Corporate ‘action that matters’:
How Black Lives Matter activists perceive the role of corporations in the movement’s fight against racism in the Netherlands

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Abstract

While the BLM movement in the Netherlands (BLMnl) in 2020 catalysed the public debate on systemic racism in the country, less is known on the movement's view of the role that the corporate sector plays in the movement's cause. By means of 13 qualitative interviews, this study therefore set out to explore how Black BLM activists in the Netherlands perceive the role of corporations in the movement's fight against racism, in an effort of gaining insight into the collective action frames of BLMnl. The thematic analysis of the interviews reveals that BLMnl activists view corporations as (1) contributing to systemic racism, (2) powerful, influential and resourceful entities, and (3) beneficiaries of the movement. This positions corporations as elite actors in the eyes of the movement and assigns them responsibility to actively respond to BLMnl, just like the political sector. Participants put a stronger emphasis on the role that corporations play to internally contribute to tangible and intangible changes than external expressions of solidarity which was how corporations were currently predominantly responding to BLMnl. The perception that corporations need to be publicly transparent with their internal actions was shared, as such a practice would ensure that corporations can be held accountable and racial equity norms can be procured. The patterned findings further point towards the movement's shared collective action frames which are beginning to stir desired change within the Dutch corporate sector. Overall, the research shows that corporations are perceived as instrumental within the BLMnl movement, which brings corporate practice in further proximity with contemporary activism and social movements.

Keywords: Social movements; collective action frames; corporate activism; Black Lives Matter; activist perceptions

Academic journals: Social Movement Studies; Social Forces; Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Table of contents

1 Introduction

In June 2020, the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement reached new heights as people all around the world mobilized to advocate for the eradication of White supremacy and the achievement of racial equality. Inspired by the initial BLM protests in the U.S., mass crowds in the Netherlands (NL) united against racism in the streets and amplified their voices online (Ghorashi, 2020). A novel collective identification with BLM in the Netherlands (BLMnl) emerged.

With no clear prior leaders or plans of action, BLMnl became a decentralized movement that called out for collective action from institutions to acknowledge the racially discriminatory practices in the Netherlands and commit to systemic and cultural antiracist change (Ghorashi, 2020; Ince et al., 2017; Thomas, 2019). Whilst BLMnl addressed public institutions, the private economic sector remained generally tangential to the movement. Only few large Dutch companies, such as Tony's Chocolonely and Unilever, shared their support for the movement in the Netherlands, and even in such cases companies did not see a need for coordinating with one another to pursue on a joint course of action addressing systemic racism.

The lack of corporate action in NL contrasts with the actions that BLM provoked within the economic sector in the U.S. (Johnson, 2021; Willingham, 2021). There, businesses from all sorts of industries were induced to react to the movement (Braithwaite, 2020; Willingham, 2021). Tech giant Apple, for example, released an open letter discussing their commitments to racial equity[1], Amazon publicly pledged $10 million to organizations that support BLM's cause[2], and Walmart announced antiracist policy changes[3]. Collective action from the economic sector in the Netherlands thereby lacked, and the role that this sector played in BLMnl's fight against racism remained ambiguous. The purpose of this research is to bring more clarity on the role of corporations in BLM's fight against racism in the Netherlands.

BLM activists publicly responded to the corporate actions in the U.S. (Ritson, 2020; Willingham, 2021), revealing the significant meaning that is placed on the role of the economic sector within social movements. Social movement research should look to

[1] See https://www.apple.com/speaking-up-on-racism/
[2] See https://twitter.com/amazon/status/1268240752309669888
[3] See https://www.nbcnews.com/business/consumer/walmart-will-stop-putting-multicultural-products-locked-cases-n1229461

comprehend these perspectives of activists and aid in legitimizing their views, in an effort of further advancing the movement's development. With the limited witnessed corporate mobilization in the Netherlands, activists were not stimulated to voice their opinions on the role of corporations in BLMnl, though they may still have strong opinions on the matter. These opinions and views could help envision the actions that the novel BLM movement in the Netherlands aspires to spur.

That is why this research is guided by the specific research question: *How do BLM activists perceive the role of corporations in the movement's fight against racism?* This qualitative interview-based research aims to unpack how and where Black BLM activists in the Netherlands position corporations in relation to the movement, and how they perceive corporations should respond to BLMnl in order to help the movement attain its goal. A thematic analysis of the interviews will provide insights into the potential collective action frames that the participants ascribe to corporations which will serve the theorization of actions that corporations should pursue in order to cooperate in BLMnl's fight against racism.

Existing scholarship on BLM has already focused on exploring the role of corporations in the movement's fight against racism. Namely, Schulz (2017) and Willingham (2021) analysed corporate responses to BLM through content analyses, and Logan (2016), Ciszek and Logan (2018), and Herbert (2020) analysed case studies of specific corporations' involvement in BLM. However, such research always strongly focused on the U.S., and no studies relied on interviews with participants of the social movement in order to explore the relationship between the economic sector and BLM. This whilst Liou and Literat (2020) emphasize the importance of comprehending (young) activist perspectives as they encompass "visions and theories of justice, and have their own complex ideas about what activism is and how it is practiced" (Liou & Literat, 2020, p. 4663).

2 Theoretical framework

To investigate how BLM activists perceive the role of corporations in the movement's fight against racism in the Netherlands, this study first provides an overview of the movement and its cause. BLM is further discussed in relation to relevant social movement theories focused on how participants are mobilized for collective action. The relationship between corporations and social movements is then explored, revealing the existent research that addresses how and why corporations involve themselves in social movements and causes. Finally, the significance of corporate involvement in antiracist social movements is illustrated.

2.1 BLM's contextual history in the fight against racism

Since 2013, Black Lives Matter has grown as a decentralized social movement addressing systemic racism, racial discrimination and White supremacy. Originating in the U.S., the movement sought to combat the "violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes" (www.blacklivesmatter.com), as Black Americans statistically faced more police brutality in their lifetime compared to their White counterparts (Edwards et al., 2019).

The problem of White on Black crime in the U.S. which BLM aims to address, gains significance when contextualized in the U.S.' historical unequal treatment of Black individuals. The violent mistreatment of Black people goes back as far as the colonial times where slavery imprisoned, exploited, and controlled Black lives (Cornelius, 2020). This act deprived African Americans of their freedom for centuries (Cornelius, 2020). Even though the abolitionist movement eventually freed African Americans from slavery and abolished slave institutions, Black lives still did not seem to institutionally and constitutionally matter as the law configured African Americans as subordinate citizens which allowed for their legal inferior treatment as citizens (Dennis, 2016). It was the civil rights movement which saw to re-write these racist laws in order to finally pave the way for Black lives to legislatively matter. Though changes in the law helped emancipate the lives of Black Americans, established institutions were founded on White superiority and racist ideologies and continued to disadvantage and oppress citizens of colour and act as though Black lives do not matter.

One can map out the systemic racism and racist ideologies present in institutions which are supposed to provide equal opportunities for all. As BLM highlights in its cause,

police institutions unjustly target Black Americans. However, also healthcare in America has been the subject of systemic racism, with less access to health care facilities in predominantly Black neighbourhoods (Jaycox, 2016; Sacks, 2019; Sederstrom & Wiggleton-Little, 2021). Educational institutions enhance racial inequalities due to the lack of diversity in professors and senior leaders within higher education, as well as unequal access to higher education for financially disadvantaged students which are predominantly students of colour (Gasman et al., 2015; Jerrim et al., 2015). Even in the labour market people of colour (POC) are disadvantaged in the employment process, excluded from representation in higher managerial positions, and discriminated against in company policies (Brooks, 2017; Dawson et al., 2019; Joshi et al., 2017; Sánchez-Monedero et al., 2020).

Driven by the surge of advocacy for BLM in America, activists in the Netherlands mobilized themselves to call out and take action against the hegemonic racist ideologies which prevail in their own country (Ghorashi, 2020; Weiner, 2014; Vermeulen et al., 2020). Similar to the U.S., many of the historical riches upon which the Netherlands was built stem from colonialism and slave trading (Weiner, 2014; Wekker, 2016). The Netherlands refers to its Golden Age as a time of economic and global prosperity which heavily enriched the country, however for many populations of colour this age marks a time of suffering and exploitation at the hands of the Dutch state and companies (Weiner, 2014; Wekker, 2016). It was through the Dutch East and West India Companies (VOC & GWC) and later the empire that, amongst others, populations in South Africa, Suriname, the Caribbean and Indonesia were subjected to Dutch imperialism whereby their resources were exploited and the Dutch language and ideologies were forced upon them (Weiner, 2014; Wekker, 2016). The Netherlands' current diasporic populations can be traced back to these imperial times (van Amersfoort & van Niekerk, 2006).

Although the Golden Age, and its horrible treatment of POC, seems centuries in the past, its ideological and cultural affinities are still highly present in Dutch society (Dikmans, 2020; Ghorashi, 2020; van der Pijl & Goulordava, 2014; Weiner, 2014; Wekker, 2016). This is because that era catalysed racialized relations and discourses in the Netherlands which hegemonized ideologies of White superiority over Black inferiority (Dikmans, 2020; Ghorashi, 2020; van der Pijl & Goulordava, 2014; Weiner, 2014; Wekker, 2016). Dutch institutions became founded on internalized racist ideologies and advanced notions of POC being "intellectually backward, lazy, sexually insatiable, and always available" compared to the superior White (Wekker, 2016, p. 42). It became implicitly embedded in culture that the

White-native-Dutch is the “rescuer” and “saviour of Blacks, driven by pity and compassion” (Wekker, 2016, p. 146). Such ideologies can be reflected in the Dutch remembrance of their colonial history as the “Golden” Age, despite the atrocities that took place at the hands of Dutch leaders in this era (Johnson, 2014). Also, the infamous Zwarte Piet (Black Pete) is a racially insensitive caricature that upholds negative and derogatory perceptions of Black people in Dutch culture (Wekker, 2016).

Racism in the Netherlands is so historically and systemically engrained whereby no longer one White person can be held responsible which propels the cultural manner of white innocence, as Wekker (2016) coined it. White innocence was termed specifically based on the Dutch racial culture which attempts to assume tolerance and colour-blindness, without recognizing the privileges that lie behind white skin. This innocence is the result of a denial and ‘smug ignorance’ of racism (Essed, 1991; van der Pijl & Goulordava, 2014; Wekker, 2016). That is where the meaning of racial relations differ between the Netherlands and the U.S. Whilst racism in the Netherlands is based on ignorance, in the U.S. it is more based on a “reluctance to share power” (Essed, 1991, p. 217). In the U.S. racial communities are more often segregated causing racial problems to be explicitly observable, whilst in the Netherlands racial conflicts are more often related to problems of integration and are implicit in culture (Essed, 1991; Rath, 2009; Siebers & Dennissen, 2015).

Instead of the Netherlands embracing its immigratory, multicultural history it continues to praise the native-White-Dutch way of life (Weiner, 2014). With the inadequate migrant integration into the Dutch culture being framed as ethnic minorities causing problems in society, as well as threatening the Dutch culture (Rath, 2009; van der Pijl & Goulordava, 2014; Wekker, 2016). This has been the latest argument raised by populist, right-wing parties and politicians as they stress the need to prevent ethnic minorities from overtaking the Dutch culture (Lucassen & Lucassen, 2015). In this way racist and xenophobic discourses were normalized and justified in the 21st century (Rath, 2009; Siebers & Dennissen, 2015). As much as the Dutch government claims to want migrant families to integrate into the Dutch way of life, its institutions systemically disadvantage and discriminate immigrants and non-White-Dutch people within “political power, jobs, education, quality housing stock, healthy neighbourhoods, and accurate group representation in the media” (Weiner, 2014, p. 732).

BLM in the Netherlands (BLMnl) aims to combat the discriminatory treatment of people of colour by instigating public discussions on racial discrimination. The movement

strove to stir nation-wide reflection on the existence of systemic racism in the country, and the recognition thereof (Ghorashi, 2020; van der Pijl & Goulordava, 2014; Weiner, 2014). The movement aimed to provoke changes in policies and cultural attitudes via mass online and offline mobilization, with the mobilization being facilitated by activistic organizers from preceding antiracist movements in the Netherlands, such as Kick-Out Zwarte Piet (KOZP).

2.2 Social movement theories

Social science scholars have widely debated the definition of social movements over time as social movements have grown, evolved and spread. However, there is a general consensus on what social movements entail: mass mobilization, a desire for change, and common efforts to pursue the change which is aimed at groups in power (Dennis, 2016; McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Tilly, 1985). Black Lives Matter is a social movement as it brings together large groups of people under a commonly held belief and a public desire for societal and political change (Dennis, 2016; McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Tilly, 1985).

Diverging perspectives and theories come about when social movement scholars aim to grasp how particular social movements mobilize participants, create a coherence and pursue change (Tillery, 2019). A contemporary distinction that is made within academic social movement research is between "old" and "new" social movement theories (Buechler, 2013).

Old social movements are rooted in socioeconomic class inequalities which require "political economic transformation" in order to rectify capitalistic injustices (Buechler, 2013; Calhoun, 1993, p. 385). These movements clearly placed the economic sector within the movement's narrative, as their actions focused on mobilizing resources and maximizing measurable benefits for a movement's goal (Buechler, 2013). New social movements are more concerned with the sociocultural inequalities within society (Buechler, 2013; Millward & Takhar, 2019). They focus on identity politics and are characterized by identity- and lifestyle-based mobilization (Buechler, 2013; Norris, 2009). Compared to the old movements, the new ones pay less attention to the economic sector (Buechler, 2013; Calhoun, 1993; Tillery, 2019).

In scholarly literature, BLM is predominantly referred to as a new social movement (Bonilla & Tillery, 2020; Rickford, 2016; Tillery, 2019). This is because a participant's belonging to the BLM movement depends not on their class status but on their collective identity (Buechler, 2013; Fominaya, 2010; Norris, 2009). The collective identity being one's

emotional relation to a movement's cause which spurs their mobilization (Fominaya, 2010; Norris, 2009). The perception of BLM as a new social movement, distances the economic sector from the movement in theory and reduces the emphasis of the role that the economic sector plays.

However, scholars like Tillery (2019) and Gürcan and Donduran (2021) have recently begun debating BLM's position in social movement research. They argue that BLM also amounts to old social movement theories as the movement's frames not only call for expressive activism addressing sociocultural injustices but also for forms of resource mobilization and organizational restructuring in addressing systemic injustices, which is characteristic of old social movements (Gürcan & Donduran, 2021; Tillery, 2019). This is where BLM's movement frames expand to also call third parties – those actors not involved in the movement – to action (Tillery, 2019).

Movement frames are the coherently built perceptions of the actions necessary to pursue a movement's goal, they are what encourage and coordinate mobilization (Andersen, 2017; Snow, 2013). Social movement literature highlights three types of frames that compose collective action frames: diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational frames (Snow, 2013, p. 2). Diagnostic frames form an understanding of the injustice that requires changing. Prognostic frames articulate methods of approaching or solving the injustice. Finally, motivational frames stress the importance of undertaking actions.

In social movement research, the third-party interaction of mainly "political parties, interest groups, other social movements, domain experts, … policy makers and other types of public authorities" (Andersen, 2017, p. 448) has been investigated. Tillery (2019), for example, uncovered that BLM frames online call political elites to action. With a multitude of researchers noting the important roles that governing elites play in the success of a social movement (Andersen, 2017; Gürcan & Donduran, 2021; McCarthy & Zald, 1977), one becomes driven to ask which other governing elites BLM includes in its collective action frames.

Scholars tend to research movement frames through the media by means of content analyses (Ince et al., 2017; Tillery, 2019), however there is little way of guaranteeing that these frames accurately represent the messages of, in particular, a decentralized movement like BLM as the Internet allows anyone to contribute to movement frames online. This may cause for the propagation of erroneous or misleading frames (Ince et al., 2017). Therefore, it

is important to study movement frames through interviews with activists as it generates more trustworthy findings of how a movement actually frames collective action.

2.3 Social movements and the corporate sector

Corporations are powerful economic and social actors with large pools of resources. According to social movement theories by McCarthy and Zald (1977), this would position corporations as elites. Andersen (2017) notes that it is when elites stand united alongside a movement's claim that "the ability of social movements to secure their goals increases" (p. 449). This is when a movement's collective action frames directed at corporations become of particular importance as they call corporations – elites that hold large potential for transformative change – to action. Academic literature has however not yet attempted at investigating the frames which promote progressive collective action from corporations.

So far, academic research that has begun exploring corporate involvement in social movements has focused on corporate activism (Eilert & Cherup, 2020). Eilert and Cherup (2020) define corporate activism (CA) as public statements that companies make on controversial socio-political matters, in attempts of contributing to social change by influencings its own institutional environment. This institutional environment may include – but is not limited to – "employees, the marketplace, other organizations, or the government" (Eilert & Cherup, 2020, p. 461). The influences of CA on institutional environments can be normative, mimetic, and/or coercive (Eilert & Cherup, 2020). Normative influences arise when a company's adaptation of activistic behaviour sets a new norm. Mimetic influences entail companies pressuring other businesses to adapt activistic behaviours in order to uphold with the competition. Finally, coercive influences include companies withholding resources from their networks to lobby them into adapting their ways. It is in these ways that corporate activism makes allies of corporations as they help change social and corporate norms which help a movement attain its goals (Ciszek & Logan, 2018; Davis & White, 2015; Eilert & Cherup, 2020).

Furthermore, corporations can be significant allies of social movements as they can help increase social support for movements and their causes. Vredenburg et al. (2020) term such activism as "intangible" as it is based on messaging/advocacy and not on "tangible" commitments which would involve changes in practices (p. 448). Corporations, and their managing members (e.g. CEO's), have this potential as they have large, global online presences whereby they can significantly contribute to the distribution of movement frames,

and guide social understandings of and public discourses on social movements (Chatterji & Toffel, 2019; Ince et al., 2017; Wilcox, 2019). However, corporations can also pertain to the distribution of misleading frames, as previously mentioned (Ince et al., 2017). Corporate activism in this way does not automatically make an ally of a corporation.

The reason why corporations engage in social issues is also not always straightforward. Though CA may be intrinsically motivated by genuine desires of combatting social issues and provoke change, as Logan (2019) showed Ben & Jerry's did with their activistic actions towards BLM, CA has in recent years also been undertaken in an effort of appealing to audiences that nowadays increasingly desire brands that align with their own values (Logan, 2016; Shetty et al., 2019; Wilcox, 2019). This makes CA a favourable strategy to attempt at increasing brand equity and sales (Herbert, 2020; Vredenburg et al., 2020). The corporate use of activistic messages that support socio-political causes are then also not always positively perceived by audiences. CA can rapidly become perceived as being misleading, inauthentic and a form of woke-washing when it appears that a company does not in fact themselves engage in the prosocial behaviour and attitudes that they advocate (Herbert, 2020; Sobande, 2020; Vredenburg et al., 2020). It is when CA is perceived as inauthentic and woke-washing that a company can receive a lot of public backlash in the form of, for example, boycotting (Eilert & Cherup, 2020; Vredenburg et al., 2020).

The study of corporate activism focuses on the strategies adopted by corporations and their likely impacts on profit and brand equity (Eilert & Cherup, 2020). Current research thereby largely neglects the impacts that CA can have on social issues and social movement interests (Eilert & Cherup, 2020). To fill this gap in research, this study considers the interests of social movements centrally and wants to explore how social movement actors perceive the role of corporations in a movement's fight against social injustice.

The Black Lives Matter movement, and its fight against racism, makes a compelling case to explore how the role of corporations in social movements is perceived as during the 2020 BLM protests an endless number of companies impromptu responded to BLM. While, according to Eilert and Cherup's (2020) CA framework, these corporate actions can be termed activism, it is unknown how participants of the movement itself evaluate these practices. If corporate activism is a practice that will continue to increase in the future, it is important to know how those involved in a movement, and reliant on its progress, perceive it helps, or not. Considering the corporate sector's liability in upholding racial injustices, it

becomes even more important to understand how BLM activists perceive the role of the corporate sector in advancing the movement.

2.4 Racial inequality and the corporate sector

Connecting the corporate sector to racism is not new. Many activists and scholars have analysed and highlighted how this capitalist sector is founded on racial injustices, with its origins most often being traced back to slave trading and colonialism (Johnson, 2021; Logan, 2019; Weiner, 2014). It is, however, important to bring to light the literature that discusses the corporate sector's linkages with racism in the Netherlands, as considerably less literature focuses on this matter than in the U.S., and because this helps argue why activists in the Netherlands may place importance on the role of corporations in the BLMnl movement.

Historical Dutch trade companies, like the VOC and GWC, have been part and parcel of building a system that oppresses people of colour in the Netherlands (Allen & Vos, 2008; van der Pijl & Goulordava, 2014; Weiner, 2014). As van der Pijl and Goulordava (2014) write, "Black bodies were traded, valued for their labour power, and desired as a tool that brought profit" to White dominated businesses (p. 283). While economic gain from racial injustices enhanced Dutch prosperity, the labour of people of colour came unacknowledged and unrewarded (Wekker, 2016). Such historical corporate practices paved the way for a modern capitalistic culture which undervalues and exploits the labour of POC, viewing POC as sources of cheap labour – as was recently done in the Netherlands with the "guest-workers" of Turkish and Moroccan origin (Emmer, 2013; Engbersen et al., 2006; Ghorashi, 2020; Weiner, 2014). Racial injustices in the Dutch economic sector can also be found within modern corporations where there is a significant lack of POC in higher working positions, as well as discriminatory practices in corporate cultures, policies and job hiring (Andriessen et al., 2012; Blommaert et al., 2014; Glastra et al., 2000; Kunz, 2019; Point & Singh, 2003; Siebers & Dennissen, 2015; Subeliani & Tsogas, 2005; Thijssen et al., 2021).

Research that brings attention to the corporate sector's contributions to systemic and cultural racism often speak of the "responsibility" that corporations hence have to act equitably and combat racist practices (Logan, 2019, p. 397; Hayward, 2017; McAfee & Getachew, 2021). It is through this perceived responsibility that expectations are formed of the ways that corporations should react to antiracist social movements, which may go beyond what is currently required of corporations by law (Logan, 2019). In this way, corporations are assigned a larger role in society than just an economic one (Logan, 2019; McAfee &

Getachew, 2021). As little research has focused on the relationship between racial inequality and the Dutch corporate sector, little is known of the expectations, responsibilities and overall role that corporations are perceived to play in redeeming racial inequality. In an attempt of clarifying this role, the perspectives of BLMnl activists are investigated.

3 Methodology

To investigate how BLMnl activists perceive the role of corporations in the movement's fight against racism, this study performed a thematic analysis of 13 semi-structured in-depth interviews with activists in the Netherlands that are involved in the movement. In-depth interviews are an intimate method of data collection which allow for a deep exploration of people's perspectives through open-ended questions and probing (Blee & Taylor, 2002; Brennen, 2017; Warren, 2001). Interviews are often used within social movement research, particularly when focusing on decentralized movements, as it is a way of capturing the voices of activists, creating thick descriptions, and analysing collective action frames (Agyemang et al., 2010; Benford, 1993; Blee & Taylor, 2002; Geertz, 1973; Hercus, 1999).

3.1 Sampling

The participants consisted of young Black BLM activists living in the Netherlands. The most active age group within the BLM movement in the Netherlands as well as the U.S. are young adults aged 18- to 35-years-old which is why this research focuses on young activists (Pew Research Center, 2020; Stoffel, 2020). A specific focus is set on Black activists, regardless of their nationality, as the BLM movement aims to amplify all Black voices in society (Sobo et al., 2020). This research aims to make an academic contribution to this mission. The Black community is also the protagonist in BLM's narrative which is why activists of other skin colours are excluded from the research. As race is a social construct, eligibility depended on how participants racially identified, with multiracially or monoracially Black identifications rendering participants eligible for the research (Marine & Trebisacci, 2018; Shih et al., 2007). Finally, participants were considered as activists if they identified with the movement and engaged in activistic actions, such as having attended a BLM demonstration, speaking out online, and/or engaging in significant prefigurative activism (Saunders, 2013). Often activists shy away from calling themselves activists due to the label being perceivably out of reach (Bobel, 2007), which is why participants were not merely asked whether they consider themselves activists or not.

Participants were recruited through snowball sampling. The researcher, who is well acquainted with a number of activistic groups in the Netherlands[4], took advantage of their own pre-existing network to reach out to eligible participants who could further direct the

[4] The activistic groups that the researcher successfully reached out to were Women's March Nederland, We Nomadic, Curated Culture, & ASAH.

researcher to potential participants (Sadler et al., 2010). These participants were contacted directly through social media platforms Instagram and WhatsApp. Through the snowball method of sampling participants become organically assured of the research as they are referred to by people they trust (Sadler et al., 2010).

A total of 13 participants were sampled, of which six were male and seven were female. The ages ranged from 20- to 29-years-old, with a median of 23.6 years of age. The participants were of various (mixed) nationalities. There was a predominance of mixed-Dutch nationalities, such as Dutch-Kenyan, Dutch-Burkinabe, Dutch-Surinamese, but nationalities such as Zimbabwean and Ivorian were also present. The number of years that the participants lived in the Netherlands differed widely, with the most being their whole life and the least being three years. Bramble and Minns (2005) note the importance of reflecting a diverse sample of participants within qualitative research into activist perspectives. The gathered sample offers insight into the diverse Black community in the Netherlands which is all too often singularized (van der Pijl & Goulordava, 2014).

The participants' commonalities were that they all shared a background of higher education – though in varying fields – and all were living in the Randstad, with a majority living in Rotterdam. This is presumably due to the snowball sampling method which "leads to a degree of 'sameness'" (Wood, 2016, p. 12) between the participants as well as the researcher who also shares such a background. Though this limits the research, the aim is not to generalize results onto a particular population. Instead, this qualitative research aims to provide theoretical insights into how various activists perceive the phenomenon of corporate involvement in antiracist social movements in order to come to a larger understanding of the contributions and value of corporations within the BLMnl movement (Blee & Taylor, 2002).

3.2 Interview structure

The interviews were semi-structured and thereby all followed the same interview guide (see Appendix A). The interview was structured around four topics. The first inquired about the participants' own involvement with the movement. This part was directed at unveiling the potential collective BLM identities of the participants (Buechler, 2013). Then there was a focus on participant perceptions of the BLM movement in the Netherlands. These questions aimed to reveal how the participants framed the movement, and what they included or excluded in those frames (Snow, 2013). Informed by the literature on corporate activism (Eilert & Cherup, 2020; Vredenburg et al., 2020) and elite outside-actors' involvement in

social movements (Andersen, 2017; Hayward, 2017; McCarthy & Zald, 1977), the third and most significant part of the interview asked participants about (1) their views on the relationship between corporations and BLM, and (2) the role and responsibilities that they view corporations to have in the fight against racism. The final part of the interview used visual/textual probes of two Dutch corporate responses to BLM in 2020, to further explore how activists respond to various (real) corporate statements. The first probe was a corporate website statement from Tony's Chocolonely, and the second probe was an Instagram post from the Dutch corporate Unilever (see Appendix C). These probes were included to stimulate reflection on how activists desire to see corporations respond to BLMnl (Willingham, 2021).

Prior to the interviews, participants were informed of the purpose of the research and requested to sign a consent form (Brennen, 2017; Warren, 2001). The interviews were all carried out in English, within a month of each other, lasted between 55 and 85 minutes and were conducted face-to-face via video-call on Zoom. The decision to conduct the interviews online, instead of in-person, primarily came as a consequence to the COVID-19 measures, though it actually offered a multitude of advantages such as allowing participants that were temporarily abroad to take part, and reducing participation effort (Neilson, 2018).

3.3 Analytical process

All the interviews were transcribed verbatim which stimulated the researcher's initial immersion in the data (Boeije, 2010). The analytical process was informed by thematic analysis whereby the interview data was firstly coded and interpreted, looking for "patterns of meaning and issues of potential interest in the data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 86). Throughout the initial coding process the goal was to identify the various ways in which the respondents discussed the addressed topics of the interview guide. Participants' views on BLMnl were first coded as "BLMnl is about …" and "BLM strategy = …". Examples of the codes are "BLMnl is about = exposing and acknowledging racism" and "BLM strategy = conversations with political sector". Then, participants' views on the corporate role within BLMnl were coded as "corporate role = …" and "corporate position in BLMnl = …". For example, "corporate role = instigating discussions about racism" and "corporate position in BLM = influential". These codes were inductively ascribed, and sought to keep an accurate and complete oversight of the activists' perspectives (see Appendix D). The qualitative data analysis software ATLAS.ti was used to facilitate the analytical process.

After the initial codes were checked, the researcher looked for patterns within the groups of codes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Identified patterns were clustered to summarize a "theme" of the data (see Appendix D). These themes point towards the movement frames of the participants. The frames of BLM and the corporate role could then be compared, revealing how activists discuss the role of corporations and how this coincides with their discourse on BLMnl. These frames were also compared between the participants, allowing for indications of how unanimous or different the perceptions of the corporate role within BLMnl are.

3.4 Reflexivity of the researcher

The analysis relied on the researcher's interpretation of the data which is why reflexivity and consciousness of the researcher's own interpretive lens and positionality – as a White-female researcher – was required throughout the analysis in order to best reflect and capture the participants' voices (Blee & Taylor, 2002; Geertz, 1973; Marine & Trebisacci, 2018; Maxwell, 2005). Also during the sampling process and interviews the researcher made conscious efforts to establish a safe and warm environment, as Gibson and Abrams (2003) note that interracial differences affect these dynamics. The researcher therefore displayed a "genuinely friendly, open and accepting personality" which helped establish rapport with the participants (Gibson & Abrams, 2003, p. 473).

4 Analysis and findings

The average participant of this study is a young adult in their 20's that has been actively involved with the BLM movement in the Netherlands (BLMnl) over the past year since the George Floyd incident in 2020. They were however already concerned with antiracist movements in the Netherlands – such as Kick-Out Zwarte Piet or A21 – and felt that being Black "naturally" involved them in antiracist activism throughout their lives. In fact, the common experience across the sample was that individuals could not specify when they became activists. During the BLMnl movement, the average participant had attended at least one protest while also actively contributing to discussions about racism, founding or joining local activistic groups, as well as using social media to raise awareness, share experiences and distribute educational information. In their view, such actions were individual yet supportive of BLMnl. These actions also concur with how Saunders (2013) describes different activistic actions, thereby reassuring that the participants interviewed are activists of BLMnl.

Overall, BLMnl participants felt motivated by BLM in the U.S., seeing it as a mobilizing factor. Participants described the BLMnl movement as "different, but with the same ideas and goals" (said Tamira) as BLM in other parts of the world, particularly the U.S. Just as in the U.S., the participants spoke of BLMnl's mission as combatting systemic racism, eradicating White supremacy, and empowering Black people – and other POC. Yet, they all explained that contributing to local change in the Netherlands was their main motivation for taking action. BLMnl's mission was perceived as distinct because racial discourses that are prominent in the U.S. were not so prevalent in the Dutch public space. For instance, Tamira explained that racial injustices are already recognized in the U.S., which is why "in America [BLM] is a lot more active" (said Tamira), whilst "in the Netherlands they don't really speak on that subject that much". On the other hand, participants felt that racism in the U.S. is "more extreme" (Marty), "more violent" (Zoe), and "more obvious" (Thato), whilst in the Netherlands racism is more covert and passive-aggressive, thereby Black people "are not really *fearing* for [their] lives" (Marty) in NL which is why racism is less addressed or centrally considered (Ghorashi, 2020; Weiner, 2014; Wekker, 2016).

Even so, the Netherlands was still described as systemically and institutionally racist against POC, as the participants recounted their countless everyday experiences of discrimination. As already hinted above, they felt that Dutch culture tended to be racially

ignorant, in that it often diminished and excluded the experiences of Black people. This is captured in Jimmy's account:

> A lot of people have the perception that in Holland the issues – especially more people who are not Black– that like the Netherlands is all liberal and free and accepting and there's no institutional racism here, like "Black people? What? They are fine here?", though we know that there's racism. But like people don't really see or understand the extent to it.

This diagnostic frame echoes prior research emphasizing the lack of Dutch concernment with racial injustices, and their inability to acknowledge and rectify historical or present-day forms of racism when they are in fact prevalent and obtrusive (Dikmans, 2020; Ghorashi, 2020; Hondius, 2014; van der Pijl & Goulordava, 2014; Weiner, 2014; Wekker, 2016). The diagnostic frame articulated by the participants suggests that BLMnl was an opportunity for these pre-existing shared experiences of racism to find a common expressive narrative in the Netherlands.

There also seemed to be shared collective action frames, as most participants talked about the need for "changing people's mindsets" (Jimmy), "educating and bringing awareness" (Donna), and "creating a safe space for Black people to be heard" (Celine) in order to pursue BLMnl's goals. As a result, it was shared that anyone – "everyday people" (Tamira) or "people walking on the streets" (Donna) – can be a target of BLMnl. This cultural focus within the collective action frames of BLMnl would coincide with the theoretical positioning of BLM as a new social movement (Buechler, 2013).

However, when asked how the participants assess BLMnl's progress, almost half of the participants mentioned the representation of POC in politics as an indicator of success. This measurable indicator points towards the systemic changes that BLMnl desires to see and shows that the movement is more than just about cultural change and also focuses on the distribution of power – resources – in society which places it in proximity with old social movement theories (Buechler, 2013; McCarthy & Zald, 1977). As a result, the participants would also locate people in power – "people that can make an impact" (Tamira) – as targets of BLMnl. This was not surprising, as elite groups are often targeted in a social movement's pursuit of success (McCarthy & Zald, 1977).

What was surprising, however, was that participants would more prominently include the government and politicians within their definition of people in power that BLMnl targets

as agents of change, and less so corporate actors. In that sense, elites appeared to be imagined primarily in relation to the political class in power and not the corporate sector. The lack of emphasis that participants organically placed on the role that corporations play in BLMnl raises questions of whether corporations are included in activists' visions of collective action at all. This study can advance our understanding of the action framings of the BLMnl movement which are still developing. Through research, BLMnl's collective action frames can be clearly established and propagated. The perceived corporate role was investigated by, first, analysing how activists position corporations in relation to the movement, and, secondly, how activists envision the actions that corporations should undertake in response to BLMnl.

4.1 The position of the corporate sector within BLMnl

When the participants were asked specifically about the role of the corporate sector, all the participants had a lot to say and unanimously shared that corporations lay central within the movement's fight against racism. The activists' extensive discourse on the role of corporations in BLMnl contrasts with the minimal way in which the corporate sector was mentioned in their earlier discourse on BLMnl. This points towards discrepancies between the communicated action frames of BLMnl and the specific actions that the movement wants to incite from different industries.

Participants' perceptions of, and attitudes towards the role of corporations expressed some shared understandings, though there were also divergences. This shows the ambiguous position of the corporate sector in the collective action frames of BLMnl. Three themes emerged during the thematic analysis which describe how the interviewees positioned corporations in relation to BLMnl: (1) contributing to systemic racism, (2) powerful, influential and resourceful entities, and (3) beneficiaries of the movement. These themes help understand why the activists perceive that corporations are relevant to the BLM movement, and why corporations hold a responsibility to take action in the fight against racism. Over half of the participants addressed at least two of the themes in their discourse.

(1) Corporations contribute to systemic racism

Four of the activists emphasized the role that corporations play in sustaining and contributing to systemic racism as a reason why corporations are relevant within the BLM movement. As employers, investors, internal policy makers, corporations build their own systems/structures which, to this day, are often subjected to White privilege and racial

inequalities in the Netherlands (Andriessen et al., 2012; Blommaert et al., 2014; Hondius, 2014; Subeliani & Tsogas, 2005; Thijssen et al., 2021). This can be interpreted from what Nyasha answered to the question of how corporations are relevant to BLM:

> They contribute towards the systematic part of [racism]. If they're not hiring people of colour, even if they're not fit for the job, there's a reason why a lot of them are not fit for the job, they've never been given the chance historically. And it's proven, like the more you push people out to certain areas, let's say Rotterdam South, you're not really creating anything there.

Here, Nyasha refers to the depths of systemic racism, not just referring to the tendencies of companies in the Netherlands to avert from hiring or giving equal opportunities to POC, but also to the larger systemic discrepancies that exist in the provision of equal opportunities in the wider society which are supposed to offer people equal chances in life. Nyasha's elaborative views on the position of corporations as targets of BLM and contributors to the problems of racism came as a surprise as he minimally mentioned the corporate sector within his prior discourse about BLM – where he more discussed the role of individual citizens and the political sector. This raises subsequent questions about why corporations are not centrally considered in the collective action frames of BLMnl, which could be the scope of future research.

(2) Corporations are powerful, influential and resourceful entities

Furthermore, more than half of the participants expressed that corporations hold a central position in BLMnl's fight against racism as corporations are powerful, influential and resourceful entities in a society. Thato asserts this as she responds to how companies are relevant to the change that BLM wants to promote:

> …because a lot of the companies and corporations in the world hold a lot of power and ties to certain laws or groups or political parties – they hold a very important role.

Thato's discourse suggests that corporations are as important as state institutions and political elites when it comes to creating societal change. This alludes to the fact that the corporate sector should almost equally be visible in BLM's action frames as the political sector, since social movement research expressed that powerful and resourceful entities – elites – in social movements are key to the success of a movement (Hayward, 2017; McCarthy & Zald, 1977).

The perceived powerful position of corporations within BLMnl, however does not mean that the activists think that corporations should lay centrally within the movement's advocacy. Namely, five participants mentioned how corporations should "fall to the back" (said Donna) of the movement. Rather, corporations should position themselves as pupils of BLM. Donna implied this clearly when she said that corporations should really position themselves as 'okay, right now *I'm the one that is being taught*'" by the BLM movement. Corporations need to take a step back from portraying themselves as powerful rational entities and rather embody a sense of humanity and urge to learn about the topics of racism.

(3) Corporations are beneficiaries of the BLM movement

The final significant way in which the participants positioned corporations within the BLMnl movement is that they perceived corporations as beneficiaries of the movement (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). The term "beneficiaries" was deductively assigned to the activists' description of corporations' position in the movement as it stems from the theory by McCarthy and Zald (1977) and represents those outside actors in a movement that have something to gain from their involvement in a social movement. The activists largely talked about how corporations can profit off BLM in terms of their revenue as well as their brand equity (Vredenburg et al., 2020). Many of the activists perceived this as the main reason why corporations have so far responded to BLM, rather than their genuine concern with racial equality. Nevan (pseudonym) explained this when he addressed the role of corporations in BLM:

> I would say that they definitely use the BLM movement as *momentum* to make themselves *look* good, but they are not concerned with it as much as they make it out to be … They won't be motivated out of the kindness of their hearts; they're motivated because of that brand image of being the company that *saves* BLM.

The corporate use of BLM as a 'momentum', which Nevan mentions, echoes what other participants mentioned about corporations viewing/using BLM as a "trend" (said Yannick, Emanuela, and Celine), "hype" (said Zoe), or "selling point" and can therefore be used to their own advantage and be exploited. This links activist/social movement research with consumer research (Herbert, 2020; Sobande, 2020; Vredenburg et al., 2020) which mentions that consumers can view brand activism as inauthentic and as forms of woke-washing. This finding thereby increasingly intertwines theories on consumerism and activism.

What Nevan said about companies wanting to "save" BLM speaks to the concept of White saviourism (Wekker, 2016) which two other participants also alluded to. This is significant within the discourse of BLMnl activists as it shows that BLMnl activists consider the historical treatment of POC by economic actors within the contemporary role of corporations in BLMnl. Yannick, for instance, mentioned that a corporation investing "big money in Black companies" still resonates as "the White guy giving money". The activists hereby position corporations as beneficiaries of BLM as their actions sustain feelings of superiority, which BLM actually aims to combat. This is why corporations need to *learn* how to appropriately respond to BLM, as previously mentioned, and help eradicate racially unequal narratives from their actions.

4.2 Corporate responses to BLMnl

The participants' views on corporate responses to BLMnl were complementary rather than contradictory. This shows that there is a shared direction of the role that corporations play in BLMnl, however a clear-cut frame of action for the corporate sector still needs to crystalize. What the interviews revealed is that BLMnl activists distinguish two correlated ways that corporations should respond to the movement: (1) internally and externally, and (2) tangibly and intangibly.

(1) Internal vs external responses

All of the participants envisioned that corporations should internally respond to BLMnl. This is linked to the theme of corporations being positioned as contributors to systemic racism and White supremacy, whereby they can stir change from within their organization, for example by changing their policies, or by addressing their employees and department structures. On the other hand, external responses refer to corporations having an influence on their external environments, such as their consumers, social media audiences, other companies, politicians (etc.), in favour of BLM. External responses are based on the theme of corporations being powerful, influential and resourceful entities – elites – within BLMnl.

Interestingly, participants put a stronger emphasis on the role that they perceive corporations to play in instigating or contributing to internal systemic changes in favour of racial equality, compared to the role they play in externally responding to BLMnl. Thato, for instance, said "what people are protesting for is that change within the company. That's the first step always.", with the second step being external responses. Also Zoe gave priority to

internal responses to BLM when she specified that corporate help, in the form of "creating awareness" for BLM "starts from within…" since she mentioned that many corporations begin with making external claims about supporting BLM but then fail to do so in their actions:

> …because, there are a lot of companies that say 'yeah, we're very diverse' but they're not. So really creating awareness is also looking in the mirror like 'are we really diverse? Or simply claim to be diverse?' and starting from within the company itself.

Contrasting the explained need for internal changes, participants in this study felt that the corporate responses to BLM that they did witness over the past year were limited to expressions of solidarity with the movement. When asked about what companies were doing throughout the BLM surge in 2020, Jimmy said that "companies were being like 'I stand with you' and they posted on their socials like #blacklivesmatter #BLM, #blackouttuesday, all those things". This resonates with what 4 of the other participants said about how "some [companies] posted stuff or changed their profile pictures" (Nyasha) on social media. Yet, when some of the participants were asked about how corporations responded to BLM in the Netherlands specifically, Hawi, Donna, Tamira, and Marty shared that even external responses were "lacking", as Donna put it. The participants seemed to share a general disappointment with the Dutch corporate sector's response to BLMnl, with Hawi stating that he "would also like to see Dutch companies acknowledge the fact that the same problems that are out there [in America] and seem very distant are also active here as well" with these 'same problems' being systemic racism.

Furthermore, almost all the participants shared the same perception that the role of corporations within BLMnl is to be externally transparent with the internal actions they are undertaking. Transparency would ensure that progress can be reported, corporations can be held accountable, and new racial equity norms can be disseminated. Nevan distinguished between external corporate responses of the type "'we support BLM'" and the evidence of actual change within these corporations. Corporations, he went on, should "show online what they do in real life". The transparency and accountability that activists desire channels a need for policies that focus on activism and the follow-through of corporate commitments to social issues to ensure that they are not only beneficiaries of social movements but also foundationally contributing to change.

This was echoed by Hawi, Yannick and Emanuela who argued that companies being vocal and transparent about their changes and actions would have mimetic influences (Eilert & Cherup, 2020). Hawi exemplifies this influence through the environmental movement, claiming that when "one big company goes like 'hey, we're going to stop getting our beef, soy, or palm oil from this place', everyone else follows", but that "in the Netherlands, no one has done that yet in terms of BLM … and until that happens, no company's going to make a stamp on it". Here, the powerful and influential position of companies is viewed as a crucial force behind the success of the BLMnl movement.

Few of the activists did however notice a rising trend in corporations aiming to hire diversely and include POC in their media representations ever since the BLM protests in 2020, which they recognize as positive internal responses to BLMnl. This can be understood from Jimmy who, as a member of the "African association" at his university said "so many big companies are hitting us up like 'D&I, D&I, D&I', and that's such a topic of conversation right now because they want representation, which is good" – with D&I referring to diversity and inclusion in the workforce. The takeaway from this is that the BLMnl movement has made its first ripple effect within the Dutch corporate sector as it begins to have an influence on corporate operations, and that collective action frames are provoking these changes.

That the activists shared understandings of corporations needing to begin with internally changing before attempting to influence/change their external environments, adds to the existing literature on corporate activism by Eilert and Cherup (2020) which mainly focuses on theorizing the external influences that corporations provoke on their institutional environments. Thereby the findings of this study reveal that a stronger focus in academic research needs to be set on how corporations can internally change with the goals of a social movement in mind.

(2) Tangible vs intangible responses

When talking about corporate responses, participants in this study articulated an alternative frame for assessing the role of corporations in BLMnl – tangible and intangible responses. The distinction tangible/ intangible is deductively proposed based on the brand activism theory by Vredenburg et al. (2020). The tangible role that the participants mentioned corporations to play in supporting BLM can overall be described in terms of their practices (Vredenburg et al., 2020), such as fostering equal opportunities and monetary distribution.

Meanwhile, the intangible role that corporations play in supporting BLM can be summarized in terms of cultural changes and messaging (Vredenburg et al., 2020).

The internal tangible changes that the activists perceive the role of corporations to encompass include hiring diversely, providing diversity & inclusion (D&I) and unconscious bias trainings, having a D&I office within the HR department, diversifying suppliers, and conducting D&I analyses. Nyasha gives a grasping impression of the number of changes corporations should make in order to accurately respond to the BLM movement: "restructuring boards, restructuring hierarchal things … having D&I programs within the workspace … workshops, active training, even independent consultancies – doing research or analysis on how diverse your workforce is."

On the other hand, there was also a clear theme of the activists appointing corporations the role of committing to internal intangible changes. These changes should lead to corporations offering a "safe space [for POC] in the workplace" (as Celine said), and becoming, as Yannick said, "aware" of the "topics" of BLM such as "systemic racial problems". This shows how BLMnl activists want corporations to internally combat the racial ignorance that prevails in the Netherlands (Wekker, 2016).

As was previously discussed, the activists did share that they believe corporations have a responsibility to externally respond to the BLM movement. Twelve out of the 13 participants mentioned that the most important tangible way that corporations can respond is through money, by for example "donating money to the BLM foundation" as Zoe says, but also investing in Black communities, and lobbying. The mentioning of "lobbying" (said Jimmy) as a corporate action for BLMnl links with Eilert and Cherup (2020) who identify the institutional coercive influences that corporations can have. The 4 activists that addressed lobbying as a corporate role within BLMnl expressed that the more corporations engage in this practice, the more impact the corporate sector can have on furthering BLMnl's goals. This can be understood from the following quote by Nevan as he answers how BLMnl can benefit from corporate involvement: "if you have a lot of corporates coming together and agreeing with BLM, they can change the legislation, they can help lobby for change". This points towards the perceived importance of the Dutch corporate sector to unify in its response to BLMnl. Future research should investigate the differences in social impact between mass and singular corporate mobilization to reliably know what approaches to change are most effective.

Furthermore, in the activists' perspectives, the significance of a corporate action that involves money, whether internally or externally, is relative to the size of the corporation. This could be taken away from Marty's impression of the second probe involving Unilever, where he took note of the significant size of the corporation, which then diminished the meaning of their comparably small monetary gesture:

> Unilever is such a gigantic, gigantic corporation, like they own everything. So, for them to be like 'oh, here's a million dollars to like organizations', that's like empty, empty, it really means nothing.

Finally, the intangible external responses which activists expressed to find appropriate for corporations resemble the desired intangible internal responses as they also focus on propelling cultural changes through meaningful messages which raise awareness and "amplify" (said Emanuela) the voices of BLMnl, POC, and other antiracist advocates in NL (Weiner, 2014; Wekker, 2016). Corporations need to offer a "localized context" (as Hawi said) of BLMnl in their external discourse. Moreover, Zoe shared that "creating a feeling of support by a big company" through a public response is an intangible manner of helping the BLMnl movement.

5 Conclusion

5.1 Main findings and implications of research

This study aimed to answer the research question 'how do BLM activists perceive the role of corporations in the movement's fight against racism, in the Netherlands?'

Based on 13 interviews with BLMnl participants, the study shows that even though corporations are not centrally positioned within the collective action frames of BLMnl, all of the activists perceived corporations to play a prominent role within BLMnl's fight against racism. Namely, the activists saw corporations as contributing to issues of racial inequality, having the power to affect systemic change, and as beneficiaries of the movement.

The activists argued that corporations need to commit to internal systemic and cultural changes that would ensure equal opportunities, and diverse and inclusive operations as well as working environments. Therefore, corporations were perceived as having a responsibility to engage in self-reflection, and operational and structural analyses. This ascription of responsibility contrasts with a corporation's implied profit-making goal, marking it as a public actor involved in the construction of the social fabric. As such, participants wanted corporations to be publicly transparent in their actions for change, so that they can be held accountable and their support can be trusted. In addition, corporations were perceived as playing an influential, whether mimetic or coercive, role in furthering a (corporate) cultural status quo in the Netherlands which is aware and recognizing of racial injustices and the significance of the BLM movement (Eilert & Cherup, 2020; Weiner, 2014; Wekker, 2016).

The interviews revealed the gap between activists' expectations and the actual responses of the Dutch corporate sector on addressing systemic racism. This points to a corporate ignorance of sustainable actions that can aid BLMnl; but also to a lack of collective action frames within the BLMnl movement which efficiently mobilize corporations to act – since corporations were not centrally mentioned in the activists' discourses on BLMnl.

By having explored how activists perceive the role of corporations in BLM's fight against racism, an understanding is forged of BLMnl's collective action frames addressed at corporations. Even though the discourse of the activists is not representative of the BLMnl movement, the patterned findings do point towards a shared framing and perception of how corporations hold a responsibility in the fight against racism in the Netherlands, and how they can support the movement. This research shows that corporations are perceived as instrumental within antiracist social movements. The corporate sector is hereby brought into

proximity with theories and practices of contemporary activism and social movements, a relationship that was formerly distanced or obscured.

5.2 Limitations and suggestions for future research

A potential limitation of this study is the use of the snowball sampling method. This method of sampling means that few of the participants knew each other and were a part of the same activistic group. This could have inclined them to have more similar views on the topics discussed which could have limited the exploration of collective action frames. Furthermore, even though this research focused on BLM in the Netherlands, non-Dutch participants that lived in the Netherlands were still allowed to be sampled as they are also affected by the movement in the Netherlands. This made for some discrepancies in knowledge of the antiracist movements in the Netherlands.

To advance understandings and theories on antiracist movements in the Netherlands which are now at a key turning point with clear ambitions taking hold, future research should continue to approach Dutch activists and give them a voice in academia. Future research should also continue to explore the relationship between corporations and antiracist activism in order to stimulate the corporate sector to act and pressure policies that would ensure change and accountability.

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Appendix A- Interview guide

Topic 1: Personal involvement

1. How are you involved in the movement?
2. What motivated you to get involved with BLM (& other movements)?
    - Probe: How do your activist actions make you feel?
3. How do you follow the movement?

Topic 2: BLM

4. What is BLM's mission in NL?
    - Probe: Are there specific focuses for BLM in NL, or are they all the same as in the US, for example?/ What is BLM in NL specifically aiming/fighting for?
5. How do you distinguish who is, or isn't an activist of BLM?
6. In NL, who does BLM aim to mobilize?
    - Probe: How important is the group-building aspect of BLM?
7. In the context of NL, who is or are the opponents? Who is BLM targeting?
8. In the context of NL, how does BLM pursue its goals (the goals you mentioned)?
9. Is there a way to assess whether BLM has attained its goals?

Topic 3: View of economic sector in addressing racial injustice

10. What comes to mind when you think of corporate involvement with BLM?
11. What is the role of the corporate sector in helping achieve the mission of …?
12. Have you seen the corporate sector in NL respond to BLM?
13. When are companies activists of BLM, rather than mere supporters or allies?
14. Why did companies respond to BLM?
15. How do companies help BLM reach its goals?
    - Probe: Should all companies react to BLM?
16. What form of communication or interaction should take place between companies and BLM?

Topic 4: Probes – examples of corporate responses to BLM from Dutch companies.

17. What did you think of these responses?
18. Where do their responses position them with relation to BLM?
19. How does this response help BLM?
20. What more, or less should have been done?

21. How should companies follow up on such responses?

22. What is different between these two responses?

Appendix B- Participant overview

Participant number	Name	Gender	Age	Nationality of mother & Father	City of residence	Current occupation	Highest obtained educational degree
#1	Donna	Female	23	Dutch & Congolese	Rotterdam	Musician	HBO bachelor
Involvement in BLM(nl): Active on social media (posting, sharing, & educating); discussions with friends and other people; signing petitions; attended the protest in Rotterdam; critical of popular culture							
#2	Nyasha	Male	23	Zimbabwean & Zimbabwean	Rotterdam	HR consultant	University bachelor
Involvement in BLM(nl): Spreading awareness by speaking out; engaging and educating people through conversations; posting on social media (though he recently gave up social media in general); attended the protest in Rotterdam; attends protests from other antiracist movements such as A21							
#3	Nevan (Pseudonym)	Male	26	Zimbabwean & Zimbabwean	Amsterdam	Recruitment marketing	University master
Involvement in BLM(nl): Attended the protest in Rotterdam; critical within own work; active on social media – posting & sharing; raising public awareness; discussions with friends and other people							
#4	Hawi	Male	20	Kenyan & Dutch	Rotterdam	Student; teaching assistant	International Baccalaureate
Involvement in BLM(nl): Attended the protest in Rotterdam; active committee member of the Association of Students of African Heritage in Rotterdam – regulating partnerships with companies; discussions with friends and other people							
#5	Yannick	Male	25	Surinamese & Dutch	Rotterdam	Sales advisor; culinary coach	HBO bachelor
Involvement in BLM(nl): Attended the protest in Rotterdam; discussions with friends, family and other people; conscious consumption from businesses that support BLM; following BLM causes on social media.							
#6	Jimmy	Male	21	Dutch & Burkinabe	Rotterdam	Student	International

							Baccalaureate
Involvement in BLM(nl): Attended the protests in Amsterdam and Rotterdam; creatively through art and music – addressing issues of BLM and racism; board member of the Association of Students of African Heritage in Rotterdam – external relations officer							
#7	Axelle	Female	21	Ivorian & Ivorian	The Hague	Student	University bachelor
Involvement in BLM(nl): Discussions with friends and other people; attended the protest in the Hague; has been involved in antiracist movement KOZP; sharing donation pages; reading about BLM news; sharing information on social media							
#8	Celine	Female	22	Dutch & Kenyan	The Hague	Unemployed	HBO Bachelor
Involvement in BLM(nl): co-founded Curated Culture magazine – a digital magazine that focuses on shining light on Black voices, experiences and joy; attended the protest in Rotterdam; active on social media; discussions with friends, family and other people							
#9	Thato	Female	21	Motswana & Dutch	Rotterdam	Student	International Baccalaureate
Involvement in BLM(nl): co-founded Curated Culture magazine – a digital magazine that "celebrates the positive aspects of being Black and Black culture"; attended the protest in Rotterdam; discussions with friends, family and other people; addressing the topics within assignments, projects & extracurricular groups							
#10	Zoe	Female	25	Dutch & Dutch	Rotterdam	Teacher	HBO Bachelor
Involvement in BLM(nl): Attended the protests in Amsterdam and Rotterdam; active on social media (sharing & posting); "speaking out in front of people, friends and colleagues"							
#11	Tamira	Female	27	Dutch & Dutch	Rotterdam	Employed	HBO Bachelor
Involvement in BLM(nl): Active on social media – to spread awareness; conversations with friends and colleagues; educating people on the matter at work; attended the protest in Rotterdam							
#12	Marty	Male	24	Dutch & Burkinabe	Rotterdam	Student	University Bachelor
Involvement in BLM(nl): Active on social media – posting, sharing & following; attended the protests in Amsterdam and Rotterdam; president of the Association of Students of African Heritage in Rotterdam							
#13	Emanuela	Female	29	Italian/Eritrean & Italian/Eritrean	The Hague	Marketing & relations manager	University Master
Involvement in BLM(nl): co-founded the first African Student Association at the university of Tilburg and became the president of this association; advocacy on social media;							

discussions with people and friends; founded the active group “anti-racist campus Tilburg”; attending anti-racist workshops and meetings

Appendix C- Probes used during interview

1. Tony Chocolonely

"J.P. Coen is not a hero, if you ask us…

On Thursday, June 18th, we placed a statement in the form of street art, next to the statue of J.P. Coen at the Beurs van Berlage in Amsterdam. The statue is on the corner of our soon-to-be opened Chocolate Bar. The Beurs van Berlage is a logical place for our Super Store and Chocolate Bar because cocoa was traded there 400 years ago, however the owners of the building recently drew our attention to the controversy surrounding the statue of J.P. Coen. J.P. Coen is not someone to be celebrated if you ask us. He is responsible for approximately 15,000 murders of residents of the Banda Islands, in present-day Indonesia, for not recognizing the Dutch East India Company's nutmeg monopoly. Coen also beheaded 44 leaders of Banda because they were suspected of conspiracies against the Dutch.

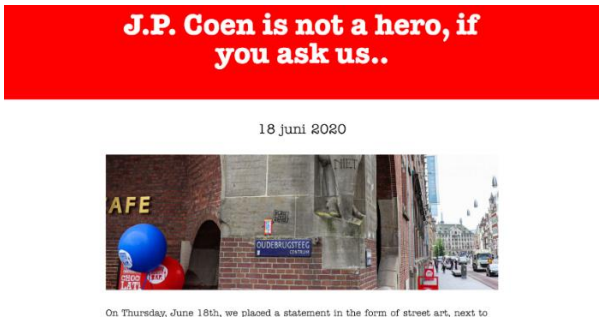
As a brand dedicated to eradicating modern slavery and illegal child labor in the cocoa industry, awareness and education play a big role in our mission. So as Tony's we felt that we needed to raise awareness of the statue's history and address the issue with a Black Lives Matter reference. Opening our Chocolate Bar without addressing this did not feel like the right thing to do. We think it is important to highlight the real story behind this statue and to shed light on the Dutch colonial past. We want to make history visible and not shy away from it, so that we can learn from it.

The Black Lives Matter movement shows how much inequality there still is in the world and we want to continue to speak out actively about it. We want choco fans who come to the bar to also learn something about the history of cocoa and its painful historical context. Because, in the end, it is about our mission and not about chocolate. We fight for an equal and fair world, and that starts with speaking out for an just society. In the Chocolate Bar you will therefore also find information about the historical place and the statue outside its entrance.

That morning, after Tony's placed the street art on the wall below the J.P. Coen statue, things escalated as our Chief Chocolate Officer was arrested by the Dutch police for defacing a monumental building.

Fortunately, he was released later in the morning thanks to the Beurs van Berlage not pressing charges. The street art was temporary, and it has since been removed. In close consultation with the Beurs van Berlage, we have decided to place a joint statement next to the statue of J.P. Coen. In this way we can provide the audience with even better context behind the statue.

We cannot rewrite history, but we can write the future."



Retrieved from: https://tonyschocolonely.com/nl/en/our-mission/news/jp-coen-is-not-a-hero-if-you-ask-us

2. Unilever

"We demand justice, equity and advancement. We must do our part.
Unilever believes it is our responsibility to take action to create systemic change to address institutionalized racism and social injustice. We are starting with five focus areas :
- We have pledged more than $1 million to date to organizations and activists working for social justice and racial equality, including @blklivesmatter, @naturbanleague, National Bail Fund Network and the @bailproject. These commitments come from Unilever and our brands such as @SheaMoisture, @AXE, @TAZO, @Suave, @SeventhGeneration and @Degree .
- We will continue to increase our work with and investment in diverse suppliers .
- We continue to work to ensure the diversity of our workforce fully reflects the communities we serve .
- We uphold a zero-tolerance policy on intolerance - both among Unilever employees and the suppliers, customers and partners that work with us .
- We will add our voice and influence to advocate for safe and fair access to voting in the US this November .
#BlackLivesMatter"

Retrieved from: https://www.instagram.com/p/CA_Ph89HIWn/?utm_source=ig_embed

Appendix D- Coding tree

	Themes	Codes
Corporate position in BLMnl = …	Contributing to systemic racism	Target of change for systemic racism
	Powerful, influential & resourceful	A lot of money/resources
		Large social media presences
		Ties to politicians & governing organizations
		Market leaders
		Actions impact environment
		"Influential"/ "Powerhouse"
	Beneficiaries of movement	Exploiting for brand image
		Exploiting for profit
		Feel good from actions
Corporate role = …	Internal/Tangible	Hiring diversely
		D&I + unconscious bias workshops & trainings
		D&I office/team (Inclusive counsellor; performing D&I analyses)
		Investing in external consulting on D&I practices
		Diversifying suppliers/ investing in Black owned businesses
	Internal/Intangible	Creating a safe space for POC
		Aligning company values/policies with BLM
		Acknowledging internal racial inequalities
		Educating company & employees on BLM and race (raising awareness & stirring reflection)
		Instigating discussions on race
	External/Tangible	Donations
		Investments
		Lobbying
	External/Intangible	Raising awareness
		Amplifying the voices of POC, BLM, & other antiracist organizations
		Combatting colonialism

BLMnl is about = …	Combatting systemic racism & White supremacy	Recognizing role of slavery
		Fighting systemic/institutionalized racism
		Fighting racist ideologies & stereotypes
		Exposing and acknowledging racism
		Opening up discussions on race
	Unity	Unity
		Empowering POC
	Change	Active change
		Long term change
BLM strategy = …	Change through mass mobilization	Empowering people to take action
		Media attention
		Mass awareness
	Change through political sector	Conversations with political sector
		Providing political sector with plans to take action
	Change through culture	Educating the people
		Creating inclusivity in culture (media, fashion, literature,…)