Research

I hope to look into the ways what LGBTQ+ women of color in the Netherlands are enacting resistance through their own definitions and conceptions of what forms resistance takes. It is important to me that this paper does not seek to put forward a fixed definition of resistance but rather convey and reflect what I have learned about resistance through my interviews and analysis. We often have been staunch ideas of what resistance looks like, which is often more organized forms of resistance like protests or direct actions. However, such a homogeneous idea of resistance limits who is deemed as an agent of resistance if such an individual is not able to participate within these forms of resistance. Though there is scholarship surrounding nontraditional forms of resistance, there still is largely a polarization constructed between organized resistance and seemingly less obvious forms of resistance, deemed everyday resistance (Scott 1985). In that way, I hope to invite more dialogue surrounding what resistance looks like and who has the potential to carry it out. Furthermore, my research seeks to center the voices of LGBTQ+ WOC through the valuing of storytelling as a legitimate form to impart and collect information. My participants told me their stories not just through their explicit answers during the formal interview, but also through their work given to me after the fact. I sought to uncover information surrounding my participants through both forms of data because I believe firmly that they have equal capacity to produce and circulate information.

In regards to my motivations, as queer Latinx woman in academia, I often find myself feeling lost amongst theories and texts that attempt to abstractly speculate about concepts that, by

virtue of my identity, I simply know to be true. Through the haze of inaccessible academic jargon, many students of color can feel incredibly isolated and undeserving of being in such spaces. It was not until I took a course my sophomore year, titled *Latina Feminisms*, and read amazing women of color authors that my perception of my role within academic settings and my capacity to thrive within institutions changed. Such a paradigm shift allowed me to see the power that comes within grounding one's knowledge in their experiences and when we position those outside traditional academic canons as holders of immense knowledge. Thus, I come to this paper having reflected thoroughly upon the place of women of color narratives within the academy and hope to mitigate such trends by revolving my research around the idea that no one can speak better to the experience of women of color than women of color themselves.

1.3 Methods and Methodology

1.3.1 *Research Ethos*

Before I even began looking for a research question, something that sat with me for a long time was how I wanted to conduct my research. As someone who tries very hard to be so conscious of my positionality to the spaces that I enter and engage with, the idea of being a researcher during my study abroad experience did not necessarily sit well with me. Engaging in research is an innately political endeavor that one should not just pursue blindly. Research and academia, as two highly exclusionary spaces, have both historically and to do this day served as potential sites for harm and violence towards oppressed communities. Research, as I understand its impact within the various communities I occupy, is largely a colonial project that exists to further impose Western ideals and hegemonic power. In other words, it is far too often a means to further produce the Other under the guise of imperialist speculation. It is important to recognize that whether research is qualitative or quantitative, at the end of the day, the results of

such studies always have very human consequences. To that end, this project is as much about my actual research project as it is the methodology of said research project. By gathering the stories of my participants, I sought to both disrupt what is traditionally thought of as belonging in academic spaces and honor the legacy of oral histories within communities of color. It is my belief that those who bear witness to their own experiences are the ones who hold the most knowledge about that subject and can offer worlds of insight and value never found in a textbook. It is important to recognize that theory formation extends far beyond the bounds of academia. I do not believe that academia is a sufficient vehicle in which to learn about disenfranchised communities as knowledge production through higher education is an inherently unilateral endeavor. Rather, I ascribe to the philosophy that the personal is very much a political landscape in which theories about how oppression and injustice manifest become most poignant. Thus, my methodology operates as a form of resistance within my larger research question about LGBTQ+ WOC resistance methods.

1.3.2 Interviews and Data Collection

Over the span of a month, I conducted four semi-structured in person interviews. I found the first three out of my four interview participants through both the convenience and snowball effect, with my initial participant having contacted me at the ISP presentation dinner. After the fact, my first participant got me in contact with the next two participants. The final interview was gathered through the dating application OkCupid. See appendix B for a screenshot of my dating profile. For my profile, I wanted to make sure that I was clear with any potential participants that my profile was strictly for research purposes. I sought to make sure that my participants would be the ones to reach out to me so that I would not be assuming any identities that they held or being an invasive in anyway. As such, I did not reach out to any participants on this app and only

interacted with those who messaged me first. I recognize that such a decision has impacted how many interviewees I came in contact with. Despite how open ended I attempted to make my profile, in terms of who I indicated to OkCupid that I was interested in, there are clearly participants that I may have closed myself off to by the very nature of it being on a technological dating app. Though one can access OkCupid on a laptop, which not all of my target population may have, it is most commonly accessed through a smart phone which is a huge point of privilege. The sole participant who I gained through OkCupid initially reached out to me through the messaging service on the application stating that they would like to help me with my research. Upon answering specific questions they had, they agreed to participate.

The only stipulation that I had for target population was that they were in the LGBTQ+ community and that they were a woman of color. Beyond gender and sexuality, I had no such restrictions on age, social class, profession, etc... Each interview lasted around one to two hours, including time set aside to explain the project and address any questions or concerns that the participants may have. All of my interviews but one were conducted in a public space which I acknowledge has the potential to influence the answers my participants gave me and their comfort level. My three interviews in public spaces took place in a café, university common area, and park respectively. Though public spaces have their clear drawbacks, as mentioned above, they proved to be the most feasible and convenient option for my participants. It was imperative to me that I remained as transparent as possible with my participants throughout the entirety of this study. I hold no ownership over the participant's stories and as such, it is of the utmost importance that I do not just haphazardly use their insights and deny them access to the decision-making process. I asked my participants if they had any opinions on they would like their data

formatted within my piece or if they would like any images, text to accompany their portion. See my appendix for the full script I read out to participants prior to conducting the formal interview.

This project seeks to utilize a multi method approach to research, through the collection of stories and traditional interviews, which looks to embody the fluidity of identity and borders. The very nature of my topic, by virtue of dealing with the themes of race, colonialism, and identity, is highly complex. Ergo, it makes sense that the manner in which such information is communicated is multifaceted. It is vital that there is an acknowledgment that asking for stories from my participants can demand labor, both emotional and otherwise, from my participants. For this reason, I always conducted a conventional interview session after first discussing with my participants if they wished to provide any additional stories in whatever form they desired. I made this component completely optional. My reasoning was that I did not want to impose the somewhat vague task of having my participants tell me their stories, but I also did not want to them to feel as though I was looking for a specific type of story. Thus, the initial question session served a means to help my participants not feel so lost but also allowing them to take the story concept whichever way they saw fit. Before I started the interview, I always asked my participants if they have anything that they would like to ask me (potentially about my positionality to the work, etc..). It is important to have an open dialogue pathway in a study so that it is not just the researcher barraging the participant with questions but that the participant feels as though they can engage with both the researcher and the study however they need. I made sure to let my participants know that all of their information would be kept confidential throughout the entirety of this process of beyond, unless they should so choose to be named.

1.3.3 *Positionality*

I made it clear to my participants that I am indeed an outsider into this community, despite being a queer woman of color, and that it was important for me to name the power dynamics present. In this section, I am going to unpack the ways in which my identity and the various spaces/roles that I occupy have inherently impacted this study. I identify as a queer woman of color, specifically a queer Latinx woman. However, I am lighter skinned and as such, my access to academic spaces is much greater than darker skinned women of color. In regards to my skin color, I found that I was generally lighter skinned than my participants, three of whom identified as black women. Given the clear power dynamics present in such an interaction, I do not discount the potential impact of this dichotomy on the answers my interviewees provided. Additionally, having a white mother who went through higher education permits me a greater ability to navigate such spaces. Due to my mobility within academic spaces, I am able to go to college and learn about concepts like homonationalism and theories on colonialism. Our society is constructed in a way that values higher education and the supposed elite knowledge accrued there. As such, there is much greater freedom of movement in the current capitalist system for those who have a college degree. Such is not to say that such access means that I hold more knowledge on the subject simply based on having gone to college. That being said, as a someone whose ancestors were colonized and who's family still deal with the consequences of that every day, I hold my own personal knowledge about colonialism and the impacts of white supremacy that traverse academic bounds.

Additionally, my relative proximity to whiteness through my skin color, and thus many of its privileges, means that I was able to study abroad for four months and conduct this research, an opportunity certainly not afforded to everyone. As a fluent English speaker, I am able to live in the Netherlands, a country in which many people speak English, rather easily; a fact that is

only exacerbated by being lighter skinned. There were many aspects of my participant's interview that I connected with as a queer woman of color, which made this project such an amazing thing to be a part of, however there also things that by nature of being an outsider I could not begin to fully comprehend. As a researcher, and as someone who is looking to engage with people's narratives in an ethical way, it is crucial to understand that the concrete implications of these stories will never impact me in the same way as they do the storytellers. I may be able to connect with my participants about being enraged over a police presence at Amsterdam Pride, but as someone who will leave to go back to the United States soon, I will not have to bear the brunt of such realities. On that note, it is especially important to discuss my positionality as a United States citizen. Though I am indeed moving from one Western hegemonic nation-state to another, the power and influence that the United States embodies, and that I carry by virtue of my nationality, cannot be disregarded.

1.3.4 Limitations of Study

Regardless of the attempts on my part to be as intentional as possible with my methodologies, this was not a perfect study. In this section, I will account for these limitations and explain their impacts on my study. However, as a result of my positionality and the inherent lens I have on this issue, this list is not exhaustive and for that I apologize. Perhaps one of the biggest restrictions of my study was the time limitations. Given the fact that I was in the Netherlands for four months, with one month carved out for research, I could not flesh out this project as much as I would have liked. In order to stay as true to my research ideologies as possible, I would have liked to engage with the LGBTQ+ WOC community in the Netherlands before reaching out about interviews. I remain cognizant that it is a lot to be asking my

participants to discuss something so personal with someone that they do not know. Such early interactions would have allowed my participants to potentially feel more comfortable with me. In connection to my time constraints and when my project began, I was limited to how much of the community I was able to reach out to. In this way, there are absolutely pockets of the LGBTQ+ WOC community, and the various intersections within that community (i.e. class and citizenship) that may feel excluded from my research. I recognize such concerns and am remorseful that I was not able to better attend to more of the community's needs. As previously mentioned in my section on data collection, due to the time constraints, two out of my four interviews had to be conducted in public spaces, more specifically either in a café, park, or university respectively. I am aware that the location of an interview, especially when it is in such a public space, has the potential to influence my participant's comfort levels and thus their responses. In that way, it is important that I do not make any overarching conclusions from my interviews.

Though this is indeed connected to many of my other limitations, such as time restrictions, my sample is very small. However, my goal with this research was never to be able to make any overarching claims about this community as it is not my place as both a researcher and outsider to this community. It was important for me to treat each participant, and all of their insights, as valuable in their own right. That being said, if I had more time and resources, I would have loved to interview more women of color. Furthermore, another limitation within my study is that the interviews were all in English. Moreover, it is not just that the interviews were conducted in English, but the initial contact and any contact thereafter was in English. A result of my monolingual abilities, the fact that the interviews were conducted in English means that there were indeed some words and concepts that struggled to be understood by both parties. In many

instances within the interviews, my participants would know what word they wanted to use in Dutch but struggled to find the word in English. Usually, my participants would be able to find the English word they wanted to use but it is important to acknowledge such struggle. I tried to be careful not to provide them with any English words as to not assume what they wanted to say or impose anything onto them. In this way, there becomes a harmful assumption that English is an all-encompassing language that has word/phrase/concept counterparts in all other languages. It is worth mentioning that it was never even a question that the interviews would be in English which speaks to the hegemonic power of the English language. I apologize to the participants of this study for enforcing linguistic guidelines, unconsciously or otherwise, that made it so their stories had to be translated. I follow the ideology that one's story is at its most genuine state when it is communicated in the language one feels most comfortable and at home. This is not to say that Dutch would have been the best alternatives because I make no assumption about the participants' preferred language or the one they feel holds their stories the best.

1.3.5 *Bias and Assumptions*

No researcher comes into a project without their own sets of biases and assumptions about what they may find. As a queer Latinx woman, I came to this project with ideas surrounding what the experiences of LGBTQ+ women of color are in a Western society. Moreover, as a Gender Studies major and Latinx studies, critiquing the academic sphere and understanding the specific ways in which racialized queer bodies are impacted by the neoliberal state are largely what I focus on in school. Therefore, I recognize the bias and set of assumptions that I have entered this project with and have made all attempts to alleviate their effects. Such biases are also accounted for within my above positionality section.

1.3.6 *Ethical Issues*

One of the most important things to me during this project was that it remained ethically responsible. My work cannot succeed in centering the voices of the participants if I do not ensure that I try to be as ethically sound as possible. However, there is no way that I will ever be able to make the interchange between myself and my participants completely ethical and equitable due to my positionality and the power dynamics present in research. We often ask women of color, especially black women, to perform emotionally laborious tasks under the guise of accessing their specific knowledge. Such performative allyship is often exercised under the banner of “just trying to learn how to do better.” I am aware that my research does not necessarily completely disengage from this practice, but I have tried to put as many protectors for my participants in place to alleviate such impacts as I can. The amount of emotional labor that I am requiring of them, especially one that goes uncompensated as per the IRB’s stipulations, is not something that should be overlooked. I recognize that my research topic is an inherently sensitive one that has the potential to be very triggering for some of my participants. I attempted to, without taking the attention off of my participants, share pieces of my story as they related to the topic at hand so that my participants would feel more comfortable. In general, I found that my participants reacted positively when I would reveal things about myself or turn the interview into a causal conversation format.

1.4 Literature Review

1.4.1 Homonationalism and Dutch Tolerance

One of the most commonly accepted tropes about the Netherlands is how tolerant of a place it is, especially in regards to sexual diversity. Both domestically and across the global stage, the Netherlands is seen as a very gay friendly country. However, many scholars attempt to

push back on this portrayal of the Netherlands and argue that that Dutch tolerance is only operationalized through a conception of the gay subject as white, male, cis, and upwardly mobile. In Mepschen, et al. (2010), the authors attempt to situate the so called sexual freedoms of the Netherlands within the context of an emerging antagonism to multiculturalism and the racialized Other. To contextualize such claims, it is important to look at the institutionalized terms used to police citizenship in the Netherlands. In 1989, The Central Bureau of Statistics introduced the twin terms *allochthon* and *autochthon* which, in Dutch, translates to ‘emerging from another soil’ and ‘emerging from this soil’ respectively to mark ethnic groups within the Netherlands. *Allochthon* describes any individual who was not born in the Netherlands or had their family born in the Netherlands for two previous generations. However, the CBS sought to distinguish the population even further through the use of Western and non-Western *allochthonous*. Officially, non-Western *allochthon* people included anyone who was born in Turkey, Asia Africa, or Latin America excluding those from Indonesia and Japan. However, in practice and mainstream discourse, *allochthon* and *autochthon* existed as categories dictated by one’s proximity to whiteness and European physical characteristics. As of 2017, the bureau stopped using the terms and instead adopted the label of resident with migrant background and resident with Dutch background. The newest phrases utilized by the bureau reveals a long held belief within Dutch institutions that to be from migrant background was to be inherently non-Dutch (Stark 2018). In such instances, we see a language of exclusion that is written into the very legal structures of the Netherlands.

Building off of Lisa Duggan’s theory of homonationalism, Mepschen, et. al work to position the rhetoric of modernity and development used in sexual politics as a weaponizing tool against communities of color. Duggan (2002) maintains that

homonormativity comes equipped with a rhetorical recording of key terms in the history of gay politics: ‘equality’ becomes narrow, formal access to a few conservatizing institutions, ‘freedom’ becomes impunity for bigotry and vast inequalities in commercial life and civil society, the ‘right to privacy’ becomes domestic confinement, and democratic politics itself becomes something to be escaped (p. 190).

Specifically, we see such the confluences of freedoms and equality propagated against communities of color, specifically migrants from Muslim majority countries. Such hostilities comes in direct conjugation with the bolstering of the Netherlands as a secular country, through the de-pillarization period of the 1960s. Depillarization describes “*the crumbling of the hierarchically organized religious and socialist subcultures (‘pillars’) composed of their own media, schools, organizations, social and cultural institutions and political parties,*” (Mepschen, et al. p. 966). Though, in theory, such shifts towards secularity denied Judeo-Christian religions access to the political and social ideological spheres of the Netherlands, it is important to recognize that secularity still seeks to perpetuate the values of Christianity. A primary example in which racist and xenophobic rhetoric has been weaponized in seeming “support” of the gay community was in 2001 when Iman Khalil El-Moumni denounced homosexuality, the same year that same sex marriage was legalized within the Netherlands, and chaos ensued.¹ In response to El-Moumni’s comments, many Dutch political figures vilified the Imam and the larger Muslim community for their “backwards” and “anti-Dutch” ideologies; most fervent amongst them being Dutch politician Pim Fortuyn, a white openly gay man (Mepschen et al., 2010). In such instances, Dutch politicians are able to employ a “*temporal narrative framing European modernity against Muslim tradition, where sexual freedom has come to stand, metonymically, for secularism and rational, liberal subjectivity,*” (Mepschen, et. al, p. 964). Consequently, the rhetoric and policies employed by the Netherlands that may read as blatantly racist and

¹ Hekma & Duyvendak, 2006.

exclusionary to POC become seen as merely protectorates of the Dutch way of life. Such a paradigm uncovers the culturization of citizenship which is described within the text as a move away from citizenship purely within the legal stratosphere and more reliant upon a set of moral values. Though citizenship as a legal apparatus has arguably always depended on an exclusionary moral value system, what these recent shifts show is the way that new demographics become absorbed into the bounds of the respectable citizen.

As we continue to see the promotion of the Netherlands as a progressive country through its LGBTQ policies, we find the LGBTQ+ community pushed into the mainstream and thus depoliticized and whitewashed. The previously mentioned marriage equality bill is one broadcasted by the Dutch as their mark of achieving LGBTQ+ equality. However, as such advances become confined to the legal sphere, a realm that is inherently exclusive, marginalized sects of the LGBTQ+ community are denied access to such benefits. By heralding equality as a marriage rights issue, we leave behind those within the LGBTQ+ community, read people of color, low income and undocumented people, who would be denied access to the privileges and benefits of marriage regardless of their sexuality. Overall, Mepschen et.al calls for a necessary disruption of the myth of Dutch tolerance and maintain that we should not mistake the absorption of some members of a marginalized group into the dominant power structure as total liberation for a community.

1.4.2 Racism in the Netherlands

Similar to the discourse surrounding the LGBTQ+ community within the Netherlands, there is a tendency to promote the idea of diversity in regards to racial and ethnic groups. As such, we see a hesitation, and sometimes outright refusal, by Dutch society to acknowledge its racist past and present. In particular, we find such a repudiation showcased in the inability of the

Netherlands to confront its colonial history. Afro- Surinamese Dutch scholar Gloria Wekker (2016) looks at the construction of the Netherlands as inherently “innocent” through the paradoxical relationship between the country’s violent colonial history (and reality) and its vehement denial of racism, and subsequently of racial difference. The fictitious tolerant nature of the Netherlands is one formed out of colorblindness and imperial mode of temporality, one which conceives of imperialism as a necessary venture of economic development and progress. Utilizing Edward Said’s concept of ‘cultural archive’ (1993), Wekker points to the Dutch academy’s longstanding disavowal of a colonial past and the means through which the control over such narratives exist as a key project of empire building. The act of controlling the discourse around colonialism and imposing a collective memory that does not engage with the colonial past is indeed an act of violence. In her text, *White Innocence*, Wekker references the growing discourse surrounding *Zwarte Piet*, or Black Pete, the Moorish Sinterklaas character who is often recreated throughout the Netherlands through blackface. Despite its overtly racist and colonialist implications, many Dutch people argue that the eradication of the figure would be the removal of an integral signifier of Dutch culture. The debates surrounding Black Pete, and its ties to childhood, speak largely to the way that racism and erasure of Dutch colonialism is embedded within the Dutch citizen since birth. Scholar Lieke Schrijver juxtaposes a 2013 pro-Black Pete demonstration, in which nearly three thousand people gathered in The Hague, against an anti-Putin demonstration that same year that sought to rally against homophobic legislation in Russia (2014). Such a paradigm allows us to see the ways in which the Dutch think about freedom and progressive values. The protestors were so very set to campaign against things they saw as unjust when it had to do with LGBTQ+ people, especially as it required the condemnation of another nation, but equally as vehement about keeping Black Pete. In both occasions, the Dutch were

protesting because they felt their national identity and beliefs threatened by a seemingly external force (be there Russia or the communities of color out crying Black Pete). With the case of the Anti-Putin protests, through the proclamation of discrimination, we see a consolidation of the Netherlands as the champion of gay rights and position the Dutch citizen as forever on the “right side of history”.

Additionally, we see the failures of Dutch society to reconcile with their colonial past through their ineptitude to make the distinctions between culture and race (Ghorashi 2014). As discussed in the previous section on homonationalism, we see that a critique of cultures, and especially when such cultures become placed within a hierarchal value system, has many embedded racialized notions. Thus, the rising hostilities against racialized migrant communities in the Netherlands become seen as rejection of “backwards” cultures rather than people of color in general. Though orientalist perceptions of non-western nations have always employed a rhetoric of underdevelopment, the September 11 attacks have emboldened politicians to deploy fear mongering tactics that ground such “backwardness” of non-white cultures in violence and terror (Ghorashi 103). As right wing politicians seek to construct an immense polarization between the values and lifestyles of the Netherlands and non-Western countries, such as Suriname and Morocco, it becomes more and more fathomable within the Dutch society exclusionary tactics are necessary. Thus, the Dutch citizen finds itself attached with specific principles, all political charged, that make it so that if one want to enjoy the benefits of Dutch citizenship, they must prove they have such ideals. As such, we see tolerance operating as a tool of assimilation into Dutch society rather than a true attempt to value and accept multiple cultures, ethnicities, and religious backgrounds.

Lastly, it is important that our understanding of the scope of racism in the Netherlands maintains an intersectional lens, especially as this study concerns women of color. Racism is not something that impacts all people of color equally, with gender heavily influencing the ways in which people experience racial oppression. To that end, legal scholar, and one of the founding minds on intersectionality, Kimberle Crenshaw (1991) calls on us to be wary of an identity politics in which we create a mass hegemonic minority group and ignore inter group differences. Many women of color feminists, specifically black women, have consistently been arguing for a more intersectional look into the manifestations of racism. One such voice is that of Philomena Essed, one of the Netherlands most esteemed scholars on racism. Through her text, *Everyday Racism: An Interdisciplinary Theory* (1991), Essed conducted an ethnographic study in which she interviewed black women from both the Netherland and the United States. Through such interviews, Essed formulated her theory on ‘everyday racism’ that outlines the racial discrimination that people of color endure on the micro, daily level. Specifically, Essed’s study found that black women are subjected to

everyday life in a White-dominated society [which] involves a continual battle against the denial of racism, against White centrism, against automatic in- group preference among Whites, against constant impediments to their aspirations, against humiliations, against petty harassment, and against denigration of their cultures (10).

Essed goes on within her piece to share that the sentiments of the women, from both countries, were that they felt dehumanized, hypersexualized, and made to be invisible. Though this is something that Essed herself acknowledged, it is important to note that Essed only interviewed black women with higher education degrees, namely university students and professionals. As such, though the experiences and narratives of Essed’s participants should not be discounted, it is

crucial that we remember to think about how the intersection of class has the potential to influence such findings. Regardless, Essed's study is groundbreaking in that it seeks to explore the specificities of the interaction between racism and sexism by speaking to the impacted group, not just by theorizing abstractly.

1.4.3 Resistance Theory

Though resistance seems like a largely straight forward concept, an academic field of study exists that seeks to analyze and theorize what resistance actually is. In this piece, I have chosen to focus on the emerging scholarship of everyday resistance, driven largely by the work of researchers Anna Johansson and Stellan Vinthagen (2013 & 2014). Everyday resistance, or infrapolitics, is a theory coined by anthropologist James Scott in *Weapons of The Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (1985) that describes acts of resistance that have been normalized and integrated into a routine. Vinthagen and Johansson (2013) conceive of “everyday” as the perceived ordinary nature of the act, through one could contest that ordinary and normal are all subjective descriptions. Throughout their publications, Vinthagen and Johansson (2013) critique Scott and many other resistance scholars (Routledge 1997)² for their focus on the political consciousness of the enactor when characterizing something as resistance. Instead, the authors stress that everyday resistance should be defined by the way that the act engages with existing power structures and the potential of the act to liberate, despite the intent of the individual. In contrast, the majority of resistance theorists understand organized resistance to necessitate a definitive objective of the enactor. Though I agree that organized resistance does

² Routledge classifies resistance as “any action imbued with intent that attempts to challenge, change or retain particular circumstances relating to societal relations, processes and/or institutions...[which] imply some form of contestation...[and] cannot be separated from practices of domination” (361).

require a minimum level of purposeful engagement, I put forward that is nearly impossible to fully discern the intention or consciousness of individuals, especially in the context of women of color. For women of color, black women in particular, there often exists the myth of the hysterical, angry woman which presupposes a lack of purpose or objective with their behavior. In that way, forms of resistance, unconscious or otherwise, may get lost in the fray.

A characterization of resistance like everyday resistance allows us to dismantle our preconceived notions of what a successful act of resistance looks like. Within the field of resistance studies, and larger society, there is much emphasis placed on resistance deemed as confrontational or organized. However, Vinthagen and Johansson attempt to disrupt the privileging of such forms of resistance by denoting the radical potential within acts of everyday resistance. There is a danger in characterizing infrapolitics as the path with the least possibilities for consequences or potential for enacting change. Such ideas assume that all bodies have access to the private sphere and do not exist in a constant state of hypervisibility. Black women are not granted entry into the neoliberal conceptions of the private space. Made to be hyper visible through a white supremacist power structure and through state mechanisms of control, black women are constantly enshrined within the public space and the privileges granted to white people within the private sphere is emphatically denied. As the lines between public and private sphere become infinitely blurred, it becomes harder to label certain actions as “undetectable.” The policing of authenticity of acts of resistance works to delegitimize nontraditional forms of resistance and has the potential to insist that, in the absence of protests, no resistance is going on. This is an important intervention to make in that it disrupts what is commonly thought of a political act. Deploying a Foucauldian notion of power, Vinthagen and Johansson seek to expand the field of resistance studies to understand resistance in relation to power not just as counter

power, or power from an individual of the minority against a hegemonic power structure, but as entirely multidimensional. The authors argue, “since resistance needs to be understood as oppositional, it exists in a *relation* to power, and, therefore, cannot be determined without a *power analysis*.” (26). The authors understand that resistance does not exist within a single point in time but within the context of generations of acts of resistance that preceded it. In this way, “*new forms of resistance connect to old forms by using them as a stepping stone, translating existing hegemonic elements, dislodging and recombining that which is available*”³,” (Vinthagen and Johansson, p. 14). Researchers Vinthagen and Johansson (2014) work to analyze everyday resistance through four categories: “*repertoires of everyday resistance, relationships of agents, spatialization, and temporalization of everyday resistance*,” (3). Such an analysis does not necessarily seek to teach us how to identify such acts but rather contextualize them within larger historical power structures. Repertoires of everyday resistance refers to the suite of resistance methods at the individual’s disposal borne out of the interplay between the cultural context of the individuals and power relations they must contend with (5). Relationships of agents looks at the ways in which an act of resistance become legible through the interface between the agents of resistance, the targets, and observers. It is important to look at everyday resistance as an intersectional power exchange in which the individual who is enacting everyday resistance is doing so within a larger network of interlocking systems of oppression. Such a paradigm shift requires us to see that agents of resistance are constantly navigating their own positionality to power and having their identities as resisters constituted by the targets of the act of resistance, and vice versa. In addition, the spatialization of everyday resistance is an acknowledgment that acts of resistance are in constant negotiation with the spaces in which they occur. Space, as both

³ Vinthagen 2006

a physical and metaphysical location, is embedded with power dynamics and socio-political implications that determine which groups are given access to spaces and autonomy over such spaces (Harvey 1990). Foucault (1980) states that the control of entry to spaces is a mechanism of control of power to discipline subordinate groups. To examine the spatialization of everyday resistance, Johansson and Vinthagen reference feminist literature (Orbach 1998) to look at the body, specifically in the context of female assigned bodies, as sites of resistance, both through the embodiment and enactment of resistance through the body. Similar to their arguments of the social construction of space and sites, Johansson and Vinthagen look the aspect of time in regards to everyday resistance. To illustrate this, the scholars use the notion of queer time to show how marginalized groups can employ alternative modes of temporality in their resistance attempts. Queer temporality understand a specific chrono politics that diverges from conceptions of time based off of milestones connected specifically to reproduction. Johansson and Vinthagen note that *“The most productive path...would primarily be to move towards the connection of time and space – to investigate the time/space of everyday resistance, in relation to investigating the intersecting of gendered, queer, classed and racialized practices of everyday resistance,”* (14). Thus, Johansson and Vinthagen ask us to look at the repertoires of everyday resistance that an individual has at their disposal as assembled through the power relations/dynamics, time, and space in which they transpire.

1.4.4 The Personal as a Site of Knowledge Production

In this section, I will work through various pieces that helped me frame my research methodologies and offered much inspiration for this piece. Such authors employ a women of color feminist critique to understand the ways in women of color’s experience are so oft

discounted. As I am using both my participant interviews and the written pieces my participants gave me for my analysis, it was important for me to understand the significance of using narratives and stories within qualitative research.

Through her text *This Bridge Called My Back*, Cherrie Moraga writes about the importance of “theory in the flesh” and understanding one’s personal landscape as an inherently political space in which we must navigate. In 1981, Moraga co-edited this work alongside fellow scholar Gloria Anzaldúa as an anthology of work by women of color speaking to ways they negotiate with their race, gender, and sexuality. To begin, Moraga’s notion of theory in the flesh works in direct opposition to the way that theory is often thought about; as cold and impersonal. Theory in the flesh is a call for women of color to realize the power within their narratives and to understand these experiences as constantly producing theory. In this context, theory is being used to signify a framework onto which one is able to analyze the world. Moraga articulates that the daily struggles and experiences that women of color go through are the true forms of racial and gender theory. Through a positioning of the personal as a theoretical landscape, we are better situated to reject the traditional modes of knowledge production and validate non-privileged narratives. Moraga, as well as many of the other authors in the collection, discuss the notion of storytelling as a valid means to learn and pass on information. Moraga requires her readers to inspect what narratives are left out of the conversation when only a select few are seen as capable of producing authentic truths. Across all spheres of academia, there are various canons that are perceived as ultimate knowledge holder who are able to dictate how authenticity and truth manifest. However, these canons, who are usually white, wealthy males, are not canonical because of what they know but because the knowledge that they choose to circulate serves to bolster the dominant power structure. Thus, Moraga’s conceptualization of women of color as

valid “knowledge holders,” acts as a destabilizing agent to these canons and traditional means of knowing (Moraga, xxi). In order to convey her argument, Moraga discusses how her experiences growing up as a light skinned Chicana continue to inform every aspect of what she knows to be true in the world. However, Moraga’s reflection on her past is not something that could be theorized within the walls of higher education, but rather it necessitated Moraga’s analysis of her own daily encounters. As painful as it is, Moraga works to process the ordeals within her life as an attempt to interpret the world and greater power structures. Furthermore, within *This Bridge Called My Back*, all of the authors operate within a multitude of forms to disrupt the tether between academia and “legitimate sources of knowledge”. This disruption is necessary for the personal experience to function as accepted theory and inform steps towards dismantling systems of oppression. The Chicana author conceives of this anthology as a battle cry for women of color to demand a, “*society that uses flesh and blood experience to concretize a vision to can begin to heal our wounds,*” (19).

Similarly, Theresa A. Martínez (1996) notes that theory has the power to determine whose narratives and voices are prioritized in both academic and social settings (Martinez 107). When we talk about violence enacted against communities of color, it is imperative that we also talk about the epistemic violence that occurs when people do not see themselves represented in academia. This incredibly damaging phenomenon ensures that people of color will come to the conclusion that they are not valuable enough to be holders and circulators of knowledge. Martínez describes the “unlearning” process she was forced to undertake as she realized that simply because versions of stories were coming from “legitimate” sociologists did not mean that different version of that narrative did not exist. Instead, Martínez was forced to participate in a radical reimagining of what it means for something to be adopted as truth. In regard to the

utilization of experiences, the author notes that while white feminists did utilize the tool of lived experiences, they remained “*seemingly fixed in the element of gender, ignoring the major elements of race/ethnicity and class,*” which can be severely alienating to women of color (109). As such, white women can be more easily adopted into the academic realm because their assertions do not require an examination of white supremacy. For women of color, it is not possible for them to center their feminism and activism around their gender purely for survival reasons. Thus, white feminist theories can be found at the forefront of many institutions while women of color feminist discourse is placed on the fringes and seen as an extracurricular.

Authors Cinthya M. Saavedra and Michelle Salazar Perez (2012) utilize testimonios inspired by Black and Chicana feminisms as a means of exploring and negotiating multiculturalism and identity. Testimonios is a research methodology rooted within critical race theory, specifically Latina/o critical race theory, that seeks to highlight the first-person narratives of communities of color within academic settings. Such a methodology is one that is as much about what data you collect as it is how you collected it and how you present it (Pérez Huber 2009). Both Saavedra and Salazar Perez argue that it is only through the examination of the lived experiences of women of color that we can effectively begin the journey of dismantling oppression. Specifically, the scholars posit that women of color must first work to strengthen the individual before we can come together as a collective, which can be done through the use of testimonios. Saavedra and Salazar Perez contest that, “for women of color in the academy, testimonios can provide a space for self-reflection of the internalized ways that one can embody and live out the very oppressions we desire to challenge,” (431). Similar to Moraga’s call for women of color to examine their own internalized oppression, these scholars find value in seemingly fringe modes of knowledge formation as a means to uncovering both the divergences

and linkages within our oppressions. Saavedra and Perez' argument is illustrated through the particular form the piece took as each author wrote their own testimonio as black and Chicana feminists, respectively, and then a joint reflection on their lived experiences. Though the majority of the authors discussed the lack of women of color voices specifically in the context of the academy, their reflections on the valuing of personal experiences can be applied to failures of society in general to honor women of color narratives.

Chapter II: Findings and Analysis

2.1 Participant Bios

In this section, I am going to briefly introduce each of my participants⁴ with information provided to me during our interviews before I share my findings. My first participant was Sabrina and she identifies as “South American, specifically from Suriname and a little bit of Dutch.” Her parents were born in Suriname but she was born in the Netherlands. Through Sabrina, I got in contact with Angela as my second research participant. Angela is a thirty five year old black woman and identifies as a lesbian. Like Sabrina, her parents were born in Suriname but she was born in the Netherlands. In 2016, Angela founded the Facebook group Pink Melanin, a closed group for LGBTQ+ WOC in the Netherlands, which Sabrina is a member of. My third participant was Bernice, a twenty eight year old “Afro-Dutch Caribbean girl.” As I will further explain below, Bernice uses the label of queer but not without entirely without hesitation. Bernice's parents were born in Curaçao but she was born in the Netherlands. Unlike my other participants who knew each other from the same social circles, I met my final interviewee, Natasha, through OkCupid. Natasha is eighteen years old and identifies as someone

⁴ All of my participants were given pseudonyms upon their consent.

on the asexual spectrum and near pan romantic. Both Natasha and her parents were born in the Netherlands but her paternal grandparents were born in Suriname.

2.2. Common Themes of Forces to Resist Against

In this section, I will be analyzing the three topics of things to resist against that my participants brought up most frequently during our interviews and the stories that they shared with me. Such themes are lack of family acceptance, racial markers of citizenship, illusions of tolerance, and lack of representation. For the sake of this project, I was not able to address all subgroups within the larger LGTQ+WOC community in the Netherlands. To that end, it is important to note that the categories below are by no means the only forces that my participants come up against or that the larger LGBTQ+ WOC community in the Netherlands face. Lastly, as with the very nature of intersectionality, all of these forces mentioned below do not exist independently of each other and the experiences of my participants are borne out of the interactions of the below forces.

2.2.1 Lack of Family Acceptance

Family was a common topic that was brought up during my interviews, specifically in regards to navigating one's sexuality with their family. As indicated within my literature review, communities of color are often written off within Dutch society, and many other Western spaces, as homophobic and intolerant. Such stereotypes then become the basis for certain cultures to be seen as in direct opposition to the progressive beliefs of the Netherlands, and thus not eligible to live here. However, it is important to contextualize such claims within a larger discussion of the underdeveloped troupe as a colonial project. As discussed in the Mepschen et. al piece, when Western countries bolster themselves as the most liberal and developed, and other non-Western countries as archaic and intolerant, they are able to base their policies and initiatives towards

immigrants off such rhetoric. That being said, this section is in no way attempting to demonize these families or make any overarching claims about the linkages between communities of color and homophobia.

In the very beginning of our interview, Sabrina spoke about her journey with her family and her sexuality, which began when she came out to them at nineteen years old. Sabrina had come out to them after encouragement from her then-girlfriend, who was white. At her girlfriend's house, Sabrina recalled that they could be very comfortable around her parents and that her girlfriend "couldn't understand why it was such a big deal" to tell Sabrina's parents. Though Sabrina did note that girlfriend did not force her to come out, the sentiments of her girlfriend exhibits the similar attitude disseminated throughout the Netherlands that everyone should just come out. However, such statements ignore that not all LGTQ+ POC individuals have the same means to coming out as their white counterparts. After telling her family, Sabrina's mother and sister had a very tough time with her coming out and did not speak to her for two weeks after the fact. Sabrina recalls her mother saying, "*How can you like girls because you go to church and it's not ok and what will our family think and what will they say?*" The reaction of Sabrina's mother uncovers the construction of the contradictory relationship between valuing one's family and coming out. Additionally, Sabrina's mother brought up the fact that Sabrina was coming out as someone who went to Church (she was the only one in her family who went every week) which again seeks to position her sexuality against something important to her. During this section of the interview, Sabrina noted how challenging the weeks following her coming out was, as her father was still in Suriname, so she was stuck in a house with people who would not speak to her. Thus, Sabrina was forced to contend with isolation from both

external, societal forces and familial influences.⁵ Likewise, Angela brought up that although her father has come to terms with his daughter's sexuality, her mother is still having difficulties with it,

I still have contact with her but only from the point of view as I am her daughter, not the lesbian side so I never told her about Pink Melanin. I'm sure she knows because it is a Facebook group so she sees it on my timeline so I'm sure that she knows but we never talk about this.

In this situation, we see that Angela's mother is only interacting with her to the extent that she is her daughter, but such interactions stop short of embracing her daughter as a lesbian. Such a reaction can be harmful for LGBTQ+ people, especially in regards to their family, because it means that they are forced to hide certain aspects of themselves.

2.2.2 The Racial Markers of Citizenship

In this section, I will discuss another theme that emerged from my participant data which is the racial markers of citizenship. Given the colonial ties with the Netherlands and Suriname and Curaçao (where my participants are from), it is important to discuss the realities of the marginalization that my participants face within the context of colonial violence. As so far that colonialism can be understood as a continuously ongoing enterprise by Western nations, we find citizenship to be an integral component of such an apparatus. Citizenship, though positioned as a neutral offset from the law, has immense social implications about who can and should belong within a space. Though all of my participants are legal⁶ citizens of the Netherlands, many of my participants explained the ways in which their access to the privileges of citizenship are consistently repudiated. For example, Sabrina spoke about the racial discrimination she faced

⁵ By the end of the interview, Sabrina mentioned that now her family is very accepting of her sexuality and shared that her mother and her girlfriend are practically best friends!

⁶ Though I posit that legality in regards to human beings is an inherent social construction.

during primary school which still has a lasting impression on her as an adult. Such thoughts emerged when I asked how she thought the broader Dutch society would perceive her identity and how such perceptions may impact how she thinks of herself,

So how people would perceive me is allochthon, even though maybe I could be born here and my parents could be born here. Because they see my skin color they assume that I am allochthon which I am but...It impacts me a lot because even when you first start school, we know that we have to work just a little bit harder than people who are autochthon. I don't think they do it consciously but they still put you in a lower academic level and that is something that I have to struggle with because of my skin color

In this portion of the interview, Sabrina stated that although she had tested and qualified for advanced classes, her teachers still put her in the less advanced courses. Though Sabrina's mother fought such academic decisions, we can still see educational tracking being used as a means to subjugate students of color (Covarrubias & Lara 2013). Sabrina's experience in school speaks to the bio-deterministic assumption made about people of color, black women specifically, that sees their capacity levels as innately inferior. Though we often think of colonialism as strictly something in the past, in reality it is an ongoing process that it constantly reproducing itself. One central apparatus to the colonial machine is through the denial of mobility of a colonized people, especially through the denial of educational access. Though Sabrina had her mother to fight for her, not all parents have the ability or knowledge to navigate the bureaucracy of the educational system. As such, many students of color are left in "lower" classes which then impacts their future career prospects and thus continues on the intergenerational cycle of poverty and marginalization.

Similarly, Bernice expressed that her inclusion, or lack thereof, in the Netherlands is bolstered by people's perception of her skin color,

My Dutch citizenship based on the color of my skin... If they see me they assume I'm from somewhere and then when I say I was born here they say, 'oh you're Dutch' and erase completely the Caribbenan-ness out of me.

Bernice's quote indicates that her access to the Dutch social imaginary comes at the cost of the erasure of her Caribbean background. As such, if one hopes to become embraced as Dutch, they must rid themselves of all traces of their background. Such a paradigm allows us to see that the neoliberal definition of diversity that is being operationalized conceives of inclusion as assimilation. During this interview, Bernice asserted that the claims that she does not belong in the Netherlands have no factual merits, as Curaçao is a territory within the Dutch Kingdom. Ergo, she is granted automatic Dutch citizenship even if she was born in Curaçao. Bernice's frustrations with the relative unawareness of the Dutch kingdom system speaks to the larger issue of the collective consciousness of the Dutch people. As Prof. Gloria Wekker described in *White Innocence*, the refusal of the Netherlands to understand its current reality in direct conjugation with the reality of colonized places (formerly or otherwise) manifests through collective knowledge. In the minds of most Dutch people, the geographical bounds of the Netherlands and thus, the reach of Dutch citizenship does not extend to Curaçao. I liken the situation to the semantical issue of the use of the term "America". Though many people from the United States may use the term American to describe strictly those from the United States, the Americas actually includes North, Central, and South America. Despite the logistical difference at play in the two examples, both exemplify the superiority complex of white Westerners and the influence of their hegemony that manifests in our day to day linguistic choices.

In the same way, Natasha discussed her experiences with being asked "where are you from?" since, as Natasha remarks, she "does not look really Dutch". Such a question assumes that, based on her features, she is not Dutch and must be from somewhere else. The questions that Natasha, and many other people of color face, are ones that white people in the Netherlands would hardly ever receive because their skin color legitimizes their belonging into the social

fabric of this country. Though we do not often discuss the psychological toll it takes on a person when they are seen as the perpetual foreigner, it can be incredibly taxing to be constantly interrogated about your identity. Bernice and Natasha's comments illustrate the racial markers of authenticity when it comes to determining citizenship. In Dutch society, and other Western spaces, citizenship and belonging is structured around whiteness as the point of neutrality. Beyond the physical markers of authenticity, both Natasha and Angela discuss the external pressures to legitimize their ethnic identities. Natasha explained that when she tells people she is Surinamese, they would accuse her first of lying and then ask if she could speak the language. Upon stating that she could not, Natasha would then be faced with questions about how she could be Surinamese if she does not speak the language. According to Natasha, this showcased that in the Netherlands, *"you can't be something if you can't prove it."* The notion of proof remained very evident throughout my interviews. For example, Angela discussed how being born in the Netherlands causes some contention for her in regards to claiming her Surinamese identity,

It is different because within Europe I am identified by outsiders as a black women but once I go to my home country they identify me as a well Dutch. They see me as black as well but they don't really see me as someone from the country because I was brought up in Europe so that's a little difficult.

Through Angela's quote, specifically when referencing how she is perceived in the Netherlands, we see that blackness becomes positioned as in contrast to the Dutch, European identity.

Angela went on to discuss a situation in which a family member stated that she was "not Surinamese" because she was born in the Netherlands. Many children of immigrants, especially if they are first generation in a new country, are often faced with conflicting opinions about who they are and where they belong. Similarly, I found such themes of navigating belonging while talking to Natasha. Natasha was my only participant whose parents were born in the Netherlands

and was a third generation Surinamese Dutch citizen. As such, she did not feel very connected to the Surinamese culture. Similarly, Natasha's father is not heavily involved with Surinamese culture, though sometimes they have Surinamese food at home. I learned during the interview that Natasha's grandmother did not want her son to learn her native language⁷. Though we did not get to discuss this at length during the interview, the fear of teaching your child your native language when in a new country, especially if it a move to a Western country, speaks to the regulatory nature of citizenship and integrating one's self into society. Often, when immigrants come to country, they are expected to, and often required through social and political pressures, to stripe themselves of any aspect of their cultural practices, language often being the first to go. The Netherlands in particular has staunch rules surrounding immigration tests, including the Civic Integration Test that all incoming immigrants are required to take that test one's capacity for the "*Dutch language and society*." However, those who belong to an EU/EEA country, Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Vatican City, United States of America, South Korea or Switzerland are exempt from taking it. Such stipulations allows us to the way that the Netherlands already presupposes a group of people, read largely White Europeans, who have already passed such litmus tests by virtues of their identities. Thus, we see that membership into ethnic or national groups are often demanded to be legitimized by things other than physical features as well, such as language or birthplace.

As the women above have discussed, women of color have historically been denied the rights and privileges of citizenship within the Netherlands. Even if one may be officially counted by law as a citizen, if one is not recognized within the social sphere as a citizen then they are

⁷ Though Dutch is the official language of Suriname, the people of Suriname primarily learn Dutch as a second language and speak a multitude of languages including Sranan, various creole languages, Sarnami, and various Maroon and South American Indian languages.

often made invisible and seen as inherently other. In such instances, to be othered is to be stripped of your humanity and personhood. Such a process of dehumanization is made entirely too visible when we look at accounts of police brutality. Bernice touches upon the violence that she has faced at the hands of the police as a queer woman of color, an issue hardly ever touched upon by the mainstream LGBTQ+ community in the Netherlands. Our current conceptions of violence understand it to exist purely within a victim-perpetrator paradigm and seek to erase legacies of colonialism and racism. To that end, the ways in which we think about violence does not encompass the distinctive ways in which violence gets marked onto the body. The actions of Black women, especially LGBTQ+ black women, are codified within society as violent and dangerous, due to our racialized perceptions of victimhood and culpability. Such connotations around victimhood and blackness are reversed in regards to white women who are cloaked in fictions of purity and cleanliness. As an individual that is not allowed claims over their autonomy, by virtue of being seen as an inherent threat, black women are othered and not seen as eligible to any forms of liberty touted by Western nations. Bernice revealed that she felt traumatized by her experiences with the police that she stated that,

So, they have the gay police and they are more sensitive to this issue, but if everyone is white then I don't care because I would rather speak to a black person who is maybe not gay but I know he is not going to discriminate me or say racist stuff to me in this fragile moment where I just need help. I'd rather talk with a black police and I don't care if he's gay, straight, whatever as long as he understands my position as a human being.

In her comments, Bernice is referencing the Pink Police, the facet of the Amsterdam Police Force specifically designed to attend to LGBTQ hate crimes. However, Bernice found that the Pink Police is inherently not built to serve all LGBTQ+ community members as it does not recognize the contentious relationship between people of color and the state. The Pink Police operated within an inherently paradoxical model as it completely disregards the reality of the

police, and various state institutions, as sites and perpetrators of violence against marginalized communities. As such, Bernice would rather speak to someone who shares her positionality as a black person and thus, is more likely to help them as a fellow human being.

2.2.3 Illusions of Tolerance

All of my participants recognized the commonly promoted rhetoric of tolerance surrounding the gay community that is utilized by mainstream Dutch society. However, the majority of my participants found that the reality is far different from this myth, especially for LGBTQ+ women of color. Specifically, Bernice noted that though people think of the Netherlands as a “gay paradise”, there existed a lack of overall social acceptance for LGBTQ people of color in the Netherlands. During this portion of the interview, Bernice referenced the rise of the right wing “gay-cervatives” in Rotterdam that sought to pit the gay community, albeit the white gay community, against immigrant communities. During my interviews, Bernice described a meeting she had the mayor of a city in the Netherlands, along with other members of the LGBTQ+ community. Bernice was the only POC in the room, along with one other black woman and a trans Latinx woman. The Latinx woman went on to discuss that the government should be helping LGBTQ+ asylum seekers that come to the Netherlands and keep them safe because the country also has migrants coming in who are not LGBTQ friendly. Bernice noted that although she understood that while the woman did not mean any harm through her comments, they could easily be twisted for the betterment of the “right wing mayor” who is hearing exactly what worked within his platform, all the more exacerbated that it came from a trans woman of color. Here, we see the cunning ways in which homonationalism becomes normalized and positioned as simply the “right thing to do”. In that same vein, Bernice described the false diversity that Amsterdam sought to promote through things like Amsterdam Pride, an

event which disregarded the needs of people of color. In addition to her organizing work around police violence, Bernice is coordinating Black Pride, an event which hopes to take on Amsterdam Pride's shortcomings. While we were meeting, Bernice expressed her frustrations over the planning process,

I had to sit in conversation with white gay men and tell them why it's important to have fucking Black Pride; why it's important to have certain debates in this white queer spaces. Yeah its crazy to defend this. They think they wanna be diverse but they don't wanna do the work to be diverse. Its superficial. We have the Amsterdam Pride but they have their ambassadors and that's how they show diversity I don't care if you have ten black fucking ambassadors I don't give a fuck but...if you're not making change then I don't care.

Bernice's trials over having to proof the necessity of Black Pride, despite Amsterdam Pride having black diversity ambassadors, elucidates the tendency of seemingly progressive societies to tokenize people of color under the neoliberal banner of diversity and inclusion.

Another detrimental offshoot of perpetuating the idea of the Netherlands as a LGBTQ+ tolerant space is that harassment against LGBTQ+ people goes unrecognized. Angela described an incident that she faced during a Kings Day Event with her friend,

We were at this bar...then out of nowhere comes these two guys and they try to fight us because most of my friends, they are kind of boyish and they look a lot tougher than me so they tried to fight us because they said, 'oh you wanna look like a guy so fight me like a guy.

Angela went on to say that once she challenged the guys to fight her, they responded by stating that they would not a female. In this scenario, the men are implying that because Angela's friends are more masculine presenting than her, they are somehow less female than Angela. The ways in which we conceive of the masculine-feminine, male-female dichotomy exists within an entirely racialized sphere. Women of color, especially black women, are registered within society as inherently more masculine and denied their access to womanhood. In this sense, the sexualities of black women, regardless of how they identify, in Western spaces are already

positioned as deviant. Something which is only exacerbated for black women in the LGBTQ+ community.

2.2.4 Lack of Representation

In this section, I will examine the challenges that my participants faced in regards to lack of representation around them. In this instance, I am using representation to describe a lack of fellow LGBTQ+ WOC around them to find solidarity and connection with. During our interview, Natasha revealed that she struggles to find fellow queer people of color to be friends with. The following is an excerpt from a piece of writing⁸ Natasha gave to me that illustrated this issue,

the lie is they aren't lies when it's not something that would ever come up in conversation? when it's so hard to speak up the words i want to say they get lost in my mind when you are gonna talk with a stranger and you know what you two are gonna talk about all you can think about is everything and anything that is even close to the subject when you feel safer with a stranger than with a friend who you have known for months or years the reason for that is probably that it wouldn't come up in conversation with that friend y'know it's that something you'd talk to a different friend about because that other friend isn't poc or queer

In this piece, Natasha writes about communicating with a stranger about topics that she could not otherwise discuss with her usual group of friends because they are not POC or queer and thus, the topic would not come up. During the interview, Natasha specified that though she does have friends who are POC and friends who are queer, she does not have a friend who is a queer person of color. As such, the conversations that she may want to have about her queerness or her race cannot be had through an intersectional lens. One of Natasha's closest friends is Moroccan and they can talk about a lot of things, including ethnicity, but as Natasha is not out to her, they cannot talk about "everything". Additionally, Natasha does try to find online friends through Instagram or queer apps and though she does enjoy talking with them, the majority are white.

⁸ See the appendix for the unabridged version.

Likewise, Sabrina explained her struggles coming out in a time where she did not know many other LGBTQ+ women of color or get to see similar stories depicted around her,

When I was younger...Facebook wasn't there. So, all you knew was the stories of the people around you. And at school, in high school, I was the only black girl who was openly out and there were a lot of white girls but their stories were not the same as mine.

In homonationalist societies, individuals whose experiences do not follow the norms can find themselves feeling alone and without people to find support. Especially when you are growing up and attempting to navigate your identity, to not have people that share such identity and set of experiences can be very isolating.

2.3 Common Themes of Everyday Resistance

In this section, I will be exploring the narratives of my participants to identify what I saw as acts of everyday resistance using Johannsson and Vinthagen's analytical framework as referenced in my literature review. From such framework, I located three preliminary characteristics of everyday resistance to identify them within my data:

1. The act does not necessitate the intention or political consciousness of the actor.
2. The act has the potential to enact change, specifically through its recurrence over time. In this way, this act is not necessarily a direct enactor of immediate change.
3. The act is something that would otherwise be seen by the general public as ordinary.

I do not think that the framework should be used as a set of rules to delineate what is labeled as an act of everyday resistance nor am I attempting to put the experiences of my participants through a checklist. I am merely using the above characteristics as a starting point.

2.3.1 Community Building

Within this section, I will be investigating community building as a form of everyday resistance. Community building is a very broad concept but in this context I am conceiving it to

be anything that looks to bring together two or more members of a specific community.

Throughout my interviews, I found that many of my participants engaged in some form of community building with other LGBTQ+ WOC. In 2016, Angela created the Facebook group Pink Melanin which is closed group for LGBTQ+ women of color in the Netherlands. Angela largely saw Pink Melanin as a social group, which held monthly in person meetings.

During the preliminary stages of Pink Melanin, Angela recalled questions that she received which sought to interrogate the closed nature of Pink Melanin. In response to this, Angela noted that LGBTQ+ women of color have different needs than their Caucasian counterparts that include staying close to their roots. As such, Angela stressed that any Pink Melanin event always has some component of culture in it,

we do keep in touch with our backgrounds and our cultures because we don't have any other way to express ourselves or any other closed community where we can do this so I think it is very important for the most colored people.

Pink Melanin is unique in that it does not just offer a social space for a LGBTQ+ WOC but, as Angela states, it seeks to satisfy the specific needs of this group. Angela explained that during Pink Melanin meetings, she attempts to make sure that everyone is able to feel included and “*demonstrate that they are good at,*” since the members of the group are from all socio-economic backgrounds and range from teachers to artists to professors. As such, the group is also attempting to honor and acknowledge the ever present intersection of class in their community. Angela noted that at the current moment, the group was more focused on the social aspect and cultivating a tight knit community before moving onto political action. Sabrina is a member of Pink Melanin and was the person who gave me the contact information of Angela. My discussion with Sabrina revealed the positivity that Pink Melanin brought to her life,

It was like coming home. It was like we have conversations about things that when you talk to white lesbians they just don't understand like what I told you about my white

girlfriend and I tried to explain to her that it's not the same. It's more difficult for me they don't really understand so when they see other people from Suriname and Curacao everywhere and they have the same exact story as you.

Similar to what many of my participants, specifically Natasha, discussed, not everyone in your life is able to relate to you. Sabrina's remarks exhibit the beauty and power that can come when you find a community in which you see yourself and your stories reflected. Sabrina's mention of home also speaks to the capacity of Pink Melanin, and other spaces of community, to exist as a means of queering kinship and offering the comfort of familial structures when you may feel let down by your biological family.

I see Pink Melanin as an act of everyday resistance because, as stated above, Angela did not see the group as being political but rather a means of develop a support network for LGBTQ+ WOC in the Netherlands. Though in my eyes Pink Melanin is very much a political endeavour, the branding of Pink Melanin as a social group and the lack of deliberateness on the part of Angela to make the group a political organization allows it to fall under the category of everyday resistance. That being said, the notion of something being apolitical does not truly exist because everything and everyone is embedded with socio-political implications. However, this what not something I sought to stress to Angela because it is not my role to tell her how she should be framing her organization. In terms of the potential of Pink Melanin to bring about change, I argue that the act of building a community that is able to have workshops and discussions about relatable content, like parenting as a lesbian woman of color, in a white dominated society is ultimately an act of taking up space. As discussed in the Johansson and Vinthagen piece (2014), acts of everyday resistance are always undergoing spatialization which means the acts are constantly negotiating and navigating the spaces exist in, and vice versa. As Pink Melanin stands today and continues to expand, they are constantly demanding more space

and access to the social imaginary of the Netherlands which has the potential for newfound liberation. What's more is that the impacts of venturing into newfound kinship structures have the potential to eventually rupture the nuclear, heterosexual model that bolsters Western society. Women of color as a collective, forming ideas and solidarity, is an inherent disruption of the Western space that have historically served to silence them.

2.3.2 Creating and Imagining

In this section, I will be exploring the act of creating and imagining as a form of everyday resistance. I found that all of my participants in some form engaged in creating something; whether that be creating art, community, or self-care mechanisms. I include the notion of imagining here to speak to the power of producing and generating things that may not be so tangible.

When I asked Angela about the origins of Pink Melanin, she replied that it began after she ended her "sitationship" of a few months,

I was thinking that I am sure that I am not the only one going through this and I just wanted to get to know people of my sort because I don't know a lot of LGBT people back then. I had a group of friends but it was only maybe about 5 and I felt kind of alone and I just wanted to talk about these kinds of issues and I spoke to one of my friends and she told me well.. I asked her if there was a Facebook group that I could join and she said, 'as far as I know there is nothing, maybe you should open up the group.' And I thought about it for one day and the next day I decided to open this group

The origin story of Pink Melanin is that the group was essentially fashioned through a dreaming of something that did not yet exist. Though Bernice sought out a community of women she could relate to, one did not exist and thus, she manifested it into being. Dreaming, and its intrinsic relationship to creating things, was something that Bernice spoke about at length during our interview. She asserts that,

Dreaming and imagining a new world is a form of resistance that we black and brown people should practice more. To believe and use imagination... To dream is the realest thing that you can do and to believe in your fantasy.

Bernice conceives of dreaming and imagining as a form of resistance because it is seeking to manifest an entirely new reality for yourself in a world that continues to deny your existence.

Bernice is not only referring to imagining large scale revolutions but imagination on the micro level as well. For example, dreaming of taking a vacation with your family while you're at a job that you hate. Bernice is also working to organize Daughters of Ivory, a black queer archive.

Through Daughters of Ivory, Bernice hopes to push for,

intergenerational conversations because I think it's really important on who's shoulders we're standing on. And in the 70s you had a really booming era in the Netherlands of black and brown communities and a lot of things happening like a radio station and they had their own book store.

One of the most compelling things about a black queer archive is that it is a project that aims to be a living collective memory, constantly reshaping itself in the present and future but only through a critical examination and recognition of the past. Through the intergenerational aspect of Daughter of Ivory, Bernice hopes to honor the tradition and power of dreaming that began with her ancestors,

they imagined a certain freedom, fought for it, even died for it knowing that they would never enjoy this freedom that they are fighting for. Knowing that someone had a dream and that was dream was worth fighting for, dying for.

Bernice is articulating that dreaming is an immensely formidable act when we think about all the dreaming, imagining, and fantasizing that previously went into the strides that our communities have made. Though communities of color are far from being liberated, no one can deny the emotional and physical labor that has gone into the changes we see today.

In regards to physically creating things, many of my participants engaged in writing and poetry. Around four years ago, Natasha began writing almost every day. Though she does not

remember the specific reason she started, Natasha remembers feelings “very lonely and down” as a major factor in beginning. Natasha writes about many different things but she says she mostly writes about her day or how she is feeling. Though most of the time she keeps her writing private, Natasha also shares her writing with her friends. In this way, her writing exists not just as an individual action but as a part of an engagement with the collective. Though she is often writing about her day to day interactions, Natasha uses a line from Alice in Wonderland of “falling down the rabbit hole.” The use of the Alice in Wonderland quote, something that is inherently fantastical yet very much based in reality, reflects the notion that dreaming as a tool of resistance will always have its implications in real life. Likewise, in her poem, Sabrina speaks to the power of imagination and the potential the lies when we try to fashion a world in which we are unafraid,

We feel safe in our little world
we know what to do, how to feel, how to act
If we let that go
there's no telling of what might be...
Stop living life being afraid
Because a life lived in fear is not a life lived at all.

Sabrina's poem, which she first posted on Facebook in 2011⁹, is about people's concerns with being accepted and living by the norms, something that she thinks is largely driven by fear.

The idea of fear, and eluding it, was also a theme that Angela discussed in her interview.

Despite her mother's disapproval of her sexuality, Angela will bring up Pink Melanin events as a form of resistance to “trigger” her mother into asking her about the group as she tells her mother

⁹ See the appendix for the unabridged version.

that she cannot come to family events because of a meeting. Though such interactions may last only a few seconds, it is so crucial because Angela is crafting a life that makes her happy, despite knowing her mother's feelings about her sexuality. Angela is rejecting the idea that she needs to follow the norms set in place for her by others to lead a happy life and somewhat fearlessly challenging said norms.

I classify the aforementioned actions as everyday resistance because creating things, be that tangible objects or ideas, always has the prospect to disrupt the status quo. Women of color are typically understood as passive subjects who are not allowed to have a voice. My participants described to me ways in which they look to harness their voice and locate their perspective as one worthy of existing. The viewpoints that my participants have by virtue of being an LGBTQ+WOC offers them a point of view for their writing that no one outside that community has. hooks (1989) postulates that this particular site of marginality offers "the possibility of radical perspective from which to see and create, to imagine alternatives, new worlds," (24). Angela's specific act of everyday resistance stood out to me because a single occurrence of her telling her mom she cannot come to dinner because she had an event may not have immense probability of enacting change. However,

2.3.3 Identification of The Self

In the beginning of all of my interviews, I inquired how my participants identified in regards to their ethnicity and nationality as well as their sexuality. I did this so that I would know how to refer to them throughout the interview without making any assumptions. Half of my participants identified as a lesbian. During my interview with Bernice, when asked about her sexual orientation, she articulated that the conventional vocabulary used by the LGBTQ+

community in the Netherlands is not one that she can relate to. Bernice emphasized that she does not,

feel like homosexuality, the way its defined, is part of my history. It's a European way of looking at sexuality so when you ask me now how do I identify in terms of my sexuality, there is no word for it yet because I use the word queer but I would like to identify myself according to the tradition that I am coming from. And my body and my history.

Bernice understands homosexuality to be an identity category that correlates to a set of binaries and histories that are not her own. She described her journey with the terms she used which began at bisexual, then went to lesbian, and now is using the word queer though she still feels as though it is still not sufficient. Additionally, Bernice tried using words within Papiamentu, her dialect from Curaçao, or from a Surinamese language that described two women of live together, however she ended up not using these. The implications underneath Bernice's search for words speaks to the notion that all words carry a politic and a history, many times a violent one.

Upon asking my interviewees how they identified in regards to their ethnicity and nationality, no one stated that they were just Dutch. See section 2.1 to see how each participant specifically identified. Rather, I received answers that ranged from hyphenated Dutch identities to "mostly Dutch" to "...with a little Dutch". While nationality is typically thought to be purely a legal, objective status, the modifiers that my participants used speak to a greater understanding of national identity. Given the history of terms that the Dutch government used to designate national and ethnic backgrounds such as allochthon and autotomy, Dutch society clearly has finite ideas surrounding who fits within the Dutch national identity. I comprehend the previously mentioned acts as everyday resistance because I recognize their trajectory towards affecting significant change. I would argue that to identify in a way that acknowledges the complexity and fluidity of one's national identity in the context of their ethnicity is an act of everyday resistance. Though it may present as a small thing, when one person begins to use an identity beyond the

norms, it has the possibility of spreading and allowing other people to see the infinite ways one can characterize their ethnic and national identities. Despite the fact that the Netherlands may seek to polarize itself as a country of just those with a migrant or Dutch background, my participants are working towards a destabilization of such a dichotomy upon the recognition that, due to colonization, identity is so much more complex. Additionally, in the case of Bernice, it is indeed an act of everyday resistance to reject the labels utilized by mainstream society that seek to further maintain binaries established by the Western world. Bernice's repudiation of the label homosexual and lesbian is a recognition that the current configurations of the LGBTQ+ community in the Netherlands is predominantly configured for the white gay subject, thus speaking to the issues of homonationalism. Overall, I suggest that shaping an identity based on one's feelings and experiences, rather than formulaically, opens up the possibilities for a greater reliance on self-identification rather than those imposed by the state and society.

2.4 Connections to Organized Resistance

As I have now outlined the common themes of every resistance in which I found my participants participating in, I will now explore to the potentials of everyday resistance to stimulate organized resistance. I make no such overarching claims concerning any formulaic link or pathway between the two, for that is its own research project, but rather suggest the potential for a link. I base this section off of something that one of my participants Bernice said.

Throughout her interview, Bernice spoke about her ideologies surrounding resistance,

Resistance is self-love, the first part really is an act of self-love. A radical act of self-love. Every day that you get up as a human being, especially being black or a POC, you are resisting. You are resisting forces who don't want you here, who erases your identity or the act of existing. So, I like to break it down to the very basic thing. And then you can take this force and place it on different places.

I find that if we employ Bernice's ideas surrounding everyday resistance, we are better able to see how acts of everyday resistance actually serve to bolster organized resistance. Bernice was one of my only participants who engaged in what is commonly thought of as organized resistance, such as the organizing of Black Pride and participating in demonstrations against police brutality. However, she finds that she is only able to carry such forms of resistance after performing her everyday of resistance through getting up in the morning and embodying self-love. She stated in her interview that when she is engaging in a protest or some type of organized resistance with other people, if that other person is not coming to the table with a base level of self-love then she would rather they not be there,

because if you cannot love yourself and find a moment to wake up, shower, put on decent clothes and make it feel like you have a right to exist then I have nothing with you if you come to a demonstration. Do you even know why you are there? Do you understand that our liberation are bound to each other? I need you to understand that you are a part of me as I am with you. If I am free in the Netherlands but I know that people in Palestine are not free then how can I be free? If I know that the Dakota Pipeline was happening knowing that my bank ING is supporting them, so then how can I talk about freedom is all these things are linked to each other. so just take it from this micro relationship to the macro relationship with the state, government. If you don't love yourself I understand that you don't give a fuck about someone who is dying right now. I think if you really love yourself as a human being, how can you say to another human being I don't care about your freedom. For me that's something about humanity and being human. Maybe I'm lost in this but this is my belief.

She finds that along with loving and valuing yourself comes with loving and valuing others. She sees that in order for someone to be able to find compassion for other people, one must first have compassion for themselves and a foundational understanding that all liberation is inextricably linked. Such an understanding allows us to begin to see the interdependence between every day and organized resistance.

3.1 Conclusions

My research aimed to explore the forms that resistance takes for LGBTQ+ women of color in the Netherlands. Engaging with a women of color feminist critique, I gathered data through the narratives found within both the explicit pieces of writing that my participants gave me and their formal interviews. Utilizing the theory of everyday resistance, my findings indicate that it is necessary to include formations of everyday resistance when discussing the resistance methods of LGBTQ+ women of color in the Netherlands. As based off my participant's data, I found that the four common forces that my interviewees were resisting against were lack of family acceptance, racial markers of citizenship, illusions of tolerance, and lack of representation. In terms of the everyday acts of resistance that my participants partook in, I postulated that they were community building, creation and imagining, and identification of the self.

I discovered that the majority of my participants did not engage heavily within organized resistance strategies and did not speak necessarily to a specific political consciousness or intent when speaking about resistance. It is necessary to utilize the configuration of everyday resistance that does not focus heavily on the intent of the individual when enacting the resistance on the everyday but rather the potential impact of the act itself. Moreover, it is important to disrupt the idea that everyday acts of resistance are trivial or not as valuable as more conventional means of resistance. Rather than creating a strict dichotomy, it is crucial to see that it is the interplay between everyday acts and organized resistance methods that create opportunities for change. Though the value in organized resistance is clear, we should remember that not everyone has the ability to participate in protests or demonstrations. The integration of everyday resistance into our conception of resistance as a whole allows us to envision who is capable of enacting

resistance. Furthermore, it permits a paradigm shift of moments in which we see resistance occurring. Theories on everyday resistance allows us to see that resistance is constantly happening all around us and has always been going on. Such a newfound consciousness is infinitely powerful for it allows oppressed people to reconceive the temporal landscape of the revolution.

3.2 Recommendations for Further Research

In regards to future research, I argue that more research into the everyday resistance methods of LGBTQ+ WOC is necessary and vital to the ongoing legacies of this community. It is important that we explore these forms of resistance and potentially undergo longitudinal studies for the impact that these actions have on affecting widespread change. Given the limitations of my study, my target population had to be generalized and my conclusions could not be as nuanced as is necessary. However, it is important not to homogenize the experiences of individuals within this community and note that the intersections of class, age, skin color, body type, citizenship status, sex assigned at birth, and many other things have the capacity to impact how one navigates the world. Thus, I would like to see more research on everyday resistance done that is able to speak to such multitudes of experiences and identities within this community. Lastly, I would recommend more research to be done that looks at the linkages between organized and everyday resistance.

3.3 Appendices

3.3.1 Interview Script

This is the script that I read out to all of my participants before the formal interview began:

“I am a student from the US studying gender and sexuality in Amsterdam and I am completing an independent study project asking the question what does resistance look like for LGBTQ+ WOC in the Netherlands? If at any point during the interview, you don’t understand something or would like me to rephrase please let me know! As part of my research methods, I will be using stories and narratives in my project, both to honor the legacy of storytelling and oral history in communities of color and to disrupt traditional forms of academic knowledge production. One of the ways that I hope to utilize storytelling in my piece is to give you to option to have time at the end of the interview to tell your story in whatever way you feel relates to this topic (this can take the form of audio, video, poem, a conversation, etc..). It is not something that you necessarily have to give me now (or at all if you would just prefer to do the Q+A and nothing more) and you can send it to me whenever is most convenient for you. I am only telling you this now so that I am not springing it on you at the end. My overall goal in using storytelling is to acknowledge the often-harmful role that researchers can embody and ensure that my project centers and honor the narratives and voices of my participants rather than just me trying to tell your story. I want to be as transparent as possible with you throughout all stages of this project and would be happy to send you drafts before they finalized to make sure that you are ok with any choices that I made. You will remain anonymous throughout all of this unless you chose not to be. Is it ok with you if I record the interview so that I can transcribe it later on? Do you have any questions for me about the project or anything you want to know before we start the interview?”

3.3.2 Ok Cupid Dating Bio

This is a screenshot of my OK Cupid Dating profile.

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the OKCupid profile of a user named Sofia, who is 20 years old and located in Amsterdam. The profile is set to 'Gay, Woman, Single'. Her self-summary states she is a queer Latinx student from the United States studying in Amsterdam until May, currently completing a research project on how LGBTQ+ WOC in the Netherlands define and enact resistance. She asks for messages from those interested in participating in her research and notes that all identities and information will be kept confidential. Her current goal is 'Looking for women, within 84 km, ages 18-99, short & long term dating.' The browser's address bar shows the URL 'https://www.okcupid.com/profile' and the system tray at the bottom indicates it is Monday, 1:12 PM.

3.3.3 Sabrina's Poem

November 14, 2011

Live your life being the best you can be

Why do we restrict ourselves?

in reality all we do is

lose little parts of ourselves

trying to conform to today's view on what is normal,

on what is acceptable...

Aren't we suppose to follow our heart

listen to our true feelings
and be the best person we can be
stay close to who we are
instead of changing into someone else
just to please others and find acceptance?
We're so focused on whatever it is
that we are trying to achieve
on whatever we're trying to prove
to the people around us
that we miss out on the little things that make life worthwhile
It's sad that we can't hold on to that free spirited child
that wants to discover
that doesn't care about what others think
that can stop and just enjoy the sunshine
or the first leaves that fall in the autumn
When we grow up
we tend to lose our inner child
the part of us that is free
and has no boundaries
sees beauty in the little things
that we can miss when we are grown
Maybe it's that we're afraid
not of what others might think
But afraid of what might become of us when we do let go
will we still be as strong as we are now?

Will we still have all the control?

We feel safe in our little world

we know what to do, how to feel, how to act

If we let that go

there's no telling of what might be..

Stop living life being afraid

because a life lived in fear is a life not lived at all. (14-11-2011)

3.3.4 Natasha's Writings

the lie is they aren't lies when it's not something that would ever come up in conversation? when it's so hard to speak up the words i want to say they get lost in my mind when you are gonna talk with a stranger and you know what you two are gonna talk about all you can think about is everything and anything that is even close to the subject when you feel safer with a stranger than with a friend who you have known for months or years the reason for that is probably that it wouldn't come up in conversation with that friend y'know it's that something you'd talk to a different friend about because that other friend isn't poc or queer or doesn't like that kinda music or that specific tv show i feel like it's close to when you are new to something you want to know everything about it but when you have known this thing for quite some time and are by now familiar with it is less interesting to think about that or you think that those questions don't matter anymore because you're pushed.. well more like pulled into a different direction like different topics and not just all topics.

13:44, 11-02-2016. 13:45. In the season of Spring there's a certain rabbit that keeps hopping through the fields. 13:46. I guess today is just one of those days on which I don't really want to feel some things. I feel the turning of my stomach while I'm thinking about nobody, but you. 13:48. And of the blue in every day I'll say nothing but the enduring pain that hasn't left me for months 13:50 I've fallen down the rabbit hole and I winded up being nowhere at all. 13:51. 14:14 I am feeling not sooo good and I was just listening to the whole of Death Of A Bachelor by Brendon Urie. Up till almost the end of Golden Days. Do I really need to find words to figure out how I feel right now? I just feel miserable and I don't want to be tired. I'm lost in a train which doesn't have any alive passengers except me and I'm very afraid. I've just awoke and I don't know how I got here. The sky outside is as grey as the rushed steel that went sharp against the silver which then burst open and let out a great gold and orange light which burns to look at. I closed the blinds I could close near to me. And the smell of lost and forgotten days has been around here for a very long time, perhaps even longer than anyone would want to remember. The curving of the hills outside distracts my eyes. I glance to the very right corner of my eye. I quickly grab my forehead with my hands, my rough skinned hands

which bare the lost and enduring pain I haven't felt in months long. My head hurts and I can begin to feel the sleep going through my whole body and eventually forcing me to fall down. (14:30) I now not only wake up rested but also feel a great acoustical vibration of music that I haven't yet heard and felt before. I can feel dried up tears of sadness and wandering madness. But I can also no longer hear the rushing clanging of the metal wheels of the train moving against the railroad. (14:34) I could hardly think or dream of anything but the light that had burst out of the sky when I first came to realise how far lost I was. (14:35, 14:36). 12Feb

3.3.5 Excerpts from *My Gender is Not Black* by Hari Ziyad (2017)

This is an article specifically mentioned by Angela during the portion of the interview in which I asked her about any story she would like to contribute. The article was originally published on AfroPunk.com. The below excerpts from the article were highlighted within the article by the author,

“I am only now realizing that this is because Blackness ruptures the laws of gender just like the laws of the state seem intent on rupturing Black life.”

“This pressure to salvage something of this anti-Black world rather than reject it fully is part of why we insist on going out of our way to prove a manhood and womanhood that was never ours to have in the first place at the expense of trans, non-binary, and queer Black folks alike.”

“To argue that “my gender is Black” is not to ignore our different experiences within Blackness, or to erase the unique struggles of different gender nonconforming individuals.

“My gender is Black” is also not an argument against using terms that dictate gender for Black folk.

“Gender identity under whiteness is a tool, not an end. How do we get to that end, that world in which all of our genders or lack thereof aren't used as the basis for our inhuman treatment? That is the question.”

3.3.6 Recommended Books from Natasha

The following are book titles that Natasha specifically mentioned after our interview:

- The Art of Being Normal by Lisa Williamson (2015)
- Coraline by Neil Gaiman (2002)
- If I was your Girl by Meredith Russo (2016).

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