Living In Between Worlds: Influences of ethnic identity and sense of belonging amongst first- and second- generation Ghanaians in the Netherlands

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Influences of ethnic identity and sense of belonging amongst first- and second-generation Ghanaians in the Netherlands

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 The journey to this research

When I was twelve years old, my parents made the decision to move to the Netherlands in the hopes of my brother and I pursuing a better education. Being born and raised in Paramaribo, Surinam I experienced an immense culture shock upon arriving in the Netherlands. This move away from my home country meant that I became part of the Surinamese diaspora in the Netherlands. To elaborate, a diaspora can be understood as "a scattered and fragmented population far removed from its original land owing to momentous historical circumstances, including voluntary immigration, forced migration, refugee dislocation, or... enslavement" (Glazier 2005: 1). Because I was born in Surinam but was now living in the Netherlands, I also became a first-generation individual suddenly needing to find my place in Dutch society. Naturally, this did not come without any challenges.

Being mixed with West-African and Indian heritage, I have big black curly hair and brown skin. In Surinam it is common for people to be of such mixed ethnic backgrounds[1], we call this *Moksi.* Because of this, I felt very secure in my ethnic identity, which refers to a person's sense of self in terms of their membership to a certain ethnic group: in my case 'Surinamese' (Liebkind 1992; Liebkind 2001; Phinney & Alipuria 1990; Liebkind & Vedder 2001 all cited in Berry & Sam 2006: 78). Now looking back, I realized that this simultaneously resulted in a certain "unknowingness" of myself. When most people around you look like you, you are less likely to be put in a position to question yourself. For the first time in my life after moving to the Netherlands, I was confronted with my ethnic identity as something that felt "different". I started to ask myself questions that I never thought about before. These questions uttered 'What does it *really* mean to be of Surinamese ethnic identity? How do people view me and how do I view myself?' Throughout my teenage years growing up in the Netherlands, I grappled with ideas around ethnicity, racism and exclusion. Later at

[1] Due to the Trans-Atlantic slave trade and the transport of contract workers from different parts of the world, Surinam acquired a variety of ethnicities (such as West African, Indian, Indonesian etc). Thus, Surinam's history of colonialism has resulted in many of these descendants living in the country today, to be of mixed ancestry (Suriname population 2022)

college I delved deep into diasporic identities, the journey of my ancestors and the journey of other people who deal with the same dual nature of belonging to a diaspora and living in the new country they have settled in. Although having made the Netherlands my "home", I found solidarity and comfort in conversing and exploring my ethnic identity through others belonging to the Surinamese diaspora as well, as we shared a common ground: our homeland.

Consequently, one aspect that has always sparked my interest is how members of such diaspora groups engage with each other and the country they live in. Investigating this phenomenon first-handedly became my motivation for this study. The groups within diasporas that sparked my interest the most were individuals who were born abroad in their homeland (first- generation) and individuals who were born in the Netherlands but have at least one parent who was born abroad (second-generation). Not only was this a personal incentive as a first-generation individual myself who may have second- generation children, but it was also one of sociocultural importance. As of June 2022, almost 26 percent of the Dutch population (comprising first- and second-generation individuals) has a migration background (CBS 2022c). Thus, this percentage amounts to about 4.56 million people in the Netherlands that belong to a diasporic community (CBS 2022c).

Table 1: Largest diaspora groups in the Netherlands (CBS 2022c)

Six largest diaspora groups in the Netherlands		**Population count**
1.	Turkish	435 012
2.	Moroccan	421 638
3.	Surinamese	360 210
4.	Indonesian	347 781
5.	German	341 085
6.	Polish	225 277

Of the total population in the Netherlands, about 11.3 percent has a western migration background and about 14.5 percent has a non-western migration background (CBS 2022c). This comes down to about 2.57 million people that have a non-western migration background (CBS 2022c). CBS defines people with a western migration background as someone from a country in Europe (excluding Turkey), North-America, Oceania, Indonesia and Japan (CBS 2022a). Furthermore, they refer to someone with a non-western migration background as a person from a country in Africa, Latin-America, Asia (excluding Indonesia and Japan) and Turkey (CBS 2022a).

Table 2: People with a migration background in the Netherlands (CBS 2022c)

Migration background	Population count
Dutch	13 132 692
Western, 1st generation	1 078 542
Western, 2nd generation	913 746
Non-Western, 1st generation	1 447 818
Non-Western, 2nd generation	1 124 142

Given these numbers, it is pivotal that we understand the lived experiences of diasporic groups in the host country as a result of specific discourses and through practices and institutions. Despite its large number of diasporic communities, there are only several scholarly works done on identity, home and belonging of non-western migrants groups in the Netherlands (Weteringen 1999: 1; Eijberts 2013: 1; Jong 2012: 67). Of these studies, most of them focus on the largest diaspora groups present in the Netherlands today, such as the Turkish, the Moroccans, the Surinamese and Indonesian (See table 1).

But one diasporic group which amounts to only about 23,000 people often goes unnoticed, namely the Ghanaians (Publinc, 2017). This study will contribute to this gap by providing new insights that have not been researched before. As the Ghanaian diaspora in the Netherlands is a small group compared to the other diaspora groups, research on how they position themselves and experience their place in Dutch society is limited (Onga'yo 2019: 1; Knipscheer & Kleber 2007: 369). This research aims to contribute to this gap by

attaining a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of first- and second-generation individuals of Ghanaian descent in the Netherlands. Moreover, it aims to offer new insights to the field of diaspora and identity studies by taking into account this understudied group.

Furthermore, for Ghanaian individuals in the Netherlands this study may also offer a new understanding of themselves, hopefully prompting self-reflection about their own identity as a diasporic Ghanaian and how this identity relates to their experiences of belonging and home. Moreover, I believe that my research generates insights that are relevant beyond Ghanaian individuals in the Netherlands, as it can be used as a case study or comparative study for other (West African) migrants in Western countries. Diaspora and migrant identity are topics that are of relevance beyond this case, as many similar aspects and patterns can be found across nations and ethnic groups.

In order to acquire a fuller comprehension of first- and second-generation individuals of Ghanaian descent in the Netherlands, the following research (sub) questions will be asked:

- What factors influence ethnic identity and sense of belonging amongst first- and second- generation individuals of the Ghanaian diaspora in the Netherlands?
    - What material and immaterial elements of Ghanaian culture influence diasporic consciousness amongst the diaspora in the Netherlands?
    - What constitutes place- and politics of belonging amongst Ghanaians in the Netherlands?
    - How do first- and second- generation Ghanaians in the Netherlands experience double consciousness and situational identity?

1.2 National Context: Ghanaians in the Netherlands

Ghanaians have been labeled as the “silent” migrants, namely for their hard working yet discrete nature (Publinc 2017). Ghana is a West- African country that borders Burkina Faso, Cote d’Ivoire and Togo (Onga’yo 2019: 95). English is the official language, but Twi is the

most commonly spoken language amongst all ethnic groups[2] (Ong'ayo 2019: 95). Ghana's population is 32.5 million people as of August 2022 (Worldometer: Ghanaian population 2022).

In the years between 1970 and 1990, several migration waves of Ghanaian to the Netherlands took place. The first major migration wave was in the late 70s, when many Ghanaians left their home country and traveled to the Netherlands for a better life, primarily because of Ghana's deteriorating economic circumstances (Obbink 2017; Vijf Eeuwen Migratie n.d.; Ong'ayo 2019: 134). Then in the 80s, a new wave of migration took place because of the country's severe drought, its political instability and the eviction of almost a million Ghanaians out of Nigeria (where many Ghanaians initially fled to) (Obbink 2017; Vijf Eeuwen Migratie n.d.). Then, in the period between 1996 and 2014, the Netherlands experienced another significant increase in Ghanaian migration. This could be attributed to the increase of the second- generation Ghanaians in the Netherlands (Ong'ayo 2019: 134). In addition this was also the result of family-based migration, followed by labor and studies (Ong'ayo 2019: 135). It is very common for one family member (usually one parent) to move abroad first and later invite those left behind to join. This is part of family reunion/union or family formation (Anarfi et al. 2000, cited in Onga'yo 2019: 112). Current migration patterns from Ghana are usually individual or family-based (Onga'yo 2019: 95). Today, about 26,000 Ghanaians reside in the Netherlands, with almost more than half of the population living in Amsterdam (almost 13,000 people), especially in the region Zuid-Oost (Alle Cijfers 2021). However, this number omits the unknown amount of undocumented Ghanaian individuals (Obbink 2017).

Alle Cijfers is an open data website with online statistics and sources, compiled from institutions such as CBS and Office of Education or DUO (Dienst Uitvoering Onderwijs: Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap).

As a starting point, when looking at the statistics of Amsterdam as a whole, more than half of its population (56%) have a migration background (Alle Cijfers, 2022a). Of this group, around 36% have a non-western migration background (Alle Cijfers, 2022a). Moreover, zooming in on the Bijlmer (Amsterdam South-East) where many of my interlocutors reside,

[2] Ghana consists of a variety of different ethnic groups, namely: the Akan, Ga-Adangbe, Mole Dagbani, Ewe, and Guan (Onga'yo 2019: 95).

71% of the people in this neighborhood have a non-western migration background (Alle Cijfers, 2022a). Hence these statistics show that the majority of Amsterdam, more specifically the Bijlmer, is a melting pot of different cultures from Turkey and countries in Africa, Latin-America and Asia (Alle Cijfers: 2022a)

1.3 Context within the field

To situate my research within the field of identity studies, it is helpful to first touch upon the study of *identity development* (also called identity formation, identity construction, or process of identification). This refers to the psychological description of how people form their identity throughout childhood to adulthood (Bell 2010: 205). With its roots in psychology, identity development laid the foundation out of which much of identity research built off of from the 20th century to today (Bell 2010: 205). Erik Erikson (1950) who founded the psychological study of identity, adapted Sigmund Freud's psychosexual stage model of childhood into his own model (Bell 2010: 206). Erikson's eight-stage model describes a person's psychosocial development for each stage of their life from infancy to old age (Bell 2010: 206). While the origins of *identity development* started with psychology, we can still observe its interdisciplinary nature by the integration of cultural ethnography in Erikson's framework. Namely, when emphasizing the importance of certain developmental tasks in each of the stages, Erikson argued that these tasks can be culturally influenced and achieved in a variety of different ways, but with a consistency in primary sequence and general age present in each stage (Bell 2010: 206). Thus, Erikson's psychosocial model states that people are designed to extract identity content from different fluctuating and ever changing cultural resources they are confronted with throughout life (Bell 2010: 206).

Erikson's developmental model was widely received in academia and eventually also led to the popularized cultural phrase *identity crisis* (Bell 2010: 206). This states that identity is often formed and integrated in childhood, only to be renegotiated later throughout adulthood when confronted with drastic life changes (Bell 2010: 206). Although Erikson's work is widely referenced in the social sciences and humanities, his model faced some challenges due to its theory-driven framework and rigid stage-model (Bell 2010: 206.

Moving beyond this critique, Erikson's concept of identity paved the way for the developing mind to be studied from a variety of different disciplines in identity studies (Bell 2010: 206).

Furthermore, the notion of *self-concept* is an essential feature in the construction and development of one's identity. Although defining this term is difficult due to its interdisciplinary usage, self-concept typically refers to people's perception of themselves in terms of who they are and what they are like (Baumeister & Vohs 2007: 797; Ronald 2010: 209). Self-concept relates mainly to a subjective experience of how a person perceives oneself (Baumeister & Vohs 2007: 797; Ronald 2010: 209). As the self-concept is a general umbrella term from which many other concepts stem, we may look more closely at the following terms that are relevant in the context of this research.

Verkuyten (2018: 79) argues that *social* identity refers to the relationship between an individual and the environment they are in. *Social identity theory* explains how the self-concept is related to group membership and group and intergroup behavior (Hogg 2007: 901). This theory describes the part of a person's self-concept which is formed by their membership of a social group and the value they attach to that membership (Hogg 2007: 901). Within various fields, social identity theory has become an integral component of analyses concerning intergroup and group phenomena such as racism, discrimination, prejudice and stereotypes (Hogg 2007: 901). While social identity comprises different subfields such as gender, class and ethnicity (Phinney & Alipuria 1990: 172), this research will focus on the subfield of ethnicity, more specifically ethnic identity.

Chapter 2. Theory and Concepts

The focus of this research is to attain a deeper understanding of the experiences of first- and second-generation Ghanaians in the Netherlands. The following key studies and concepts will provide this study a theoretical framework which will inform the findings.

2.1 Diaspora

The idea of being loose, scattered and fragmented seems to be a prevalent theme in scholarly discussion about the term *diaspora*. For example, this is evident from Glazier's definition mentioned before, referring to it as a scattered and fragmented group (2005: 1). But much like Glazier, Clifford also has a similar definition of diaspora asserting it as "a loosely coherent, adaptive constellation of responses to dwelling-in-displacement" (1999: 254). Similarly, Duarte (2015: 317) and Ribeiro (1999: 45) both share a comparable view that a diaspora is a heterogeneous group who differ in origin, social class, age and education level, as found in their research on Brazilian diaspora in Australia and the USA.

Cohen's 1997 book called 'Global Diasporas' further specifies this by stating that all diasporas have nine features that intertwine to create different diasporic experiences. These include the following: a dispersal from the homeland that is often traumatic; an expansion from the homeland in search of trade, work or empire; a collective memory of the homeland; an idealistic notion of the homeland; a return movement; strong ethnic consciousness; troubled relationships with new homes and hosts; a feeling of solidarity with other co-ethnic members; and the possibility of a new life in a host country that is tolerant (cited in Kassam, 2016, p. 13).

Building off of this, a question that is then relevant for this research is: can a certain diaspora group, although scattered and differentiated from their homeland, experience a shared identity or consciousness? Cohen explores this issue with the concept of *diaspora consciousness* which is defined as "a strong and enduring group consciousness about the homeland, and feelings of solidarity more or less shared by the members of a diasporic collectivity in the host country" (1997: 184-187).

Cultural practices related to food and music are amongst the most distinct ways to foster 'home-building', which refers to creating the sense of being 'at home' in the host

country (Hage 1997: 100). Food generates an “intimation of familiarity” as there is a common knowledge on how to prepare it, cook it and eat it (Hage 1997: 109). Furthermore, it provides “practices of communality” when diaspora groups gather with fellow group members (think of family and friends) to share food from the same homeland (Hage 1997: 109). Music also plays a similar role in home-building within diaspora groups as it functions as a “conduit to the imaginary world of the homeland” (Hage 1997: 107).

In researching how Ghanaians position themselves in Dutch society, it is helpful to investigate if this diaspora group indeed experiences a shared consciousness that ties them together. And if yes, which material and immaterial elements of culture influence this diaspora consciousness? Looking into these influences might generate a better understanding of the ways they still uphold their Ghanaian roots.

2.2 Ethnic identity

As mentioned before, ethnic identity is another term that stands central in this research. Firstly, ethnic identity stems from the term *ethnicity,* which is defined as a felt belonging to a certain (assumed) ancestry and origin (e.g. Cornell & Hartmann 1998; DeVos 1995; Roosens 1994 all cited in Berry & Sam 2006: 79) . Across identity studies, there is no widely agreed upon definition of ethnic identity. Defined broadly, *ethnic identity* can thus be seen as the component of one’s self-concept that has to do with their connection with an ethnic group or groups (Kim-Gervey 2010: 429). As Berry & Sam note (2006: 79), one’s ethnic identity is both achieved and ascribed. This is because on the one hand, one cannot choose the ethnic group they are born into (Berry & Sam 2006: 79).But on the other hand, a person’s ethnicity is also achieved, as it is an individual choice as to what personal meaning one attaches to it (Berry & Sam 2006: 79).

Furthermore, Phinney (2003: 66) describes *ethnic self-identification* as “the most obvious and straightforward aspect of ethnic identity”. This term refers to the group label or name that an individual may ascribe to themselves (Phinney 2003: 66). After an individual moves away from their home country, changes may occur over time in relation to their ethnic self- identification (Berry & Sam, 2006: 80; Phinney 2003: 66). Examples of cases like

these, may include people being confronted with the dilemma of retaining their own ethnic label or taking over that of the host country (Berry & Sam 2006: 80). For instance, in this research (self) labels may include the country of origin: Ghanaian or a compound or bicultural term (hyphenated identities): Ghanaian- Dutch or taking over the new country of residence fully: Dutch (Phinney 2003: 66). Here, we can find differences in first- and second-generation individuals as the first usually label themselves by their home country and second usually show compound labels (Phinney 2003: 66).

When looking at cases of visually identifiable migrants, this ethnic self-identification then gets challenged, as they may get ascribed an ethnic label by other people regardless of their own idea of identification (Berry & Sam 2006: 79). Furthermore, these migrants do not have much choice in terms of self- identification, as they may identify with the host country but will still not be seen as such because of their apparent phenotypic characteristics (Berry & Sam 2006: 79). Although cultural aspects like language and customs may decrease over time and generations, physical racial appearances do not. People are then judged by their ascribed identity at birth (skin color), instead of their achieved identity (national identity) (Ronald 2010: 44; Kottak 2015: 127). Scholars Lee and Zhou denote this phenomenon with the term *immigrant shadow* in which migrants are often "shadowed" by their ethnic physical appearance, which often leads to members of the host country to label them as "foreign" (Lee & Zhou 2004: 322).

Furthermore, for ethnic groups that are racially identifiable, a strong ethnic identity may be felt as a reaction to negative experiences with the majority group (Phinney 2003: 76). Tajfel and Turner first suggested in their Social Identity Theory in 1986, that minority groups may assert their ethnic identity when confronted with discrimination or prejudice as a way of dealing with threats to their sense of sense (cited in Phinney 2003: 76). Examples of research that attest this is Felix-Ortiz's study of Latinos and Latinas in 1994 and Romero and Roberts's study of a diverse group of adolescents in 1998 (cited in Phinney 2003: 76). These studies suggest a link between discrimination and ethnic identity (cited in Phinney 2003: 76). Moreover, Rumbaut's study of children of immigrants in the USA in 1994 found that people who experienced more discrimination were usually less inclined to identify with the country of residence (cited in Phinney 2003: 76). Consequently, such discrimination might be the cause for a stronger ethnic identity among first- generation individuals (Phinney 2003: 76).

Another important aspect of ethnic identity is the relationship between ethnicity and religion. Because ethnicity has to do with how a group views and engages with their bonds of common origin, religion plays an integral role in that process (Calvillo & Bailey 2015: 59). Thus, “consciousness of a common destiny or linked fate” can also be significant for ethnic self- identification as well (Calvillo & Bailey 2015: 59).

Studies have shown that a fundamental role in maintaining ethnic identity can be attributed to religion, especially in its social dimension (Mazurek 2021; Calvillo & Bailey 2015). Furthermore, religion is also part of the most principle sources of collective identity (Mazurek 2021: 2). Geertz (1996) states:

> "religion is a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic” (cited in Davis 2009: 60).

Here the social aspect of religion is highlighted. Essentially, Geertz argues above that religion can be seen as a manifestation of culture that creates a bond which binds communities together (cited in Davis 2009: 60).

Orsi and Alba (2009) explain how churches may provide cultural capital, which involves the use of languages, symbols and rituals derived directly from the homeland and in this way allow ethnic identity to be forged and maintained in the host country (cited in Calvillo & Bailey 2015: 59). Consequently, Min (2010) argues that these symbolic elements create a bridge with the home country and generate a constant renewal of a sense of common ancestry and memories of a shared past (cited in Calvillo & Bailey 2015: 59). Thus, religion may enhance a group’s ethnic identity due to its retrospective elements such as cultural devotions and practices (such as in church) retained from the home country. In turn, this supports a sense of ethnic commonality which may have a unifying nature.

Lastly, the concept that ethnic identity may vary depending on different settings has been explored. Many social anthropologists have signified the importance of taking into account social situations when attempting to analyze ethnicity and ethnic relations (Okamura 1981: 452; Kaufert 1977: 126; Barth 1969: 19). This approach takes a situational stance to ethnicity, where there is an emphasis on the variability in social relations and social contexts (Okamura 1981: 452). This perspective challenges the idea that the concept of an ethnic group follows from its identification with an “objectively defined, shared,

uniform cultural inventory or with common normative patterns of behavior that are assumed to be consistently adhered to" (Okamura 1981: 452). Essentially, this perspective speaks to the idea that ethnicity is not a fixed phenomenon with certain mandatory adherences but must rather be understood as a loose and fluctuating concept.

The first scholar to combine the two notions of ethnic identity and social situation into situational identity, was John N. Paden (1967) in his research on ethnicity in urban Africa. Paden (1967: 268) states that the premise of situational identity lies in the idea that certain contexts may establish which of an individual's communal loyalties or identities are appropriate. An important note in this concept is that its variability is related to the person in question's perception of a situation (Okamura 1981: 452). Namely, this means that there is a certain agency and ability to 'adapt' or 'change' one's assertion to a particular ethnic loyalty due to the social context one is in. Thus, research in social science has supported the idea that varying situations influence the effects of ethnicity on behavior.

2.3 Sense of belonging

One concept that connects all these notions together, is that of *sense of belonging*. Sense of belonging can be understood through two dimensions, namely *place- belongingness* and the *politics of belonging* (Antonsich 2010: 644). Place- belongingness connects to how an individual envisions their idea of home as ascribed to a place (Antonsich 2010: 644). Politics of belonging is less connected to personal ideas of belonging but more to the social aspect of belonging (Antonsich 2010: 649). He stresses the importance of acknowledging both of these dimensions as vital to our understanding of sense of belonging (Antonsich 2010: 649).

One's sense of belonging is often inextricably linked to "discourses and practices of socio-spatial inclusion/exclusion" (Antonsich 2010: 649). The boundaries of a group are delineated by these discourses and practices, separating ingroup from outgroup, "us" from "them" (Antonsich 2010: 649). This boundary demarcation is the very foundation of the politics of belonging as it conflates belonging to a place with belonging to a people group. Through this conflation, the politics of belonging become synonymous with identity politics (Antonsich 2010: 649).

Antonsich explains how group membership is granted (or not granted) through processes of negotiation between those seeking belonging and those with the power to grant it. This negotiation can range from a more abstract sense of belonging, to more concrete forms of belonging such as citizenship and resident permits (Antonsich 2010: 649). However, the legal and political belonging in the forms of citizenship or residence permits are not always congruent with the level of a social sense of belonging, as we will see in this research. Beyond political rights granted by institutions, feelings of recognition and acceptance from society are needed to truly gain a sense of belonging (Antonsich 2010: 649)

According to Antonsich, the problem with the politics of belonging arises out of the tendency of dominant ethnic groups to "fill the notion of belonging with a rhetoric of sameness, which clearly prevents any recognition of difference" (Antonsich 2010: 650). To be granted group membership, one must uptake the dominant group, actively rejecting any aspects of their own identity that are incongruent. Furthermore, even if one decides to undergo this full assimilation, certain aspects of oneself that may be different from the dominant group – such as skin color or place of birth – are simply unchangeable (Antonsich, p. 650). Thus, the attempt at gaining 'real' belonging is often futile for those that differ from the dominant group in visible and permanent ways.

Antonisch's analysis of the politics of belonging is highly relevant to this research because it sheds light on the complex and multifaceted nature of sense of belonging. It helps us understand and identify dualities and nuances in the experiences of belonging among Ghanaians in the Netherlands.

2.4 Living in between worlds

Another important concept that is relevant to this research is that of *double consciousness*. The concept was first coined in the book 'The Souls of Black Folk' (Du Bois 1903). He based this term on the internal conflict that he himself, along with many other African- Americans, experienced being both black and American. Double consciousness refers to one's awareness and negotiation of these two identities (Ronald 2010: 236). Because they both signify respective sets of ideals and privileges, they cannot be reconciled nor dominated by

the other (Ronald 2010: 236). Du Bois (1903) described it as "[a] sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others" (cited in Hinchey 2018: 9). He theorized that this double consciousness results in a "twoness", a duality of "two souls, two thoughts", or a "double self" in regards to one's identity (Du Bois, 1903, cited in Hinchey, 2018, p. 9).

Du Bois argued that the black American can never fully enjoy all facets of being an American, as his black identity subjects him to imposed restrictions (Ronald 2010: 237). Here, there will always be judgment based upon assumptions of their inferiority to their white American counterparts in which the doubly conscious person will recognize the hierarchy of racial identities (Ronald 2010: 237). Du Bois stated that these individuals must not only anticipate being subjected to limitations normalized by law in a racist, oppressive white society, but also anticipate being subjected to the customs and judgements they receive as a result of their apparent identity as black (Ronald 2010: 237). Thus, he states that a black American is caught in a dynamic relationship, one where limitations are imposed but a constant attempt to push boundaries is simultaneously present as well (Ronald 2010: 237).

While Du Bois laid a pivotal foundation in understanding situations of social inequality and creating the conceptual framework of double consciousness, he focused only on African- Americans in the United States. Because the feeling of living in between worlds and experiencing a double identity surpasses the African- American context, this can be connected to different diaspora groups living in other host countries as well. This research will investigate double consciousness amongst first- and second- generation Ghanaians in the Netherlands. This concept can offer interesting insights when looking at the black experience in the Netherlands and what it is like being pulled in two different directions: being Ghanaian and being Dutch. Du Bois's notions of living within a two-ness and experiencing a double identity will be researched.

2.5 Racism and discrimination in the Dutch context

As this research is focused on individuals of Ghanaian descent who live in the Netherlands, research that is specific to the Dutch context may be fruitful to utilize. Examples of such

research include Essed's Everyday Racism (1999:3) and Wekker's White Innocence (2016 157).

Philomena Essed's work on Everyday Racism geared her attention to the micro-level of racism and people's everyday experiences with racism that often seem to be overlooked (1999: 3). She stresses the importance of these micro-level interactions as every day, interactional forms of racism are intimately connected to the larger structural context in which they occur. Everyday interactions that seem to be "normal", at least for the dominant group, tend to be infused with racist notions (Essed 1999: 6).

She found that for ethnic minorities, everyday experiences in a white-dominated society often involve a constant battle against petty harassment in the form of racially charged jokes, casual hostile comments, negative stereotypes and other discourse that makes them feel as if they do not belong (1999: 6). This sense of not belonging is only further exacerbated by the normalization of these everyday racist practices and the denial of these petty harassments as a whole.

Essed explains the cumulative nature of everyday racism: the interpretations of everyday interactions by the racially dominated group are informed by previous racialized interactions (Essed 1999: 7). Racist interactions are given meaning against the backdrop of the sum total of other interactions. Because of this, the significance and interpretation given to an interaction can differ between the racially dominant and racially dominated group (Essed 1999: 7). Whereas the racially dominated group bases their interpretations on their own experiences and those of family members and friends, the racially dominant group mainly relies on the media or their education for their knowledge of racism. In many cases, the media they consume and the education they partake in are inadequate in granting them the knowledge that the racially dominated gain through their everyday experiences (Essed 1999: 7). Essed explains the importance of this everyday racism by highlighting how racist attitudes and ideologies are transmitted through systematic and recurrent practices that involve socialized attitudes and behavior (1999: 3).

Moreover, she claims that these everyday interactions with racism challenge the dominant Dutch discourse around racism being a question of "to be or not to be racist" (1999: 3). With her theory on everyday racism, Essed combats the Netherlands' reputation of being "racially progressive or tolerant" and the denial of racism being present in the country (1999: 3-4). Essed's study is pivotal for the context of this research as it is useful in

examining experiences of racism, discrimination and prejudice amongst migrants of Ghanaian descent in the Netherlands.

Much like Essed, Wekker argues that while notions of racism are very prevalent in the context of the Netherlands today, they are still denied to exist in the dominant discourse (2016: 157). Gloria Wekker's book title, *White Innocence*, encapsulates the mode of thinking about whiteness and national identity that is prevalent in Dutch society: it signifies that the Dutch feel like they are innocent of racism. In her book, Wekker examines how the invisible force of whiteness informs meaning-making processes in the Netherlands, mainly with regards to Dutch national identity. Her thesis entails the idea that whiteness is simultaneously a pervasive but unacknowledged facet of Dutch national identity.. In White Innocence, Wekker examines how past systems of oppression have become interwoven with more current narratives and cultural productions.

In her analysis, Wekker outlines apparent paradoxes that are present in White Dutch self-representation. The first paradox entails the lack of identification with migrants in a country where large swaths of the population have migrant ancestry (Wekker 2016: 6). The Netherlands has experienced many waves of migration, both in the pre- and postwar period. Large segments of the Dutch populace – white people included – have a family history of migration (Wekker 2016: 6). Nonetheless, the country's problematic racial labeling shows that the Dutch do not recognize this migration history as part of their own. The terms 'migrant' and 'allochtoon' are problematic and highly racialized in the Dutch context. This will be further elaborated in the next subchapter. According to Wekker, this is a prime example of racism in the Dutch context, as even such innocent terms for group populations are infused with exclusitory approaches.

Another paradox that Wekker mentions entails the juxtaposition of the centrality of the Dutch in global imperial history and the almost complete absence of imperial history in Dutch education, literature, self-representation, and the political discourse on things like migration and multiculturalism (Wekker 2016: 13). In her book she argues that Dutch colonial history is not an element in Dutch national history in schools, causing not only an unawareness about Dutch slavery and exploitation, but also denial and racial ignorance (2016: 25). Thus, Wekker states that these notions of an "innocent" sense of self are at the root of racism in the Dutch context (2016: 167). In short, Wekker's work is a central study

that may be helpful in understanding the underlying mechanisms of racism, discrimination and prejudice in the Netherlands.

2.6 National discourse: allochtoon/ autochtoon

Building off of Wekker and Essed's theories, it is important to touch upon two important terms when speaking of the context of the Netherlands. The terms *allochtoon* and *autochtoon* were first officially introduced in the Netherlands in 1971 when referring to migrant groups (Bovens et al. 2016: 21). These terms are related to genealogy and biology, delineated from the Greek words *allos* meaning 'other' or 'another', *autos* meaning 'own' or 'the same' and *chtoon* meaning 'land' or 'ground' (Bovens et al. 2016: 21). Thus, allochtoon is defined as 'from another country' or 'of other grounds' and autochtoon is translated as 'of own grounds' (Bovens et al. 2016: 21).

The terms were first used by sociologist Verwey-Jonker in a report on immigrant groups, but only later gained traction in 1989 after the Scientific Council for Government Policy or WRR (Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid) used them in their report on immigrant policy (Bovens et al. 2016: 21). Then Statistics Netherlands or CBS (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek), which is a Dutch governmental institution that gathers statistical information about the Netherlands, took over this terminology in their official national statistics (Bovens et al. 2016: 21). Here, CBS's definition of allochtoon stated "someone who has at least one parent that is born abroad" (CBS 2022b).

For years, much debate has surrounded these terms in the academic, political and societal spheres because of their problematic nature (Bovens et al. 2016: 21). Namely, these terms create a distinct dichotomy between, on one hand, someone 'from here' and on the other hand as someone 'from somewhere else'. These labels then acquire a new meaning that have less to do with the simple classification of people but rather who is considered in- and excluded and who is superior versus subordinate. These terms have become highly racialized, with children and grandchildren of non-western migrants often still being referred to as 'allochtoon'. According to Wekker (2016: 15), placing the notion of "coming from elsewhere" racializes people of color for endless generations, never getting to belong to the Dutch nation. Not to mention that this labeling is already incorrect when speaking of

the second-generation of people with a migration background, as they were born in the Netherlands and not 'elsewhere' (Bovens et al. 2016: 21).

After the term was used for 27 years in the official Dutch statistics, CBS changed their terminology (retaining the same definition) from allochtoon to a 'person with a migration background' in 2016 (CBS 2022b). This change in terminology by an official national institution, speaks to the developments that are being stirred up as result of the discussions around these terms. Thus, a positive shift is taking place in working towards inclusion and acknowledging the Netherlands as a multifaceted society.

Nevertheless, what we see today is that merely changing the official terminology does not ensure that these harmful terms are not being used anymore or that the divide it has implicitly created, has been stopped. Wekker (2016: 7) specifies this point by highlighting that when one is marked as an allochtoon, they are not only marked as foreigen, but also racially marked. Not only does it refer to someone of color or 'een kleurtje hebben'[3] (having a tinge of color), but it also holds a negative connotation of allochtonen as people with something missing. Namely, that they have one parent that is not fully "Dutch". This then brings forth the layer beneath: what does it mean to be "Dutch"? Who is considered "Dutch" and who is not? Is "the" Dutch person only seen as someone with blond hair, blue eyes and white skin?

As we will see throughout this study, the terms still live in the Dutch national discourse, language and conceptualizations of self amongst people with a migration background (in this case first- and second-generation Ghanaians). The history and development of the terms allochtoon and autochtoon are relevant in this research as it uncovers the underlying narratives and paradoxes of whiteness and exclusion that are embedded in Dutch society.

[3] Wekker (2016: 7) explains that een kleurtje hebben translates to "having a tinge of color" (the diminutive way in which being of color is popularly indicated) in the Netherlands.

Chapter 3. Methodology

> "*Qualitative research* is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world… This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them." (Denzin & Lincoln 2000: 3)

3.1 Bringing meaning to people and their experiences

The aim of qualitative research is to produce an in-depth understanding of "people's social and material circumstances, their experiences, perspectives and histories" (Ritchie & Lewis 2003: 94). Within qualitative research, ethnography is a research tradition in anthropology and sociology that aims to understand "the social world of people being studied through immersion in their community to produce detailed description of people, their culture and beliefs" (Ritchie & Lewis 2003: 12). Ethnographic field research studies groups of people as they go about their everyday lives (Emerson et al 2011: 1). In this process, the researcher enters into the social setting, gets to know the people involved, develops relationships with people and participates in routines (Emerson et al 2011: 1). The goal of the ethnographer is that from this engagement and observation, a written account can be made from the world researched (Emerson et al 2011: 1). This study is an ethnographic research in which attempting to understand the personal experiences of first- and second-generation Ghanaians stands central.

My research took place in January 2022 through March 2022 in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. This city was specifically chosen as this is where the highest density of Ghanaians in the Netherlands reside. Moreover, I was already immersed in this environment by living there myself. Furthermore, confining my study to people who currently live in Amsterdam, allowed for a more narrow and focused analysis of Ghanaians in the Netherlands.

Data triangulation was a pivotal methodological approach in my research. Ritchie and Lewis (2003:43) state that data triangulation can be used as a way to validate

qualitative research evidence. In this approach three different methods of data are collected to prevent being exclusive to only a single data collection method and thus combat any biases present in certain data sources (Anfara et. al 2002: 33). Data triangulation ensures both accuracy and credibility (Anfara et al. 2002: 33). In order to triangulate my data, I conducted a literature review, twenty interviews and participant observation.

3.2 Interlocutors

In ethnographic studies, sampling is required because it is not possible for the researcher to record or observe everything that occurs (Ritchie & Lewis 2003: 77). Instead, a group of people (a sample) is chosen as a representation of the selected study population to deepen the understanding of a particular phenomenon.

After determining that my study population would be first- and second- generation Ghanaians in Amsterdam, the next step was to consider what the appropriate sample frame would be to access these interlocutors (Ritchie & Lewis 2003: 88). I used the following two sampling techniques, namely flow populations and snowballing (chain sampling) (Ritchie & Lewis 2003: 94).

To start off, I found that the most effective and least time-consuming way to generate samples would be using locations where so-called *flow populations* are present. This meant finding places in Amsterdam where I would likely come into contact with Ghanaians. Flow populations is a term used where interlocutors are discovered by approaching the desired research population in a particular setting or location where it is likely they are present, such as a job center or outside a school (Ritchie & Lewis 2003: 94). With this method, identifying people who are willing to consider taking part in the study is made possible (Ritchie & Lewis 2003: 95). Given the public nature of the location and because people may be present for a particular purpose, this may limit engagement with potential interlocutors (Ritchie & Lewis 2003: 95). To remedy this I chose a location I attended before and was familiar with prior to this research namely, Amsterdam City Church. This is a Pentecost church located in Amsterdam East, which consists of a

predominantly Ghanaian population.

At Amsterdam City Church I made use of the 'fellowship' hour, which is a moment after the service where people are enabled to get acquainted with each other. Here, I approached a combination of my own existing, personal contacts and established other potential contacts which I had not yet built rapport with. I shortly explained the purpose of my research and already sought their permission to interview and record them (as further detailed in 3.5). After they agreed to participate in the study, I also asked permission to acquire their contact details and describe the study in detail outside of the location.

From these interlocutors onwards, I applied the *snowballing approach (chain sampling)* (Ritchie & Lewis 2003: 94). This method describes 'snowballing' to more participants, through interlocutors who suggest new potential people to interview (Ritchie & Lewis 2003: 94). Ritchie & Lewis (2003: 94) state that this approach is especially useful for dispersed and small populations. However, the limitation of the snowball method can be that the diversity of the sample frame is compromised, as new individuals are generated through existing ones (Ritchie & Lewis 2003: 94). In this study, this was attempted to be mitigated through specifying preferred characteristics of new interlocutors who meet the criteria of being a first and second- generation Ghanaian, but who are also dissimilar to them in particular ways such as avoiding close contacts from the same church (Ritchie & Lewis 2003: 94). Ritchie and Lewis (2003: 94) recommend that the snowballing approach may better be used as a supplement to other methods of gathering interlocutors, which is why a combination of flow populations and snowballing was used because of limited time available. These approaches may still not have provided the most optimal diversity required and can be considered a limitation to this research's sample frame.

In tandem with the above, stratified purposive sampling was also applied for interlocutors (Patton 2002, cited in Ritchie & Lewis 2003: 79). In this method, a "hybrid approach" is used where interlocutors are chosen who demonstrate a variation of a certain phenomenon but each of which are also fairly homogenous so that comparison may take place (Ritchie & Lewis 2003: 79). This hybrid approach will be further elaborated below.

In this study, all interlocutors did indeed have homogenous aspects. Interlocutors were selected based on the following criteria: namely, they all belonged to either the first- or the second- generation Ghanaian diaspora living in the Netherlands. Furthermore, this

study focused on the younger generation from 18 to 28 years old. The last thing interlocutors required to have in common was that both parents were of Ghanaian descent. Omitting individuals of mixed Ghanaian descent was conscious as this may add an extra layer of analysis in terms of the influence of other ethnicities. Homogenous samples are beneficial as they allow for analysis of shared social processes in a specific context (Ritchie & Lewis 2003: 79).

On the other hand, interlocutors also varied from each other. First of all seven interlocutors were men and thirteen were women. All ages from 18 to 28 had at least one interlocutor of that age, with two age groups (21 and 22) having four interlocutors each. Furthermore, six belonged to the first generation and fourteen to the second generation. Fifteen of the interlocutors reported the ability of speaking Twi fluently and the other five did not speak Twi at all or only partially.

In terms of highest achieved education, three interlocutors were still students in high school, with two enrolled in VWO (voorbereidend wetenschappelijk onderwijs) and the other in HAVO (hoger algemeen voortgezet onderwijs). Then, six interlocutors did MBO (middelbaar beroepsonderwijs), six did HBO (hoger beroepsonderwijs) and five did WO (wetenschappelijk onderwijs) or university.

Moreover, nine interlocutors were born in Amsterdam, with six from Amsterdam South-East, two from Amsterdam East and one from Amsterdam West. Then, three were born in The Hague and two in Almere. Of the six people born in Ghana, two were born in Accra, two in Kumasi, one in Tema and another in East Legon.

To elaborate on where the parents of interlocutors were born, two cities were most prominent, namely six parents were born in Accra (the capital and largest city in Ghana, located in the south east of the country) and 18 parents were born in Kumasi (which is the second largest city after Accra and located in the south of Ghana). The other sixteen parents were from other regions in Ghana divided between cities in the west like Elmina, Berekum and Beyin, North like Techiman and Nkoranza and East like Kwahu, Twenedurase, Sunyani and Tema.

Although having a sample frame with a good variation in terms of age, sex, first or second- generation, place of birth, birthplace of their parents, ability to speak Twi and highest achieved education, this may have also caused some limitations. For example, interviewing more women than men may have not given a balanced view of the male versus

female perspective. Or having more interlocutors of the second- generation than the first-generation might have also narrowed down the experiences of people born in Ghana who now live in the Netherlands. Because such variations may have not been exactly equal, this may have affected my results.

3.3 Interviewing process

The interviews were the main medium used to dive deep in understanding the experiences of individuals of first- and second- generation Ghanaian descent in the Netherlands. In this research, twenty semi-structured interviews took place. This was done by compiling an *interview guide* with potential conversation points beforehand (See Appendix 1) (Bernard 2006: 212). An important advantage of this interviewing approach is that the researcher can display they know what they want from the interview, but also leave space to follow new leads (Bernard 2006: 212). In this way the list will only function as a guide in maintaining structure, but will allow the interview to become less formal and flow to natural directions.

Although the COVID-19 restrictions were much more softened in the Netherlands during January to March 2022, some interviews were still conducted online. For some interlocutors, the alternative of being able to be interviewed online was preferred. This could be for several reasons, the convenience of an online platform timewise and effort-wise instead of having to meet in person. Or this option may have been preferred because online was less intimidating or more comfortable than meeting in person for people who I had not yet built an extensive rapport with.

Half of the interviews I conducted, ten in total, were held through the platform Zoom. Between online and in-person interviews, I did notice some differences that may have posed as a limitation in the data collection process. Firstly, online interviews resulted in not optimally being able to fully read body language and non-verbal communication or interlocutors may have felt hyper aware seeing themselves through a screen. However, as I had already anticipated this, I attempted to remedy these aspects by being extra attentive, empathetic and present so that my interviewees felt as comfortable as possible. I did this by using the same tactics as in an in-person interview, such as using an informal tone, showing

my interest and being attentive. Ritchie and Lewis (2003: 143) emphasize the importance of these qualities in creating the right rapport with interlocutors. When comparing the on- and offline interviews, both types of interviews luckily generated open and vulnerable answers.

Creating a safe and comfortable space for my in- person interviews was definitely pivotal in my research as sensitive topics such as discrimination and racism were discussed. Ritchie and Lewis (2003: 166) state that the venue's "environment needs to be conducive to concentration: private, quiet and physically comfortable". Therefore, I chose a venue in Amsterdam South-East, Holendrecht, called Our Domain. This venue is a trendy 21st century urban housing building for young professionals and students. It is equipped with work- and study spaces, a lounge, a game room and more. Moreover, this space proved to be an accessible and easy location for people to reach as it is in the Bijlmer, where most of the interlocutors reside.

Furthermore, this area is bright and cozy as it has several seating options, high windows, many plants and greenery, and a space for coffee and tea. I found that the spatial dimension at play here was that the area created an informal, light and trustworthy feeling amongst respondents. Almost all of my respondents expressed that they felt at ease and this was also reflected in how open they were with sharing their experiences during interviews. Consequently, this produced data that went beyond surface level conversations.

In the lounge area of Our Domain, interlocutors and I sat across from each other on the sofa with my iPhone in between us, in which the inhouse 'Voice Memo' app functioned as the recorder. Recording my interviews was consciously chosen for its many advantages. Ritchie and Lewis (2003: 166) argue that audio-recording interviews are highly desirable as this allows for full devotion and attention to the interviewee as opposed to continuous note-taking. In addition, it also "provides an accurate, verbatim record of the interview, capturing the language used by the participant including their hesitations and tone in far more detail" than note taking (Ritchie and Lewis 2003: 166). One limitation to only using a recording without any note-taking, is that additional cues such as non-verbal communication and body language cannot be heard when listened back. This is why a note pad was still used occasionally during interviews in order to document when these two observations took place. Around the twenty interviews, data saturation was reached. This takes place when the data collection process is continued until the researcher reaches a point when no new insights could be obtained from expanding the sample further (Ritchie &

Lewis 2003: 80). Namely, within the scope of the interview questions and topics discussed, no new information was given by new interlocutors but rather a repetition or an added experience of the same issue was shared.

Hereafter, the data processing phase started with transcribing all twenty interviews that were recorded. For this, an online transcribing software was used called Trint. This automatically transcribed audio interviews into written texts in English or Dutch. But because this is an online artificial intelligence, transcriptions did not turn out 100% accurate. These interview audios were then listened to again and typing corrections were made. Here, the notes taken on non-verbal communication and body language were also added and served as an important methodological choice to accompany the transcripts. As mentioned before, sensitive, personal and even painful topics were discussed during interviews. When transcribing certain excerpts, I found it important to translate the emotionally charged moments that I experienced with interlocutors onto paper. Ultimately, this adds depth and meaning to quotes given by interlocutors and enables the reader to attain a deeper understanding of what the interlocutor felt on a psychological level, while speaking of their experiences.

After the audios were converted into transcripts, this data was analyzed by *code mapping* them (Anfara et al. 2002: 33). This is a useful and efficient method to analyze data through labeling recurring themes in all interviews by 'codes' (Anfara et al. 2002: 33). Code mapping can be used to combat overwhelming amounts of data presented to a researcher and allows for an easy, organized and manageable overview of all the qualitative information at hand (Anfara et al. 2002: 33). Here, another online coding software called MAXQDA was used to code the collected data from the interviews in (sub)categories.

3.4 Interviewing methods

Bernard (2006: 217) argues that probing is the key to successful interviewing. Probing revolves around the idea of stimulating interlocutors to share more about their experiences, without creating a reflection of the interviewer's own ideas in the answers (Bernard 2006: 217). Here, when an interlocutor shares information, open-ended follow-up questions are

asked in order to dig deeper into the topic. This was done by using a combination of probing types. The *neutral probe* was used which is done by active or affirmative listening, so nodding or making sounds such as 'uh-huh'. Second, the *silent probe* was used to leave space for the interlocutor to expand on their statement by simply making use of intentional silence. Then, the *tell-me-more probe* urged the interlocutor by questions such as 'Could you tell me more about that?' or 'Why exactly do you feel that way?' (Bernard 2006: 219). As this study focuses on the lived experiences of interlocutors throughout their lifetime, the *echo probe* was often used to summarize the series of events to verify if it was understood correctly (Bernard 2006: 219). An example is: 'Okay I see! *So what I'm hearing is that* you enjoyed the cultural diversity in Amsterdam. Could you tell me more?' These probing techniques were shown to be very useful, as it not only expanded the data extensively but also showed interest and attentiveness to the interlocutor.

In addition to probing, two specific questions were designed beforehand and asked in every interview: the *Home-Question* and the *Percentages-Question*. The Home-Question asked the following:

"Do you consider the Netherlands 'home' and why?"

The first simple yes/no segment of the question was designed to kick-start investigation of general feelings of home and belonging amongst interlocutors, as this was a central notion in this research. Then, the second segment of the question, "and why?" combatted the closed-question prior and allowed interlocutors to think about why they answered yes or no and elaborate.

Interlocutors were made aware that this question would be answered according to two different interpretations, therefore yielding two different answers. This was done to take into account Antonsich's (2010: 644) understanding of belonging by making a distinction between *place- belongingness* and the *politics of belonging*. When speaking of the concept of 'home' during interviews, I found it important to clearly divide these two notions of belonging. To place this in an understandable context, the Home-Question was asked in two of the following ways.

The first interpretation of *"Do you consider the Netherlands 'home' and why?"* connected to *place- belongingness* and had to do with the interlocutor's own personal

feelings of belonging. Here, interlocutors were invited to think about the Netherlands as home from their own point of view. What are personal things that make a place feel like home? What does the Netherlands mean to them on a personal level? Which aspects of the Netherlands translate to the feeling of being at home?

Then, the second interpretation of *"Do you consider the Netherlands 'home' and why?"* was related to *politics of belonging* and had to do with how *other* people make them feel at home in the Netherlands. This interpretation allowed interlocutors to think deeply about how *other people* influence their ideas of home and belonging in the Netherlands. This understanding of home attempted to generate answers that had to do with how acceptance from society affects one's sense of belonging.

Furthermore, the Percentages- Question stated:

> *"If you had to express how much you feel connected in percentages to your Ghanaian roots versus Dutch, how much percent would that be and why?"*

This question was designed to help interlocutors conceptualize their ethnic identity in an easy and tangible way. Not only was this for the interlocutors, but it was also to aid myself as the researcher in getting an idea where the interlocutor was at in relation to their Ghanaian ethnic identity. The goal was to simplify this academic term and translate it to something more accessible, yet still intellectually challenging. When considering expressing themselves in something tangible like a percentage, this question urged interlocutors to think about something complex in a simple way.

Positive feedback from interlocutors after interviews, or even after this question was asked, stated that this question allowed them to structure their thoughts about their Ghanaian roots in a way they have never spent time thinking about before. This question proved to be very instrumental in impacting part of the societal relevance of this research mentioned before, where self-reflection is sparked amongst interlocutors about their own identity as a Ghanaian.

Although the concept of ethnic identity was made more tangible for interlocutors, the Percentage-Question also has its limitations. Because this question asks interlocutors to give a percentage about how much they feel connected to their roots, one can also argue

that something as complex as this cannot be quantified into a simple scope of zero to 100 percent. Still, this question did prove to be very fruitful in discovering the dynamics between on the one hand feeling Dutch and on the other hand feeling Ghanaian.

3.5 Ethical considerations

It is important that the interlocutor is made aware of all of the details of a research before the interview. In order to ensure this, I made an ethics form (Informed consent form) that was read through and signed by the respondent (see Appendix 2). These were made in accordance with the language of the interlocutors (They were all able to read English). Here, I am aware that such forms may also be intimidating so I worked with a dual option approach. I gave the respondents the option of signing the form or the possibility to orally consent on record before the interview. Then after the interview, if they still wanted to continue with their participation, they could sign the form.

In this form the following concerns are addressed: the purpose of the study, how long the interview would take, information on confidentiality, my contact details and lastly consent for recording the interview and the use of changing their name to pseudonyms to ensure anonymity (if requested). Also in this form, I emphasized the option of not having to answer a question if the respondent felt uncomfortable and reminded them that they were allowed to stop and leave. As identity, culture and diaspora are very personal topics, it is possible that sensitive topics would be brought to the surface. Therefore, I needed to ensure that all my participants felt safe sharing their experiences.

The ethics form took into account the first two guidelines of the Dutch Anthropological Association. Namely my research, in no way, caused harm to any participants or actors involved, it respected their well-being and guaranteed confidentiality and informed consent (Dutch Anthropological Association 2018: 1-2; American Anthropological Association 2009: 1-8).

Moreover, in my research I aimed to take into account four important aspects of ethical guidelines as delineated by the Dutch Anthropological Association and American Anthropological Association. This consists of avoiding any harmful impact on people, non-

human species and materials studied, obtaining consent of the research population and guarantee confidentiality, scholarly integrity and secure data management, ownership and access to data (Dutch Anthropological Association 2018: 1; American Anthropological Association 2009: 1-8).

Then, I also ensured to safeguard the third guideline which is integrity. Throughout my research I was fully transparent about the methods, analysis and process of my study with all actors involved. For example, the purpose of the study was also be stated in my ethics form but was also repeated at the beginning of the interview to see to it that the interlocutors fully understood the research (Dutch Anthropological Association 2018: 2). Furthermore, not only respondents should receive full transparency, but also in the publications, to sponsors, the scholarly community etc (Dutch Anthropological Association 2018: 2; American Anthropological Association 2009: 1-8).

Furthermore, another important ethical consideration within anthropological research is data management, ownership and access to data. As mentioned before, I recorded my interviews, transcribed and coded them via an online coding software. Because I was responsible for storing personal data, this was done securely. My devices were password protected and I was the only one that had access to it. Handwritten data was also stored and kept safe in secure lockers (Dutch Anthropological Association 2018: 2-3; American Anthropological Association 2009: 1-8).

3.6 Reflexivity

In this research, it is pivotal to consider how my own positionality might have influenced this study. This would mean being very self-reflexive. Firstly, relatability seemed to be helpful during interviews. By opening up about my own similar experiences as a young, first-generation non-western migrant with West African roots, I noticed that interlocutors then felt more comfortable to share as they felt a certain relatability. However, on the other hand this also meant that I had to stay clear of any personal biases. As an interviewer it is important to try and stay objective to avoid influencing your data with reflections of yourself (Bernard 2006: 217). In an attempt to ensure this did not happen, I used flow

populations and the snowballing method to look for respondents that did not only consist of my personal social circle.

Furthermore, in this study I did encounter some challenges in working together with interlocutors. I found it difficult to balance the dynamic between myself as a person versus myself as an interviewer. This required me to constantly stay critical of any personal influences in my role as an ethnographer. So much so that I sometimes would be overly self-critical. This looked like starting questions off very mildly in interviews, but only later realizing that I was on the right track and this also being confirmed by responses from interlocutors.

Another difficulty I faced was to always try and stay objective during conversations. As you will read throughout this research, many painful and triggering instances were discussed with interviewees such as confrontations with racism. Because I have also had my own experiences with this, I found it quite hard to balance supporting and showing empathy to the interlocutor while simultaneously also having to deal with anything it brought up for myself and the obvious emotions that accompanied hearing about these unfair situations.

Lastly, I also found that I was very aware of how to engage with Ghanaian interlocutors, as I did not want to overstep any boundaries or offend anyone. For example, making sure I was respecting any religious backgrounds. Luckily, cultural elements that I did not know could be interpreted as offensive were shared during the interviewing process which allowed me to stay away from them. Moreover, I also made sure to ask for feedback to my interlocutors, just to make sure that this respect towards my interlocutors was being upheld.

Chapter 4. Who am I as a Ghanaian in the Netherlands?

"What does being a Ghanaian mean to me? Well. Being Ghanaian is a part of my identity. It is my identity" - Adjua

The notion of self-identification takes central stage when attempting to understand how individuals view, understand and perceive themselves. It is a given that everyone has reached a point in their lives where they have had to ask themselves, 'Who am I?'. However, this concept of self-identification may become especially interesting when investigating individuals belonging to a diaspora. As we've discussed earlier, the most recurring themes when looking at diaspora groups are the ideas of a loose, scattered and fragmented group that still share a common root (Glazier 2005: 1; Clifford 1999: 254; Duarte 2015: 317; Ribeiro 1999: 45; Cohen 1997, cited in Kassam 2016: 13).

Although taking it one step further, individuals of a diaspora who are visually identifiable as belonging to a non- western migrant group due to the color of their skin, may have an accelerated confrontation with this question as they visually stand out amongst the individuals of the western host country. The question may then change to: 'Who am I *amongst the rest*?' as they are not living in their country of heritage. This chapter will investigate this same question amongst the Ghanaian diaspora living in the Netherlands.

4.1 How do Ghanaians see themselves? Self-identification

To start off, it is important to understand how Ghanaians position themselves in Dutch society. In doing so, the concepts of ascribed and achieved identity may be helpful. Berry and Sam (2006: 79) explained that one cannot choose which ethnic group they are born as, making (a part of) their identity ascribed to them in that sense . But one's identity can also be something that is achieved, as this is a personal choice what kind of meaning is attributed to it (Berry & Sam 2006: 79). Consequently, one may have been *ascribed* a certain identity at birth and feel an aligning connectedness to it as well. Or one may *achieve* a nuanced sense of this identity or an entirely other interpretation of their identity for that matter.

During my interviews, I found that first- and second- generation individuals of the Ghanaian diaspora in the Netherlands grappled with these two types of identity. Their loose, scattered and differentiated characteristics were reflected in their experiences: no one interpreted their Ghanaian identity the same way. As explained in chapter 3.4, I used the Percentages-Question to aid myself and my interlocutors in visualizing and conceptualizing their Ghanaian identity in a tangible way. In the following subchapters, I will discuss the ranges of Ghanaian connectedness and disconnectedness reported amongst my interlocutors.

4.1.1 Ghanaian connectedness

Firstly, 15 of the 20 interlocutors interviewed reported an amount higher than 50% Ghanaian in the Percentage- Question. This points to 75% of all interlocutors interviewed in this research. To illustrate, two interlocutors stated that they felt 90% connected to their Ghanaian roots, one person reported 85%, two stated 75%, seven individuals stated 70% and lastly three people reported 60%. Being that fifteen interlocutors make up two thirds of the total number of people interviewed (so the majority), it is important to investigate what exactly influences this strong connectedness.

Fram is a 25 year old first- generation student living in Amsterdam. He was amongst the two interlocutors who stated the highest percentage of connectedness to their Ghanaian roots, namely 90% Ghanaian and 10% Dutch. He states the following:

> "[Moments I feel most connected to my Ghanaian roots are at] my Ghanaian church, Ghanaian parties and Ghanaian events. One moment that sticks out to me is my grandfather's funeral many years ago. It was the first time I went to such a funeral- very different from the Dutch… Yeah. It was just weird and shocking. And that's when I actually felt really connected like, you are actually a Ghanaian and this is how we do it."
>
> Me: "What does that look like? I don't know anything about it" [smiles]

> Fram: “Yeah it’s just totally- [face lights up] it’s really just a party. It’s also literally called ‘celebration of life’. There’s music, there’s food, it’s said what that person has done in their life. Stuff like that.”

Another first- generation female interlocutor was also asked what makes her feel connected to her Ghanaian roots. Bediako, who is 28 years old, reported feeling 60% Ghanaian and 40% Dutch, answered:

> “The music you know [smiles]. The Ghanaian lyrics, Ghanaian music- it just hits differently you know. The melodies. I love to cook for my friends and family, everyone always asks me to make Ghanaian food for them [laughs]. They say I can cook it well.”

Fram and Bediako both share material aspects of connectedness deriving from moments like Ghanaian parties, events, funerals, food, church and music. What can be observed by these two excerpts is Hage’s (1997:100) concept of ‘home-building’ at play. Aligning with this concept, these elements of Ghanain culture give interlocutors the sense of being at home in Ghana while still being in the host country, namely the Netherlands. Bediako displays the ‘intimation of familiarity’ and ‘practices of communality’ (Hage 1997:109), by saying how much her friends and family not only tell her that she knows how to prepare Ghananaian dishes well, but also in expressing the joy she feels in gathering together to eat.

To add, another interlocutor gave an interesting insight as to why he reported his high Ghanaian percentage as well. Adjua is a 23 year old, second- generation Ghanaian born in The Hague, the Netherlands. He moved to Amsterdam at a young age and currently pursues a career as a primary school teacher. Adjua says:

> “70% Ghanaian/ 30% Dutch, because I mean, me myself, I am someone that is... I'm quite into my roots. So when it comes to the food I cook and eat- all the typical Ghanaian dishes, the language I prefer to speak- so I really like it when I’m around fellow Ghanaians and I’m able to speak my language, Twi.”

Next to material elements of connectedness shared by Fram and Bediako, Adjua touches upon immaterial aspects of connectedness. He explains how for him, connectedness is linked to moments shared with fellow Ghanaians such as family and friends. This seemed to be a recurring experience for many interlocutors.

Much like Adjua, Sisi shared a similar experience. Sisi is a 23 year old second-generation Ghanaian who was born in the Bijlmer, Amsterdam. She is currently a photographer and medical student. She still lives in Amsterdam and reported 75% Ghanaian/ 25% Dutch in the Percentages-Question. Sisi said:

> "[I feel most connected when] people come over, when we get together- I think it's really just that gathering. Yeah. Um. That you then feel- because I know that I'm Ghanaian, but for example when I'm with my Ghanaian friends and we speak the language and we listen to Ghanaian music- there are certain things about Ghana that other countries don't have. There are certain inside jokes that we- I wouldn't be able to mention them 1,2, 3. But if we hear it, then it's automatically: a Ghanaian person would know it." [Smiles from ear to ear]

In this excerpt Sisi explains the reason why her Ghanaian connectedness arises from interactions with fellow Ghanaians. She states that Ghanaians amongst themselves have fellowship rooted in relatability and comfortability. Examples of this are inside jokes and understanding the culture and language.

In alignment with Adjua and Sisi, another second- generation interlocutor named Serwa related her connectedness to intimate moments with other Ghanaians as well. She reported a very high percentage of Ghanaian connectedness, giving 90% Ghanaian and only 10% Dutch. Serwa is a 26 year-old second- generation Ghanaian who works in pedagogy. She shared:

> "Moments with my family, [is when I feel most connected]. And the fact that I can speak Ghanaian, because not everyone can. And yeah upbringing. My parents raised me [in the] Ghanaian [way], not European."

Here Serwa indicates something different than the aforementioned interlocutors. She draws a comparison between Ghanaian upbringing and European upbringing as an example of feeling connected with her Ghanaian roots. Interestingly, this opposition or unrelatability towards European ways or tendencies seemed to be another way that several other Ghanaians felt connected to their roots as well. To illustrate, we can take a look at one interlocutor's experience in particular. Adric is currently 27 years old and has studied medicine at the University of Amsterdam. He lived in Ghana until he was six years old and then moved to Amsterdam. Despite this, Adric was still one of the interlocutors who gave a lower percentage of Ghanaian connectedness compared to Dutch connectedness (only 24% Ghanaian). Nevertheless, he said:

> "I must admit that I do feel connected [to my Ghanaian roots] as well because of the things that, you know, that are inherently Ghanaian based on how we think, how we do things and how we perceive the world. Things like- I wouldn't know why- but it's just not us, it's just not me. It might possibly be like the feedback you get that make you proud of certain things. So not sending 'tikkies[4]', being generous. That's something that I learned from my culture and it's something that both people within my culture and those that are like white, they tend to view that as very beautiful. Yeah. So you tend to become proud of the things that other people value about you."

Although Adric gave a low percentage of Ghanaian connectedness as opposed to Serwa who gave a very high percentage, they still share a commonality. These excerpts show that both Adric and Serwa feel a sense of pride in being Ghanaian due to things that they feel are inherent to their culture. For example, Adric explains that the Ghanaian value of generosity is admired and valued by others. In return, moments like these still make him feel connected to his Ghanaian roots, even though he does feel more of an overall Dutch connectedness.

[4] Tikkie is a method of payment that allows one to easily forward their payment requests to people online. Here Adric is referring to the perception of Dutch people being very hands on when it comes to owing them money, even for the smallest amounts.

Lastly, Jennifer also shared an interesting stance when asked to explain moments when she felt most connected with her Ghanaian roots. Jennifer was born in Tema, Ghana and moved to the Netherlands at two years old. Currently she is 23 years old and works at the university hospital called Amsterdam Medical Center, or AMC. Furthermore, Jennifer reported 70% Ghanaian and 30% Dutch in the Percentage- Question. She shared:

> "I think it's especially when I'm with friends and we speak, Twi, that's when you really feel like, 'Okay, I'm a Dutch-Ghanaian and these are also Dutch-Ghanaians. But we're also just really Ghanaian' [laughs]. Yeah so it's usually always when you're with other Ghanaians or Dutch-Ghanaians and something happens that a Dutch person [implying white dutch] does and that's something you would never do, like handing something with your left hand or something[5], then you think, 'Oh nooo! You can't do that'. And then you suddenly don't feel Dutch at all [giggles]. So I don't think I've had really big moments in my life [where I felt most connected] but it's just more in the small everyday things, really."

Here we see once more that moments of disconnect with Dutch tendencies can actually also in turn boost one's Ghanaian connectedness. Jennifer explains that Ghanaians can especially relate to each other in moments where they notice their tendencies are different than that of the Dutch. This is often an 'aha-moment' that she describes as 'suddenly not feeling Dutch at all', remembering that your roots are from elsewhere with different customs.

Furthermore an interesting point in this excerpt by Jennifer, is that she makes a clear distinction in ethnic labeling between Ghanaians (self-label according to the country of origin) and Dutch-Ghanaians (self-label of hyphenated identity). Although she is a first-generation Ghanaian herself, she refers to her own ethnic self-identification as a Dutch-Ghanaian. Because she was not born in the Netherlands but in Ghana, this could be enough grounds for one to claim that she can indeed use a Ghanaian self-label and not Dutch-

[5] Data from my interviews show that in Ghanaian culture the left hand is seen as unclean and inappropriate to use in interactions with others or other everyday activities. Therefore it is a customary unspoken rule that you do not eat, shake someone's hand or hand something to someone with your left hand.

Ghanaian. However, she probably makes this distinction because she moved to the Netherlands at two years old. This may result in her feeling more like a second-generation Ghanaian, as she spent her conscious years after the age of two in the Netherlands. Thus her quote shows her perception of a 'Ghanaian' as somebody from Ghana who was born and raised there or spent the majority of their lives there, as the 'real' Ghanaians. This alludes to the discussion of who is Ghanaian and who is Dutch? Who can claim themselves as one or the other and who controls this? This debate will be further unpacked in chapter 6.3.

The majority of the interlocutors in this study reported feeling more than 50% connected to their Ghanaian roots. Influences of this strong connectedness range from material factors that promote home-building such as listening to Ghanaian music, eating Ghanaian food and going to a Ghanaian church, party, funeral or event. Other immaterial factors mostly revolve around moments of fellowship with other Ghanaians. Examples of this include Ghanaian upbringing, intimate moments of gathering with friends and family, speaking Twi or understanding Ghanaian inside-jokes, customs and values. This applied to second-generation individuals such as Adjua, Sisi and Serwa as well as first-generation individuals such as Fram and Bediako. Intriguingly, moments of disconnect with Dutch values and tendencies also amplified connectedness to their Ghanaian roots. This was true for both first- and second-generation individuals such as Jennifer, Serwa and even Adric, who reported a low connectedness with his Ghanaian roots. Furthermore, these interlocutors (apart from Adric) demonstrated that their ascribed and achieved identity more or less aligned, as they reported feeling more than 50% connected to their Ghanaian roots.

4.1.2 Ghanaian disconnectedness

Ekow was born in Ghana and moved to the Netherlands at 11 years old, making him a first-generation Ghanaian. He is now 27 years old. When asked the Percentages-Question he said:

> "Yeah, that's a good one! [chuckles]. I haven't really actually ever thought about that. But I think to a certain extent you do feel more drawn to the Ghanaian side I think mostly, than you would say Dutch. I mean yes, in the meantime I do have my Dutch passport now, but I think, if you would ask everyone they would just- especially the people that were born in another country who may feel more drawn to that side because- but yeah that also doesn't mean that. I mean I like being Dutch the same way as I like being Ghanaian. So yeah it's a pretty hard question hahaha."

As you can see, Ekow seems to be pretty taken aback by this question and mentions that this is the first time he really has ever thought about this topic. This is also reflected in his reaction as he goes back and forth with his answer, showing a confliction. Furthermore, Ekow supposes that every first-generation individual of a diaspora feels more drawn towards their identity of their country of origin. While this may be the obvious and most straight- forward assumption, surprisingly some interlocutors interviewed in this study showed otherwise. Now that we've discussed how some individuals experience Ghanaian connectedness, the remainder of this chapter will discuss experiences of disconnect.

Contrary to the majority of the people interviewed, five individuals of the Ghanaian diaspora living in the Netherlands conveyed amounts lower than 50% Ghanaian when asked the Percentages Question. One interlocutor named Mawusi shared why he felt less connected to his Ghanaian roots than his Dutch roots. He is of the second-generation and was born in Amsterdam East. He shared the following:

> Mawusi: "I would say 40% [Ghanaian], probably. And Dutch… [silence] yeah, 60% Dutch then yeah."
>
> Me: "And can you explain why 40%/60%?"
>
> Mawusi: "I don't know a lot about our culture, if I have to be honest. Speaking Ghanaian: it's not one of my strongest suits- difficulty with that. I can understand it, but speaking, here and there it'll go wrong. So that's what I'm missing mostly."

Me: “And what, would you say, is the cause of that?“

Mawusi: “I think purely because I kept myself at a distance from my culture.” … “My parents did take me with them to birthday parties, weddings. But I didn’t really have friends there or family that I could hang with-“

Me: [Nodding] Mhm

Mawusi: “So I was- I don’t wanna say left out… But that’s what it came down to.”

Me: “Why left out?”

Mawusi: “Because I didn’t know much and yeah… opening myself up was something I also struggled with in the past. So that’s why I kept myself at a distance.”

Me: “But was it because you felt judged or? What was the reason you felt like that?”

Mawusi: “The reason was more because.. how should I say this? [silence]
I was a little- I don’t wanna say- I guess the older generation would often judge you about your clothes, the way you act, the way you speak. It was pretty strict and I just didn’t like that. So I just took a distance from it. So that’s why. You had to have a certain image in their eyes and I just didn't have that...”

Much can be unpacked in this touching excerpt of Mawusi’s conversation. To start off, by the way Mawusi sometimes stumbled over his words and took moments of silence, displays a certain reserved nature. You could possibly even say that this question is a sensitive or shameful topic for him. Being that he also mentioned past difficulties opening up, further reinforces this difficulty to be vulnerable in this conversation. It also seemed that when first asked why he gave a low percentage of Ghanaian connectedness, he did not divulge much. After probing further, Mawusi continued to explain that the reason was more because he felt out of place and judged amongst the Ghanaians (especially the older generation).

Additionally, a comparable experience came from Adric who also reported a low connectedness to his Ghanaian roots for similar reasons. He stated:

> Adric: “I'd give the Ghanian roots part a 24%. And I'd give the Dutch part a 55%. And the rest is just me as a person.”
>
> Me: “So if you would give a 24% that you feel connected to your Ghanaian roots, if I'm hearing you correctly, there’s more of a disconnect than a connection?”
>
> Adric: “Definitely.”
>
> Me: “So I would like to talk about this disconnect. Could you tell me more about it?”
>
> Adric: “Culturally, [Ghanaians] are just like: ‘Okay, we have these clear paths.’ For example, school: you have like three or four things every Ghanaian parent wants. Either a doctor- that is the holiest of grails, the *crème de la crème* hahaha” [we both laugh] “Doctor, engineer, lawyer, and a good fourth place would be pharmacist, because those are the things that they know back from the 1960s that used to work for someone. Like if someone were to be a doctor or a lawyer they would: 1, make money and 2, they would be respected within their communities. Fast forward 40, 50, 60 years later and you have so many more choices to be great at, to make great money (more than a doctor does) and to be respected within that field. So I feel like they have a certain perception of what you should be like based on what they knew back then back there.”

Sisi explains further from her point of view:

> “Power lies in knowledge. And that’s why our parents who then came from for example Ghana or other countries, to the western world. The main goal they have for their children is: go to school, get a good job. Because that’s also what I was taught by my parents: go to school, get a good job. You can’t be lazy at school you

> know, and that brings a lot of pressure… There are a lot of us that are in university with the thought process of, 'Okay I'm doing this for my parents'. And I know that I speak for a lot of children of migrant parents. In my case I am one of the fortunate ones because I love what I study, I wanted to be a nurse."

Although differently explained, Mawusi, Adric and Sisi all share a similar experience. Unlike Mawusi and Adric, who gave low percentages of Ghanaian connectedness, even Sisi also mentions this issue despite reporting her percentage as 70% Ghanaian. Namely, they all feel a disconnect through certain Ghanaian views. To zoom into detail, Mawusi uses the words, 'You had to have a certain image in their eyes' and 'left out'. Furthermore, Adric uses the words 'a certain perception of what you should be like'. Additionally Sisi explains it as 'pressure' and 'doing it for my parents'.

These powerful statements show that interlocutors feel as if they need to uphold a certain standard in order for them to be accepted or not be judged amongst their parents or the older generation that came from Ghana. Sisi explains that this comes from good intentions as they come from much less and want their children to succeed. However, she also uses the words 'fortunate' when referring to her studies being a personal choice. It seems as though these conflicting, traditional Ghanaian ideals conflict with the Ghanaians who grew up in the Netherlands. Adric even states that these are outdated principles that would work decades ago, but do not apply in the current times. Thus, here we see that these perceived strict Ghanaian views form part of the reason why Adric and Mawusi feel less connected to their Ghanaian roots in comparison to that of the Dutch.

Building off of Adric's comment, another aspect of Ghanaian disconnect for the first- and second- generation diaspora living in the Netherlands, also came up a lot during interviews. To demonstrate this we can look at Najla's experience. She is a twenty year old second-generation Ghanaian who grew up in Amsterdam- West. She reported the highest disconnect with her Ghanaian roots amongst all interlocutors, answering 75% Dutch and 25% Ghanaian. She shares her thoughts on why this is the case:

> "The things of the Netherlands I just understand much more. Some things from the Ghanaian culture, I just find unacceptable. And that's why I say 25% Ghanaian because I do feel Ghanaian but not to the extent that I actually feel Dutch."
> "In our culture you have to have respect for your elder, so you are not allowed to give a rebuttal. Whilst in my opinion, through rebuttal you can learn from each other. Sometimes for example, our parents don't understand us, but because we can explain it, change can come out of it. But the moment that you try to explain it is: you're rude, you have a big mouth. Yeah that… So with things like that, I then believe that they should just go along with- we live in a modern world so I believe that they should also just go along with that. But yeah, they just view things like that in a very traditional way."

Here, two notions that are mentioned can be highlighted, namely *respect* and *the dynamic between the child and parent*. Najla explains that her disconnectedness mainly comes from not feeling heard or understood in the dynamic between herself and her Ghanaian parents. She says that in trying to explain their differences, she can quickly be shut down as this is seen as disrespectful in traditional Ghanaian culture.

Najla is part of only a small group that reported their overall percentages as lower than 50% Ghanaian, displaying a dominant disconnect with their Ghanaian roots. But despite the other interlocutors reporting high overall Ghanaian percentages, even they still had outspoken moments of Ghanaian disconnect, much like Sisi.

To illustrate, Serwa who answered 10% Dutch and 90% Ghanaian, shared why she still felt a little bit of a disconnect:

> "[One thing that makes me feel a disconnect is] the typical Ghanaian upbringing of not speaking much." [laughs awkwardly] Um, Ghanaian parents. Yeah, I don't even know how to say it. I also did pedagogy myself. So um. That's where you really saw the difference between how European, or yeah European parents I mean, raise their children. They talk a lot, stay calm, come to their level to speak. But with Ghanaian

> parents it's really: screaming." [laughs again awkwardly] "You can't talk back and you can't really voice your opinion. And you can do that with them [European parents]."

In accordance with Najla, Serwa mentions the same two notions of respect and the parent-child dynamic. Serwa explains how her background in pedagogy has made her see a difference in how European and Ghanaian parents raise their children. Here she shows that she favors the European approach. Again, much like Najla, this excerpt places an emphasis on not feeling heard or understood from the older Ghanaian generation.

Serwa continued her stance:

> "At school I learn something totally different, so that clashes with the Ghanaian side, the things that my parents have learnt in the past. So it's really ambivalent for that matter."

Similarly Sisi also said:

> "How it goes in the Ghanaian culture is: give respect because I say so. So if you're gonna ask for an explanation- we're not a culture that asks for an explanation. Do it because I say so. If you're gonna ask questions, then it's an indication of disrespect in their eyes. Meanwhile here in the Western world, if you ask questions, then it just shows that you are interested. You want to know why. And that is the clash that we have: Us who were born here but have the culture of Ghana. Because now I've grown up with two cultures. In school I learn one plus one is two: Why is one plus one two? And in the Ghanaian culture it's: one plus one is two and just take it as it is. So I've clashed a lot with this…" [smiles reluctantly]

These are two pivotal quotes by Serwa and Sisi. They both mention the word 'clash', referring to the European/ Western world as opposed to the Ghanaian world. The Ghanaian norm of never questioning elders or authority often clashes with Dutch culture, one that is characteristic of asking questions and being firm. Sisi mentions this clash as, 'us who were born here but have the culture of Ghana' referring to the Ghanaian diaspora living in the

Netherlands. Moreover she calls it, ‘growing up with two cultures’. Furthermore, both Serwa and Sisi juxtapose two aspects of this clash, namely what you learn in school and what you learn at home.

So essentially, even though they both reported that they do, in fact, feel most connected to their Ghanaian roots, on the other hand being part of the Ghanaian diaspora living in the Netherlands has also made them face a disconnect.

To develop this further, I asked my interlocutors what role living in the Netherlands, a western modern environment, has played in their Ghanaian identity. Adric made an interesting comment:

> “The role I think it plays is… I think it made all the difference. Because Dutch people and Dutch culture states that you have to be a 'weldenkend Nederlander[6]'. So you have to be someone who definitely thinks for themselves and someone who, uh, who dares *to* think. We are, like, so used to believing what would be taught. But I basically consider myself and, like, those who know me, they tend to refer to me as the rebel because I challenge the status quo. I tend to think for myself and I tend to stick to what feels good to me. They [the older Ghanaian generation] tend to be very rooted and very rigid in their way of thinking. It's either white or black. And my biggest problem with that is that I'm kind of born in the gray. I love the gray- it is so interesting. White and black? It's boring because you have the right answers. The gray is adventurous. She's mysterious. She's tantalizing. I love the gray. And it's very difficult to be Ghanaian and in the gray…”

Much like Sisi who called it ‘growing up with two cultures’, Adric beautifully explains this clash as being ‘born in the gray’. On the one side, you have your Ghanaian influences and on the other side you have your Dutch influences: making you a product of the two. How first- and second generation individuals of the Ghanaian diaspora in the Netherlands navigate living in-between these two worlds, will be explored further in the next chapter.

[6] The translation for this is: A critical (Dutch) thinker

In this chapter we have examined ways people of the Ghanaian diaspora in the Netherlands connect and disconnect with their Ghanaian roots. Furthermore, we have also seen ways of connecting and disconnecting with their Dutchness.

Ways of connecting with their Ghanaian roots involved material and immaterial elements. Food, music, parties and events contributed to home- building amongst interlocutors. Then, immaterial ways of connecting had to do with moments shared with fellow Ghanaians. Here relatability and comfortability played a role. Ways of connecting with their Dutchness were attributable to conflicting Ghanaian customs and practices that clashed with that of the first- and second- generation Ghanaians who are influenced by more western and modern views. Furthermore, interlocutors showed that this clash is rooted in the traditional meaning of respect for the older generation, resulting in a problematic child/parent dynamic.

The experiences demonstrated by interlocutors revealed that being ascribed a Ghanaian identity at birth and achieving that same identity later in life is not as straight cut as it seems. Some interlocutors such as Adric, Najla and Mawusi showed that despite being born a Ghanaian (ascribed identity), they do not fully feel or connect with being Ghanaian. Their achieved identity is rather a combination of Dutch and Ghanaian, where connections to the Dutch dominate. This disconnect with their Ghanaian roots is embedded in conflicting traditional Ghanaian views and ideals that do not align with theirs. Not only interlocutors who reported a low Ghanaian connection felt this disconnect, but even people who stated they felt very connected with their Ghanaian roots agreed with this. For example, interlocutors Serwa and Sisi also still disconnected with some parts of their Ghanaian culture. In this case their ascribed and achieved identity more or less align, but has reached a nuanced sense of identity. Namely, still being valid in their Ghanaian identity when indicating what they do not agree with in the Ghanaian culture, such as the notion of respect and the child-parent dynamic.

Chapter 5. Where is home?

While walking through the Bijlmer center in Amsterdam,
I spot a group of Ghanaians speaking Twi. I think they're the
same age as me. It's a beautiful day out, so they're sitting in
the sunshine on the bench. I hear them laugh and crack jokes.
While they're talking, another fellow Ghanaian walks by and they
greet each other. They have snacks with them and are
enjoying themselves.

As mentioned before, the feeling of belonging somewhere can be understood through two concepts namely place- belongingness and the politics of belonging (Antonsich 2010: 644). To reflect this in a tangible way, the Home-Question was asked in two ways: "Do you consider the Netherlands 'home'?" This chapter will spend time discussing these two interpretations, namely personal feelings of home and belonging attributed to a place and the larger structures at play in the Netherlands within politics of belonging.

5.1 Personal feelings of home and belonging

The first interpretation of "Do you consider the Netherlands 'home'?" revolved around how, solely, the individual feels. Here personal feelings of belonging came up. To illustrate, Adjua shared his personal stance on why Amsterdam feels like home. He stated the following:

> "Well, I would say that home is Amsterdam based on how I feel. Um, probably because I spend most of my time here. Yeah, and because I feel very comfortable here, you know?"

Another interlocutor Adric had a similar view. He also shared that the Netherlands feels like home to him personally, despite being born in Ghana.

> "I'm really used to my 'kikkerlandje'[7]" [Adric chuckles] … home to me feels like.. home definitely is here, like, the Netherlands. Amsterdam. I grew up here, for the most part. Ninety-five percent of my loved ones live here. I think home inadvertently is connected to how you feel, both love and warmth. I feel like home definitely is the place where you feel most comfortable, where you feel most loved because home is where the heart is."

Moreover, Jennifer said the following about her personal relationship with the Netherlands:

> "I do feel at home in the Netherlands. Every time I leave the country, I still feel a sort of relief when I arrive back here. Yeah, it's just cause like I grew up here. So just like every other Dutch kid, I also experienced that. For example, you know just know how to handle certain things, you just know certain stuff- Dutch tv-shows, Dutch games and practices. Just typical Dutch stuff- I also had that growing up. So yeah I do attach a lot of meaning to the Netherlands- it has my heart."

Here Adjua, Adric and Jennifer seem to share the personal idea that the Netherlands, specifically Amsterdam, feels like home. One significant note is that Adric and Jennifer, both share the fact that they were born in Ghana and grew up partially in the Netherlands. Interestingly, both of them still feel that the Netherlands is home.

Amongst the above mentioned interlocutors, we see a distinct connection to place-belongingness (Antonsich 2010: 644). For them, much meaning is attached to the Netherlands in particular as home. For them, this connectedness with the Netherlands as a place stems from a comfortability forged by spending the most time in the Netherlands growing up. Adric attributes it to the love and warmth that comes from family and friends who are in the Netherlands. Moreover, Jennifer specifies this further by explaining that she envisions the Netherlands as home because of customs, memories and practices that are typically Dutch.

[7] The Dutch often refer to the Netherlands as 'kikkerland', (which translates directly to frog country) but is rather meant to refer to the perception of the country's consistent coldness and bad weather.

The second interpretation of the question “Do you consider the Netherlands ‘home’?”, had less to do with personal ideas of belonging but rather the social aspect of belonging. Here, interlocutors were invited to think about the influence of how *other people* make them feel at home. Many interlocutors related this question back to what was discussed in the previous chapter when discussing ways of connecting to Ghanaian roots. Here we’ve seen that for some Ghanaians such as Adjua, Sisi and Serwa, feeling at home is closely related to the people around them making them feel they belong. However, taking a closer look, it may be worthwhile to ask: who are the people around them? In this case it is pivotal to take into consideration the interlocutors’ social surroundings.

As the statistics in Chapter 1 show, much of Amsterdam, more specifically the Bijlmer, is a melting pot of different cultures from Turkey and countries in Africa, Latin-America and Asia (Alle Cijfers 2022a).

Accordingly, many interlocutors also reflected this diversity in migration backgrounds in their answers when speaking of their social surroundings. Serwa was born and raised in Kraaiennest, Bijlmer. Serwa currently still lives in Amsterdam. She recalls:

> “Um, in Kraaiennest there are a lot of Ghanaians. And, um, I myself also go to the church that is like a 5 minute walk from where I grew up. And yeah because of that I grew up with a lot of Ghanaians around me. I know a lot of Ghanaians because of my church, but also on the street, and yeah the school I went to was very diverse. So yeah I grew up with Ghanaians, but also Asian people, Surinamese people, Turkish people, Moroccan people and a little bit of [white] Dutch people.”

What is more, Adric also shared an interesting stance on his social surroundings growing up in Kralenbeek, Bijlmer.

> “The social contacts I had with kids apart from school weren't really like extracurricular activities. So not really football or soccer or basketball. It was church because we used to go to church at least twice a week, once on the Fridays and once

on the Sundays. So most of my, then, friends were from church. So I was like predominantly engaged within the Ghanaian community from a very young age. So the friends that I was allowed to see after school quite sporadically, they were Ghanaian as well. Apart from this one friend that I had when I was like younger, his, his name was Pieterik, [smiles and laughs] the most Dutch name, that I could visit once in a blue moon. Apart from that it was just the Ghanaian community."

Serwa and Adric both report that while growing up in the Bijlmer they were frequently in contact with fellow Ghanaians and other people of a non-western migration background. This happened not only due to the places they would visit such as Church, but also school and the Bijlmer as a neighborhood.

At first, when asked "Do you consider the Netherlands 'home'?", taking into account how other people make them feel, many interlocutors answered yes. But what quickly became evident is that these answers were inextricably linked to their diverse social surroundings. The following touching moment with Serwa illustrates this link:

Serwa: "Where I really, really feel at home is Ghana, but I also get a home-feeling here [in the Netherlands].

Me: "So it's a bit of both for you?"

Serwa: "Yes. But I think that it's because there are also a lot of black people here [in Amsterdam]".

Me: " What do you mean by that?"

Serwa: "Let me think of a good example… [silence] For example Culemborg or something? Do you know where that is? It's a small town far in the Netherlands. I would hesitate to live there. I wouldn't feel at home. Firstly because it's not that

multicultural[8] [laughs reluctantly] " … "I mean, I do still feel at home in the Netherlands! But it's mostly because um.. I'm not alone... here [nervously stutters]. If you get what I mean?"

Here Serwa shows clearly that she is able to feel at home in Amsterdam, due to its multicultural population. Compared to the option of having to live in a rural city in the Netherlands with her perception of less diversity, she explains that she would not feel at home. Interestingly, she uses the words, "not alone" in Amsterdam. This moment also seems to be challenging or upsetting as she starts to stutter and displays a change in body language.

A comparable emotional moment like Serwa's, was with Sisi. When asked "Do you consider the Netherlands 'home'?", taking into account how other people make you feel, she answered:

Sisi: [Smiles enthusiastically] "Yes um. A little bit, a little bit! Because I can remember, in high school there was this Turkish boy and I taught him a lot of Ghanaian sentences [laughs] because he was so interested. So that made me feel, in a way, at home. When people accept my culture but at the same time also want to participate in it."

We continue to speak about how this went. When this comes to an end, I ask:

Me: "And if I ask the same question, "do you feel like people in the Netherlands make you feel at home" and we're specifically speaking about white Dutch people. How would you answer that?

[Silence]

[8] Although Serwa's perception is that Cumemborg is not multicultural, about 24% of its residents actually have migration background (Alle cijfers 2021b).

Sisi: “I think that my answer would then change… Yeah.. yeah..” [looks down at hands and mood changes]

Me: “That’s unfortunate to hear..”

Sisi: “It’s super unfortunate isn’t it [chuckles softly]

[Silence]

Sisi: “Yeah it’s really not okay.. Now if I really stand still and think about it. The people who I taught the sentences.. Wait no. Okay. There was this one white guy who I also taught a lot! So he understood my culture and he was really interested. But that was one person out of the majority.. you know. So for that matter, it's more the other nationalities that more often make me feel at home than the white Dutch themselves.”

It is clear that this part of the conversation was very difficult for Sisi. Here we not only see a significant switch in her answer, but also a switch in emotion. Sisi starts off smiling and explaining memories of teaching a classmate Ghanaian sentences, claiming that this contributed in her feeling at home in the Netherlands. However when asked to answer the same question, but then with only white Dutch people in mind, she realized that her answer would not be the same. This same realization was prevalent in many interviews when asked to rear their attention to only the white Dutch. This shows that people automatically think of their everyday/common surroundings, which are often very culturally diverse, when answering this question. When combining Serwa and Sisi’s answers it is evident that, for some Ghanaians, feeling at home in the Netherlands goes hand in hand with cultural diversity.

Next to placing meaning on growing up in the Netherlands, the presence of loved ones and understanding typical Dutch customs, memories and practices, here we also see that much meaning is placed on Amsterdam as home because of its diversity. Interlocutors Serwa,

Adric and Sisi feel a connection with the city because they do not feel 'alone', as they find comfort in the presence of other diverse ethnic groups. Still, in these excerpts we observe hints of some interlocutors not feeling at home, after they were asked to look outside of their social circle which often consisted of diversity as well. This will be further investigated in the next subchapter.

5.2 Racism, discrimination, exclusion

"Why is it that black people, in today's day and age, are still not considered to belong? That's the question you're confronted with then, when these things happen." - Sisi

The second interpretation of the Home-Question: "Do you consider the Netherlands 'home'?" allowed interlocutors to think deeply about how *other people* influence their ideas of home and belonging in the Netherlands. Of all the interviews conducted, this question specifically seemed to bring up the most shocking and vulnerable experiences shared by interlocutors. In this subchapter we will discuss these instances.

5.2.1 Everyday racism

To start off, we can look at Adwoa's initial response to this question which includes important overall themes. She said:

> "Okay [sits up straight]. So how I see it, is like this: I'm in the Netherlands. I have the Dutch nationality but I'm not Dutch. That's how I feel. And that's how it is. Because we can happily claim, 'You have the Dutch nationality, so therefore you are Dutch' but that is not correct. Those Dutch people [speaking about white ethnic Dutch] don't see you as Dutch- they will also never do. We just need to know: racism isn't gonna go away. They will never see you as their *own*. But you are still here. Do you think when we're walking down the street and a Dutch person sees us they'll say, 'Oh that's a Dutch person!'. No. they'll say 'Oh that's an 'allochtoon', that's a black person.' That's why you just do your best for yourself. I will never be like them and I don't want that either. Because eventually, I am not from here. I was just born here

> coincidentally and yeah… it's not like I can decide where I'm born. I speak the language. Okay. Sometimes I mess up. Yea. I have my days. I can read Dutch. I do HBO[9], but yea I just don't find myself a Dutch person. If someone asks, 'what are you?' I'm Ghanaian. I don't say: 'Oh, because I carry the Dutch nationality, I am Dutch'. I don't feel Dutch."

As we can see, this excerpt by Adwoa has many interesting layers. Firstly, we can clearly see her demeanor instantly become serious as she signals 'okay.' and proceeds to sit up straight. Then, she continues to explain that although she was born in the Netherlands and therefore has the Dutch nationality, she does not feel Dutch. By her saying, 'That's how I feel. *And that's how it is'* she is not only making a distinction based on her personal feelings of belonging, but is also stating that this is the reality she faces as a Ghanaian in the Netherlands (or someone with a non-western migration background for that matter). This speaks to Antosich's (2010: 649) politics of belonging in which her sense of belonging is inextricably linked to the discourses and practices of in- and exclusion in the Netherlands, separating "us" from "them" . Namely, that she is not seen or accepted as Dutch, or in her words: 'as their own', no matter being born there.

She argues this is still the case even though she possesses certain qualities that would seemingly 'deem' her as more Dutch, such as being literate in Dutch, able to speak the language and even attending the second highest education level in the Netherlands. Again, this aligns with what Antonsich (2010: 649) explains about political rights granted by institutions such as citizenship, still not being enough to forge a sense of belonging. As what is needed to truly gain a sense of belonging, is granted by recognition and acceptance from society (Antonsich 2010: 649).

Her main argument is embodied in her street analogy. Here, she shows in simple terms how she feels she is perceived by the white ethnic Dutch: when they see you, they don't see a fellow Dutch person, but rather an 'allochtoon'. This analogy speaks to her reasoning behind why she feels she does not belong nor feel at home in the Netherlands: she does not feel accepted.

[9] 'Hoger beroeps onderwijs' in the Netherlands. Equal to college.

In order to conceptualize this question further in tangible terms, interlocutors were asked if they ever experienced moments where other people made them feel like they did not belong or when they felt uncomfortable about being Ghanaian in the eyes of others. Here, several instances were reported with many similarities across interlocutors' experiences. To illustrate, some excerpts are added below:

> Imela: "Oh yeah, of course I have [had an experience like that]. It was in the classroom, but that was a long time ago. Like: 'In Africa you guys also live in huts right?' and it's just the same things as, 'You're from Africa right?' or 'You speak African right?' Like no. I'm from Ghana, West Africa and I speak Twi ughh."
>
> Ekow: "These things you will just hear a lot, I think we've all heard them before: 'Go back to your own country' and stuff…"
>
> Jennifer: "When I was younger in lower school, that's when- but you've probably already heard that in your interviews. But just like monkey and stuff."
>
> Serwa: "I was doing an internship at a daycare center. A colleague first asked me where I was from, so I said the Netherlands. And he was like, 'No, where are you really from?' I said, 'The Netherlands' again, 'I was born here'. He said, 'Ok where are your parents from?' and I said 'Oh that's what you mean', I pretended. So I said, 'Ghana'. He said, 'Oh Ghana, there in Africa. There are only huts there right?' And then the other colleague started to laugh and said, 'No that is no longer the case.'"

Throughout these above mentioned excerpts, we can notice several similar themes. First and foremost is the common misconception of using 'Africa' as an umbrella term for all countries in the continent. Instead of recognizing every country in their own right.

Second, are the constant harmful stereotypes equated to someone from 'Africa'. Not only do these individuals disregard Ghana as a separate entity, but like in Imela's and Serwa's case, they also show that their perception of someone from a country in Africa is immediately mentioning 'living in huts'. However miniscule this word might be, unpacking this shows how problematic it is. Thinking that everyone from an African country lives in

huts, raises the notion of Africa as primitive and unsophisticated. This creates a juxtaposition between ideas of Africa as barbaric as opposed to Europe as civilized. This reinforces underlying notions of superiority versus inferiority and exaltation versus condescension.

The third similarity in these quotes builds off of what Adwoa mentioned above about not being accepted as 'Dutch'. To illustrate, Ekow states that he has often heard the comment, 'Go back to your own country'. In addition, Serwa mentions an encounter in which there was a persistence in 'where she was from' even though she is a second-generation Ghanaian born in Amsterdam. These quotes, again, reinforce the exclusion of Ghanaians living in the Netherlands (or even born there) as not 'Dutch' but rather as 'allochtoon' and foreign.

Lastly, an important aspect of these experiences is the subtle normalization of these issues by the interlocutors themselves. What is hidden under these uncomfortable experiences is the fact that all of it seems normal to them. This can be seen by the language they use. Examples include Imela's '*of course* I have [had an experience like that]', Ekow's 'These things you will *just* hear a lot, *I think we've all heard them before'* or Jennifer's 'but *you've probably already heard that* in your interviews. But *just* like monkey and stuff'. On the one hand, these interlocutors use very casual and light-hearted language while simultaneously also speaking of experiences that may be considered violent or damaging. This contradiction shows how deeply rooted this normalization is.

This clearly demonstrates Essed's (1999: 3) concept of everyday racism. Such daily interactions that seem to be overlooked, like in school or at work, that seem to be 'normal' for the dominant group (and as we've just seen, implicitly for the Ghanaians as well), often tend to be infused with racist notions. Furthermore, Essed's (1999: 3) note that everyday racism involves a constant battle against petty harassment is also clearly portrayed. These may be cloaked in the form of racially charged jokes, like in Serwa's case, casual hostile comments, like in Ekow's experience and negative stereotypes, like Imela shared. These experiences attest to her claim that such everyday experiences contribute to making people feel as if they do not belong (Essed 1999: 6).

5.2.2 Dilemma of reacting to racism

Furthermore, during my interviews another important theme came up that goes hand in hand with experiencing everyday racism and microaggressions, which is the dilemma of reacting to racism. Sisi's excerpts below demonstrates this dilemma:

> Sisi: "Once we had a class and it was about babies. And we had a lecture about baby nutrition. It was said that in their first year they only drink milk. And I was like, huh? Only milk? And please note: I had just started this study, I'm speaking of me as a first year's medical student. So I thought, huh milk? No water? So I asked, don't they drink any water? And she [the university professor] said, 'No they don't drink water, maybe in your country'. And I- I- I- I had in.. my.. mind like this is odd, but I didn't go into it further. And now many years later, now that I reflect back on it, I think: [stern tone] This, you really could not have said this. Not as a student, not as a professor, not like that in front of the whole lecture room- not at all… [silence]. And she just continued with the lecture as if nothing happened."

She continues with another example:

> Sisi: "Another time in class we were covering communication skills, and sometimes we had an actor come and play a case study. And we had to, as nurses, apply our communication skills. So that happened and then we had a break. My professor left the class and we were speaking to the actress. And she complimented my hair. I had box braids. But it was after everyone already did because I had just gotten my hair done. And then someone said, you must have a lot of hair and I said yes that's true. And then the actress said jokingly, 'Or you probably have 'zo een rattenkop' [one of those 'rat heads'] under those braids-'"
>
> Me: [stunned at the word the woman used]

> Sisi: "-implying like: very short nappy hair. And I- I- I immediately was like,' Oh no I don't, no, no, no.' But other people already reacted like woah?- exactly how you're reacting right now and I didn't realize what she actually was saying and I was just talking over it. And I realized later what she said was not ok… [silence] It was so not done to do that. So that's what I don't understand sometimes. How people have the audacity to say certain things to other people. I didn't realize it really, but later when you reflect, then you start to see and understand certain things."

In her first example, Sisi explains how a simple question as a new medical student turned into an experience where a university professor mockingly brought up her assumed heritage as an answer to her question. In her second experience, she discusses a comment made by an actress equating her natural hair to that of a rat. Both of Sisi's experiences are very emotionally charged as she can be seen stuttering after bravely sharing the things that have been said to her. Furthermore, she uses a stern tone when talking about how this affects her in this present time. Namely, that now many years later she finally realizes how problematic these racist encounters were, only after reflecting back on it.

Another comparable experience was that of Serwa in the workplace:

> Serwa: "At another internship at a newspaper company, in October the discussion about 'Zwarte Piet[10]' would come up at the table. And then an old white woman said, 'I don't understand why black people make a problem out of it, they just need to leave.' But then I feel offended, because I'm also black, so do I also need to leave? And then I think ok, I need to leave? Where do I need to go to then? Because I am also born here you know. Just like you. So pff, stuff like that just makes me.. On the one hand I want to react, but then I'll react off of anger. But on the other hand, I want to be quiet. But then I think again: I'm not standing up for myself or my skin-color. So it's then- I don't know- I really get in a- I- I would then rather not… be in such an, um… environment. And that's why I choose to live in a place like

[10] National holiday in the Netherlands: often seen as problematic and harmful to the black community as there is an ongoing discussion of it resembling black face. elaborate more

> Amsterdam instead of a village somewhere in the back of Utrecht for example [referring to her perception of a non- multicultural city]. Just to avoid things like this. [The racism was] from what I can remember always in the workplace at internships. And that was at places where I was the only black or brown person there. Apart from that I didn't really have other encounters. And because of that, I noticed I don't really wanna be in places where there are only white people. That's why I chose working at OLVG instead of AMC because its more multicultural there. More than AMC. I think because of experiences at internships, that I just think I don't need that anymore. I don't want it anymore [laughs] and I don't know how I'm gonna react to it. Am I gonna be aggressive? [laughs] I don't know [laughs] I don't know. That is why I consciously pick places that are multicultural."

Serwa explains an encounter at her internship in which, much like Ekow's experience, she was indirectly told to leave the Netherlands for being black and having an issue with 'Zwarte Piet'. She rightfully questions the same notion again of not being accepted as 'Dutch', as discussed through Adwoa's excerpt. She says: *"But then I feel offended, because I'm also black, so do I also need to leave? And then I think ok, I need to leave? Where do I need to go to then? Because I am also born here you know. Just like you".* Then, she brings up the dilemma she faced of reacting to this uncomfortable encounter: staying quiet to prevent an angry response or standing up for herself and her skin-color.

Sisi mentions this same anger as well:

> Sisi: "It's always in an undertone, below the surface, masked with comedy. So it's like if I'm not alert to it, I may actually not even realize. I often realize it only after the fact when I reflect back on it. And then that's when the…. the- the- anger actually comes up like: how didn't you notice or why didn't you stand up for yourself? And I think that if I, in that moment, would have said something then it would have been clear like: hey this isn't ok. Because maybe not directly noticing it, caused it to not be seen as: oh this is a problem. But then on the other hand you think, this wasn't even supposed to happen to begin with."

Consequently, these above-mentioned excerpts portray this dilemma of experiencing racism: understandably, people who experience this want to stand up for themselves, but also indicate that when these encounters occur, they are almost taken aback in shock. As a result, there is also a certain added guilt or pressure. Namely, a passive anger comes up in which you feel you could have done more about the situation. This dilemma shows every day racism's lasting effect, as it stays prevalent in people's lives when they still ponder and reflect back on the situation years later.

5.2.3 Being 'tired'

Another effect of everyday racism that came up for Ghanaian interlocutors is fatigue and jadedness. This may take form in different ways. One interlocutor Kwame shared how this affects him:

> Kwame: 'Your ground and roads are just made out of sand right?' Those types of comments [laughs]. Or that we don't have any water- any clean water. I've heard those comments so often that I just think- I just filter it out, I don't hear it anymore."

Kwame uses the words 'filter out', when referencing microaggressions in everyday life. What can also be noted is that even the way he explains the situation reflects his jadedness. Namely, when he repeats the comments said to him, he proceeds to laugh. Furthermore he stresses the frequency of such comments in daily life: *'I've heard those comments so often'*, and stated how this results in him *'not hearing it anymore'.*

Moreover, for interlocutors Danquah and Sisi this takes form in being tired of having to educate people. Danquah is a female, 18 year old, second-generation Ghanaian. She attended a predominantly white high school in Almere and recounts the following experience there:

> Danquah: "If we would talk about the Netherlands and refugees or immigrants or the language [in class]. I would see it from a totally different perspective than they

> [white classmates] would. So then I see in their faces: that they wanna say something and then start a sentence with, 'Sorry I don't want to offend anyone BUT.. I think that if you come and live here then you can also just- you need to learn Dutch.' And I would have to be the only one to go like, 'Wait a second.. You do realize that these people were not born here, they came to live here at 40/50 years old, they understand Dutch, speak Dutch to the best of their ability, they participate in Dutch society. But they cannot dot all the I's... You also learn French [in school] but you can't speak it that perfectly because you're not from France right?' It's like they just didn't understand my perspective and I would so often think.. why can't you just understand? I'm tired."

Danquah sketches an experience in class where she felt that no one understood her when defending immigrants and their integration. She says: *"I would so often think.. why can't you just understand? I'm tired."* Here Danquah clearly expresses a certain desperation in wanting people to understand her point of view. Moreover, in this excerpt she also expresses how she often felt alone in such instances as she was often the only person of color addressing another side of such issues at her predominantly white school.

The following excerpt by Sisi adds to Danquah's tiredness of educating people:

> Sisi: "I often felt called to give an explanation but now I just think no"…
> "In the past people would say we have to educate people who don't know better. No. Educate yourself"… "I came to the realization that, wait you can just look it up? I have to constantly give the same explanation, defend myself every time- how my hair works, why it looks like this, what Ghana is- which isn't even that complex. There's Google, there's Youtube. So many things that I can now do, I learnt from Youtube and the internet. So how come, *you* who doesn't know, is gonna be asking *me*, harassing me constantly, you know."

All in all, interlocutors shared that because of the frequency of everyday racism in their daily life, there is also a constant jadedness that happens as a result. For Kwame, this takes the form of being able to 'filter it out' and to 'not hear it anymore'. For Danquah and Sisi, this

takes form in being tired of educating people on why certain things are damaging and hurtful. Sisi states that in the past she often felt called to always defend and explain herself, as this was a normal and recurring thing to do. However she now feels that people can also educate themselves instead of relying on others to be the spokesperson.
As we can see throughout this chapter there has been a prevalent and recurring topic amongst Ghanaian interlocutors, namely the normalization of racism within the community. Because this was such a common theme that surfaced during interviews, it is worthwhile to investigate this further. The next subchapter will discuss and challenge this.

5.3 'The model migrants' or rather, the 'silent migrants'?

"I think we, as a Ghanaian community, have become less assertive. As a result of how we are treated." -Sisi

In this subchapter we will spend time analyzing the idea of Ghanaians in the Netherlands as 'the model migrants'. To do so we can revisit the main topics mentioned in chapter 4.1.2 and chapter 5.2. Namely, respect and the child-parent dynamic and the normalization of racism.

Firstly, we saw that *respect* is considered a central value in Ghanaian culture. Within the child- parent dynamic this can cause a clash. Interlocutors shared in their interviews that they are learnt from early on in childhood by their parents that they must have respect for their elders, be hardworking and have a good education. This cultural norm of respect is taken with the older generation from Ghana. They teach their children not to question, defy or talk back to an elder or someone of authority, as this is considered 'disrespectful'. To illustrate, Sisi explains this norm of respect and its effects:

> "Because we haven't been taught to speak up- from within our household already. Because once you do that, it's disrespectful. Yeah and everything you learn at home, you take with you outside. So that's just it. Because today I was thinking about the comments made by my professors [mentioned in 6.2.1] and I thought. Because I wasn't assertive, I didn't speak up. Because I haven't been taught to speak up. I think like, Ok.

> You are a professor. You have authority over me within these hours of school. So everything you say, I would actually have to listen to. Yeah because I've learnt that from home. Which is why if we now go outside and we experience these things [racism, discrimination, exclusion] we don't really respond the way we should. Yeah so what happens then? They think that our worth is much lower because it looks like we accept it. We don't accept it, we just don't know how we should approach it, you know? Or how we should respond to that? So that is the problem that- that- that lies in the Ghanaian culture. And I think I speak for a lot of Ghanaians when I say these things you know?"

What this excerpt shows is that this taught norm of respect in Ghanaian culture has consequently also taught the Ghanaian diaspora living in the Netherlands (and abroad) to be less assertive. Sisi explains it as '*not being taught to speak up'.*

What is more is that during my data collection process, interlocutors have also shown a certain normalization of experienced (everyday) racism. When asked about these instances, interlocutors initially almost unanimously stated that they have not experienced racism or discrimination. But then when probed further they would say comments similar to, "Oh *just* the *normal* things" and proceed to speak about instances of racist microaggressions (and even blatant racism). This shows that these backhanded comments or subtle ways of discriminating are normalized amongst Ghanaians. As mentioned before, I found that this theme of 'shrugging off' racism because they are so used to it, was very prevalent.

To bring these themes all together, the following can be concluded. Ghanaians in the Netherlands are often known by their 'easy- going' and hardworking nature. A culture that does what they are told, no questions asked. Because of this stance, they are seen as the easy going and model immigrant that goes along with the Dutch norms and values. But in my interviews I found that there is much more under the surface of this modesty. As the previous subchapters have shown, this does not mean they are exempt from experiencing every day racism and microaggressions.

I found that the importance of respect and its result in a lack of assertion, combined with the normalization of microaggressions and racism results in a silence amongst Ghanaians. They are not quick to complain nor speak up to elders or authority, for example

in the workplace or at school, as this can also be seen as being disrespectful. However when they experience microaggressions in these same places, this results in a 'brushing it under the rug' attitude and normalization of horrible and uncomfortable experiences that make you feel like you don't belong.

This chapter explored the sense of belonging and home amongst first- and second-generation Ghanaians in the Netherlands. Here, we have seen that the Home- Question facilitated in investigating these issues. First, interlocutors have shown that place-belongingness for them is closely related to a comfortability that stems from spending time with friends and family. In addition, notions of typical Dutch customs, memories and practices also influence this place-belongingness. Furthermore, the cultural diversity of Amsterdam also plays a role in this. Interlocutors shared that they felt more at home in the presence of variations in ethnic groups, especially fellow diaspora members.

The second- interpretation of the Home- Question demonstrated that interlocutors do not feel a sense of belonging as a result of everyday racism and larger structures of exclusion separating "us" from "them". This comes in the form of racially charged jokes, casual hostile comments and negative stereotypes. Moreover, effects of experiencing this every day racism was also observed, Interlocutors reported feeling a dilemma of reacting to racism and being tired and jaded, to where such comments are 'filtered out'. Lastly, all these themes work together in combination with the Ghanaian value of respect to produce a normalization of racism amongst Ghanaians and eventually a silence and lack of assertion to stand up for themselves. Here we see that being Ghanaian and also Dutch is a multi-sided relationship. In the next chapter, we will examine what this experience looks like for first and second-generation Ghanaians

Chapter 6. Living in-between Worlds

"[Being a Dutch-Ghanaian] you have the best of both worlds. But it's also a paradox. You can adapt to Ghanaian or Dutch, so in essence you always have a place. But in the same breath you don't have a place at all. When I'm in Ghana they see me as an outsider and as white. But when I'm in the Netherlands it's: you're Ghanaian, you're not a real Dutch person, you're an allochtoon. So it's like, where? Where do you really belong?"- Awusi

In chapter 4, we discussed ways first- and second- generation Ghanaians in the Netherlands not only connect and disconnect with their Ghanaian identity, but also with their Dutch identity as well. Interlocutors defined this negotiation of identities as 'a clash', 'growing up with two cultures' and being 'born in the gray'.

As mentioned before, Du Bois's double consciousness (1903, cited in Hinchey 2018: 9) delineates this same "twoness" and centrality of a "double self". Furthermore, living in between these two identities may go hand in hand with aspects found in situational identity (Paden 1967 cited in Okamura 1981: 452), where one can adapt or change their ethnic loyalties, as these identities are constantly renegotiated.

Accordingly, this chapter will explore the experiences of what it is like being a product of both Ghanaian and Dutch identities in the Netherlands. In order to exemplify both sides of this coin we will touch upon the perceptions of belonging that first- and second- generation Ghanaians face while in Ghana and in the Netherlands. Then what it is like living in between these worlds will be explored.

6.1 'Obroni' for Ghanaians

"When I went there again after years, it was new for me. When I landed, I was a stranger in my own motherland" - Imela

While going on vacations back to Ghana, some interlocutors explained how being a Ghanaian who lives in the Netherlands influenced their experiences in the way they were perceived by locals. To illustrate, Serwa explained the following:

> “The people that live in Ghana see that I am not from there. If you ask any European Ghanaian they will tell you that they can just sniff us out [laughs]. And I don't know how, because even if I don't speak they can still see it. Maybe it's the way we dress or the way we act. But that already comes with the idea of: [shrugs] ‘Oh you weren’t born here.’ I can always feel it. Like they don't see you as one of them.”

This idea of always being identifiable as from elsewhere seemed to be widespread amongst almost every interlocutor who visited Ghana. For example in the abovementioned excerpt, Serwa explains that sometimes before she even speaks the language, a judgment is already placed upon her. She says that her mannerisms and look shows locals that she was not born in Ghana and therefore is not ‘one of them’.

Danquah specified this perception further by recounting her experience in Ghana:

> “When I go there, at certain moments they refer to you as, ‘Ohh yeah those Dutch people’. Because they see you as a Ghanaian, don't get me wrong. But also not. They see you more as a mixed person almost? In the sense that: you have Ghanaian ‘blood’, but you're not Ghananain. That's how you're seen. And then it’s always when you want to pitch in about politics or anything else in Ghana it’s, ‘Ohhh but you’re the European so what do you know. You weren’t born here, you don't live here.’ As if you don't have the right to speak about it.” [looks down sadly]

Interestingly, Daniquah describes this experience as comparable to being of mixed descent. Although your only ethnicity is Ghanaian, it is negated because you are from Europe. She continues to state that this causes locals to not deem her ‘worthy’ of speaking on issues in Ghana as well. We see her body language change as she looks down after saying this, indicating that this affects her emotionally.

As Danquah calls this experience being perceived as ‘mixed race’, other interlocutors explain that they are dismissed as Ghanaian entirely by being called *obroni.* Awusi explained the definition of this word in Twi:

> “They always call me *obroni* and that just means white [laughs] and I’m like what? I’m black.”

Jennifer had the same experience and delved deeper into moments when this would happen:

> “They literally just call you obroni. Obroni is translated as, like, white person [laughs]. Those two months that I was there on vacation were actually pretty long. That’s why I don't think I could stay there for a long period of time because every time you go, people constantly point out to you that you’re not “fully” Ghanaian. Even though I was born there.. So I had that disconnect in moments when I couldn't speak the language well or had an accent, or sometimes the very traditional cultural things, I also couldn't really understand what it was or why they did it. Some things that I didn’t eat or didn’t know how to eat with my hands. Then it was like: you’re Ghanaian, you need to eat it. But at the same time you act like I'm not Ghanaian and everything I do is Obroni so what do you want from me? [laughs]. ”

This excerpt by Jennifer clearly explains the notion of being pulled in two directions. She clarifies that she would be called obroni for many things ranging from her accent or the perceived inability to speak the language well to not fully understanding certain cultural practices such as eating with hands. But at the same time she also felt pressure from these same locals of needing to know these things as a Ghanaian. What is important to note is that as a first-generation Ghanaian, this might feel like a heavier burden for Jennifer. Not only because of the expectation of other people to ‘fit in’ because you were born there, but also the pressure she places on herself as she might not feel good enough.

Another interlocutor, Sisi, demonstrated this same notion with an example when she was visiting someone in Ghana:

> “In our culture there is a certain cultural custom that you do when you are a guest, there is a certain way for people to welcome you and for you to show gratitude that

you're there? So you need to explain why you came and it's done in a specific manner as well. I went to visit a friend of a friend's, and I knew of it but never really experienced it. And so when it was happening in front of me for the first time, I was really confused like, what is going on? What do I do? It is expected of me to know these things. But because I am still a Dutch-Ghanaian, there are still some things that I don't know about my culture nor understand yet. I want to! But I'm just not there yet."

Comparable to Jennifer, Sisi also experienced not understanding certain cultural norms while in Ghana. Sisi attributes this to being Dutch-Ghanaian and explains that this difference in cultural knowledge or practices is to be expected because she does not live there and grew up in the Netherlands. She points towards the idea that some things about her culture she just might not know 'yet'.

As Antonsich notes (2010: 649), a sense of belonging is attributable to "discourses and practices of socio-spatial inclusion/exclusion". What we've seen in this subchapter is these dismissals and disapprovals by Ghanaian locals can influence the sense of belonging of first- and second- generation Ghanaians living in the Netherlands. In Ghana, there is a clear demarcation of who is "us" and who is "them", as interlocutors share that they are never truly considered as 'fully' Ghanaian. They state that many aspects of their 'Dutchness' often become the reason for this, such as not speaking the language well (or with an accent) or not fully understanding the culture.

6.2 'Allochtoon' for the Dutch

"I don't get how people can experience other people's culture as weird. Normal comes from the word norm. So it's what you deem normal. What you think, that's what you accept and whatever falls outside of that, you think is weird? 'The' Dutch person isn't just the white Dutch person. It's the Turkish Dutch person, the Surinamese Dutch person, the Ghanaian Dutch person." - Sisi

Next to the negative perceptions by local Ghanaians influencing their sense of belonging, many interlocutors also felt these same perceptions by the Dutch. Interlocutor Esi, who is a 25 year old second-generation law student who grew up in the Bijlmer, stated:

> "[At work] the [white] Dutch would often mention things like, 'Oh what are you gonna eat when you're home?' and I would answer their question with something like 'A rice dish, it's called Jollof' and they would immediately be like, 'But isn't it too early for a hot dish, don't you only eat hot dishes for dinner? I never do that haha' and they could actually really make you feel like you are weird or out of place for it.."

Here Esi states that she often felt judged at work, for something that was perceived as 'not Dutch', for example eating a hot dish before dinner time. She explains this as people making her feel 'weird' or 'out of place' because of her Ghanaian customs.

Twenty-two year old second-generation dental student who also lives in the Bijlmer, Commie, added to this feeling of being 'out of place':

> "I have been working for about three to four months now in a new team, which consists of only white Dutch people. But the kind that are so rooted in their Dutchness and are not open to new things, other cultures. So because I feel connected to my Ghanaian roots, that is also the part of you that you're gonna show the most right? And I often just felt that I would be looked at weird or handled differently. It even came to a point where I was like, is this really the setting for me? I even contemplated switching jobs. I just felt really awkward, I couldn't be myself. But I mean obviously because you suddenly have to be and act Dutch. But my Ghanaian side would just shine through."

This excerpt by Commie contains several layers. First, it is noteworthy that she makes a distinction between Dutch people and 'the kind that are rooted in their Dutchness', those who 'are not open to new things or other cultures'. Second, she explains that her interactions with the latter kind have made her feel uncomfortable in showing her 'real self', which is one in which her Ghanaian identity is apparent. Then she names this experience as

‘suddenly having to act Dutch’. Here, it shows that her association with acting ‘Dutch’ is something that she needs to *do*.

Here, Du Bois’s double consciousness (1903) can be observed (cited in Hinchey 2018: 9). Commie clearly demonstrates what Du Bois explains as a sense of seeing yourself through the eyes of others (1903, cited in Hinchey 2018: 9). She states that she constantly felt that she was perceived as weird or different. This even reached the point where she wanted to switch jobs. Commie’s experience also relates to Paden’s (1967) concept of situational identity in which there is a certain agency and ability to ‘adapt’ or ‘change’ one’s assertion to a particular ethnic loyalty due to the social context one is in (cited in Okamura 1981: 452). By Commie calling it her Ghanaian ‘side’ she further alludes to the fact that certain social contexts establish which of a person’s loyalties or identities is appropriate.

Another interlocutor, Morowa, who is a 19 year old second- generation Ghanaian shared her experiences of trying to act more ‘Dutch’ as well.

> “Just in the way I speak. When I’m with my close circle, I speak how I normally speak. But when I speak to a professor or something I try to speak Dutch very well. When I was younger I used to work at a hospital and you would encounter, like, doctors and stuff. And I tried to speak very properly. Eloquently or something. As if how I normally speak isn’t eloquent or something.. So yeah in that way. The language. Or just like, I used to also act as if I like the things that the white Dutch people did. For example swimming or something [laughs]. It’s so dumb but, I hate swimming. But when I was younger I would act like I loved swimming just to act more Dutch”

Again we see that for Morowa, acting more Dutch is actively going out of the way to speak more eloquently or acting as if you have the same interests such as swimming. However, the layer that is underneath these desires is: what is ‘Dutch’ then? What is apparent is that trying to act more Dutch, is also implicitly trying to act more white. Morowa exemplifies this by saying that she wanted to pretend she liked the things *white Dutch* people liked. But then referred back to this as *acting more Dutch*- specifying that she sees these two things as synonymous to each other. This raises Wekker’s notion (2016: 15) that people with a

migration background who are labeled as allochtoon, “will forever remain *allochtonen*”. This points to a certain internalization amongst Ghanaians in that they are allochtonen (from elsewhere, not Dutch) and thus not valid in their own ‘Dutch’-ness, despite being born in the Netherlands and calling it home.

6.3 Where do I belong? Neither fully ‘Dutch’ nor ‘Ghanaian’

Interestingly, unlike Commie and Morowa, interlocutor Dhakirah had another view on having to go out of the way to ‘act more Dutch’. She is a first- generation twenty two year old caregiver. She stated:

> “I do notice I speak differently, if that makes sense? When I’m at my internship or in formal settings etc. But I think that we as humans do that anyway, we just adapt to our environment. And to add I also think that it is important. Because or else you clash too much. Because if I go and make totally different comments, you’re not gonna get me?” [laughs and smiles]

Moreover, Adric mentioned the same:

> “I don't view it as a bad thing per se, because you are in both worlds, you have been molded by both worlds. So you have two versions of yourself and you then use it accordingly. So to me, it's part of who I am. So it's not like I'm portraying myself to be different than I am now. It is because of that. I have more sides to me.”

Rather than viewing this ‘switching’ to different ethnic loyalties as something negative, Dhakirah and Adric see it as something necessary. Dhakirah attributes this to an inevitable ‘clash’ that would occur, as some Dutch people might just simply not understand certain Ghanaian comments or customs. Moreover, Adric sees it as being ‘molded by both worlds’. Again, we see him alluding to different ‘versions’ of himself, further specifying that different

context may bring forth different sides to him. But he claims that this does not make him fake, but rather views it as a dynamic, multi sided nature of himself.

When closing off interviews, interlocutors were asked how they experience living in between these worlds, being both Ghanaian and Dutch. Below are some quotes shared by interlocutors:

> Adric: “And the way I see things is that I have this privilege, actually, of moving through two different kinds of worlds. So I usually meet a very broad spectrum of people. So the blackest of black who just came out of West Africa and the whitest of whites who've got like holiday homes on islands [laughs].”

> Adjua: “Yeah, like there's a switch because Ghana and the Netherlands, they're very different countries, very different cultural backgrounds and different ways of thinking, spirituality, language, food etc. So yeah it's quite based on the circumstance you're in at a given point in time and the way you express yourself. So in that sense, there is some kind of very obvious switching, but I can also imagine that a lot of the time it's mixed together in some ways and that at this point it’s just my personality. I feel blessed.”

> Ekow: “It used to be challenging, but now- I guess it’s just a situation where you just find balance in both [identities] eventually.”

> Adwoa: “I don't think about it actually, but I don't think it's ever been challenging, its very normal. And I don't feel limited. I think each side of the switch just has its positives and negatives. But sometimes it does feel freeing somehow, when I get to switch. So that is my superpower.”

These excerpts show that because they have this ‘double self’, interlocutors have learnt to navigate between these two identities depending on the setting they are in. They use words like blessed, superpower, and freeing when speaking of this ability to switch and enjoy all

facets of their identities. As Ekow and Adjua explain, this is a process in finding a balance between the two and eventually this becomes part of your personality.

This chapter has discussed both sides of living in between worlds as a Dutch and Ghanaian person living in the Netherlands. On the one hand, interlocutors have shown that when they visit Ghana, they are judged and dismissed as a 'fully' Ghanaian. This can be attributed to their inabilities in the language or shortcomings about knowledge of the culture, as a result of being a Dutch-Ghanaian. Because of this they are called Obroni, meaning *white person*, which leads to a lessened sense of belonging as they are clearly excluded as a 'real' Ghanaians. This is evident for second-generation individuals such as Serwa, Danquah, Awusi and Sisi, but even for first- generation individuals such as Jennifer.

Then on the other hand, interlocutors show that in the Netherlands, they are not accepted as 'fully' Dutch either. They are put in situations where they feel out of place and like they don't belong, sometimes wanting to 'act more Dutch'. Underlying themes demonstrate that 'Dutch' is implicitly attributed to whiteness and that a certain internalization of them being 'allochtonen' is present. Furthermore, interlocutors also show a clear situational identity, where different social contexts bring forth either their Dutch or their Ghanaian identity. In addition, they experience a double consciousness where they constantly see themselves through the eyes of others, navigating their way through a twoness and duality of their identities.

Interlocutors feel that they belong both nowhere and everywhere. Although for the Ghanaians they are not 'fully' Ghanaians and for the Dutch they are not 'fully Dutch, interlocutors show that this inbetweenness also grants them the best of both worlds. Their ability to adapt and change gives them the power to move and flow through their multifaceted and dynamic identity, working together as one eventually.

Conclusion

This study investigated what factors influence ethnic identity and sense of belonging amongst twenty first- and second- generation individuals of the Ghanaian diaspora in the Netherlands.

The experiences shared by interlocutors portray that ethnic identity is fluid and interchangeable, instead of a fixed phenomenon. Ghanaian interlocutors demonstrated that they live within a double consciousness, as they are able to move between the two worlds of being Ghanaian and Dutch. As they move between these identities, they also move between moments of connectedness and disconnect with their Ghanaian and Dutch identities. First, connectedness was shown to be influenced by material elements such as food, parties, church and events which were integral to home-building with fellow Ghanaians. Immaterial elements like spending time with Ghanaian family and friends also contributed to feeling a connectedness to Ghanaian roots. These elements work together to generate a felt diasporic consciousness. Second, a disconnect to their Ghanaian identity often proved to be attributable to differences between the older and younger generation. Traditional Ghanaian views seemed to clash with the double (Ghanaian-Dutch) nature felt by first- and second- generation Ghanaians.

Living in- between worlds was also reflected in the sense of belonging amongst Ghanaian interlocutors. Experiences showed that they feel like they belong in both worlds but also in none. The notions of in and exclusion towards first- and second- generation Dutch Ghanaians in Ghana are prevalent. Interlocutors share that they are never accepted as 'fully' Ghanaian, as they are more likely to be seen as *Obroni.* Then the other side of the coin shows that while living in the Netherlands, they are not seen as 'fully' Dutch either. Instances of everyday racism demonstrate that they do not belong. This is shown through a subtle undertone of everyday jokes, casual hostile comment and negative stereotypes. The cumulative nature of experiencing this everyday racism shows its lasting effects by feeling a dilemma about how to respond and a normalization in which this racism 'is simply filtered out'.

This study attests to the larger societal structures of racism and exclusion embedded in Dutch society. The experiences shared by interlocutors show that the harmful Dutch labeling of terms like allochtoon not only live on through ethnic groups but through

generations: they will always be treated and seen as allochtonen. Thus, Ghanaians who are visually identifiable as different from the dominant group in the Netherlands, will always be confronted with having to feel like they do not entirely belong.

This study portrays that 'the' Dutch person is reflected in the experience of Ghanaians in the Netherlands: a dynamic and diverse identity- one that is valid in its own right.

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Appendix 1

MSC THESIS INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Before interview:

1. Purpose of interview
2. No compensation, but contribution to knowledge production
3. Takes 1 hour
4. You can decline any time or decide to stop, no consequences
5. Doesn't intend to cause harm, but uncomfortable topics will be discussed

***Trigger warning*:** Inclusion of topics about racism, discrimination and/or prejudice.

6. Confidential/ Pseudonym, if you want that?
7. Consent for recording/ participation on tape. After interview we're going to come back to it and you can agree to continue with this decision

Interview guidelines

- Can you introduce yourself and explain where you were born and where your parents are from?
- Where did you grow up/ where were you raised?
    - (To investigate: Do most of my respondents originate from the same place, and if not from where?)
- (For 1st gen) Can you explain how you experienced (some of) your childhood/time in Ghana?
    - What are the reasons you (and your family) left Ghana? Do you miss it/ want to ever return?
- (For 2nd gen) Can you explain how you experienced (some of) your childhood/time in the Netherlands?
    - Have you ever visited Ghana?
        - § If yes, how did you experience your time there? Do you miss it/ want to ever return?
        - § If not, would you ever want to visit Ghana? How do you feel about the country? (To gauge how they think about the country from which they have their roots)
- (If they can) If you had to express how much you feel connected in percentages to your Ghanaian roots versus Dutch, how much percent would that be and why?
- What does being Ghanaian mean to you?

- Do you feel connected with your Ghanaian roots/heritage?
    - If so, can you give me an example of what kind of things make you feel connected with your Ghanaian roots/heritage?

    (Think of something typically "Ghanaian") Name some of these if they don't know and find new leads:

- Material things:
  - How do Ghanaian activities make you feel connected to your Ghanaian roots?
  - How does Ghanaian food make you feel connected to your Ghanaian roots?3
  - How does certain (for example the genre “Afro”-)music make you feel connected to your Ghanaian roots?
  - Are there any Events that make you feel connected to your Ghanaian roots?
  - Are there any Parties that make you feel connected to your Ghanaian roots?
  - Are there any Customs/ rituals that make you feel connected to your Ghanaian roots?
  - What role does going to Church play in feeling this connectedness?
- Immaterial things:
  - Are there any memories that make you feel connected?
  - Wat role do Relationships: (family/ friendships/ significant other) play in influencing this connectedness?
  - Do Feelings of community/solidarity play a role?
  - Do specific values/norms (Think of family, upbringing, community, ‘proper behavior’) play a role?

· Can you name one example from your past or present, where you feel/felt most connected with your Ghanaian roots?
· Are these ways of connecting something you alone experience or is this shared amongst other people with Ghanaians roots in the Netherlands (Think of family/ people you surround yourself with?)
  - If so, how do you know this? Can you give me an example? Is this something that is discussed among Dutch Ghanaians or are there jokes/stories/sayings about this?
  - If not, can you explain why this is more individual for you?

· Do you feel disconnected with your Ghanaian roots/heritage?
  - What makes you feel this disconnect?
· Can you name one example from your past or present, where you feel/felt most disconnected with your Ghanaian roots?
· You can use these again if they don’t know and find new leads
  - Material things:
    - How do *Ghanaian activities* make you feel disconnected to your Ghanaian roots?
    - The same for
      - *Ghanaian food*
      - *Events*
      - *Parties*
      - *Customs/ rituals*
      - *Church*
  - Immaterial things:

        - § Are there any memories that make you feel disconnected?
        - § What role do Relationships: (family/ friendships/ significant other) play in influencing this disconnectedness?
        - § Do Feelings of community/solidarity play a role?
        - § Do specific values/norms (Think of family, community, 'proper behavior') play a role?
- Do you consider the Netherlands 'home' and why*?* (First what *they* feel)
    - Where do you consider "home"? (NL or Ghana or any other place)
    - Does "home" for you have to do with a place or the feeling you get?
- Do you consider the Netherlands 'home' and why? (How other people make them feel)
    - If yes, what experiences make you feel this way? Can you recount an experience as an example?
    - If not, why do you feel like you don't belong? Have you ever had a moment where you felt/ someone made you feel uncomfortable as a Ghanaian in the Netherlands? (gauging for influences of (everyday) racism, discrimination, dynamics of in/exclusion)
    - What role does the way you look play in these experiences of belonging in the Netherlands? (immigrant shadow)
- Do you have to juggle having Ghanaian roots while also living in the Netherlands?
    - How do you juggle living in between both worlds?

Appendix 2

Informed Consent Form

1. The purpose of this research is to investigate the experiences of first- and second-generation Ghanaian individuals in the Netherlands in relation to their ethnic identity and sense of belonging.
2. There are no prospective research benefits involved in this research such as financial compensation. However, your participation will be greatly appreciated as you will be contributing to data collection and scientific knowledge needed to fill a research gap on identity studies of Ghanaian people in the Netherlands.
3. One of the procedures of this research consists of conducting interviews in which you have agreed to participate in. The expected duration of this interview is +- one hour.
4. You have the right to decline taking part in this interview without consequences, or to withdraw from participation at any given point.
5. Declining or withdrawing from this research will not come with any consequences.
6. This research does not intend to involve any foreseeable factors such as potential risks, discomfort or adverse effects. However, it is possible that during the interview unpleasant emotions or uncomfortable memories come up. In this case, you are allowed to notify the researcher and request for the interview to stop and invoke your right to decline/ withdraw as stated in point 2.
   ***Trigger warning*:** Inclusion of topics about racism, discrimination and/or prejudice.
7. All information provided by you will be kept confidential per request. In this research, your real name will then not be used and you will be referred to with a pseudonym in order to stay anonymous. You agree that the conversation may be recorded for transcription purposes. These will be deleted once transcription is done.
8. If you have any questions regarding this research or the research participants' rights, you may refer to the contact information below:
   - Alysha Wazir
   - +31655118698
   - Alyshaczw@gmail.com

Signature Researcher Signature Participant

_____ _____