

Resistance in everyday encounters with racism

A study on how five young women of colour respond to the everyday racism they experience in Sweden.

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Abstract

Racism can be maintained and spread in a society through seemingly small everyday actions. In Sweden, this *everyday racism* often aims to point out that a non-white body is not Swedish by questions and comments on a person's, sometimes assumed, 'origin'. A study on everyday racism in Sweden therefore raises questions of national belonging in a globalised world. To understand how racism is not only expressed, but also negotiated and challenged, the aim of the research has been to analyse the unorganised, individual *everyday resistance* repertoire against racism that young women of colour potentially offer in their everyday lives. In addition to this, it will identify significant factors affecting the repertoire. It will not try to evaluate the effectiveness of the resistance, but the potential of social change will be discussed. The data comes from five semi-structured interviews with respondents who have revealed experiences of everyday racism in a related social media forum. One important finding in the study was that the resistance repertoire was strongly affected by the relationships between the actors involved in the encounter. Clearly, everyday racism occurs everywhere and can be expressed by strangers, teachers, colleagues, customers, neighbours, friends and family and the resistance repertoire vary accordingly. One alarming conclusion of the study was that the respondents often left schools, workplaces, neighbourhoods and friendships due to lack of understanding and support from the people involved in that specific context. This was often the outcome after several attempts to negotiate and challenge the racism they experienced.

Keywords: Everyday resistance, everyday racism, national identity, relationships, Sweden.

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1.1. Introduction

Resistance against racism can be practised in various forms. It is often associated with organised, collective movements aiming to end racial segregation such as the Civil rights movement in the US, or to protest violence and police brutality as in the global Black Lives Matter movement. In order to understand social change, these forms of organised resistance tend to gain a lot of academic attention as well as media coverage. Unfortunately, the individual and unorganised forms of so called ‘everyday resistance’ are not discussed as frequently, although they are by far the most common (Lilja & Vinthagen, 2009a, p. 87). Since power and resistance are closely and historically entangled, discussions on everyday resistance will therefore also highlight experiences of everyday power (Johansson & Vinthagen, 2016), in this case everyday racism. An analysis of individual unorganised forms of resistance reveals crucial aspects of how racism is expressed, negotiated and challenged constantly through seemingly small actions in ordinary people’s everyday lives. The analysis will not only create awareness of how people of colour experience racism in their everyday lives, but also demonstrate how racism may affect national identities.

This study will focus on racism and resistance in a Swedish context where three interconnected related issues can be identified. Firstly, in Sweden, racism is often only recognised as extreme, intentional actions against people of colour, whereas more common, informal racism, such as asking intimidating questions or exotifying one’s appearance, is dismissed as mere curiosity, regardless the response. This form of so called ‘everyday racism’ is thus often not considered to be ‘real’ racism (Pripp & Öhlander, 2012). Secondly, in addition to this narrow interpretation of racism, the concept of ‘race’ is rarely discussed. In fact, when books about race are translated into Swedish the word for ‘ethnicity’ is used instead, often explained as race not being relevant in Sweden (Hübinette & Lundström 2014, p. 426). Occasionally, one can also hear the concept of ‘ethnic Swede’, often without any further explanation (E.g. TT, 2012, May 15th). This confusion of words is misleading since many people of colour experience racism only based on their physical appearance (Mulinari, 2017), which race traditionally refers to. Thirdly, expressions and actions of everyday racism often aims to point out that the non-white body is not Swedish, thus being Swedish is often considered the same as being white (Mulinari, 2017). To conclude, everyday racism is not recognised as real racism, but this form of racism stresses both the importance of talking

about race instead of ethnicity and that whiteness is normative for being Swedish (Hübinette, Hörnfeldt, Farahani & León Rosales, 2012 & Mulinari, 2017). One advantage of highlighting everyday, instead of organised, resistance is its focus on the individual's agency and access to potentially change these structures and social orders in his or her everyday life.

Previous studies on everyday racism in Sweden have aimed to explain the racism, how and why it is expressed the way it is, rather than to transform it. Some of these studies have discussed related reactions or managing strategies (E.g. Schmauch, 2006, Rätzzel, 2006, Adolfsson, 2016 & Mulinari, 2017), but only touched upon theories on everyday resistance very briefly. Additionally, these studies tend to focus on one specific social contexts, often on the labour market (E.g. Rätzzel, 2006 & Mulinari, 2017). This thesis is inspired by a critical feminist perspective which put greater emphasis on the change of social orders, rather than only the explanation of them (Ackerly & True, 2010, p. 2). Moreover, in order to better understand how everyday racism is expressed, negotiated and challenged in different social contexts, the thesis will cover several aspects of one's everyday life, not only one's participation on the labour market. The analysis will however not try to evaluate the effectiveness of the resistance, but rather illustrate the *potential* change of social orders. Similar qualitative studies on everyday resistance in a Swedish context have been done before against other forms of discursive power, such as heteronormativity and/or gender norms (E.g. Wasshede, 2010 & Ambjörnsson, 2009), but this will be the first against everyday racism.

1.2. Aim and research questions

The aim for this thesis is to examine how racism is expressed, negotiated and challenged by analysing the everyday resistance repertoire against racism that young women of colour potentially offer in their everyday lives in Sweden. It further aims to identify some important aspects that affect this resistance repertoire.

1. What unorganised, sometimes hidden, everyday strategies or tactics do the young women of colour use when responding to the everyday racism they potentially experience in the Swedish society, and how can this repertoire be explained?
2. What aspects can significantly affect the resistance repertoire, and how can these aspects be understood in relation to social change?

1.3. Delimitations

As pointed out in the introduction, this thesis will focus on the everyday resistance, and not the organised resistance against racism in Sweden. The distinction between the two forms is however not always clear and one form may encourage the other (Lilja, Baaz, Schulz & Vinthagen, 2017). This study will emphasise the individual's response to everyday racism in everyday situations and encounters, and little attention will be drawn to the more collective and formal events of demonstrations, boycotts or anti-racist movements. Furthermore, it will not discuss whether there is a whiteness norm or not in Sweden. Relying on studies demonstrated in the Previous research section, this whiteness norm will, on the contrary, serve as a point of departure for this thesis and a reason for why everyday racism often aims to point out that a non-white body is not Swedish (Hübinette & Lundström, 2014; Hübinette, Hörnfeldt, Farahani & León Rosales, 2012 & Mulinari, 2017). In analysing the potential everyday resistance against racism, this study will show how the whiteness norm can be expressed, negotiated and challenged through seemingly insignificant everyday actions. In claiming that there is a whiteness norm affecting how people interact, it is also possible to argue that everyday racism should be recognised as real racism. The whiteness norm and the everyday racism is thus closely entangled and enable each other's existence. One can argue that the whiteness norm affects different non-white bodies in different ways and that there might be many hierarchies, power relations and racist structures within the group 'people of colour'. This study is unfortunately too limited to discuss all these differences and will therefore mainly concern the simplistic categorisation of white people and non-white people.

The role of race and ethnicity in this study needs some clarification but will not be discussed further in the analysis. The choice of using the concept of 'race' instead of 'ethnicity' is to emphasise the physical appearance as the most influential factor of why people experience everyday racism. Ethnicity, on the other hand, refers to cultural aspects, such as language, religion or other patterns of behaviour and belief and often originates from the group members themselves in contrast to race, which typically originates from classifications that outsiders make (Cornell & Hartmann, 1998, pp. 17 & 27). Scholars interested in ethnicity and race studies (E.g. Cornell & Hartmann, 1998 & Haslanger, 2000/2005) agree that any sharp distinction between the two is not easy to draw and they often overlap. For this study, social hierarchy as a possible contrast pointed out by Sally Haslanger is instructive:

Ethnic groups can be (and are) racialized, however, and when they are, one's membership in the group positions one in a social hierarchy; but /.../ the occurrence of this hierarchical positioning means that the group has gone beyond simply being an ethnic group and functions in that context as a race. (Haslanger, 2000/2005, p. 163).

This social hierarchy and experiences of racism are central in this study; thus, race is more relevant to discuss than ethnicity. Moreover, race (or its confusion with ethnicity) is generally discussed in dualistic terms of being white or non-white, or of being Swedish or 'immigrant'. In other words, of either having a white 'Swedish appearance' or a non-white 'immigrant appearance' (E.g. Hübinette & Lundström, 2014 & Mulinari, 2012), and specific ethnicities are only occasionally discussed. Besides, in accordance to Sally Haslanger's (2000/2005) theories on race, it is irrelevant to explain what race *is*, but highly more important to understand what it *does* to members of the Swedish society, as well as to societal norms. All the participants in this study are born and/or raised in Sweden and (one of) their ethnicity (/ies) is therefore Swedish. That is, they speak Swedish fluently, produce and reproduce cultural codes and behaviour, and in one way or another identify themselves as Swedish. Others, however, may assign them other identities based on their physical appearance. This relation between race and ethnicity will not be problematised further.

To summarise, the focus of the study will be on the everyday resistance repertoire and related aspects affecting the resistance. It will not discuss whether a whiteness norm exists in Sweden or not, or if everyday racism should count as real racism or not. It will additionally not compare advantages and obstacles in using the concepts of race versus ethnicity. The analysis will furthermore not try to evaluate the effectiveness of the resistance for social change but will rather illustrate how social orders may change as a potential outcome of the resistance.

1.4. Background

Discussions on racism are often connected to debates on immigration and a short background description of these debates in contemporary Sweden will further stress the relevance of this thesis. When the nationalistic anti-immigration party, the Sweden Democrats, entered the parliament in 2010 it was considered by many people to be a national shame for Sweden (Hübinette & Lundström, 2014). Now, in 2018, it is the third largest party in the parliament

and according to recent election surveys, the votes for the party seem to increase in the upcoming election in September this year compared to last election's (Sveriges Riksdag, n.d. & Novus, 2018). The party's argument that immigration '*needs to be kept at a certain level and be of a certain character to not pose a threat to our national identity or to our country's welfare and safety*' (Sverigedemokraterna, n.d.a, my translation), widely influences the public debate on immigration and people's general attitudes towards immigrants. What the party means with 'our national identity' or whose safety they are addressing is not clear, but one can assume it is not the immigrants' safety and that a diverse population is not a part of the national identity. Immigration is on the other hand not a new phenomenon in Sweden and it is estimated that about eighteen percent of the population is foreign-born (SCB, n.d.).

Globally, Sweden is known for being welcoming to migrants. Only in 2015 and 2016 about 100 thousand asylum seekers were granted residence permit, in a country having a total population of ten million (migrationsinfo.se, 2017, SCB, n.d.). Moreover, the country is ranked the best out of thirty-eight countries when it comes to policies to integrate migrants, such as anti-discrimination laws and getting mainstream services to better serve a diverse public (MIPEX, 2015). In contrast to this rather positive image, Sweden has had a state institute for race biology during many decades in the 20th century. It was initiated in the 1920's to set up a rational population policy on how to best secure the pure Nordic white race, argued to have qualities above other races. To collect the data, about 50 thousand Swedish citizens were classified into different race types by height, the shape of their skulls, and the colour of their eyes, hair and skin. Today these methods and theoretical framework are scientifically dismissed, and many people question how this research was even possible (Kjellman, 2013). Similar ideas can however be seen in the rhetoric of the Nordic resistance movement, a political party aiming to enter the parliament, by claiming the Nordic peoples' 'racial survival and freedom' to be the most important goal for its political struggle and even wants 'strangers' from outside Europe to be sent back (Nordiska motståndsrörelsen, 2018). This party's organised racism may influence attitudes leading to everyday forms of racism, such as identifying which bodies 'belong here' and which do not.

To conclude, despite being globally known as an anti-racist country, racism is a part of Sweden's history and contemporary society. The quasi-scientific historical studies on race biology and white superiority is arguably a part of colonialism and its continuity can be explained by Sara Ahmed's philosophical claim that '*Bodies remember such histories, even*

when we forget them.' (Ahmed, 2007, pp. 153-154). This study will show how this remembrance may affect actions of everyday racism, as well as responses to it.

1.5. Relevance to Global studies

Globalisation enables resistance and processes of social change to arise rapidly around the world. As Mona Lilja and Stellan Vinthagen (2009b, p. 13) argue, new discourses, groups and networks are easier to access, and new ways of communication enable resistance in new forms. Actions of resistance can easily be organised and spread through internet and social media, as can be illustrated by the Black Lives Matter movement addressing questions of racism and social inequity. The movement started as a hashtag on Twitter where people highlighted stories of racialised violence and police brutality in the US and led to a variety of demonstrations and local campaigns around the world (Rickford, 2016 & Tharoor, 2016, July 12). This kind of movement together with several social media forums where stories, thoughts and actions against racism are shared and spread may encourage other forms of resistance. Lilja et al. (2017) suggest for example that *'different forms of organized resistance often become the very origin for more subtle forms of everyday resistance, which are important forces in creating social change.'* (Lilja et al., 2017, pp. 44-45). The interviewees in this study were contacted via one of such Swedish social media forums. This thesis can therefore be relevant to the field of Global studies for showing the entanglement of organised and everyday resistance, as well as claiming that local resistance can turn global, and vice versa.

Globalisation can also pose questions about national identities. The global interconnectivity, migration, and opportunities to have immediate contact with people anywhere in the world can cause problems to identify with only one national identity. Ambiguously, the sense of belonging to a nation remains as one of the most important parts of our identities (Kassem, Talbott & Snarr, 2016, pp. 59 & 81 & Yuval-Davis, 1997, p. 11). These identification problems can be explained as a negotiation between the civic and the ethnic form of nationalism. The former refers to an individual being a citizen for believing in ideals and symbols of that country, while the latter refers to bloodlines and a shared common history (Kassem et al., 2016, p. 65). The type of nationalism dominant in a country is not only decided by the state with laws and regulations but is also produced and reproduced by the civil society and families. This thesis's focus on everyday racism and resistance can show how the unorganised civil society takes part in what Nira Yuval-Davis (1997) calls, 'the

nationalist projects' of national reproduction, national culture and national citizenship. Moreover, the thesis can support her argument that ethnicity, culture, and citizenship are never fixed categories, but political processes that divide the world into 'us' and 'them'. In other words, this study can reveal how Swedish national identities are created and developed through small actions of racism and resistance in ordinary people's everyday lives.

2.1. Theory

The theory chapter is divided into two sections, namely Previous research and Theoretical framework. The section about previous research will start with a discussion on everyday racism in a Swedish context, where studies aim to explain and criticise everyday racism and white privilege. It will continue with some studies on everyday resistance carried out in Sweden and argue for this study's relevance and topicality. The theoretical framework section will further put this study into a theoretical context, define key concepts and analytical tools in order to show how the study will contribute to the field of Global studies as well as achieve the thesis's aim and answer the research questions.

2.2. Previous research

Sweden is sometimes called 'a colour-blind society', in order to explain the uneasiness to talk about how race impact one's opportunities in life (E.g. Hübinette & Lundström, 2014; Feiler, 2012 & Mulinari, 2017). The colour-blind society could be seen as a utopia of the civic nationalism where race does not matter, and the concept is used by scholars and others to highlight the mechanisms which silently reproduce white privilege. The utopia is in other words far from the reality many people of colour face in contemporary Sweden. Furthermore, Tobias Hübinette and Cathrin Lundström (2014), whose analysis is inspired by critical whiteness studies, show how whiteness has been maintained as the structuring principle for Swedishness over a long period of time, including historical phases of overt race biology politics in early 20th century and the anti-racist colour-blindness of today. They call this structuring principle 'hegemonic whiteness' and claim that:

In contemporary Sweden, hegemonic whiteness is, for us, upheld through a colour-blindness that constantly reinscribes whiteness as the normative, yet unmarked, position that, for example, effectively forecloses, silences and excludes experiences of everyday racism among non-white Swedes. (Hübinette & Lundström, 2014, p. 425).

This shows a need to talk about race and to ‘see’ colour in order to include experiences of everyday racism among non-white Swedes in politics and public debates. Additionally, the quotation clarifies that everyday racism should be seen as a consequence of the whiteness norm in Sweden. This correlation between a colour-blind society, the whiteness norm and everyday racism is of high importance for this thesis and can be further illustrated with Oscar Pripp and Magnus Öhlander’s (2012) discourse analysis of a media debate taking place in the spring 2005. It concerned a release of a new liquorice ice-cream called ‘Nogger Black’ where ‘Black’ was written in graffiti style. The heated debate started with a press note from Centrum mot Rasism [Centre against racism], claiming the ice-cream and its commercial to be racist and stereotypical. In the analysis of the following debate, Pripp and Öhlander found five narratives dominating the discourse of ‘real racism’ in Sweden, which can be summarised as conscious, racist intentions or visible actions against black people in given contexts, and the use of words should be unequivocally understood as racist. Clearly, and according to Pripp and Öhlander, everyday racism is excluded from this understanding of racism, and only five per cent of the 180 articles and about 60 blogs analysed, included narratives of everyday racism. After this debate, the organisation Centrum mot Rasism lost its state funding, since many agreed that they did not work with real issues concerning racism (Pripp & Öhlander, 2012). This huge debate about an ice-cream release shows how people refuse to see themselves as privileged and parts of racist structures and what is more significant, when someone highlights these structures the response is filled with anger and ridicule instead of acceptance and reflection. This response, in combination with the state’s withdrawal of the organisation’s funding, declares how difficult it is to change the structures and also supports the idea in the quotation above, that whiteness is an unmarked position in the Swedish society. This thesis will demonstrate how ideas of what real racism is and what it is not may affect the resistance repertoire in people of colour’s everyday lives.

Even though everyday racism and whiteness is discussed more frequently in public debates now, the discussions still meet a lot of resistance. The recently released book *Så blev vi alla*

rasister [How we all became racists], is one example of this. The authors, Ivar Arpi and Adam Cwejman (2018), are both journalists and writers for the editorial pages in two of the largest Swedish newspapers, Svenska Dagbladet and Göteborgs-Posten. In general, they claim that it is racist to speak about race, since it reduces people to only become their race and skin colour, and not seen as individuals with different abilities and qualities. They question the idea of lived experience as a form of knowledge and consequently also organisational tools promoting diversity, such as quota systems (Arpi & Cwejman, 2018). Their critique to many of the theories and scholars that this thesis is based upon, highlights Haslanger's (2000/2005) questions about what race is, and what work we want the concept to do for us. She argues that the purpose of using the concept is to develop accounts of race *'that will be effective tools in the fight against injustice.'* (Haslanger, 2000/2005, p. 157). It is in other words difficult to talk about racism without talking about race and the concept is necessary for effectively challenging racism. Arpi and Cwejman may find no purpose for the concept of race, but in this study, race will serve as a tool to understand how it, along with other identity aspects, may affect everyday encounters and ideas of who is included or excluded in the Swedish nation.

All individuals are also parts of social structures and may produce and reproduce them intentionally or unintentionally. This relation between agency and structure puts Arpi and Cwejman's discussion in contrast to Yael Feiler's (2012) study on representation, ethnicity and power in the performing arts. Feiler sees the theatre as a part of the society where social issues are discussed and processed and points out that when the principle of colour-blind casting is practised, meaning black actors are casted for roles historically written for white people, there is a risk of de-politicising the issue of representation as well as neutralising organisation and tools used in the struggle for a fair representation. If the low representation of black bodies in performing arts is not recognised as a reflection of racism in the wider society, it is likely that the theatre will only show normative bodies. Feiler concludes by stating that a double vision is needed to achieve really fair performance arts. That is, *'One has to be both colour-blind and fully seeing to dare to let in underrepresented, "wrong colour", in a normative context'* (Feiler, 2012, p. 185, my translation). This double vision is important to bear in mind throughout this thesis and in other discussions concerning race and racism. To reduce racism, colour-blindness may occasionally serve as a tool, but experiences and privileges concerning race also need to be emphasised and taken seriously.

Several studies have shown how everyday racism may be expressed in a variety of situations and in a variety of ways. Many Swedish studies have in general focused on everyday racism in one specific context, often related to the labour market. Paula Mulinari (2017), for example, explores everyday racism and processes of ‘othering’ within the service encounter. In accordance to Pripp and Öhlander’s (2012) findings, Mulinari argues that there is a tendency in Sweden to only recognise racism in its extreme forms, and it is therefore of particular importance to explore the everyday practices which create the everyday relations of ruling and reproduce racism (Mulinari, 2017, p. 602). She has interviewed young women who experience racism in their workplace and has discovered different strategies used by customers aiming to classify their non-white bodies as non-Swedish. These strategies and processes of ‘othering’, found by Mulinari, consist of looks of confusion, surprise, displacement or exoticism, repetitive and often curious, questions of belonging, of family situations, or of permission to touch one’s hair. Many of the interviewees in her study also experience involuntary touches and sexual harassments related to their racialised bodies. One of them concludes a story with stating ‘*You never know how near you are to a racist comment*’ (Mulinari, 2017, p. 609). In different ways, Mulinari’s study shows that through looks, questions and touches, the idea of the white body as the national signifier is reproduced (Mulinari, 2017), and further highlights the need to analyse the practices of everyday racism, and its related resistance.

Some studies put everyday racism on the labour market in dialogue with theories on resistance. In another study of Mulinari (2012), medical doctors are interviewed about their experiences of processes of inclusion and exclusion with focus on the role of informal contacts. She finds that it is easier to discuss and to form a ‘we’ against gender-based discrimination than discrimination based on ethnicity (or race) at their workplaces. The racialized doctors tend to legitimise excluding practices, such as the role of informal contacts to boost one’s career and see the lack of contacts as an individual problem. One outcome of the discrimination is either to work harder or to leave the workplace (Mulinari, 2012). Two other studies are carried out by Nora Räthzel (2006) and Ulrika Schmauch (2006). Räthzel’s study discusses how young people with a migrant background experience their entrance on the labour market. The people in the study respond to, or manage, the racism they experience in a variety of ways, for example changing one’s name in the job application, labelling the Swedish population as boring in contrast to oneself, motivating oneself to struggle harder, or situating personal experiences in a broader perspective of political injustices. Schmauch

(2006) finds similar strategies in her study about how people with African background manage everyday racism in workplaces where racism is silenced. Her interviewees use strategies of for example re-defining racism as something less threatening or intentionally choosing contexts where one feels welcome. Schmauch further argues that the analysis shows that *'overt resistance was problematic because of the dominant denial of structural racism in Sweden. People who do protest are seen as extreme, overly sensitive and are said not to understand fully how Swedish society works.'* (Schmauch, 2006, p. 198, emphasis in original). This quote further illustrates how everyday racism can be expressed as a response to the entangled resistance, here by denying a person of colour the right or possibility to *define* something concerning Sweden. In this case, how the Swedish society 'works'. One can argue that the strategies discussed in the studies above serve to manage the experiences, or negotiate the conditions, of the racism in the Swedish labour market, but one can question to what extent they actually challenge the racism. It is however important to point out that everyday resistance is generally difficult to evaluate, and it is sometimes impossible to see the correlation between the resistance and the social change (Lilja & Vinthagen, 2009a, p. 82, Ambjörnsson, 2009, p. 192 & Wasshede, 2010, p. 316). A further discussion of what should count as resistance or not will be presented in the next section of theoretical framework.

Studies on everyday resistance do not always focus on one specific context as in the studies above. According to Lilja and Vinthagen (2009a), this form of resistance is often used against discourses creating hierarchies and stereotypes about different identity positions, such as 'woman', 'immigrant' or 'black'. The resistance strategy can therefore be to raise the value or expand the interpretation of that position (Lilja & Vinthagen, 2009a, pp. 76-77), and moreover do so in different social contexts. Fanny Ambjörnsson's (2009) research highlights for example how the colour pink is used by queer activists in their everyday lives to change norms of femininity and class in different contexts of the Swedish society. She discusses reactions and responses the activists get from roommates, strangers on the subway or students and teachers at the university. Another example is Wasshede's (2010) study where many aspects of the activists' lives are included. Norm-resisting practices concerning gender and sexuality are discussed in public spaces, organisations and activist movements, as well as in private spheres.

The only study found to discuss everyday resistance against everyday racism in several societal contexts in Sweden is Maja Adolfsson's (2016) bachelor thesis. Her study aimed to

examine how young people with a migrant background experience and manage racialisation, and she divides the strategies she found into two categories, namely offensive and defensive strategies. The offensive strategies could be to fight the structure or disprove stereotypes, and the defensive strategies could be to move away from white housing areas or to improve oneself instead of complaining. Adolfsson (2016) does not call the strategies everyday resistance and she concludes the thesis by stating that the lack of collective action against racist structures is problematic. A theoretical framework of everyday resistance may have shown the potential change as an outcome of the strategies, despite the lack of collective action.

This section has shown how whiteness works as a structuring principle for the Swedish society, and consequently how people of colour experience racism in their everyday life. It has shown how everyday racism is seldom recognised as real racism in public debates and is on the contrary often perceived as individual issues or responsibilities for the individual to manage. It has, by drawing examples from previous studies, illustrated what everyday strategies and tactics that a potential resistance repertoire may include and shown that many studies focus on one specific societal context, often related to the labour market. Furthermore, it has been found that previous studies on everyday racism examine strategies for managing racism rather than resisting racism and lack discussions on how these strategies could be understood in relation to social change. Nonetheless, in studies where the everyday resistance is the main focus, other societal contexts are generally included, and potential outcomes of the resistance are more thoroughly discussed. The next section will further discuss the theoretical framework of this study and define key concepts and analytical tools that will serve in the analysis of everyday resistance.

2.3. Theoretical framework and key concepts

As stated above, this thesis aims to examine how racism is expressed, negotiated and challenged by analysing the everyday resistance repertoire against racism that young women of colour potentially offer in their everyday lives in Sweden. The focus on racism and resistance relates to several fields of research within Global studies, such as resistance studies, critical race and whiteness studies, and gender studies. Even more broadly, Lilja and Vinthagen (2009b) argue that studies on resistance link to the common social science debate of agency and structure. This debate deals with the questions if people/agents produce the

structures they prefer or if structures produce the people/agents that are needed to uphold the structure. Lilja and Vinthagen further argue that resistance cannot exist without power and that resistance show that the power is not absolute. They conclude by stating that resistance research therefore studies how *'(resistance) agents try to redesign certain (power) structures and how (power) structures produce the conditions for (resistance) agents.'* (Lilja & Vinthagen, 2009b, pp. 12-13, my translation). The power structure in this study is (everyday) racism and the resistance agents are young women of colour. By rephrasing the quotation above, the analysis will thus show how resisting young women of colour try to redesign certain racist structures but also show how racist structures produce the conditions for the resisting young women of colour.

In addition to examining this relationship between everyday racism and the resistance agents, the analysis will contribute to new knowledge on how the social injustices can be transformed. The aim to transform the social orders instead of only explaining them is common in studies with a critical feminist perspective. In resemblance to the interdisciplinary field of global studies, the perspective *'encourages opening new lines of inquiry versus simply "filling in gaps" in already established disciplinary terrains.'* (Ackerly & True, 2010, p. 2). As the section of previous research informed, studies on everyday racism have had little focus on resistance and social change, and studies on everyday resistance have had little focus on racism. This study could therefore be said to fill this gap. The critical feminist perspective will however, encourage the analysis to emphasise on how the resistance repertoire may lead to social change instead of only explaining it, and to keep an open mind on which theories to use for this as well as future analyses.

In contrast to previous research on everyday racism in Sweden, this study will not focus on only one specific social context but develop from the situations and examples that the respondents choose to share. One can argue that this broad perspective will make the analysis too general, but according to Lilja and Vinthagen (2009b) it is only by critically studying the resistance's wide variety and dynamic in different contexts that resistance studies can *'contribute to social science's understanding of social change and provide support to the resistance agents who want to develop more liberating forms of resistance.'* (Lilja & Vinthagen, 2009b, p. 15, my translation). The analysis may reveal similarities and differences in encounters of racism and resistance that may explain aspects of the society that would not be apparent in only one social context. For example, the power relation between employers

and employees may lead to resistance strategies that are not relevant in encounters with racism in a neighbourhood or in public transportation. The small number of participants in the study will on the other hand prevent the making of too broad generalisations concerning explanation and transformation of social orders, and rather emphasise the resistance's *potential* to change racial structures in the Swedish society.

The key concepts used in this study are *everyday racism* and *everyday resistance* and will now be further defined and discussed. It can be argued that everyday racism is difficult to clearly define. The concept of everyday racism was developed by Philomena Essed and '*links ideological dimensions of racism with daily attitudes and interprets the reproduction of racism in terms of the experience of it in everyday life*' (Essed, 1991, p. 2). Additionally, Mulinari (2012 & 2017) stresses the importance to study gender and race in intersection in analyses on everyday racism, and for this study, age, class and sexuality may be relevant too. Pripp and Öhlander (2012) summarise the concept as a repeated everyday behaviour that reproduces historical orders such as colonialism, with consequences in people's everyday lives. This subtle behaviour, as in looks, body language and use of certain expressions, may not always be intentional or conscious, and could be offered by people who consider themselves tolerant and friendly (Pripp & Öhlander, 2012, pp. 90-91). So, the stated definitions emphasise daily attitudes and repeated everyday behaviour that negatively affect people of colour's everyday lives and the behaviour may vary because of gender, age, class or sexuality. In studies demonstrated in the previous section, it was shown that everyday racism was expressed through looks, comments or questions that make a person feel 'othered', exotified, or less valued compared to other people in the same context due to his or her race. The person expressing the everyday racism may not be aware of the repetitiveness of such behaviour in people of colour's everyday lives and may not intend to 'other', exotify or disrespect the person he or she is talking to and the racism is therefore often dismissed as not 'real'. Still, this behaviour may reproduce historical orders and oppression.

The question of the need for intention is also debated within research on everyday resistance. James Scott's ground-breaking research on poor peasants' use of 'hidden resistance' shows how resistance seldom appears as the expected violent riots in the streets, but more often as irony, gossip, slow work or misunderstandings (Scott in Lilja & Vinthagen, 2009a, pp. 74-75). Scott believes that the resistance must be intentional, whereas Lilja and Vinthagen suggest a more inclusive definition without consideration of which intention or political

ideology the performer has. Their definition will guide the analysis of this thesis and reads: ‘A *subaltern’s response to power, a practice which can challenge and undermine power, or such a practice performed in solidarity with a subaltern*’ (Lilja & Vinthagen, 2009a, p. 51, my translation). They moreover add that when defining resistance as a response to power, some unintentional actions which can theoretically undermine power, such as mistakes and genuine ignorance, are beneficially left out. Their definition is additionally important for showing that practices in solidarity with a subaltern should also count as resistance (Lilja & Vinthagen, 2009a, pp. 51-52). This solidarity could be with animals, children, friends or strangers.

Another debate is whether the resistance is recognised as resistance by the actors involved, namely the activity’s target for the action (the racist in this case), the performer of the resistance, and potential witnesses or observers. If the resistance is collective and organised, it is easier to know if it is intentional or recognised by the actors involved. When it comes to the more individual, everyday resistance, these distinctions are not always clear (Lilja & Vinthagen, 2009b, pp. 14-15). One can assume that if the acts of everyday racism are not recognised as real racism, then the response will not be recognised as real resistance against racism either. In this study, the respondents will decide whether the actions and attitudes should count as racism or not, and their responses to this racism will be discussed as resistance.

An analysis of everyday resistance may require a clear analytical framework. One such framework is based on sociological concepts and aims to answer the questions of ‘*who is carrying out the practice, in relation to whom, where and when, and how?*’ (Johansson & Vinthagen, 2016, p. 419). It is offered by Anna Johansson and Stellan Vinthagen (2016) and contains four dimensions which should, according to the authors, be studied in intersection. However, when putting these dimensions in dialogue with the empirical data of this study, two dimensions seemed more relevant than the others, namely (1) repertoires of everyday resistance and (2) relationships of agents. The repertoire represents the ‘how’ in the question quoted above and is defined as:

a collection of ways or methods of resistance that people are familiar with, know of, understand and are able to handle. These methods, or tactics, grow out of the

particular circumstances of the social place and the life experience of the people that do the resisting. (Johansson & Vinthagen, 2016, p. 422).

The repertoire includes, in other words, strategies and tactics developed from lived experiences and social circumstances. Some examples of such a potential resistance repertoire were discussed in the Previous research section of this thesis. The second dimension, relationships of agents, represent the ‘who’ in the question above and concerns the relationships between the resisting agents, between the resisting agent and the target of the resistance, as well as the relationship between the resistance or power agent and the observers of the resistance encounter, including both witnesses and researchers. Johansson and Vinthagen argue that actors of everyday resistance both place themselves and are placed in various positions and claim that:

The relationships will not only vary according to the position within different hierarchical orders but also according to a number of other aspects: types of agent (individual/collective); what kind of relation they are in (such as parent-child, friends, colleagues at a work place, etc.); how much contact they have (intensity); in what way they have contact (means of interaction, for example: face-to-face or virtual) and the type of context and situation in which they meet, the pattern of their interaction. (Johansson & Vinthagen, 2016, p. 423).

This shows not only the complexity of analysing everyday resistance but also how different power relations interact. Resistance practices are not only affected by power relations of race, gender, sexuality, age or class, but also of hierarchies at workplaces or within families.

The other two dimensions, which aim to answer ‘where’ and ‘when’ in the question above, are spatialization and temporalisation of everyday resistance. These dimensions relate to the first two but will not gain as much attention. For example, one’s interaction with a stranger is often of short duration and in public spaces where other strangers become observers of the interaction, while a relation with a friend is often long term and occurs in private, ‘safe’ spaces where one may be alone with the friend or with only other friends present. In the data analysis described in detail in the next chapter, it became more important to further focus on the relationships of the actors involved and the spatialization and temporalisation dimensions

were therefore replaced with another sociological concept, namely *focus of activity*. Scott Feld and William C. Carter's (1998) use this concept to explain the social context of relationships, and more specifically, friendships. A focus of activity is explained as for example '*Families, work-places, voluntary organisations, and neighbourhoods, but all have the common effect of bringing a relatively limited set of individuals together in repeated interactions in and around the focused activities.*' (Feld & Carter, 1998, p. 136). The spatial and temporal aspects of the resistance may therefore be to enter, maintain, or leave as well as negotiate and interpret one's place and time in various foci of activities.

This section has put this study in a theoretical context of everyday resistance research and defined how the concepts of everyday racism and everyday resistance will be understood in this thesis. It has also presented an three sociological concepts that will be used in this thesis to analyse the potential everyday resistance. The next chapter will further present how the study has been carried out, including sections on how the data was collected and how it was analysed. The chapter will end with a discussion on ethical considerations and reflexivity concerning the study.

3.1. Method

The data for this thesis was collected through five semi-structured interviews. The method was chosen to best study the experiences of everyday racism and the entangled everyday resistance in order to examine how racism is expressed, negotiated and challenged in the Swedish society. The study's ontological position is hence constructionist, meaning that social properties (in this case racism) are outcomes of the interactions between individuals, rather than phenomena separated from the agents involved in its construction (Bryman, 2016, p. 375). In other words, all people involved in the everyday encounters where racism is constructed are participating in its construction. As pointed out in the previous research section, experiences of everyday racism are often ignored as not being 'real racism' (Pripp & Öhlander, 2012), and colour-blindness upholds whiteness as the normative yet unmarked position in contemporary Sweden. (Hübinette & Lundström, 2014, p. 426). The importance of studying racialised people's experiences in Sweden is therefore in line with feminist research, explained by Brooke Ackerly and Jacqui True (2010):

feminism alerts us to the importance of studying silences and absences in familiar institutions and of studying marginalized and excluded peoples' experiences for understanding our local and global world (Ackerly & True, 2010, p. 7).

This understanding for the local and the global world would not be possible if the respondents in this study would have been the everyday racists or the observers in the encounters, although they might feel marginalised or excluded for other reasons than for being non-white. Rather, the so called 'lived experience' possessed by the women of colour in this study should be seen as distinctive and necessary knowledge to understand the construction of racism in Sweden today.

3.2. The collection of data

The interviews were conducted with five women of colour between 18 and 24 who are born and/or raised in Sweden with parents who are born somewhere else. The sampling was carried out through a separatist social media forum where racialised people can share experiences and knowledge about their lives in Sweden. This kind of sampling is called a 'purposive sampling' because the respondents were selected in terms of criteria that will answer the research questions (Bryman, 2016, p. 410). One such criterion was that I wanted the respondents to be relatively used to talk about everyday racism and moreover feel keen to share their stories. First, I contacted some friends of friends and asked them to participate, but it did not feel right to assume that they experienced everyday racism or identified as 'people of colour' just because they were non-white, or that they were willing to talk about racism. I also contacted a few anti-racism organisations but did not receive any replies.

Through the social media forum, a number of potential respondents were contacted that fit the target group of young women of colour born and/or raised in Sweden and currently lived somewhere convenient for me to meet them. Almost everyone I contacted wanted to take part in the study but because of different reasons, such as lack of time, only five interviews were carried out. The interviews took place in public group rooms, quiet cafeterias or libraries in four different cities in Sweden, lasted between 40 and 90 minutes and were conducted in Swedish. They usually started with some small talk before the semi-structured interview guide was used and ended with a more unstructured conversation about the topics we discussed in

the interview. This structure was used in order to make sure the interviewees were comfortable during the interview and that they left the interview with a good feeling and a better knowledge of who I was and how I would use the data. The interviews and the following conversations were recorded on my mobile phone and then transcribed and printed out. At first, I thought I would use the social media posts as well, but when the interviews were done I realised they would not be necessary. However, the social media posts will occasionally be used in the analysis to clarify or complement what the respondents say in the interviews. All the quotations in the study are translated by me.

The choice of research method was made to better understand how people who experience racism perceive the society they live in. According to Alan Bryman (2016), the choice of semi-structured, qualitative interviews as research method is good when the research emphasises the respondents' own perspective on the world and allow the researcher to get rich and detailed answers (Bryman, 2016, pp. 466-467). These rich and detailed answers would be difficult to get from using a quantitative method, such as a questionnaire. It would be possible however, to use personal texts such as blogs, social media posts, or media columns. This would probably have provided the study with more material to analyse, but would on the other hand, not offer the same richness of personal reflections about the resistance repertoire or important factors affecting the repertoire. In other words, the method would not have allowed the research questions of this study to be answered. A potential complement to interviews, could have been to gather all the respondents in a focus group to discuss the themes of the study, but since they live in different cities this would be difficult and time consuming for both me and them to manage. A focus group discussion would have revealed the interaction between the participants and show how the respondents react to each other's experiences and how they jointly construct meaning of the themes in focus (Bryman, 2016, p. 501). Additionally, some resistance strategies might have become more visible, such as how humour is used, and the discussion may also have shown how everyday resistance potentially encourage organised resistance. Another possible outcome could have been a better understanding of other power relations and hierarchies within the group 'people of colour'.

The sampling group of this study, namely young women of colour who are born or/and raised in Sweden with both parents born elsewhere, was chosen because I believe that this group is not heard enough in discussions on racism and discrimination in Sweden. They are often referred to as belonging to categories whose usefulness can be questioned, such as 'second

generation immigrants' or 'people with a migrant background'. These normalised categories can be understood as too fixed, and consequently contribute to the idea that this group of people can never be fully Swedish, for they will always be immigrants. This binary categorisation is used by both scholars and journalists. Schmauch (2006) for example, has interviewed young people either born in Africa or with at least one parent who was born there about their experiences on the Swedish labour market. She continues to refer to her sampled group as 'Africans' (Schmauch, 2006, pp. 64-65), not Swedes. It is not clear how the interviewees in the study identify themselves. Another example is from one of the largest newspapers in Sweden, Dagens Nyheter, where one journalist claims that '*Foreign background is common among shooting young men*' (Wierup, 2017, May 20th), as if their parents' country of birth will explain their crimes. The shooting young men themselves, would probably make other conclusions.

Furthermore, the choice of sampling group was inspired by Yuval-Davis's (1997) gender analysis on nations and nationalism where she points out that women, in contrast to men, are '*constructed as the symbolic bearers of the collectivity's identity and honour, both personally and collectively.*' (Yuval-Davis, 1997, p. 45). This might suggest that women's experiences of everyday racism would be more powerful and detailed in explaining how everyday racism affect the construction of Swedish national identity/-ies than if both men and women were interviewed, or only men. The choice of only interviewing women was however, also a matter of convenience since most of the people active in the particular social media forum are young women. The female majority in the social media forum may in turn illustrate Yuval-Davis' point and argue for how everyday racism affect this group differently, and perhaps more severely, than other groups. In addition to this, my own identity as a woman could serve as a common ground and shorten the potential distance between the white me and the respondents of colour. It is not my intention however, to make any broad generalisations about differences in how women and men experience or respond to everyday racism, but rather motivate the choice of sampling group by suggesting that young women of colour are seldom heard in the debate, and that they may possess a distinctive knowledge about everyday resistance against racism in contemporary Sweden.

3.3. Analytical method

The collected data was analysed through the Charmaz approach in grounded theory, in which the coding is done in three stages (Bryman, 2016, p. 574-577). The first one is called ‘initial coding’ and aims to provide the analyst with initial impressions of what is happening in the data. I needed to stay close to the data, but still be open-minded of other possible interpretations. For example, while marking utterances with different codes related to the research questions, such as ‘explaining’, ‘confronting’, ‘avoiding’ as resistant strategies, it was important to be open-minded to new impressions from the data. In this search for new findings, it became clear that the relationships between the actors involved played a significant role for how the respondents experienced racism. The similarities in the answers lead to the second stage, called ‘focused coding’, where the most significant initial impressions were categorised into five themes, namely A. Ideal society, B. Resistance strategies, C. Relationships, D. Emotions, and E. Whiteness norm.

This categorisation led to the third stage of the Charmaz approach, called ‘theoretical coding’, which aims to specify possible relationships between the categories found in the focused coding. It then became clear that themes A and E should be analysed together, and that themes B, C and D are closely interlinked. Two hypotheses were then developed suggesting that firstly, Sweden is far from being described as an ideal society where the whiteness norm will not determine one’s opportunities in life, and secondly that the relationship between the actors will have an impact on the everyday racism and the related resistance repertoire. I found this second part of the hypothesis least developed in previous research and most inspiring for transforming the racist structures and not only explaining them. It will thus be the main focus of the analysis of everyday resistance in this thesis. To clarify, the discussion will mostly focus on the findings from theme B and C. The initial idea to follow the trend within Resistance studies of studying emotions (Baaz, Heikkinen & Lilja, 2017) was dismissed due to the complexity of how and which emotions affect the resistance repertoire when and where. The data analysis showed that the relationships between the actors involved was more important to focus on.

3.4. Ethical considerations and reflexivity

In feminist research, the power relationship between the researcher and the researched is important to acknowledge. As a white person studying racism I understood that my research could be met by scepticism and critique. I wanted to avoid being one of the white feminists

that bell hooks (1984/2005) criticises in her discussion about the tension between black and white women in feminist work:

Frequently, white feminists act as if black women did not know sexist oppression existed until they voiced feminist sentiment. They believe they are providing black women with “the” analysis and “the” program for liberation. (hooks, 1984/2005, p. 65).

In accordance to this critique, I find it important to emphasise that this thesis does not make any claims of providing people of colour with *the* analysis of their resistance or the racism they experience. It will nonetheless provide the readers, regardless of their race, with *an* analysis of the resistance encounters that would not have been possible without the respondents’ experiences of racism in Sweden. In order to avoid or at least diminish any possible scepticism I have tried to be as transparent as possible before, during and after the interviews about the aim of the study, as well as of my personal interest in this topic. My personal interest comes from years of work experience in some of the multicultural suburbs of Gothenburg and the many puzzling discussions with teenagers and colleagues about national identity, what it means to be Swedish and for how long a person can be an ‘immigrant’. These discussions have made me reflect on my own life and privileges in Sweden, of racial prejudices and everyday racist attitudes among my friends and family, as well as the ones I have unconsciously had myself.

Years of theoretical knowledge of migration, nationalism, gender and racism from Global studies, of work experience in multicultural contexts, and lots of self-reflection about whiteness in Sweden have made me aware of how racist structures can be reproduced by every member of the society, including myself. This constant reproduction is illustrated by one of Mulinari’s (2017) respondents as ‘*You never know how near you are to a racist comment*’ (Mulinari, 2017, p. 609). Although this quotation has guided all my interaction with the respondents in this study, my fear of being criticised and perceived as a white, unaware, Swedish woman was confirmed in some of the interviews. For instance, in the interview with the respondent Jossan, I was informed that she was not comfortable with me in the beginning because I am white, and she continues to address some critique about Swedish (white) people directly to me. This helped me to further realise that regardless of my good intentions I am

part of the racist structure this study aims to understand and transform. In other words, as an individual, I cannot be excluded from the racism Jossan and many others experience from white people on an everyday basis.

To overcome some of the obstacles of conducting a study about potentially sensitive topics, some ethical considerations were taken into account. All the participants were granted anonymity and had the possibility to withdraw their participation without any specific reason. To grant the participants anonymity is common in qualitative research in order to protect their integrity. According to Ambjörnsson (2009), this custom is problematic when it comes to interviewing activists, for it may send the activists back to the invisibility and silence they are fighting against (Ambjörnsson, 2009, footnote p. 117). I found this dilemma difficult to solve. I thought that an open participation would impact how the respondents would answer the questions or perhaps regretting their participation afterwards for ‘revealing too much’. In addition to this, I was unsure if all the respondents would label themselves ‘activists’ and their young age made it seem unnecessary to expose their real identities, despite some respondent’s wish to participate openly. I decided, in dialog with the respondents, that they would participate under pseudonyms they could choose themselves. The risk of contributing to potential online racial hatred addressed to the respondents or other future problems in being associated with activism against racism overrun the risk of sending the respondents back to invisibility and silence surrounding the people who experience everyday racism.

Before the main interviews were held, I had a pilot interview with a friend who experiences racism. This gave me the chance to see if the questions needed to be reformulated or if they were too sensitive, too general or too specific. It turned out to be very helpful, and I decided to end all the interviews with a question about how the respondent perceived the interview and the questions. I also asked the respondents to object if they did not want to answer a question, but this opportunity was not taken by anyone. Everyone reassured me that they were positive about their participation and that the questions were good and not too sensitive. All the respondents were offered to comment on utterances, findings and interpretations used in this thesis before it was completed. This was done to make sure that the respondents approved on how their participation contributed to this study.

Bryman (2016) states that some qualitative researchers stress the need to view the social world through the eyes of the people that they study (Bryman, 2016, p. 393). This view serves

well as a point of departure but can also be misleading and perhaps hide the researcher's own interpretations of the social phenomenon in focus. As a white person, experiences of racism on an everyday basis were new to me. Racism as a social phenomenon was not new, but the frequency and multitude of the respondents' experiences were. Consequently, when I tried to view the world with the eyes of the people in the study I was angry with all white people whom I thought were everyday racists. In addition to this anger, I felt compassion for (or was impressed by) all the people of colour whom I assumed had to face racism every day. This view, which I am sure was greatly exaggerated by me and do not accurately reflect the respondents view of the world, did not encourage a valid and reliable interpretation of the actions, attitudes and 'good intentions' of the everyday racists discussed in the analysis. Feiler's (2012) argument was helpful to escape this dilemma, I needed to be both colour-blind and fully seeing in order to better understand how racism was expressed, negotiated and challenged, and to both accept and criticise the respondents view of the world. These alternate positions helped me to see nuances in the respondents reasonings about racism and their own awareness of how they too, may reproduce racism unintentionally. This awareness further stresses that racism is a complex and often hidden phenomenon that needs more research on how it is reproduced and challenged in our everyday lives.

4.1. Results and discussion

Racism is expressed, negotiated and challenged in all forms of relationships, whether the actors involved in the encounter are strangers or friends. This section will answer the aim and research questions by analysing the results and narratives from the interviews together with theories on everyday racism, everyday resistance, and relationships. The analysis will focus on the findings that everyday racism is expressed differently depending on the relationships between the actors, which affect the racism's entangled response. These responses make up to the potential resistance repertoire. The fact that the questions, comments, and looks perceived as everyday racism, are addressed to the interviewees in their everyday lives, means that the resistance may occur in situations where the target, the performer and the observers of the resistance, are either physically and/or emotionally close. This closeness of a relationship affects the resistance repertoire and the relationships between other actors involved. In other words, the most important aspect affecting the resistance repertoire is identified as the relationships between the actors involved. Other important aspects are the frequency and

severity of the everyday racism in these relationships, as well as the (lack of) support and understanding from others in the same social context.

The examples discussed in this chapter are defined as everyday racism by the respondents. These examples are responses to questions such as *'What do you think of when you hear the concept "everyday racism"?' or 'Would you like to give some examples of when you have experienced everyday racism?'*. The questions or comments perceived as everyday racism can sometimes appear trivial and interpreted as expressions of curiosity, rather than racism. As argued before, the intentional aspect of the racism as well as of the resistance is widely debated (E.g. Pripp & Öhlander, 2012 & Lilja & Vinthagen, 2009a) and one can conclude that in studies of everyday power and resistance, the intention is not always clear. One reason why it is important to recognise these small acts of possibly unintentional racism is because of its repetitiveness. Mulinari, who understands everyday racism as *'unremarkable and routine ways through which racism is reproduced'* (Mulinari, 2017, p. 602) further states that *'In different ways, the repetitive questions to the look produce and reproduce the idea of white bodies as a national signifier.'* (Ibid., p. 608). The respondents would not give these examples if they would not illustrate the racist structures that they have learnt to recognise through years of experience. They reveal these experiences to point out how their bodies are constantly marked and identified as non-Swedish and how they must face related prejudices in their everyday lives. The examples of everyday racism should therefore not be dismissed as mistakes, illusions or signs of being easily offended. On the contrary, they should be taken into careful consideration of how racism and Swedish identities are created, negotiated and challenged, as well as how they affect trust and relationships between members of the Swedish society. Also, it is not always clear if the everyday racist is a white person or a person of colour in the illustrated situations. This should not be seen as a disadvantage for the study but can rather demonstrate that the whiteness norm can be reproduced by all members of society, and hence be questioned and challenged by everyone as well.

The analysis is divided into four sections according to the relationship between the actors involved in the encounter. The first three focus on the target of the resistance, if that person is a stranger, a formal acquaintance, or a friend. The last part focuses on the resistance offered in solidarity with someone else, meaning the person performing the resistance was an observer of the racism, rather than being the one the racism was directly addressed to. All sections will use the previous research and the theoretical framework discussed above together with other

relevant studies and theories to explain and analyse how racism is expressed, negotiated and challenged in women of colour's everyday lives in Sweden.

4.2. Encounters between strangers

Encounters between strangers may reveal the most obvious forms of everyday racism and resistance. The actors involved in the situation will probably not meet again nor need to form any type of closer relationship with each other, and this may encourage both the racism and the resistance to be violent or confrontative. Nevertheless, the interviewees also express how tired they are of such racist comments, questions and behaviour so they do not bother responding to the racism at all. Nina, who is 24 years old and lives in Stockholm, explains it as follows *'You just have to shake it off, because it happens often, it is systematic. All those things you go through, they do not happen only once, it is basically the same but in different forms.'* Moreover, it becomes clear that strangers often base their comments, questions and assumptions on how the respondent looks, meaning her race, and not on culture, language or other patterns of behaviour. In fact, as this section will show, questions and comments about one's assumed origin continue to be posed in the encounter, despite answers indicating the respondent has lived all her life in Sweden. This section will further demonstrate how racism is expressed, negotiated and challenged in everyday encounters between strangers by analysing three different scenarios described in the interviews. The first scenario is about the intersection of race and gender. The second is about race, gender and class, and the third one highlights how more people than the person expressing racist sentiments and the racialised person are involved in the encounter.

Nina discusses a situation in which she strongly felt like a racialised woman. She worked alone in a shop and a white middle-aged male customer tried to figure out her origin by greeting her in different East Asian languages and she just shook her head and tried to assist him in his business to the shop instead. Even when she made it clear that she did not want to answer and tried to talk about the products in the shop, he continued to ask. She just wanted him to leave because he appeared very demanding. He did not listen to her demonstrating the products, but instead started to become frustrated and studied her from head to toe. Nina explains this as *'being exoticised as a racialised woman and thus experiencing two dimensions that reinforce each other'*. After a while she felt obliged to answer him and said Afghanistan, but the man still made claims that she looked Chinese. These repetitive questions pointing out

where Nina should ‘belong’ made her uncomfortable and she wanted to end the encounter as soon as possible. The customer however, kept asking her intimidating questions such as ‘*What are you doing in Sweden?*’ and then complimenting her good Swedish. He also commented her appearance in exotifying ways, like ‘*You look gorgeous, but I have a wife*’. Nina says in the interview that she never learns to be quick enough to dismiss this kind of people because she never expects them to behave like this. In this situation she just wanted to get away from the customer and to avoid any kind of further contact.

The scenario illustrates how questions and looks can be experienced as everyday racism. It is possible that the man was not aware of that Nina felt uncomfortable in the situation or did not appreciate his behaviour. His intention might have been to only show curiosity or his East Asian language skills. Nonetheless, the aim, or at least the outcome, of questions such as ‘*What are you doing in Sweden?*’ and examining looks to get clues of geographical origin, is, at least partly, to point out that Nina is only a visitor in Sweden and a non-member of the Swedish society. The customer did not identify her as Swedish, despite her attempts to emphasise her fluent Swedish or position as employed staff member at a Swedish workplace. Mulinari (2017) calls these practices of defining non-white bodies as non-Swedish as ‘*central in everyday forms of racism*’ (Mulinari, 2017, p. 602). The racism can hence be understood as expressed through ideas of the Swedish population as being white, that is, one’s body and race will decide whether one is recognised as Swedish or not. This kind of nationalism is explained by Yuval-Davis as exclusionary:

Nationalist projects which focus on genealogy and origin as the major organizing principles of the national collectivity would tend to be more exclusionary than other nationalist projects. Only by being born into a certain collectivity could one be a full member in it. (Yuval-Davis, 1997, p. 22).

In its extremity, this form of nationalism can lead to control of marriage and sexuality in order to prevent inferior races to ‘pollute’ the superior race (Ibid.). The customer did not however show any fear of Nina’s potential to ‘pollute’ his race, but rather exotified her origin by initiating sexual contact if his marriage would not have hindered him. Jossan, who is 24 years old and lives in Gothenburg, also draws attention to how sexual harassments and exotifying

actions and attitudes affect her identification of being Swedish and moreover her general idea of Sweden:

I don't want my children to grow up here. It's a shit hole for brown people. You are called the n-word, you get harassed, you get touched on your bottom, you get exotified, you become a sex object. You know it's not, well sure, we can talk about free education and whatever /.../ but this is not a dream country to live in.

The reality that Jossan describes, highlights that Nina's example should not be seen as an isolated event, but a part of how racism is expressed in everyday encounters with strangers in Sweden. The non-white body as an 'exotic other' is also discussed in Mulinari's (2017) study of service encounters. She explains the customers' motivation to be close to the exotic other as a desire to make themselves more interesting (Mulinari, 2017, p. 607). This explanation is supported by bell hooks (1992), a black feminist academic well-known for theories on race, gender and exotification. In her chapter *Eating the other*, she criticises how 'Otherness' has become a commodification in mass culture and that ethnicity '*becomes spice, seasoning that can liven up the dull dish that is mainstream white culture.*' (hooks, 1992, p. 21). One can argue that this desire for otherness also demonstrates a desire for diversity and could hence challenge racism and white supremacy. The problem with this argument is, according to hooks, a fear '*that cultural, ethnic, and racial differences will be continually commodified and offered up as new dishes to enhance the white palate – that the Other will be eaten, consumed, and forgotten.*' (hooks, 1992, p. 39). In other words, it is not a representation of ethnicities or races that is developed by people of colour themselves, but to satisfy white people's image of themselves as welcoming and curious of what they define as 'others'.

The nonacceptance implied in being exotified or identified as 'the Other' is evident in the resistance repertoire of Nina and Jossan. They both understand these attitudes as everyday racism and both try to find ways to avoid it. Nina claims that in these situations her normal strategy is to become more academic and intensify the qualities 'they' (i.e. the everyday racists) define as Swedish and expect her not to have. But due to the customers behaviour and that he refused to listen to her, she just wanted to escape the situation. If this would have been a stranger in a public place, it is possible that she would have acted differently, for example strongly emphasised her Swedish qualities or left the situation at an earlier point. Jossan

declares an ambition to leave the country in order to avoid the everyday racism. This escape can be understood as drastic, but also illustrates what Adolfsson (2016) would call a defensive strategy aiming to solve the problem on an individual level instead of trying to fight the racist structure. Moreover, in Mulinari's (2012) interpretation of Scott's concept 'everyday resistance', these types of hidden actions are invisible for the power holders and beyond their control (Mulinari, 2012, p. 25). Jossan's declaration that she does not want her future children to grow up here could therefore be seen as silent disobedience and a reaction to the thankfulness she feels obliged to have. She explains this as:

Sweden is also very open, /.../ it once welcomed my father, but it has never welcomed me. I didn't choose to come here /.../ I didn't choose my citizenship here. /.../ But I think my parents look at it differently /.../ My mother is very thankful, like 'oh this is a really good country, it is really good here!' /.../ I am not at all thankful, because I don't need to be thankful, it's my right to be here.

The quotation reveals how Jossan refuses to adjust to the idea of being a guest in Sweden, and one way to refuse being a guest is to leave the country. This strategy of 'withdrawal' is known in Scott's work, and could be an 'act of not being governed' (Scott in Haraldsson & Lilja, 2017, p. 178). It would have been interesting to know why Jossan decides to stay in Sweden, despite her feeling of not being welcome. According to Lilja and Vinthagen (2009a), one of the biggest obstacles for organised resistance is not the penal sanctions, but conflicts in close social relationships (Lilja & Vinthagen, 2009a, p. 84). This may be true for everyday resistance as well, and Jossan might stay because her mother, partner and friends have a different opinion of Sweden than she does and wants to stay.

To return to Nina's normal strategy of being 'more academic which 'they' do not expect her to be, demonstrates a class dimension to the racism she usually experiences. This dimension is also visible in the interview with Kayla, who is 21 years old and lives in Lund. She reveals that she sometimes felt like a 'charity case' when she got large tips at a restaurant that she describes as fancy and where she worked at for a while:

They [the customers] saw me, and just 'well I'm gonna give you a hundred kronor' and you *know* why. You can see it in their eyes. So ok, [now switching to English]

I'm gonna do it. I'll take the money. If you want to feel like you have a charity case, I mean I win on it, you win on it.

Kayla's story is interesting for two reasons. First, it reveals a class difference in how the restaurant is understood by customers and how she, as a staff member, is identified as not belonging to that same place or class. Secondly, in accordance to Nina, she uses language as a form of resistance. In the telling of the response to the customer, she switches to English from Swedish as perhaps a way to further distance oneself from that place and situation. This use of English instead of Swedish is not uncommon in the other interviews too. Since resistance is closely entangled with power (Johansson & Vinthagen, 2016), language may play a significant role in reproducing racism. Indeed, all the interviewees experience questions and comments on their Swedish skills, which adds to the idea that a non-white body is not Swedish. R athzel (2006), for example, states in her study that employers often meet young people of migrant background with suspicion and they are understood as '*deeply problematic to employ*' (R athzel, 2006, p. 225), mostly because of assumed language deficiencies. She calls this argument a metaphor because she believes:

it constitutes an accepted way of saying that young people with a migrant background cannot be accepted as a legitimate part of the Swedish population. /.../ As language is the signifier of belonging to a nation it also becomes the signifier of exclusion. (R athzel, 2006, p. 226).

Nina uses a more academic language as a way to refuse this exclusion and show that she belongs to the Swedish nation too, whereas Kayla distance herself from the white Swede and instead position herself as belonging to a more global or diverse community. Similar to Jossan's talk of leaving Sweden, Kayla's response in the illustrated situation should be seen as 'off stage', and likely to be hidden from the customers. Her retelling of the story can be assumed to be a way to deal with the situations afterwards by laughing at their ignorance and superior attitudes. Along with this hidden resistance, the strategy of leaving was also a part of Kayla's resistance repertoire. She quit her job at the restaurant after one month and states that she '*would rather be poor than dealing with this shit*'.

This section has shown how racism can be expressed through questions, guesses, assumptions, and comments about a person's origin, but also through examining looks and unwanted touching. These examples of everyday racism highlight the intersection of race, gender and class, and sometimes also age. The respondents Nina, Jossan and Kayla negotiate and challenge these racist actions and attitudes through resistance repertoires of leaving intimidating situations or workplaces, distancing themselves 'off stage' to how they act or are expected to act in the specific encounter, and emphasising certain qualities such as language skills to point out their identity positions.

4.3. Encounters between people in formal relationships

Encounters between people in formal relationships are often affected by the probability to involuntarily meet each other again. These encounters occur in different social contexts, referred to by Feld and Carter (1998) as 'foci of activity', and can be between teacher and student, between class mates, neighbours, colleagues, members of the same association, relatives etc. In the interviews, the everyday racism in these encounters can be expressed as a fixation of someone's origin, the usage of a racist language, having opinions about 'the Other', making a person of colour as representative for diversity or dismissing reported racial harassments. This section will discuss resistance in four different foci of activity, namely a school, a workplace, a political party and a neighbourhood.

All the interviewees have experienced racism from teachers or class mates at school. For example, Jossan explains that she has suffered a lot because of racist teachers that she wishes to introduce a test for teachers on racist attitudes. If the test shows that they are racist, they should not be allowed to be teachers. Sanna, who is 19 years old and lives in Borås, mentions having a teacher that addressed her by different names depending on how she behaved. She was addressed by her more Swedish sounding nick name when she behaved well, and her Albanian name when she did something wrong. This can potentially depend on other intentions than racist ones, such as talking in a more serious way in serious situations. However, the repetitive way to address her differently along with the fact that few people call her by her Albanian name, made Sanna experience the behaviour as everyday racism. Moreover, Nina declares that she has so many examples of racism in school that she could go on all day. Kayla too, expresses how racism was normalised for her in school and how this made her suicidal and depressed at a very young age.

Anisah, who is 18 years old and lives in Gothenburg, talks about a specific situation where she confronted a teacher. She mentions how she had just changed school from a white high school to a more diverse school in order to feel more comfortable and where she would not need to be *'ready for attack all the time'*. Despite this, she still faced racism from both teachers and class mates in her new school. When a teacher in social science used the n-word several times during a lecture, she confronted the teacher afterwards by telling him that whatever opinions and attitudes about the society he had, he should have them outside the classroom and not where people of other backgrounds are present. She continues:

So, I told him this and he was really annoyed, took me to another classroom and said, 'I'm allowed to say nigger if I want to, nigger, nigger, nigger, nigger.' And I thought well ok, what's going on now, you know. So I told the principal too, and he says, 'But you know, a teacher in social science can say these things to provoke people' Like what? What does he mean 'to provoke people'? One is provoked no matter who it is saying the n-word.

The lack of understanding made her notably more upset and in addition to this, Anisah got poor grades from that teacher's course which made her feel discouraged and less eager to confront him, or any other teacher, again. Defending herself and confronting the teacher became an issue of jeopardising her grades and hence, her future. Instead of confronting the teacher, she started to develop more covert resistance strategies. She made jokes about him and formulated revenge fantasies where he would be publicly humiliated when she would throw eggs at him at graduation. Her resistance can thus be understood as shifting from a visible action, to a hidden form of resistance. This shift highlights one of Scott's most central points, namely that it is only the ones that do not have anything to lose that dare to openly fight against power holders, the others may find alternative hidden forms of resistance (Scott in Lilja & Vinthagen, 2009a, p. 75).

The illustrated situation is not unique, and the response may vary depending on colonial history or traditions. When discussing name calling and verbal abuse, Essed (1991) states that racist slurs in the Netherlands are often dealt with on an individual level just like any other slurs, whereas U.S. women tend to see racist slurs in a structural context:

From that point of view *nigger* is not a word but a concept representing history of oppression of Blacks. Name calling is intimidating because Whites use, as a symbolic weapon, the body of cultural and structural oppression. (Essed, 1991, p. 256, *italics in original*).

It can be argued that Anisah tried to point out an oppressive structure related to the n-word, but the teacher and the principal ignored this idea and instead argued that she as an individual was the problem. This ignorance made her frustrated and angry, but she said that the principal claimed that she overreacted and that he would take her to the school's therapist. This response to Anisah's behaviour and reaction follows the precise line of how Essed explains the dealing of racism in the Netherlands. She points out that strong reactions of black women to name calling are often met by a response of 'You are overreacting', which is used as an effective way to depoliticise racial name calling (Essed, 1991, p. 256). Anisah too, calls this typical for being stereotyped as 'the angry black woman'. The encounter between Anisah and the teacher and the principal, illustrates how the colour-blind society has implications in people of colour's everyday lives, such as silencing them and leading to a lack of understanding of how racism may be expressed. The example also shows how anger may motivate resistance but also negatively affect its immediate effectiveness.

Revenge fantasies as a form of hidden, 'off stage' resistance is discussed in Anna Johansson's (2009) study of Nicaraguan women. She draws on Scott's example from the slavery in the US, where the blacks were quiet and submissive in the presence of whites but expressed anger and hatred and formulated violent revenge fantasies off stage. This behaviour is also shown in Johansson's study, where one interviewee jokes about her cheating husband and fantasises of seeing him get humiliated, exposed and ridiculed. These jokes are rarely told directly to her husband, but rather serve as a matter of dignity. Instead of placing her in a position of shame and him in a status position as 'macho' due to his many love affairs, she will make him feel ashamed and publicly humiliated. Johansson argues that humour and laughs are important in human social life and play a significant part in the social construction of personal and collective identities. Humour is furthermore a social practice that can establish and strengthen authority and hierarchies, but also question and challenge the same authority and hierarchies (Johansson, 2009, p. 199). In other words, how humour and fantasies are used and formulated

can reveal how power is created, maintained and challenged. This may illustrate why it is relevant to analyse more hidden forms of resistance and not only overt forms offered in the direct everyday racism encounter. To conclude, the resistance does not end when Anisah leaves the principal's office, it only takes another, more hidden, form.

Experiences of racist comments and attitudes from colleagues are also shared in the interviews. Kayla relates this to a school she worked at where some of her colleagues were obsessed with her origin the first month and could hear a variety of odd comments and opinions, such as *'what a nice mixed race you have'*, *'there are many terrorists in Pakistan'* or *'will you have an arranged marriage?'* She often questioned these comments, but the repetitiveness was too tiring for her so after six months she quit. She only felt support from one other colleague, a woman of colour from Pakistan working in the school kitchen. This woman advised her to talk to the principal about it and before she left, Kayla reported the racism to the principal but still doubts that he did anything to stop it.

Kayla also mentions in the interview that people of colour are used as representatives for diversity at some workplaces. This can be illustrated with an example from Nina when she was active in a political party. She explains how issues of diversity and feminism often were tied to her and her body, to legitimise that the party worked with these issues. When she on the other hand tried to introduce new issues to the agenda, the attempts were ignored. She hesitates to call the fellow party members 'everyday racists' but claims that the whiteness norm was obvious. She left when she realised that she was always identified as the minority. In both these cases, Kayla and Nina questioned the actions of everyday racism, but when nothing changed they left the place and position. The frustration reached a level of being too much to handle. This leaving act can be seen as an individual failure to change the norms in these contexts. However, the act of leaving can also be seen as resistance against the expectation of being a representative for diversity. Similar to the discussion above on exoticification, the terms and conditions of Kayla and Nina's presence, set by someone else, and by leaving they make these contexts white and dull again (See hooks, 1992). The leaving strategy in the repertoire can in other words, be understood as both a response to the everyday racism they experience, but also as an outcome of months of negotiating and challenging the everyday racism without any signs of change.

The everyday racism in these examples highlights the discussion of being both colour-blind and fully seeing. Both Kayla and Nina perceive their bodies as being signifiers for their presence in these foci of activity. They get questions and assignments related to their bodies but when they try to negotiate and question the importance of their bodies in relation to their personal qualities and skills, these attempts are ignored. To use the reasoning of Arpi and Cwejman (2018), this can be seen as an example of how people are reduced to their race and that diversity cannot be achieved by only looking at or counting bodies. Kayla's colleagues and Nina's fellow part members should in some situations be more colour-blind to better value their skills, whereas in other situations they should 'see colour' in order to take experiences of discrimination and disregard seriously. This is what Feiler (2012) calls the need for a double vision, and it can be argued that there was no common understanding at Kayla's workplace or in Nina's political party of what diversity (or race) is, and what they want diversity (or race) to do for them. This lack of consensus led to negative experiences for Kayla and Nina and may impact their understanding of when and where they belong on the labour market and in different foci of activity.

Everyday racism from neighbours is also discussed in the interviews. Sanna speaks about the place she grew up as a '*racist shithole*' and how racism made her want to behave as Swedish as possible when she was little. Anisah reveals that she recently found out that some parents of the children she played with in the courtyard as a child had a Nazi background, which explained why they told their children not to play with her and why they gave her degrading looks. She became good friends with other Somali neighbours instead. Jossan refers to her neighbourhood as '*a quite white area*' and mentions a neighbour who always asks her if she is there to visit someone. The first times she answered, '*no I live here*', but now she says that she has understood what he really means and therefore ignores him. Other neighbours can also give her looks telling her she is not welcomed or wanted there.

According to Essed, blacks are often confronted with hostility when moving into white-dominated areas. In the Netherlands, this is most frequently shown by hostile staring or through gossip, whereas in the US, racial threats are more common (Essed, 1991, pp. 216-217). These hostile attitudes support Loretta Lees (2008) critique on trendy urban policy goals of social mixing in for example the UK, Netherlands and Scandinavia. She argues that social mixing can create tensions on a local scale, especially when there are marked social, economic and cultural differences between residents, and can lead to self-segregation and

withdrawal instead of mixing (Lees, 2008, p. 2456). The respondents' experiences listed above suggest that racially mixed neighbourhoods can create tensions between residents and additionally make people of colour feel unwanted and unwelcomed by their white neighbours. The resistance repertoire against this everyday racism consists of ignoring comments or avoiding certain neighbours, labelling the neighbourhood 'racist', and finding comfort and friendship in other neighbours who are understood to be safe or similar to oneself. By calling a neighbourhood 'a racist shithole' as Sanna does, might give the area a bad reputation and hence encourage the silent and observing residents to challenge the racism even if they are not personally affected by it. However, it is also possible that her neighbours will ignore her experiences, think she is overreacting and prefer the Sanna who wanted to behave as 'Swedish' as possible.

This section has discussed racism and resistance in encounters between people in formal relationships, such as between school staff and students, colleagues, fellow party members and neighbours. The racism is expressed through name calling, unwillingness to take discrimination seriously, fixation of origin instead of personal qualities and skills, as well as questions and looks indicating a non-white body does not belong in this focus of activity. The resistance is offered through overt forms such as reporting to higher authority, leaving the activity, and ignoring racist comments and questions, but also through more hidden forms such as joking, fantasising of revenge, giving an area a bad reputation by calling it racist, and making friends with other, safer people. The social and personal importance of friendships will be further discussed in the next section.

4.4. Encounters between friends

This section will analyse one of the most startling findings in the study, namely how everyday racism and resistance can exist between friends. It highlights the very importance of studies such as this one, about how racism operates in a Swedish, and perhaps a global, context.

When racism exists between friends, it becomes clear that it is a normalised part of the everyday life in Sweden and that no one is ever safe or free from it. It furthermore seems to be the worst kind of everyday racism and feelings of shock, shame and powerlessness strongly affect the resistance. Anisah explains it as racism from strangers do not really affect her that much, but when it comes from friends it is different:

You start making excuses for that person, because you do not want to accept it. But then it happens again and again and again, and you start to wonder like ‘Are you racist? What you’re doing?’ Then you need to be tougher, so they really understand. You don’t have to give the person a lecture, you can just leave. Like ‘you know what, I can’t be friends with someone who constantly degrades my skin colour, religious background or try to make jokes about it.’

Anisah’s unwillingness to accept the racism expressed by friends put her resistance repertoire in a new light. Once again, she leaves the situation and the relationship, but different from when racism is expressed by strangers or teachers, she does not want to ‘*give the person a lecture*’ nor does she make jokes about the person or fantasising of revenge. She just makes them aware of having racist attitudes, and leaves. Although Lilja and Vinthagen’s (2009a) statement – that conflicts in close social relationships is the unquestionable biggest obstacle for resistance – is given in a context of organised resistance, it seems relevant for situations of everyday resistance too. They argue that competition, tensions and suspicion may arise within the resistance group, but also in relation to family members, friends and partners. Conflicts within close social relationships thus stress the need for the resistance to take other forms, such as open dialogue and self-reflection (Lilja & Vinthagen, 2009a, pp. 84-85). Anisah continues the story by proudly announcing that some of these friends have come back to her later and have told her that they have now been enlightened about racism, by for example listening to speeches of the black rights activist Malcolm X. The friends confessed that they felt ashamed of how they behaved and now support Anisah in arguments with others by telling them to read or listen to the same things they have done. One can argue that the resistance Anisah offered by leaving these relationships, encouraged her friends to self-reflect on their behaviour and led to an open dialogue between them.

The other respondents have also experienced racist attitudes and comments from friends. Nina informs about friendships that have ended because the friends were not as aware as one could expect. She knows most of her friends from Gender and Diversity studies, so she explains it feels extra shocking when racist or stereotypical comments come from them. Usually she does not remember what they have said, the examples are too many, but she remembers how it made her feel. Nina, like Anisah, makes excuses for her friends by saying ‘*of course, no one is flawless*’, but still declares that friendships have ended because of racism. Kayla does not discuss racism among friends so much in the interview but declares that she could write a

whole book about odd things her non-racialised friends said to her when they were younger. Potentially, these memories affect her new friendships and other relationships too, as well as her reactions in encounters with racism. An example of such reaction will be discussed in the next section of the analysis. The most explicit and far-going strategy concerning resistance against racism among friends is formulated by Jossan. She has stopped trying to make friends with white people after all the racism she has gone through. She says that she avoids friendships with white women because she simply cannot trust them. Similar to the discussion in the previous section, this strategy of absolute exclusion should not be seen as an individual failure, but an outcome of years of negotiating and challenging everyday racism among white friends without any sign of changing attitudes.

The experiences of racism listed above do not clearly show how the racism is expressed. The interviewees rather define it as remembering the feeling caused by racist comments or that it becomes evident for them that their friends are not aware of racist structures or white privilege. Sanna however, is more concrete in her accounts of how the racism among friends is expressed. She says that her friends can give her confused or surprised looks when she talks about an Albanian tradition or speaks or curses in Albanian. She explains the looks as if they say, *'what the fuck, you are normally so Swedish, where did this come from?'* She finds these looks quite depressing, as *'people have no understanding of someone else's culture'*, but often just let it be. These looks are thus another example of Mulinari's (2017) claim that everyday racism is expressed through pointing out that a non-white body is not Swedish, and also supports Rätzzel's (2006) suggestion that language is the signifier of belonging to a nation and can therefore be used for exclusion purposes (Rätzzel, 2006, p. 226).

In contrast to the examples from Anisah, Nina and Jossan, Sanna does not leave or avoid these friendships but seems to accept their ignorance. This can be understood as an intent to keep testing the boundaries of what is accepted to do and not for a Swedish person, as well as a way to negotiate the experienced racism. It can also show the practise of open dialogue in the resistance, or that Sanna values the friendships for other reasons. One can additionally argue that attempts for open dialogue have assumingly been made by all the interviewees, not only by Sanna, and that the ending of a friendship should not be seen as a first, but a final, response. Another potential reason why some friendships end, and some maintain can be because of the focus of activity in which they are rooted. Feld and Carter (1998) argue that even though friendship is relatively voluntary and self-determined, social context has

important effects on who become friends and how those friends act towards one another. Additionally, they state that each friendship that is formed in a specific focus of activity is embedded within a relatively dense web of other relationships that are derived from the same focus of activity (Feld & Carter, 1998, p. 136). Anisah and Sanna are still in high school, so they are forced to meet these friends every day regardless if they maintain to be friends or not. This relationship on an everyday basis, along with the surrounding web of other relationships, may facilitate an open dialogue and a reconciliation. Nina, Kayla and Jossan on the other hand, all work or study at the university and may find it easier to avoid or leave both the friendship and the focus of activity in which they experience racism.

To understand the true power of friendships in producing, negotiating and challenging racism, it is important to further address questions of what a friendship is and how it can be understood in a social context. Friendship, according to Pat O'Connor (1998) who studies women's friendships in a post-modern world, is *'a voluntary relationship between peers /.../ [and] offers a way of inventing and re-inventing the self in an authentic way throughout one's life'* (O'Connor, 1998, p. 118). In regard to many of the other discussions in this thesis, such as the paradoxes of exotifying people of colour yet excluding them in a Swedish context, friendships may reveal the complexity of society through the want of both sameness and difference. O'Connor argues that:

[It] has been widely noted that friendships reflect and reinforce the stratified nature of the society, with friends typically being made with people from the same class, race, educational background, level of income, recreational interests, etc. Yet, paradoxically, part of the attractiveness of friendship as a relational form lies in its ability to generate alternative definitions of self, ones which /.../ are peculiarly under the control of those involved. (O'Connor, 1998, p. 119).

This highlights that people often become friends with those identified as similar to themselves according to societal norms, but friendships may also reflect one's ability to develop new qualities and insights. Furthermore, this ability is under the control of those involved, namely the friends. So, when Anisah points out that her friends are (unintentionally) racists, or at least expressing racist attitudes, she controls how they identify themselves and forces them to re-invent their self in an authentic way and develop qualities that counter the definition of them

as racists. This control of the definition of ourselves can thus be seen as marking the differences between friendships and more distant kinds of relationships. As we have seen in other examples told by the respondents and shown in previous research (E.g. Essed, 1991, Pripp & Öhlander, 2012 & Hübinette & Lundström, 2014), responses to be called racist often consists of arguments that the racism was not intentional, that the person experiencing racism overreacts or misunderstands and is simply ignored or silenced. Friendships may, on the other hand, have a greater potential to change how racism is understood, expressed and spread in society than other forms of relationships may have.

Another important factor concerning racism and friendships in contemporary society, is the prevalence of online friendships. In discussions about the separatist social media forum for racialised people where the respondents for this study were found, some of the respondents reveal that they have made new friends through the forum. Sanna explains the forum as a way to reach people whose experiences and feelings are the same as hers and therefore it serves to create safety for others and for herself. She stresses the importance for people to know that there is a whole army of supporters out there, so that no one feels alone in their experiences of racism. Nina too, finds the separatist forums very rewarding. She has become friends with people she never would have met elsewhere, and she gains new knowledge from others' experiences of racism. Kayla uses the forum as a way to deal with one's own experiences, to find support and help from others and to learn more about other's experiences and insights of racism. However, she further notes that these kinds of forums can also reveal hierarchies and different opinions within the group people of colour, so the themes and discussions can vary in different forums. This variety may also affect the relationships between the members of the forum, of who become friends with who and who is avoided or blocked.

These narratives confirm previous research about online friendships. According to Yair Amichai-Hamburger, Mila Kingsbury and Barry H. Schneider (2012), the Internet is an effective tool for discovering like-minded others. They state that one of the important benefits of having friends is to get support at times of stress, and this can be provided both online and face-to-face. The online friendships may be easier to sustain, but also easier to terminate with less concern for negative consequences (Amichai-Hamburger et al., 2012). The online forums can be seen as a safe space for support where the members gain new knowledge and friends. The forums can also be understood as a platform of resistance against racism, both organised and more everyday form of resistance. When more and more people join the forums and share

their stories, the extent of everyday racism in Sweden becomes clear. In addition to this, if the members in the forum are friends with each other, they may encourage each other to act and fight the racism. This *'army of supporters out there'* as Sanna puts it, may make it easier for individuals to resist the racism that either they themselves or their friends are experiencing. This discussion on online friends and forums illustrates Lilja et al.'s (2017) argument that resistance could encourage resistance. Moreover, it adds to the fact that not only organised resistance encourages everyday resistance (and vice versa), but also demonstrates that everyday resistance can inspire and encourage other forms of everyday resistance.

This section has shown that the closer the relationship is, the more the racism and its entangled resistance affect the people involved. Racism between friends is often expressed through casual comments or attitudes, non-appreciated jokes about someone's background, and surprised looks when acting in a way understood as non-Swedish. Some of the respondents talk about making excuses for their friend's behaviour or making attempts for open dialogues, but some also reveal having friendships that have ended because of racism. The power of friendships has been discussed in both the online and the offline world, as well as how these relationships can produce and encourage resistance against racism. The next section will focus on resistance offered in solidarity with someone else and the lack of it.

4.5. The resistance of the observer

The interviews and previous research show that racism is a part of many people of colour's everyday lives in Sweden. Although some of the encounters described in this study have only been between the target and the agent of the resistance, one can argue that racist encounters often are witnessed by others. Johansson and Vinthagen (2016), for example, suggest that resistance is a process of social interaction between agents, targets and the observers of the resistance. The role of the observer therefore needs some further attention. In addition to this, the definition of resistance provided by Lilja and Vinthagen (2009a, p. 51) emphasises that a practice performed in solidarity with a subaltern should also count as resistance and can thus challenge and undermine power. The observer can therefore become the resister. This section will analyse the resistance offered by these observers, and also discuss how the lack of such solidarity affects the respondents.

Jossan tells about one day when she and her little sister was at the gym, and an older white woman thought Jossan's sister was in her way and gave her degrading looks. Jossan's sister replied politely and apologised. Jossan however, who knew that this older woman had expressed racist attitudes before, was provoked by this and confronted her. After some arguing Jossan also threatened the woman, and after the workout Jossan called her friend who owned the gym and demanded him to do something about this woman. Jossan says she acted this way because '*sometimes one has to*' and also to show her sister that she does not have to accept such things:

To stand up for yourself as brown, is very hard. Because I never saw anyone else do it. I had to learn it myself. But I want my sister to see examples of it and therefore I want to be one. And I think she was like 'Oh that was so brave!'. /.../
But it is sad that I have to do it.

Jossan acted in a way that she hoped others would have done when she was younger, so she would have learnt earlier in life to stand up for herself. It is also possible that she acted in a way she would not normally do if the racism was addressed to her. She got provoked and angry when it was addressed to a loved one, a sister she describes as kind-hearted and naïve. And in addition to hear others complain about the older woman, Jossan acted as if she had had enough and felt obliged and encouraged to confront the woman.

Kayla describes a similar situation where a man started to shout racist things at her mother in a traffic situation and how Kayla then completely '*lost it*'. She explains this violent reaction as a consequence of being quiet for so many years and having tried to restrain herself from shouting at people in order to avoid that such reactions would be used against 'us'. It is not totally clear who she refers to as 'us' here, but one can assume she means her family and perhaps also all other people of colour. In this situation, she felt it would not matter, they would use it against 'us' anyway, so she could at least release some pressure. She talks about this situation as an exception from her normal behaviour where she never gets violent or angry with people but acts more '*passive aggressive*'. Similar to Jossan's story, this encounter causes Kayla to feel she has had enough. As an observer she sees *how 'fucking ridiculous'* this racism is, and the fact that it is addressed to a loved one makes her react more violently than if it would have been addressed to her. In theoretical terms, this resistance can be

labelled spontaneous and non-strategical due to Kayla's awareness that this kind of behaviour can be used against 'us'. The example also supports the argument developed in the previous section, that the closer the relationship is, the more the racism and its entangled resistance affect the people involved.

The line between offering resistance as a subaltern, or in solidarity with a subaltern is not always clear. Often it appears that the resistance is offered as a response to racism the respondents themselves have experienced, but they can also be seen as representatives for a larger group. For example, when Anisah reports her racist teacher to the principal she also represents other students at the school, and when Kayla reports her colleagues to the principal at the school she worked at she also does so in solidarity with her colleague from Pakistan, and with the many non-white pupils at the school. Regarding this, it is crucial to analyse the resistance in a wider context of relationships and previous experiences involved in order to fully understand how racism is expressed, negotiated and challenged in specific encounters.

Anisah speaks about a common situation where she usually addresses the resistance to the silent observers. She declares she is often confronted with racist attitudes on public transportation. Usually it is old people calling her racist names or sharing stereotypical opinions, such as that Somali mothers have many children. The first times it happened, she remained silent because people always told her to ignore it, but now she uses her voice to silence the racist instead. Most often she stands up and arguing against the racist, saying things like *'You shouldn't speak to me like that, you don't know me'* in order to point out the difference between prejudices and real people. In addition to this strategy of confronting the racist, she usually addresses the observers, asking them why no one is backing her up. By doing this, she demonstrates how the silent observer is also participating in the everyday racism, and hence has a potential to challenge racism.

Jossan, Kayla and Anisah express how they want others to behave in solidarity with them when they are attacked or harassed. This overt resistance of confronting the everyday racist and the observers is however not always supported by their parents. Both Jossan and Sanna reveal that their parents think they should be thankful for being in Sweden. When Sanna has shared experiences of racism with her parents they have responded that she complains about banalities. Before she joined the online forums discussing everyday racism, she had no one to talk to about these experiences, neither family nor friends. This difference in how to respond

to everyday racism can demonstrate a difference between generations. It also poses the question why the parents choose to ignore the racism that they potentially also experience, and hence neither resist the racism nor offer it in solidarity with their loved ones. According to Gene Sharp (in Lilja & Vinthagen, 2009a), the subaltern's obedience can be seen as a form of cooperation. His definition of power is that it is a capacity to control other people's behaviour, and hence cannot exist if the subalterns do not obey. Resistance is therefore the same as disobedience to the power. Sharp lists several reasons why people obey, for example out of routine, fear of punishment, self-interest because of privileges, psychological identification with the ruling group, disheartened acceptance, and lack of confidence or resources (Sharp in Lilja & Vinthagen, 2009a, p. 68). The parents might thus perhaps enjoy privileges of living in Sweden that their children do not, due to different past experiences. The lack of resistance can also depend on disheartened acceptance, something the respondents also may experience in different situations when their voices are not heard, as for example in Nina's story about the political party she used to be a member of.

This section has shown that the biggest obstacle for resistance, namely close social relationships, can also be the biggest source of support and encouragement to resist racism. The racism becomes too much to bear when it is addressed to a loved one and enables and fuels sometimes violent confrontations between the observer and the racist. The lack of response from the unknown observers can also provoke resistance, as well as it can discourage resistance if it comes from loved ones such as family members. Once again, this analysis has shown that the relationships between the agents involved in the resistance play a crucial role in how the resistance repertoire is carried out and how racism is expressed, negotiated and challenged in different social contexts.

5.1. Conclusion

This thesis has shown that the responses to everyday racism can take many different forms, often depending on how the racism is expressed, by whom and where. It has analysed how everyday racism is negotiated and challenged in a variety of situations in young women of colour's everyday lives. The sometimes unintentional or unconscious resistance repertoire offered by the respondents' narratives consists of strategies such as confronting, reporting, increasing 'Swedish' qualities, and holding open dialogues, as well as more hidden forms of

for example ignoring comments, developing revenge strategies, testing boundaries or naming an area, person or context 'racist'. The one aspect that most significantly affects the resistance repertoire is argued in this thesis to be the relationships between the actors involved in the encounter, and more specifically, whether this relationship is important for the person experiencing racism or not. Everyday racism from strangers does not affect the respondents as much as if it is expressed by friends. In addition to this, observers tend to react according to the same reasons. If the victim of the racism is emotionally close to them, it is easier to react than if it is a stranger. This was shown, for example, when Anisah did not get support from the stranger co-travellers in the public transportation, but her friends reacted and supported her in encounters with racism. The study also showed that one may react stronger to the racism when it was addressed to someone emotionally close, than if it would have been addressed to oneself.

The lack of understanding and support also affected the resistance repertoire. This impact can be illustrated by the strategy of reporting the racism or the racist, which besides, only seemed relevant for formal relationships based in foci of activity such as schools or workplaces. The possible effect of the reporting was either doubted or in stark contrast to the respondent's intention. This refusal to recognise the problem supports Pripp and Öhlander's (2012) finding that everyday racism is often not understood as real racism. The person receiving the report may therefore choose to dismiss the accusations and explain the events as misunderstandings or overreactions. The resistance, on the other hand, does not end there but rather takes another form. Open resistance can for example turn into more hidden forms of resistance, and individual resistance can turn into collective forms of resistance. Moreover, in this study it becomes alarmingly evident that the lack of understanding and support often leads to the final strategy of ending the relationship or leaving the schools, workplaces or other types of foci of activity in order to avoid racism. The lack of understanding and support from managers, principals, teachers, neighbours, colleagues, fellow party members, friends and family may, in other words, lead to self-segregation and a society with few opportunities to discuss, negotiate and challenge racism in everyday encounters.

It is difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of the everyday resistance to transform the racial order in Sweden. The study has however shown how the order can potentially change with various strategies offered by five young women of colour, and how the response to the resistance may encourage more resistance or more people to engage in the resistance. One can

argue that racism, as well as resistance, is expressed, negotiated and challenged constantly, and the resistance repertoire is therefore likely to develop accordingly and thus become more effective. The main conclusion for this thesis is that friendships play a crucial role in everyday encounters of racism. When people in real life dismiss, ignore or defend the everyday racism people of colour experience, online forums or other safe foci of activity become important for support and recognition. My hope is that this thesis will encourage future research to further examine the importance of friendship in building a nation, and additionally, if and how self-reflection and open dialogue in interracial friendships may serve as a key strategy in the everyday fight against racism in Sweden, as well as worldwide.

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